

WORLD



● Palestinian families rejoice over release of minors and women  
● UK police leaflet Israel-Hamas conflict protesters

NATION



● 'No anti-incumbency, Congress will form govt in Rajasthan again'  
● BJP accuses Rahul, Priyanka of poll code violation

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## Assam: Family members pray for rescue of labourers trapped in Uttarakhand tunnel

**KOKRAJHAR, Nov 25:** With prayers on their lips, family members of two Assam labourers who were trapped inside the collapsed under-construction tunnel in Uttarakhand for 14 days, are waiting for their rescue.

The kin of those two workers hope that all those who are inside the Silkyara tunnel in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi district will be rescued soon.

A total of 41 workers were trapped inside the tunnel as the operation to evacuate them continued to get disrupted for one reason or another.

Hailing from Ramfalbil village in Kokrajhar district, 40-year-old Ramprasad Narzary and Sanjay Basumatary, 35, had gone there in May.

'We can only hope and pray that all are rescued soon and they return to their respective homes,' said Basumatary's father Dhiren Basumatary.

The government has brought many sophisticated machines to rescue them but it is taking a long time and 'now we are worried', he said.



'We cannot do anything from here but can only rest our faith in God and the government. My elder son Rocket Basumatary was also working at the site and it is he who is giving us the information about those trapped inside', he added.

Narzary's wife Sumitra appeals to both the Uttarakhand and central governments to rescue all the trapped workers safely.

'We are receiving news that they are being provided with food but we are concerned about their health. We are hopeful of their safe

return', she added.

Both the families thanked the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) chief Pramod Boro and Kokrajhar West MLA Rabiram Narzary for sending two persons, one from each family, of the trapped labourers by providing them with plane fare and other provisions to Uttarakashi.

The multi-agency rescue effort began on November 12 when a portion of the under-construction tunnel on Uttarakhand's Char Dham route collapsed, trapping workers who were still inside. (PTI)

## Govt takes new step to bring ULFA cadres to mainstream

Involving family members of ULFA cadres will pay dividends, hopes DGP

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Nov 25:** The state government in collaboration with the Assam police and Indian Army has launched an initiative to involve family members of ULFA cadres in bringing the latter back to the mainstream.

Assam director general of police (DGP), GP Singh said on Saturday that efforts are underway to connect with the family members of ULFA cadres and help them bring back their wards into the mainstream.

The joint initiative by the state police along with the chief minister's office (CMO) and the Indian Army aims at fostering peace and reconciliation in the entire region, he said.

'From conflict to collaboration: A trust-building initiative for a peaceful future,' Singh posted on X, sharing photographs of family



members of ULFA cadres in conversation with security personnel at different locations.

Under the initiative, families of ULFA cadres are invited to army or central armed police force camps or police stations for 'trust-building' and to help them bring their children into the mainstream', the

DGP said.

'The initiative of inviting families of ULFA cadres for trust-building activities holds immense potential to promote peace and reconciliation in the region,' he said.

Among the objectives of the programme is building trust and understanding.

'The initiative aims to bridge the gap between the security forces and the families of ULFA cadres, creating a foundation of mutual respect and understanding,' the DGP said.

By engaging with the families, it also seeks to encourage rehabilitation and reintegration of ULFA cadres into mainstream society.

Stating that promoting peace and reconciliation is another objective of the initiative, the top police official said, 'The overall objective is to foster a sense of peace and reconciliation in the region, paving the way for a more harmonious and peaceful future. An Initiative by @adgpi and @assampolice @CMOfficeAssam.'

Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had on November 16 said that 8,756 militants from different organisations have been rehabilitated (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

### HT BRIEFS

#### Solar streetlights

**KHERONI:** The 20th battalion of CRPF has provided 10 solar streetlights in the remote area of Amrengh in West Karbi Anglong district. The solar street lights were inaugurated by commandant, Swarn Singh. CRPF jawans, SP of West Karbi Anglong, Indranil Barua, additional SP of West Karbi Anglong, Faiza Ahmed Borbhuya, students and teachers along with locals were also present on the occasion.

#### Yuva Morcha GS resigns

**DIPHU:** In the latest political development of Karbi Anglong, Alom Rongpi resigned as the General Secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, West Karbi Anglong district committee. He submitted his tender resignation to the president of BJP-WKADC on 21 November. Rongpi is the son of a veteran politician of Karbi Anglong and former executive member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Pradeep Rongpi who was not given a ticket by the BJP in the last member of autonomous council election in 2022.

#### Heroin seized

**GUWAHATI:** Special Task Force (STF) on Saturday apprehended two alleged drug peddlers and recovered some vials containing suspected heroin, said an official statement. They were nabbed after the STF conducted a raid near Khanapara bus stand, in front of the Khanapara Veterinary College in Guwahati. 'Based on an input, raid was conducted at near Khanapara bus stand, in front of Khanapara Veterinary College under Dispur PS Jurisdiction by STF, Assam and apprehended two habitual Drugs peddlers and recovered 63 nos of vials containing suspected heroin weight 81.5 grams, cash ₹ 3,000, 2 mobile handsets and 8 numbers of empty vials.

## Assam products have great market in Singapore: High Commissioner

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Nov 25:** High Commissioner of Singapore in India, Simon Wong Wie Kuen visited the Assam Pavilion at the ongoing 42nd India International Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi on Saturday.

The High Commissioner was very much impressed with the Assamese products on display and opined that these products have a great market in Singapore. The High Commissioner said many Assamese products can now be directly exported to Singapore.

The High Commissioner spent almost 15 minutes at the Assam Pavilion and interacted with the officials manning the stalls.

Reacting to the Singapore High Commissioner's visit to the Assam



Pavilion, Assam chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma said on X, formerly Twitter, 'Thank you, Your Excellency, High Commissioner Wong!'

Like you, I too hope to see more Assamese products exported and sold in Singapore and Southeast

Asia with the direct air cargo route between Guwahati and Singapore. Grateful for your constant support.'

Himachal Pradesh minister for industries, Harshwardhan Chauhan also visited the Assam Pavilion on Thursday (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Former militants' organisation marks 12<sup>th</sup> memorandum of settlement day

HT Bureau

**DIPHU, Nov 25:** The Ex. United People Democratic Solidarity Welfare Society (Ex-UPDSWS), the organisation of former militants, commemorated the 12th Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) day at Rongchingum, Kiri Englang village here on Saturday.

The commemoration program begins with the hoisting of its organisation flag by President, Ex-UPDSWS, Rupsing Teron in presence of its General Secretary Tom Bey.

It may be mentioned that the UPDS was formed on 12th March, 1999 and entered into a ceasefire with the Centre and state government in 2002 while the MoS Accord was signed on 25th November 2011.

Interacting with the media, adviser of Ex-UPDSWS, Abhijit Hanse said, 'We are heartbroken with the implementation of MoS Accord-2011 signed in 2011. The implementation of the clauses has not been made available to us. The roads that have been constructed in Karbi Anglong are all from the MoS packaged schemes. We have lost our hope on MP Horensing Bey and executive member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Surya Rongphar.'

It may be mentioned that MP Horensing Bey and executive member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Surya Rongphar are former UPDS leaders.

About the steps taken by the Government for their rehabilitation, Hanse (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Village volunteer killed in gunfight in Manipur

**IMPHAL, Nov 25:** At least one village volunteer was killed in a gunfight with unidentified men in Manipur's Kangpokpi district on Saturday, an official said.

The incident took place around 2.30 am when a group of armed men attacked Joupi, leading to a gunfight with local volunteers guarding the hill village, he said.

'One person, identified as Khupminthang, was killed in the gun-battle,' he said, adding that the armed men retreated some time after launching the attack.

Tension prevailed in the village as well as adjoining areas in Bishnupur and Kangpokpi districts, with people apprehending counter-attacks on villages in adjoining Imphal Valley and further reprisals, he said.

Additional security forces have been deployed in the village and operations are underway to nab the attackers, the official said.

The fresh attack comes five days after two (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Govt convenes all party meet ahead of Winter session

**NEW DELHI, Nov 25:** The government has convened an all-party meeting on December 2 ahead of the Winter session of Parliament, sources said on Saturday.

The session will begin on December 4 and conclude on December 22.

Though the all-party meet is convened a day before the session begins, this time it has been advanced by a day apparently due to counting of votes for five states on December 3 where polls are underway.

The results of the assembly elections will have a major bearing on the session during which the government is keen to pass key bills. The report (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Govt monitoring situation: Union health minister on pneumonia outbreak in China

**MEHSANA, Nov 25:** Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Saturday said the government is monitoring the situation and taking necessary steps in view of the surge in cases of mycoplasma pneumonia and influenza flu, especially among children, in China.

'The government is monitoring the situation. The ICMR and the Director General of Health Services are observing the surging cases of pneumonia in China, and necessary steps are being taken,' Mandaviya told reporters when asked about the outbreak which has caused global concern. He was in Gujarat's Mehsana district to launch the

'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra.'

The Union Health Ministry said in a statement Friday that India is prepared for any kind of exigency that may emerge from the current influenza situation in China, highlighting that it is monitoring the outbreak of H9N2 and clusters of respiratory illness in children in that country.

Amid global concerns over surging cases of mycoplasma pneumonia and influenza flu, especially among children, in its southern and northern provinces, China has claimed no unusual or novel pathogens other than the seasonal ones were detected. China said the spike in respiratory diseases was due to an 'immunity gap'. (PTI)



## 14 more Israeli hostages likely to be freed by Hamas today

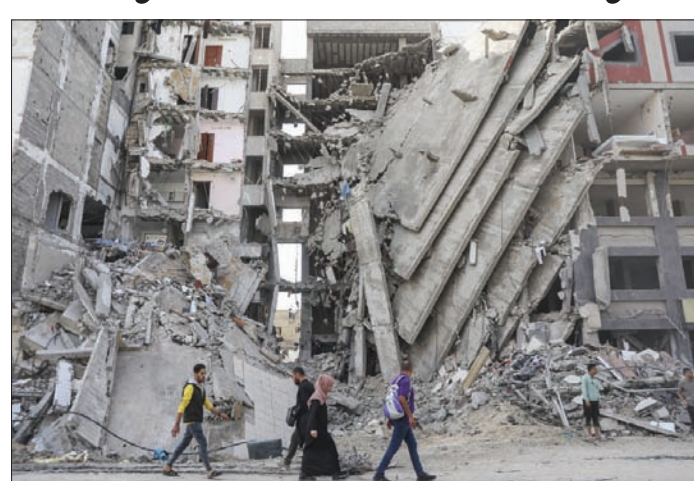
**JERUSALEM, Nov 25:** A second group of 14 Israeli hostages, mostly children, are expected to be freed by Hamas militants on Saturday after they were abducted during the horrific onslaught on the country on October 7.

The Israeli Prime Minister's Office confirmed that it received the names on Friday night of the people to be released on Saturday, the second day of the exchange deal.

The first exchange of 13 Israelis taken hostages for 39 Palestinian prisoners concluded successfully on Friday evening evoking mixed reactions on both sides.

It is expected that 14 Israelis will be released later on Saturday.

The Israel Prison Service said that 42 Palestinian prisoners are to be released as part of the agreement between Israel and Hamas, three prisoners for each Israeli that it let go.



In Israel, people expressed satisfaction at the return of some of their relatives but concerns over those still in captivity. There are also those who oppose the whole mechanism adopted arguing for

continued full-fledged military operation to release all the hostages, and not to give the enemy respite to reorganise itself. Islamist Hamas, which has ruled the Gaza Strip since (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## High excise tax effective in regulating tobacco consumption

## Health experts urge govt to hike tobacco tax

**NEW DELHI, Nov 25:** Public health groups along with doctors and economists have urged the Centre to increase excise duty on all tobacco products in the Union Budget 2024-25 to generate additional revenue.

In their appeals to the Union finance ministry, they asked for an increase in health taxes on cigarettes, bidis and smokeless tobacco.

Health taxes are excise taxes imposed on products such as tobacco that have a clear negative public health impact.

According to these experts, among the several public policy tools to regulate the consumption of tobacco, increasing the excise tax is considered to be one of the most cost-effective, based on a



substantial body of research from around the world.

Health taxes, also known as sin tax, are often used by many countries to achieve this.

According to a recent study, cigarettes, bidis and smokeless tobacco have become increasingly

affordable over the past 10 years. Recently, there has been a minor increase in National Calamity Contingent Duties (NCCD) on cigarettes,

but apart from that, there has not been any major increase in tobacco taxes since the introduction of GST in July 2017, said Rijo John, health economist and adjunct professor of the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences in Kochi.

Adding the current GST rate, compensation cess, NCCD, and central excise, the total tax burden (taxes as a percentage of final tax inclusive retail price) is only about 49.3 per cent for cigarettes, 22 per cent for bidis and 63 per cent for smokeless tobacco, he said.

The World Health Organization recommends a tax burden of at least 75 per cent of retail price for all tobacco products. The existing tax burden on all tobacco products is far lower than this. 'Given that more than (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Caste survey must, Centre should conduct it with census: Chidambaram

**KOLKATA, Nov 24:** Former union finance minister P Chidambaram on Saturday said Saturday that a caste survey was necessary before deciding on any reservation benefits and it should be conducted by the central government along with the census.

In an interview to PTI, the Congress leader who is a well-known legal expert, also pointed out that the BJP-led central government has not conducted a census as it should have in 2021, and may defer the decadal exercise till after the general elections next year.

His statement came days after Bihar conducted a caste survey and recommended 65 per cent reservation for the deprived sections.

'I think if reservation is there, a caste count is necessary. According to me, it should be done along with



the national census. But these people (the BJP) did not do the national census of 2021, now we are at the end of 2023. They will not do it before the 2024 elections,' Chidambaram said.

He referred to his party's promise that if it comes to power at the

Centre, it would conduct the national census and the caste survey simultaneously.

Chidambaram said Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin has said that he will not conduct a separate caste census and has appealed to the Centre (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)







# Keshab Mahanta inaugurates distribution camp for aids to Divyangjans in Nagaon

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Nov 25:** The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, collaborated with Nagaon district administration for the district-level inauguration of a distribution camp for aids and assistive devices to Divyangjans under the ADIP scheme, Government of India. The event, held at the auditorium of Nagaon district library, saw state health and family welfare minister Keshab Mahanta as the chief guest.

Mahanta emphasized the government's commitment to inclusive governance and its readiness to support all sections of society, including Divyangjans. The program aims to distribute over 6157 appliances to around 3499 beneficiaries in the district under the ADIP scheme. During the inaugural ceremony, seven beneficiaries were ceremoniously handed over the appliances, including motorized tricycles, folding wheelchairs, walking sticks, hearing aid



machines, and rollators. Pradyut Bordoloi, MP, Nagaon, also highlighted the scheme's significance and the proactive role played by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of

India. Other dignitaries present included Raha MLA Sashikanta Das, District Commissioner Narendra Kumar Shah, Chairperson of Nagaon Development Authority Dhrubajyoti Sharma,

Additional District Commissioner (Social Welfare) Phyllis VL Hrangchal, Manager of ALIMCO NE Mukesh Mishra, and District Social Welfare Officer, among others.

# Pijush announces government's aim to provide jobs to 1,35,000 youths

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 25:** Assam cabinet minister Pijush Hazarkia, attending a joining ceremony and karyakartā sanmela in Rangia LAC, emphasized the commitment of the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government to provide jobs to the youth.

Sharing the news on social media site 'X' (formerly Twitter), the minister stated, "I participated in a padyatra at the Hindi High School ground in No. 57 Rangia Assembly constituency, addressing a joining ceremony and a karyakartā sanmela. Enthused by the Bharatiya Janata Party's ideals and the capable leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma sir, more than 1,500 members from various parties and organisations officially joined the BJP. Extending a warm welcome, I encouraged them to continue their efforts for societal development while upholding the party's principles. Additionally, I engaged with the karyakartās during the event."

Hazarkia stated that in the last 2.5 years, the government has already provided jobs to 87,000



youths, and in the next 2.5 years, they aim to create a record by offering jobs to an additional 48,000 youths.

Highlighting Himanta Biswa Sarma's promise to provide jobs to one lakh youths if elected, Hazarkia mentioned that the government now aspires to provide employment to 1,35,000 youths. He criticized the previous Congress government for its corrupt practices in job allocation, emphasizing that the BJP government has stood against corruption and ensured a fair entry for all job seekers in the state.

Hazarkia also reiterated the government's commitment to phasing out the Orunodoi scheme and transforming it into the Orunodoi Parivar. He announced the fulfillment of this promise, with the Orunodoi scheme benefiting 27 lakh families and the amount set to increase from ₹ 1,250 to ₹ 1,450 soon."

The event was attended by president of the BJP Assam and local MLA Bhabhesh kalita, state general secretary (Org.) G.R. Ravindra Raju, MP Dilip Saikia, and other party officials and karyakartās.

# Ranoj Pegu sounds cautionary note against fraudulent calls State govt to distribute Scooties to meritorious students



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 25:** The Assam government has announced the distribution of Scooties to deserving students who excelled in their Higher Secondary (HS)

exams. Scheduled for November 30, this initiative focuses on girls with a minimum of 60 per cent and boys with an impressive 75 per cent in their examinations. However, amidst the antici-

tion, Assam's education minister, Ranoj Pegu, sounded a cautionary note on November 24. Minister Pegu shared concerns about fraudulent calls targeting Scooty beneficiaries, where some students reported receiving calls demanding money for registration and insurance through UPI transactions.

Minister Pegu, in a post on the microblogging site X, unequivocally urged recipients not to make any payments in response to such calls. He emphasized the importance of reporting these fraudulent activities to the nodal Principals. Pegu assured students and their families that the government has already covered the insurance and registration costs associated with the Scooty distribution, and no additional financial transactions are required.



Women harvesting paddy in a field at Kishnapur village in Dhakuakhana on Saturday. UB Photos

# Workshop on child protection with elected legislators held in Tamulpur



**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Nov 25:** A one-day workshop with elected legislators of the Bodoland Territorial Region on the protection of child rights and the role of lawmakers in BTR was conducted at the conference hall of the district commissioner's office in Tamulpur. The event, organized jointly by the Centre for Development & Peace Studies (CDPS), UNICEF, and the BTR government, saw nearly a hundred participants, including elected members of the Bodoland Territorial Council Legislative Assembly (BTCLA), officials from UNICEF, departmental officers of BTC government, and media fraternities.

Pramod Boro, the Chief Executive Member of Bodoland Territorial Region, inaugurated the workshop and highlighted various initiatives taken by the BTC government for the protection of child rights. He announced the launch of "Mission Child Labour Free BTR" on January 1, 2024, in partnership with MV Foundation, UNICEF Assam & NE India, and CDPS. Additionally, a Child-Friendly BTR is set to be created within the next three years through joint efforts by the BTR government, UNICEF, and CDPS.

During the event, Boro emphasized the importance of upholding and protecting child rights, and he, along with other elected members, took a solemn pledge to advocate for and champion the cause of child rights.

Katiram Boro, Speaker of BTC Legislative Assembly, Gobinda Chandra Basumatary, Deputy CEM, Dharma Narayan Das, EM, Sanjoy Swargiary, MCLA, and Dr. Madhulika Jonathan, Chief of UNICEF Field Office, also addressed the occasion. Wasbir Hussain, Executive Director of CDPS, delivered the welcome address, highlighting the project activities undertaken by CDPS in association with UNICEF since June 2023.

# AASAA commemorates Adivasi Adhikar Divas in Demow

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, Nov 25:** Under the patronage of All Adivasi Students Association of Assam (AASAA), Demow Regional Committee and AASAA, Kharahat Primary Committee paid tribute and shradhanjali by lighting earthen lamps in Kharahat Bazaar House on Friday evening.

The program saw the presence of Guwahati Beltola incident. In memory of the martyrs, members of AASAA, Demow Regional Committee, and AASAA, Kharahat Primary Committee paid tribute and shradhanjali by lighting earthen lamps in Kharahat Bazaar House on Friday evening.

Lalit Tanti, President, Jiten Das, President of AASAA, Kharahat Primary Committee, along with other AASAA members. Additionally, the AASAA, Gohainbari Primary Committee also organized a similar program. Kamal Bhumij, Secretary of AASAA, Demow Regional Committee, participated in the event.

# OBITUARY

**Sushila Devi Kayal (Shilu),** a dedicated member of Akhil Bharatiya Marwari Mahila Samellan, Hojai branch, peacefully passed away at the age of 60 in a Guwahati hospital on Friday. Her funeral procession commenced at 11 am on Saturday from her residence on Jugal Kishore Kedia Road in Hojai.



Members of Akhil Bharatiya Marwari Mahila Samellan, Marwari Yuva Manch, Hojai, and Apna Manch paid their respects and recalled her significant social contributions. The final rites took place at Bhoonath Cremation ground, where her son, Mayank Kayal, performed the last rites with tearful eyes. Sushila Devi Kayal was remembered as a dedicated social worker, a woman of faith, humility, and honesty. Her demise is mourned by her well-wishers and family members. She is survived by her husband, daughter, son, and a host of relatives.

# 31st Bn SSB launches handicraft training

**HT Correspondent**

**GOSSAIGAON, Nov 25:** The 31st Battalion Sashastha Seema Bal (SSB) has taken a significant step in collaboration with the Samuktala Bidyasagar Social Welfare Society, Alipurduar, by launching a 15-day vocational training program on Handicraft Courses. The inaugural ceremony, overseen by L.N. Singh, Deputy Commandant of the 31st Bn. SSB, unfolded at their camp located in Matiajuri.

This initiative aims to empower youths residing in border villages within the Area of Responsibility (AOR). The opening ceremony witnessed the active participation of 20 individuals eager to acquire skills in handicrafts. Deputy Commandant L.N. Singh, addressing the event, highlighted the broader vision of the course – not only imparting valuable skills but also fostering a path to self-reliance in their livelihoods. The collaboration between the SSB and Samuktala Bidyasagar Social Welfare Society underscores their commitment to community development, offering a platform for individuals to enhance their capabilities and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

# Nowgong College hosts national lecture program on 'Amrit Kaal Vimarsh: Viksit Bharat@2047'

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Nov 25:** The Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Nowgong College (Autonomous), in collaboration with the Department of Philosophy, organized a national-level lecture program on the theme 'Amrit Kaal Vimarsh: Viksit Bharat@2047.' The program, sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, North Eastern Regional Centre, featured Professor Shubhada A. Joshi, Retired Head & Professor, Department of Philosophy at Mumbai University, as the chief keynote speaker.

Dr. Bhuban Chandra Chutia, coordinator of IQAC, initiated the proceedings, and Dr. Sarat Borkotaki, principal of the college, welcomed the guests and participants. He expressed gratitude to the Indian Council of Social Science Research for selecting Nowgong College for the event and to Professor Joshi for accepting the invitation.

In her speech, Prof. Joshi delved into the intersection of Indian philosophical thought and the status of women. She explored the layers of tradition and societal evolution, from ancient texts like the Vedas and Upanishads, which celebrate female deities and portray women as embodiments of knowledge, to the more egalitarian outlooks of Buddhism and Jainism. Prof. Joshi highlighted the complex relationship between philosophy and the roles of women, shaping India's cultural landscape.

While ancient texts laid the foundation for the exaltation of women, the translation of these philosophical ideals into societal norms has often given rise to hierarchical structures that marginalize them, Prof. Joshi noted.

The program, attended by over 250 participants, including faculty members, research scholars, students, and citizens, concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Naba Prasad Nath, Head of the Department of Philosophy at Nowgong College (Autonomous).

# Int'l Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women observed in Charaideo



**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Nov 25:** In sync with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls, Sammilita Nari Adhikar Suraksha Samity and Shamik Krishak Adhikar Suraksha Samity, under the banner of Forum for Assam, conducted a silent protest rally in Charaideo. The participants demanded sincere initiatives from the Union Government to bring lasting peace in strife-torn Manipur and urged for peace talks between the Meiteis and the Kukies.

In a memorandum to the Prime Minister, the organizations also called for the publication of the reports of the two Judges regarding Manipur Violence. They demanded a thorough investigation into the deaths of over 200 men, women, and children, along with 37 missing persons and 60,000 rendered homeless. The forum emphasized the need for a complete halt to indiscriminate killings by security forces, terrorists, and underground rebels in Manipur.

The rally, leading from Sonari College to Sonari HS School Field, submitted a memorandum to Addl SP Nivedita Doley. The leaders of the rally included Tarun Gogoi, Mukul Phukan, Bipul Bora, Mohan Saikia, and Mridula Kalita.

# Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Morigaon celebrates Silver Jubilee

**HT Correspondent**

**MORIGAON, Nov 25:** Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), Morigaon, run by the Ministry of Human Resources, Government of India, marked its Silver Jubilee with enthusiasm on the school premises, commencing on Saturday. The two-day celebration began with the captivating program 'Setubandha' (Bridge building). Renowned journalist and Sahitya Academy awardee, Manuj Kr. Goswami, inaugurated the souvenir 'Eaikyam.'

In his address to the students, Goswami encouraged them to think big in life. He emphasized the need to expand their scope of thought in the era of contemporary science and technology. Goswami advised the students to develop a mentality for serving society, the nation, and the country with a service-oriented attitude. He emphasized the importance of continuous learning, planning, and following the law in life. Goswami urged the students to respect their neighbors, stay away from drugs, and enjoy life while maintaining good health.

# Aaranyak-British Asian Trust event highlights importance of Panidihing Bird Sanctuary

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 25:** With winter approaching, the Panidihing Bird Sanctuary in Sivasagar district of Assam becomes a haven for migratory birds. Recognizing the importance of protecting these feathered visitors and their habitats, biodiversity conservation organization Aaranyak, in collaboration with the British Asian Trust and support from Darwin Initiative (UK Aid), organized an awareness campaign in the Forest Beat Office of Charaguwa in Sivasagar.

The event, marking the celebration of National Birds Day, saw the participation of 47 students, local bird enthusiasts, forest officials, and environment conservation workers. A nature walk and bird-watching session were conducted, with Range Officer Himangshu Gogoi and Aaranyak officials Tibrajyoti Gogoi and Lekhon Gogoi providing hands-on learning experiences about the biodiversity of Panidihing Bird Sanctuary.

The program included a poster presentation and documentary screening by Tribeni Hazarika, a PhD research scholar and Assistant Professor of the Department of Zoology at the Arunachal University of Studies. The event also facilitated interaction between students and researchers, including those from Finland involved in the Bird



India Count for bird census.

The Panidihing Bird Sanctuary, covering an area of approximately 33 square kilometers, is a vital habitat for over 120 bird species, including migratory and resident birds. The sanctuary's diverse ecosystem, featuring marshes, ponds, and dense vegetation, plays a crucial role in the conservation of species like

Sarus Crane and Pelicans.

The event began with a pledge-taking ceremony and an address by Ghanashyam Borgohain, President of the Panidihing Suraksha Samiti. Efforts are ongoing to preserve this sanctuary, emphasizing the significance of safeguarding fragile ecosystems and their feathered inhabitants.



## Editor's pick

## The other India-Australia Match

By: Kumardeep Banerjee

India and Australia got into a 2+2 dialogue this week, right after a heartbreak, for the World Cup hosts' and crowd favourites India, whose luck perhaps ran out on the 11th match/hour. India may have lost the World Cup to the mighty Australian cricket team, but it is back at the table to discuss business about the gated globalisation with Australia on the geo-economic front.

India and Australia signed on an interim Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) last December. This set the stage for greater economic cooperation between the two countries from the QUAD group to shed their age-old inhibitions, and come together in the vast Indian Ocean Region against the bully in the backyard of China. Commenting on the signing of ECTA in December Union Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal had said "There is a lot of potential for exporting finished goods to Australia, since they hardly manufacture anything, they are largely a raw material and intermediate producing country, we will get cheaper raw materials which will not only make us more competitive globally but also enable us to serve Indian consumers better, enabling us to provide more quality goods at more affordable prices.

Australia, which is largely dependent on imports, will benefit hugely, they will soon start seeing a lot more finished goods coming in from India, providing a huge amount of work and job opportunities in both goods and services, provided by Indian talent. The Agreement will also eliminate Double taxation on IT services which was making us less competitive and making us less profitable in the IT sector, the double taxation has now been removed by amending the law, and from 1st April, double taxation for the IT sector will be over, we will save millions and millions of dollars right now, and over a billion dollars going forward, maybe 5 - 7 years going forward, giving us competitive edge and also creating a lot many jobs. I appreciate the Australian government for being very sensitive and considerate, giving us full cooperation throughout the negotiations, especially in protecting the interests of the farmers and dairy sector of India."

The ECTA is likely to be upgraded to a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) which will provide more areas of economic play between Australia and India. The ECTA framework has already provided a huge fillip for Indian exports to Australia, where data reveals that nearly eight per cent of Indian exporters have utilised the concessional tariff lines available. This has also pushed India's exports to Australia by nearly 17% on a year-on-year basis, making India one of the important trade partners. This week the defence and external affairs ministers of both countries discussed in detail the expansion of bilateral defence cooperation, including intelligence sharing, maritime awareness and emerging technology, such as AI, and cybercrime cooperation.

Foreign minister S Jaishankar highlighted post the dialogue, the message of stability Australia and India, closely working together are sending out in the greater Indo-Pacific region, where China is getting aggressive with many of its immediate neighbours. It was no surprise that the Philippines almost simultaneously was complaining of China's belligerent behaviour in the ocean, in their backyard, and reiterating the need to respect the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

India and Australia work closely as the QUAD countries along with the US and Japan, to bring greater economic and strategic cooperation for stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Each of the QUAD countries has strong bilateral relations among themselves too. With China threatening to unilaterally change the world order, especially through military and sophisticated technology use, the World Cup for geo politics in the Indo-Pacific would go to teams from countries (especially in QUAD) who work more closely. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

## GDP growth in Indian economy does not automatically lead to poverty reduction

One of the striking findings of the Bihar Caste Survey, which bears out what the Left has been asserting for a long time, is that absolute poverty in the country is far more pervasive than what successive governments in India have been claiming. It shows that 34.1 per cent of Bihar's population has a monthly household income of ₹ 6,000 or less. This benchmark figure of ₹ 6000 per month corresponds to what the official "poverty line" itself should be on the government's own criterion, though these days the government has stopped talking about the poverty line altogether; it has adopted instead the concept of "multi-dimensional poverty" propagated by some international organisations which shows only 15 per cent of the country's population in poverty! Bihar, it is true, does not represent the country as a whole, but the Bihar Survey figure is so large that the pervasiveness of poverty in the country cannot be denied.

The rationale for taking ₹6,000 as the benchmark arises for the following reason. For 2011-12, the Tendulkar Committee which had been appointed by the government had recommended a poverty line of ₹29 per day for rural India. If we take the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers, then between 2011-12 and 2021-22 there has been a rise in this index of 77.5 per cent, which would make the corresponding poverty-line for 2021-22 equal to ₹ 51,475; for a family of four, this works out to a monthly figure of ₹ 6177. A monthly income of ₹ 6000 therefore appears perfectly justified, on the government's own criterion, as the benchmark figure for rural poverty.

The benchmark figure for urban poverty is of course much higher. In looking at the prevalence of poverty in the population as a whole, including its urban and rural components, taking a uniform benchmark of ₹ 6,000 per month therefore grossly underestimates the magnitude of poverty. Nonetheless, we apply a uniform benchmark of ₹ 6,000 per month quite deliberately to the data in order to ensure that nobody can accuse us of exaggerating the magnitude of poverty.

Even the benchmark of ₹



6,000 per month, however, while being inconformity with official criterion, is not really an appropriate one. The Tendulkar Committee was an officially appointed committee that was bound to respect official sensibilities in suggesting a poverty line. But we can approach the problem differently. The Planning Commission had originally accepted 2200 calories per person per day as the benchmark for poverty in rural India. If we look at the National Sample Survey figures on the per capita expenditure level at which exactly 2200 calories were accessed in rural India, then that works out to ₹ 70 in 2017-18. For a family of four persons, this amounts to ₹ 8400 per month. Between 2017-18 and 2021-22, there has been a 21 per cent increase in the Agricultural Labourers Price Index, so that the monthly household expenditure for a family of four that should define the benchmark for poverty in rural India in 2021-22, is ₹ 10,164. At the very least therefore we should take ₹ 10,000 as the benchmark level of household income for defining rural poverty. The income level for defining urban poverty should be much higher; but let us deliberately apply a uniform benchmark for both urban and rural household incomes, so that no scope can possibly exist for anyone to accuse us of exaggeration.

If we take this benchmark, then we find according to the Bihar Caste Survey that 63.74 per cent, or 64 per cent in round figures, was below this benchmark. The idea that as much as

64 per cent of the population at the very least was steeped in absolute poverty is an amazing finding for a major state of India in the year 2022-23. Official spokesmen keep emphasizing growth in GDP as if that ipso facto solves all the economic

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Prabhat Patnaik

problems of the country; in fact the government even keeps proclaiming its vision of achieving a \$5 trillion economy as the ultimate feather in its cap. But behind all this talk of GDP growth lies the appalling fact, if we extrapolate from Bihar to the country as a whole, that two-thirds of the population lives in absolute poverty.

Of course, a glimpse of this appalling reality was already evident from a number of other indicators, especially from the Global Hunger Index that placed India at the 111th position among a total of 125 countries; but every such indicator was dismissed by the government as being inconsequential. The fact that even a survey, conducted for an altogether different purpose, namely to ascertain the caste-wise distribution of the population, has also found the pervasiveness of deprivation and poverty in the country, reaffirms this dismal reality.

This dismal reality exposes in particular the utter vacuity, indeed the utter tendentiousness, of the BJP's position on the economy. The fact that the BJP is a party upholding the interests

of monopoly capitalists, especially of crony monopoly capitalists, has been clear to all; indeed all fascistic outfits have this feature. But this position is sought to be justified by the BJP with the argument that GDP growth is of paramount importance for the Indian economy, and that such growth can be ushered in only by the capitalists, especially the monopoly capitalists; for this they have to be given all facilities from the government, including incentives in the form of transfers. The "nation's interests" therefore are made identical with the interests of the monopoly capitalists through an emphasis on GDP growth. The fact that India's GDP growth which the government claims to be the highest among the major economies of the world, still leaves two-thirds of the population in absolute poverty, underscores both the vacuity and the tendentiousness of BJP's argument.

But then, it may be asked, what about the findings of the multidimensional poverty index? That index however is based on an intellectual confusion. Every mode of production has the poor within it acting in a particular way; hence every mode of production must have its own criteria for identifying poverty. Poverty under feudalism for instance takes the specific form of children being starved, left uneducated, and intensively exploited by being forced to join the work-force. Poverty under capitalism on the other hand, especially under advanced capitalism, takes the specific form not of children being

forced to work, but of their having to access poor schools, poor healthcare facilities, living with dilapidated furniture and run-down gadgets in squalid surroundings, and being pushed into crime; the link between poverty and crime is particularly strong under advanced capitalism, which is one reason why any survey on poverty which obviously would not cover jail inmates remains unsatisfactory.

To define poverty in terms of, say, whether children go to school or not, would make sense in a feudal society, but not in an advanced capitalist society where they may be going to schools, but schools of extremely poor quality. The criteria for identifying poverty in short would have to differ from one mode of production to another. And if we have to have one criteria to cover all forms of poverty, especially in a society like ours where we have an amalgam of different modes of production, then that has to be the level of income.

Income itself however is not an easy concept to measure, which is why some easily measurable proxy for it has to be found; and the level of nutrition, apart from being important in itself, is one such proxy. Whether we look at poverty within a feudal setting, or poverty within an advanced capitalist setting, we find that the poor are invariably undernourished, even though in one case they may be joining the work-force at a very early age, while in the other they may be going to poor-quality schools. The problem with the multidimensional poverty index is that it gives a very low weight to nutrition (and also takes a poor approximation to it such as the body mass index); and at the same time it takes a number of other measures such as school attendance, and access to gadgets as signifying the absence of poverty while they only signify at best a transition from feudal poverty to capitalist poverty.

It is on the basis of this utterly dubious multidimensional poverty measure that the BJP government has been claiming that GDP growth leads to an automatic elimination of poverty. The findings of the Bihar Caste Census should be an eye-opener for all those who have been taken in by such government propaganda. (IPA Service)

## Germany's main Left party die LINKE splits into two, new party to be launched in January

By: Victor Grossman

Germany's Left Party Die LINKE is splitting into two. Is it a tragedy or a new hope? After months, in fact years of inner-party squabbling in Germany's LINKE party (The Left), the die has been cast, the Rubicon crossed, and Sahra Wagenknecht, with nine other Bundestag deputies, has quit the party and announced their decision to found a new party in January.

Until then, when it chooses a name, it is being called the Alliance Sahra Wagenknecht – For Reason and Justice (BSW = Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht – für Vernunft und Gerechtigkeit).

That was on October 23. There was friction from the start. The ten, though no longer members of the LINKE faction in the Bundestag, rejected demands by the 28 deputies still in the party to give up their franchises, their votes in the Bundestag. They insisted they can remain deputies until new elections, probably in 2025.

But alas! To maintain "fraction" status a party must hold at least 5% of the seats, currently that means 37. Till now Die LINKE had squeezed through with 38. But with only 28, there can be no fraction – for the first time since 2005.

Both the 28 and the 10 who left can apply for and may receive a subordinate status as "groups," but groups cannot propose new bills, have limited speaking time, less office space, worse seats, and far less money for staff. Up to a hundred researchers, legal and other assistants and secretaries may lose their jobs, with few of the revolving-door company possibilities enjoyed by other parties. And groups have far fewer rights to demand time to be heard and seen in the mass media.

Why did this damaging split develop? Was it necessary? The party – seemingly like leftists eternally – has long been divided. On some issues common grounds were found, but those

tectonic plates never ceased moving apart.

An early issue was and remains related to the (East) German Democratic Republic (GDR). Those often called the "Reformers," the ones who have not quit the party, carefully distanced themselves from what media and politicians called an "Unrechtsstaat" – "a country of injustice" – overlooked all GDR achievements and came close to equating "Stalinist repression" in the GDR with that earlier state – oh yes, Hitler called it "national socialism."

By accepting this right-wing interpretation of the GDR and never sounding too radical, it became possible for Die LINKE to move up from nasty "bad boy" status and gain partial acceptance as a left-leaning but otherwise tolerably "respectable" piece on the "free market democracy" chessboard. This made it possible to join governing coalitions off and on in a number of state governments in Berlin, East Germany (and down-and-out western Bremen), and even to head the governing coalition in Thuringia.

But over the years such participation resulted in slip-sliding downhill and losing feathers; more and more East Germans, disgruntled, dissatisfied, and worried, viewed Die LINKE leaders as ineffective pawns in a rejected establishment. More and more turned to loud, rightist protest parties or stayed home on Election Day.

The hope of many "reformer" leaders to become junior partners in a national cabinet with Social Democrats and Greens proved to be not only an illusion but a catastrophe. The party, which boasted a proud 11.9% in 2009, making it the leading opposition party, had dropped nationally to a pitiful 5.5% in the European Union and a shameful 4.9% in the Bundestag vote in 2019.

In October, in state elections in Hessen, die LINKE lost its seats in a West German legislature – held for fifteen years – by

badly missing that magic 5% number. And all omens pointed to more tears next year in three East German state elections, where the AfD, the right-wing neo-fascist party, now topped the polls, although with far short of a majority.

The "reformers" blamed the Leftists for causing dissension around that very disturbing gadfly Sahra Wagenknecht who received so much media attention. As for the Leftists, they asserted that the party leadership had never properly analyzed the causes of their losses, opened up chances for free discussion by the members, and considered changing strategies which were proving wrong, where despite many good speeches by Bundestag deputies, they claimed there was too much stress on the rights of refugees and immigrants, on identity questions for minorities, – but neglect of so-called "direct working-class issues." It was no longer a "truly working-class party," many leftists maintained and, for some, it was too far gone to be salvaged.

The differences came to a head with the Ukraine war. Both sides condemned the Russian attack in February 2022; any variant on that position would mean being totally denounced as "Putin-lovers," with resultant gagging. But Leftists in the party also accused NATO of defying pleas and warnings from U.S. experts and from Moscow against pushing NATO front lines and big weapons closer and closer toward total encirclement of Russia, against provocative threats in the form of sea and land manoeuvres, and against arming and training Ukrainian troops while supporting openly pro-fascist "Azov" units against the Donbas breakaways.

They contended that all attempts at settlement at Minsk, in Turkey, or with Naftali Bennett of Israel had been stymied and that the basic cause of the conflict was Washington's goal of world hegemony, as proclaimed by Biden and his predecessors.

The "reformers," on the other



hand, while sometimes vaguely blaming all sides, tended to avoid any sharp rejection – or analysis – of NATO but joined in general attacks on "the imperialist Putin" and accepted the sanctions and economic break in relations with Russia, pushed through by Washington, regardless of the severe problems that meant for Germany's economy, as a necessary sacrifice.

In an angry speech in the Bundestag in September 2022 Wagenknecht rejected this policy, calling it a kowtow to American interests especially in the oil and gas business, which would mean a permanent and perilous split in Europe and the world.

The speech angered many "reformers"; some called then for her expulsion from the party. But a major break came when Sahra (as many speak of her) joined a well-known feminist in jointly publishing a Peace Manifesto calling for a ceasefire and negotiations to end the Ukraine war.

It was soon signed, amazingly, by over 750,000 Germans and was followed in February by a call for a giant peace rally in Berlin. To the dismay of countless adherents, die LINKE party leaders not only failed to support the manifesto and the rally but called upon its members to stay clear of both, thus joining the mass media chorus in accusing Sahra of accepting support from AfD and other far-right leaders who – for their own "oppose-everything" reasons – have been more-or-less supporting Putin.

Die LINKE made every effort to hold a successful congress. Except for one angry speech by Sahra's faction co-chair, Dietmar Bartsch, who scolded Sahra for the split, she was rarely mentioned. The well-organized agenda aimed at a chins-up "good riddance" posture, with a call for an active fight for peace and progress, against poverty and the billionaires.

Indeed, the opening speeches of its co-chairs, Janice Wissler and Martin Schirdevan, sounded more militantly anti-capitalist than in a long time. Wissler announced that several hundred new members had joined in recent weeks, far more than had left the party; all efforts must now be concentrated on regaining strength for the European Parliament election in June, vitally important elections next fall in East German Saxony, Brandenburg, Thuringia, and, in 2025, beating that menacing 5% hurdle and regaining a strong presence in the Bundestag.

But despite loud, militant demands for a new fighting spirit in defiance of the super-wealthy, little was changed, with no analysis of the basic motivation of the European Union or NATO, hardly a critical word about them, while criticism of death and destruction in Gaza was weakened so as not to trouble the no-questions-asked friends of Israel.

Any real criticism of past mistaken policies was limited to 2½ minute statements. Even a de-

mand to nationalize the giant utility corporations was voted down (195 to 175) by the delegates, a large proportion of whom were long-time party officials. From Gaza to Ukraine, the EU in Strasbourg, or the German economy, the bold generalities contained little to alarm the mass media, the politicians, or those behind them.

The initial statement of Sahra and her alliance also raised some questions, first of all regarding immigration. She has always stressed the fight for working-class rights and the working-class connections so often neglected or weak in past activities of Die LINKE. But, in doing so, she condemned the use of immigrants to depress the wages and rights of workers as a whole. Her position was that "genuine" refugees must be accepted but that the rules should be "clearer," even tighter, with purely economic immigrants discouraged – and proven law-breakers deported.

She has stressed that the real fight must be to end and prevent wars and the imperialist exploitation of southern resources, unprocessed crops, and markets too open to cheap northern wares – and thus avoid migration waves. Her critics claim that she edges too close to rightist, AfD slogans in hopes of winning, or regaining, their voters. Nevertheless, three women in leadership joining her in building a new party have immigrant backgrounds. One is Amira Mohamed Ali, 33, (whose Egyptian father is responsible for the surprising double family name). Sahra favours her as the possible main organizer of the new party – a role Sahra is not accustomed to. And no easy one!

The program of this left-wing, more radical breakaway from a tame LINKE similarly described Germany's current economic situation as a mess, with a failing education system, painful cutting of medical facilities and infrastructure. It then continued: "...as a result of the Russian sanctions and exaggerated cli-

mate improvement policy, making energy more expensive... our country is threatened with the loss of important industries."

The program then calls for "a return of reason to politics;" Germany needs a strong, innovative economy and social justice, peace and fair trade, respect for the individual freedom of its citizens... Our country still has a solid industry and a successful small and middle-size enterprise sector... German industry is the backbone of our prosperity and must be preserved."

Somehow this sounds even less radical or socialist-based than many pronouncements of Die LINKE party. Has it been toned down so as not to frighten off middle-class voters? What can then happen in 2024?

It is all too possible that both the new and old parties flop and miss that 5% mark, as many in the media gleefully predict. This would mean that leftwing views are voiced only by a scattering of small, weak groups and groups, no longer in the Bundestag or state legislatures, fully barred from mass media.

The present "traffic light" coalition governing Germany is truly in disarray, with the Social Democrats, Greens, and Free Democrats quarrelling more than they work together, all of them ready to jilt the other two and cuddle up with the right-wing Christian Democrats, who, from the opposition seats, play one against the other. With the far-right AfD in second place nationally and first place in much of eastern Germany, the whole scene is lurking to the right! Now dangerously! A growing left is urgently needed, not only for Germany!

Can a new party, aided by Sahra's ability and allure, engage in hard fights against militarism and war, against fossil-fuel-based destruction, against greater hardships for those least able to surmount them – can such a new party win a new and growing stature in Germany – and Europe? (IPA Service)



# Indian cricket team: A time for sweet revenge

By: Dipak Kurni

The Indian cricket team's loss in the World Cup final can only be compared with the defeat of the great West Indian team in 1983. Ironically, then it was The Indian cricket team led by Kapil Dev that was instrumental in the West Indies defeat. Till Indian captain Kapil Dev took that mesmerizing catch of Vivian Richards while running back almost 17 meters, nobody entertained the thought of India winning the World Cup. It was similar to the catch of Indian captain Rohit Sharma, taken by Australian Travis Head. Rohit was till then in a punishing mood like Richards was in 1983.

The recollections from 1977: Frankly speaking, I have been watching cricket since 1977 when Tony Greg's English team had toured India, and had defeated Bedi's team 3-1. This was the series that witnessed John Lever terrorizing the Indian batting line-up with his swing bowling and was accused of using glycerin on the ball. This was the time when the Indian team had world-class players like Sunil Gavaskar, Gundappa Vishwanath, EAS Prasanna, Bishan Singh Bedi, BS Chandrasekhar, and wicket-keeper Syed Kirmani, but it was never considered a "great" team. This was the time when the Indian team used to play to avoid defeat, despite the genius of Indian spinners. In those days, a Test match was "real" cricket, and one-day matches were not very popular.

In India, in 1983, nobody had even dreamt that India could even reach the semi-finals of the World Cup. India till then had participated in two earlier World Cups in 1975 and 1979 and had won only one match, that too against East Africa. How prepared the team was for the one-day matches could be understood by the fact that many Indian players had plans to go to the USA for a tour after an early exit from the tournament.

The West Indies Dominance and India's Historic Upset in 1983: The West Indies, by that time, had won two World Cups back to back and were seen as unstoppable even in 1983. Since the mid-1970s till the late 1980s, no other team, since The Australian team of George W Bradman, was so intimidating and feared. The West Indies under Clive Lloyd had used four fearsome fast bowlers to terrorize other teams. Michael Holding, Andy Roberts, Joel Garner, Colin Croft, Malcolm Marshall, Patrick Patterson, Wayne Daniel, and Sylvester Clarke were terrors on the cricket field in those days. Though India had defeated The West Indies in its opening match, in 1983, no one was yet willing to imagine that Kapil Dev's team was going to engineer the biggest upset in world cricket history.

The 1983 victory ushered in a renaissance in Indian cricket. The Indians till then were considered to be good players but lacking the killer instinct. The credit goes to two great players of that generation, Sunil Gavaskar and

Kapil Dev. If Gavaskar taught Indian players not to be in awe of foreign players, he played not to lose; then Kapil invented the art of fast bowling on Indian soils. He showed the world that Indians can also bowl fast and swing new balls. Before him, The India did not have the concept of fast bowling. The new ball was of no use. Spinners were the trump cards.

The beginning of a new era: Sachin Tendulkar's entry was the beginning of a new era. But it was Sourav Ganguly who took the battle to the opposition camp. He played to win. He was willing to take risks and gamble. He nurtured and backed players to the hilt. During his time, The India was blessed with the most creative, compact, elegantly intimidating batters. Sachin, Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag, VVS Laxman, Yuvraj Singh, and Sourav were world-class batters and together, they were beyond comparison. Mahendra Singh Dhoni as captain took the team to a new level. He was street-smart. He won two World Cups for India, in 2007, the T20 World Cup and in 2011, the one-day World Cup. During his time cricket was rapidly changing. Cricket was no longer a laid-back game; it became more energetic, monstrously athletic, and ultra-aggressive. Batters invented unbelievable shots to score runs in limited overs. The game of straight bat was gone. Helicopter shots, reverse sweeps, hitting over the slip fields, and wicket-keepers required new technique. A large paraphernalia of coaching staff was also a

new concept.

The baton passed to Virat Kohli when Dhoni passed the baton to Virat Kohli, India was already among the top three teams in the world. Kohli as a captain was very expressive. Under him, India became the number one team though he failed to win any tournament for the country. But credit should go to Rohit Sharma and Rahul Dravid for making the Indian team most complete and ferocious, though they took some time to begin with. In this World Cup, till India lost in the final, India was unstoppable. It won ten straight matches. It was not the victory but the margin of victories, that tell a story about the greatness of the team.

In my opinion, no Indian can be compared with this team. Since the days of Vijay Merchant till Kohli, India never had a dearth of great batsmen. India had the greatest of spin bowlers. Venu Mankad, Ghulam Ahmed, Subhash Gupte, Bedi, Prasanna, Chandrasekhar, Venkataraghavan, Dilip Doshi, Shiv Lal Yadav, Maninder Singh, Harbhajan Singh, Anil Kumble, R Ashwin, Jadeja, and Kuldeep Yadav were/are magicians of spin bowling. India's biggest undoing was its pace bowling. Mohammad Nisar, Amar Singh, Kapil Dev, Srinath, and Zahir were exceptions. But no other Indian team has had so many world-class pace bowlers as Rohit's team has. Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd Shami and Mohd Siraj are not only accurate but also have pace and



guile to intimidate any batsman in the world. Plus they are ably supported by another two world-class spinners - Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja. The richness and depth of this bowling attack can be measured by the fact that R Ashwin, in my opinion, the greatest of Indian spinners in terms of pure statistics, is sitting on the bench in most of the matches.

The modern day Rohit Sharma and Dravid realised that in the modern day, cricket has evolved to the extent that bits and pieces players are not good enough if the team has to win. Bumrah, Shami, Siraj and Kuldeep are not expected to bat. Jadeja is an all-rounder, but he is no part-time bowler. He is one player who can easily play in any team in the world purely as a bowler. The present bowling unit is the most complete bowling unit in India's cricket history. It has a brilliant mix of pace and spin attack. Sourav and Dhoni's attack did not have such high-quality pace bowlers. This bowling attack was supported by equally

menacing batsmen led by Kohli. Rohit, Gill, Shreyas, Rahul and Surya are a great bunch of fearless batters. Rohit led from the front. This team has one weakness; its fielding at times is tentative.

The law of averages caught up with the Indian team when it needed to win badly to be the world champion. The Australian team had the resilience to tire out the Indian attack. But this team can't be compared with that of Steve Waugh and Ricky Ponting, two of the all-time great Australian teams. Pat Cummins that way is lucky, but India should not sulk. Except for the last day, it played great cricket. If this team is nursed well, then the future is very bright. Let's hope that just as the West Indies, after losing in 1983, had pulverized the Indian team when they toured India soon after the World Cup, the Indian team too seeks sweet revenge when Australia visits India in the coming days. **(The writer can be reached at dipaknewslive@gmail.com)**

## Why the dream of violence-free women's society unfulfilled?

By: Lalit Garg

International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women is celebrated every year on 25th November by the United Nations to eradicate increasing incidents of violence, exploitation and harassment against women all over the world, and this is a serious problem plaguing the entire world. The United Nations organizes many events that highlight the need to do something more to eliminate this type of violence against women.

Women's groups and voluntary organizations undertake various initiatives to highlight the worrying situation of women in society, and the resulting adverse effects on women's physical, mental and psychological health. Many women's rights activists and organizations support feminist movements on this day to free the world from violence against women.

The Day also honours Mirabal Sisters, whose three sisters, Patria Mercedes Mirabal, María Argentina Minerva Mirabal, and Antonia María Teresa Mirabal, were brutally murdered on this day in 1960 on the orders of political activist Dominican ruler Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961).

These three sisters had strongly opposed Trujillo's dictatorship. Women's rights supporters and activists have celebrated this day since 1981 to commemorate the death of these three sisters. With the development in the country and the world, instead of subsidizing, the violent thoughts towards women have been emerging in newer forms.

To overcome this violent social thinking and ideology, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is a day related to the existence and identity of women, which gives the message of consciousness of responsibility, a call to develop a new civilized and decent thinking towards women. This day guards those crossroads from where there are possibilities of deviation of life ideals and violence against women; it stops those aspirations whose violent pace is very fast, but which reflects the wild race of society without any aim.

One of the objectives of celebrating this day is to make resolutions to control increasing violence against women. This day is a unique medium to make women powerful, progressive and cultured.

Every hour more than five women or girls are murdered by someone in their own families. Nearly one in three women has been a victim of physical and sexual violence at least once in her life. No less than 86 percent of women and girls live in countries without legal protection against gender-based violence.

Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent and widespread human rights violations in the world. This crisis has intensified in a variety of settings, including workplace and online spaces, which is further exacerbated by after-effects of pandemic, conflicts, and climate change. It is estimated that 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced physical and sexual violence by a non-partner at some point in their lives.

However, some national studies show that 70 percent of women have experienced physical and sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime. Adult women account for 51 percent of all human trafficking victims detected worldwide.

The European Union reports one in 10 women have experienced cyber-harassment since the age of 15. The risk is highest among young women between the ages of 18 and 29. Violence against women is a global epidemic. No less than 70 percent of women experience violence sometimes or other in their lifetime.

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data also highlights the increase in crimes against women. These crimes include rape,



domestic-violence, assault, dowry harassment, acid attack, kidnapping, human-trafficking, cyber-crime and workplace harassment etc. According to NCRB data, a total of 32,559 rapes took place in India in 2017, in which 93.1 percent of the accused were close relatives.

According to the report of National Crime Bureau-2017, the highest numbers of cases numbering 5562 were registered in Madhya Pradesh; while Rajasthan stood second in this list with 3305 rape cases. In Rajasthan, there has been a terrible mentality of killing girl babies as soon as they are born.

With some thought and contemplation, we come to know that sexual harassment against women, including gossiping, eve-teasing, prostitution, forced pregnancy, buying and selling of women and girls, violent behaviour resulting from war and gruesome torture in prisons are rampant. It still continues against women and instead of decreasing, it is increasing.

Today, it is necessary to discuss general women of the society suffering from violence and oppression. It is unfortunate that women in developed and developing countries are under the shadow of oppression, exploitation, discrimination and harassment.

Minority Rights Group International, in its annual report titled 'The Situation of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples', describes how women from minority and indigenous communities around the world are more likely to be victims of violence, whether in times of conflict or peace.

Mark Latimer, executive director of this organization, said that women across the world have to suffer the brunt of physical violence due to discrimination against minorities. This situation is frightening even in the context of India.

Even though the Government of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is currently doing commendable work for women empowerment, yet in the modern era, not only thousands of minorities, but also common women are far away from their full rights.

Even though the government has prepared hundreds of schemes for women- upliftment, there is still a lack of education and awareness among women. Ignorant of their duties and rights, the world of women has been confined to the kitchen. Women of tribal communities in India are unaware of their rights and their life is still like a tragedy.

The mentality of regarding women as inferior and of secondary status has penetrated into every fiber of the Indian society. The real question is how to change this mentality. Over the years, the tendency to hide crime and fear the criminals has started to end, from movements like MeToo or the laws made after Nirbhaya incident. Therefore, such crimes may not be complete, but still they are coming to light in large numbers.

An unjust person continues to do injustice, as long as he is tolerated. To create this belief among women, a fundamental change is also needed in the justice system and mentality. People in the country do not have complete knowledge about women's rights, and it is not followed with full seriousness and will-power.

Despite all the claims of women empowerment, women are far away from their real rights. They have to understand that accidents do not choose the person and the time and it is not their fault that all this happened.

Not only the polluted and distorted ways of the male society have to be changed, but also the roots of those reasons have to be uprooted due to which women are forced to drink poison again and again. World Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is an opportunity for non-governmental organizations, international organizations and governments to raise public awareness about violence against women.

The world must pave the way for genuine respect for the human dignity of women, so that the work of securing their real rights can be practical. So that words like rape, gang-rap, women oppression, women violence cease to exist in this world. **(The author is a writer, journalist, columnist who can be reached at lalitgarg11@gmail.com)**



By: Kamal Baruah

In sport, there's nothing more satisfying than hearing a big crowd go silent and that's the aim for him and Pat Cummins on the final-eveid it right for Australia, winning the Cricket World Cup 2023 crown from India's soil, while 1.4 billion Indian saw an unforgettable tale of sorrows and heartbreaks. That was India's only defeat in the cricketing extravaganza which came in the final. Despite the loss, 1.3 lakh fans dressed in blue had cheered for cricket. Oh, sound doesn't matter for him. The only thing that matters is that Australia made another milestone.

However the critics go further, and say that Ahmedabad crowd has gone silent. If this was Wankhede, the stadium would have been charged, loud and intimidating to the opponent. But the intensity of sound waves inside the stadium erupts at 127 db. A citizen point of view on health-

## Remembering 26/11: A day of tragedy, a test of resilience

By: Shashanka Das

*"The flames are silent,  
Peace is violent,  
Tears are frozen  
'cause massacre was chosen."*

The attacks of 26/11, also known as the Mumbai terror attacks, have left a deep scar on the collective memory of India. It was a night of terror, in which people lost their loved ones, tourists were killed, and police officers laid down their lives in the line of duty. The events of that night are etched in the history of India, serving as a stark reminder of the vulnerability of the nation's security. The terrorists, hailing from Pakistan, managed to invade Mumbai, unleashing a wave of destruction and mayhem that shook the entire nation to its core.

However, amidst the tragedy and devastation, the resilience and bravery of the Indian security forces and law enforcement agencies came to the forefront. The Mumbai Police and Indian Army, through their unwavering courage and commitment, were able to apprehend the perpetrators of the attacks.

The capture of Ajmal Kasab, the 25-year-old terrorist who confessed to coming to India from Pakistan via boat, raised significant concerns about the security of India's coastline. It was a wake-up call for the Indian defense ministry, which had neglected the protection of the country's waterfront despite being aware of its vulnerabilities since the 1993 blasts in Maharashtra.

The inadequacies in India's coastal security were starkly exposed by the audacity of the terrorists' breach, marking the first instance of a group of extremists infiltrating an entire nation by bypassing maritime defenses. In the aftermath of the attacks, the Indian government took decisive measures to bolster coastal security, recognizing the critical importance of safeguarding the nation's borders from potential threats.

Moreover, the attacks laid bare serious shortcomings in India's national security apparatus. The terrorists were able to bypass security checks and infiltrate key locations in Mumbai, including the iconic Taj Hotel. The lapses in the security measures raised perplexing questions about the preparedness and effectiveness of the Indian security forces in thwarting such brazen acts of terrorism.

The government learned harsh lessons from these grave mistakes, prompting a re-evaluation of the country's defense systems and security forces. Efforts were made to equip the Indian police with advanced weaponry, tools, and training to effectively combat terrorism.

However, it became apparent that the sheer size of the police force did not mitigate the systemic inefficiencies and bureaucratic hurdles that hindered their operational effectiveness.

One glaring issue that surfaced was the stringent adherence to protocol and hierarchy within the law enforcement agencies, which impeded swift and decisive action in response to dire situations. The rigidity of the chain of command often restrained officers from taking immediate and necessary measures to combat imminent threats, reflecting a need for systemic reform and adaptability in crisis management.

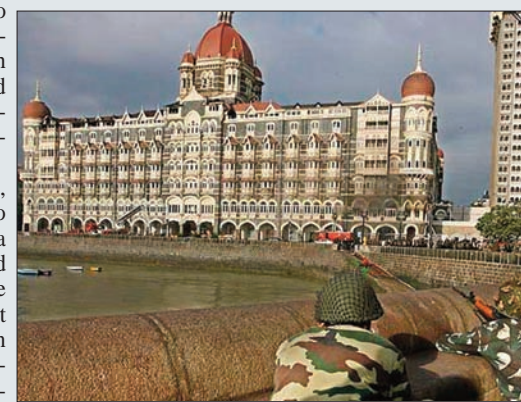
The implications of the attacks were felt beyond the realm of security and law enforcement. India's thriving tourism industry suffered a severe blow, as the attacks resulted in the loss of lives and instilled fear among potential visitors. The tragic incidents also shed light on the vulnerabilities and deficiencies in India's tourism policies and infrastructure, especially with regard to ensuring the safety and security of tourists, especially female travellers.

However, in the aftermath of the attacks, India embarked on a path of introspection and reform. The nation recognized the imper-

ative of leveraging its vast potential as a tourist destination while simultaneously addressing the critical issue of safety and security for visitors. The government initiated comprehensive national tourism policies and undertook measures to instill confidence in travellers by bolstering security and crime prevention initiatives.

The attacks of 26/11 remain a painful chapter in India's history, but they also serve as a catalyst for transformation and progress. The lessons learned from the tragic events have spurred the nation to introspect, evolve, and adapt, reinforcing the resilience and resolve of its people.

As India continues to forge ahead in the pursuit of a secure, prosperous, and inclusive future, the memories of 26/11 will endure as a poignant reminder of the nation's enduring spirit and commitment to safeguarding its people and its interests. **(The author can be reached at shashankadas0007@gmail.com or 9706619975)**



## Thou shalt not shout

care, a noise level chart showing sounds above 85 db are harmful, where we encounter loud sounds in our everyday life, while our ear has the remarkable ability to handle an enormous range of sound levels.

Surprisingly, sound levels of a gunshot or a siren goes above 140 db. They are extremely loud, painful and dangerous and it could affect our eardrum rupture. A sound of firing gunshot from 303 rifles is so loud that one could be permanently damaged hearing. This writer has to experience continue ringing in the ears from tinnitus symptom after a heavy firing practice at shooting range since his combatant days.

Over time, exposure to loud noise can damage hearing. Earplugs or earmuffs are necessary for aviation. A military jet at the time of take-off makes so much noise that becomes really tiresome and uncomfortable for aircrews at the tarmac.

Service personnel travelling by MI helicopters or AN-32 transport must wear headsets to protect their hearing from the loud sound exposure. The inside cabin noise can be around 100 db. I'm also surprised to hear loudspeaker provocation by South Indian film fan followers in Tamil Nadu. Sound systems are generally legal as long as they do not impact the quiet environment of their individuals' homes. Some people would say; it violates their religious rights too.

Despite all, we also make lot of unnecessary noise from blowing horn on the street to bursting firecracker during Diwali and other festivals. Sometime VIP culture of beacon lights and sirens of vehicles concerning emergency

would hit around others vehicles on the road in panic as city roads failed to ease congestion most of the time. That loudness from PA system at cinema, festivals worried us. As the saying goes, organizers can disband the local administration and rule by diktat. Those noises raise stress on the road.

Street cricket of Sundays in Mumbai found it fascinating. The magic of cricket is woven all around India. The thrills of winning on the last ball of a cricket match are some of those heart-stopping moments of our childhood days. However, the noise support has significant impact in all playing conditions. People always support their local team. Be it Lord's Cricket Ground or iconic Eden Garden, is a good way to eyewitness such sports extravaganza. Back at the heart of English football, the impact of the fans on EPL is absolutely enormous.

Such deafening noise experience from a roaring crowd with blowing horns, vuvuzelas, trumpets and beats of drums can only be heard inside a stadium only.

It was another day of playing volleyball in Subroto Park, New Delhi, while our Signals Wing reached the final. Incidentally, I missed the last match for persistent wrist pain. As substitute outside the court, we cheered for the win, sang the familiar volleyball chant yelling at opponent and even booed the referee as well against illegal ball handling over net violations. At the end of the ceremony, I got our Commander's pat praising "You shout well" and also suggesting "You shalt not shout" again as he wished to make his Air Wing to win the trophy next time.



## Ukraine's military says Russia has launched its largest drone attack since the start of the invasion

**KYIV, Nov 25:** Russia on Saturday morning launched its most intense drone attack on Ukraine since the beginning of its full-scale invasion in 2022, targeting the Ukrainian capital, military officials said.

"Kyiv was the main target," Ukrainian Air Force Commander Mykola Oleschuk wrote on his Telegram channel.

In total, Russia launched 75 Iranian-made Shahed drones against Ukraine, of which 74 were destroyed by air defenses, Ukraine's air force said.

The attack was "the most massive air attack by drones on Kyiv," said Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv city administration. Ukrainian air force spokesman Yuri Ihnat confirmed later that the air defenses shot down 66 air targets over the capital and surrounding region throughout the morning.

At least five civilians were wounded in the hours-long assault, which saw several buildings damaged by falling debris from downed drones, including a kindergarten. The wounded included an 11-year-old child, according to Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko.

In the city's Solomianskyi district, debris left a crater in the courtyard of a residential area, and the windows of a nearby building were blown out. Residents, most of them elderly, received medical attention at the scene. Others took shelter in a nearby subway station. As people

were clearing up debris and broken glass in the neighborhood, the hum of a fresh wave of drones could be heard nearby.

The assault on Kyiv began at 4 a.m., continuing in waves for over six hours, and caused power outages in 77 residential buildings and 120 institutions, according to Popko.

Ukraine's Energy Ministry said 17,000 people were without power in the Kyiv region as a result of the attack, noting that four power lines were damaged. Power was restored in the early afternoon.

"Our soldiers shot down most of the drones. Unfortunately, not all," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. "But we continue to work to strengthen our air defense and shoot down more," he said.

The attack was carried out on the morning of Holodomor Memorial Day which commemorates the man-made famine in Soviet Ukraine that killed millions of Ukrainians from 1932 to 1933. It is marked on the fourth Saturday in November.

In addition to Kyiv, the Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv and Kirovohrad regions were also targeted.

Meanwhile, shelling killed on person and wounded three in the southern Kherson region, regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said on Saturday. According to Prokudin, the region had been shelled 100 times over the previous 24 hours. (AP)

## Pak military court sentences two former army officers for espionage

**ISLAMABAD, Nov 25:** Two retired Pakistani Army officers have been court-martialed and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of up to 14 years for inciting sedition, it was announced on Saturday, indicating that military court trials of those accused of violence against military installations on May 9 have begun. Major (Retired) Adil Farooq Raja and Captain (Retired) Haider Raza Mehdi, who live abroad and are critical of the senior Army leadership, were sentenced in absentia.

The Army said in a statement that they "were convicted and sentenced through Field General Court Martial (FGCM) under Pakistan Army Act, 1952 for the charges of inciting sedition among army personnel."

They have also violated the provisions of the Official Secrets Act, 1923 related to espionage and acts prejudicial to the safety and interest of the State, it said.

Major Raja was sentenced to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment, while Captain Mehdi was given 12 years of rigorous imprisonment.

Neither Raja nor Mehdi is likely to serve the sentence as they are based outside of Pakistan, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The convictions likely pertain to the May 9 incidents, when former prime minister and chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party Imran Khan's arrest resulted in widespread violence and important military installations were attacked.

Raja and Mehdi host vlogs on Youtube. Raja, who is known for his pro-PTI stance, had moved to London last year following reports that he had gone "missing" from Islamabad. (PTI)

## Canada, EU agree to new partnerships as Trudeau welcomes European leaders

**ST. JOHN'S, Nov 25:** Canada and the European Union said Friday they are making strides toward new partnerships on green energy, digital transformation and research funding, as a Canada-EU Summit got underway in the Atlantic coast province of Newfoundland. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced during opening remarks on Thursday evening that Canada is joining Horizon Europe, a \$100 billion scientific research program. Afterward, the two parties said in a joint statement on Friday that substantive negotiations are complete and they are working toward their "prompt signature and implementation."

"Canadian companies are already benefiting from Horizon and

have for many years, but there is much more that we'll be able to access now that we are full partners," Trudeau said.

"It is an exciting articulation of what have been long-standing partnerships between scientists on both sides of the Atlantic."

Ottawa and Brussels started negotiations on Canada joining it a year ago, with an initial goal of signing the agreement this past spring. Canada has also worked out a deal to build water bombers and ship them to the EU, after both regions faced devastating forest fires this past summer.

And Canada and the EU have announced what they are calling a new Green Alliance, which is focused on deepening existing part-

nerships on fighting climate change, halting biodiversity loss and intensifying technological and scientific co-operation.

A new digital partnership was also part of the package of announcements on Friday. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Canada "is a perfect match" for Europe's resource needs, and she urged Ottawa to join a global partnership on the issue that the EU will launch within weeks.

Trudeau also said Canada and the EU are committed to helping Ukraine continue in its fight against the Russian invasion, and announced that Canada is donating additional small arms and ammunition to the country. (AP)

## 11 killed in fire in Karachi shopping mall, several feared trapped

**KARACHI, Nov 25:** A massive fire tore through a shopping mall in Pakistan's Karachi city on Saturday, killing at least 11 people and injuring six, officials said.

The fire that broke out at around 7 am on the second floor engulfed the fourth, fifth and sixth floors of the shopping mall, but it was not clear what caused it.

Twelve fire tenders, a snorkel and around 50 firefighters were called to control the fire and rescue around 42 people in the building.

Chief Fire Officer Zubin Ahmed said that 11 people were killed and six injured in the blaze mostly due to smoke inhalation and panic as the electricity to the building had to be cut off to control the blaze.

"Our teams are still searching for anyone still in the building but we rescued 42 people, all males who were present when the fire broke out around 7 am this morning," he told PTI. Karachi Mayor Muratza Wahab confirmed that nine persons were killed in the fire but Police official Summaya Syed said that so far 11 bodies have been brought to two hospitals. Nine were brought to Jinnah

Hospital while 2 others were taken to Civil Hospital, she said, adding that the condition of 6 of those rescued was critical.

Mubin said they were still investigating the reason for the fire but just earlier this week, city planners and engineers at a seminar said they were sure some 90 per cent of structures in Karachi — residential, commercial and industrial — did not have fire prevention and firefighting systems.

They agreed that it was "criminal negligence" on the part of regulatory bodies like the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) that put the lives of millions of people in the metropolis at risk.

A senior police official of the area, Raja Tariq said the building was a commercial high-rise that housed shopping centres, call centres and software houses.

A statement from the Fire and Rescue spokesperson said the fire had since been controlled and the cooling process was now underway.

Tariq said last year also a smaller fire broke out in the same mall but was controlled quickly and was caused by short-circuiting. (PTI)

**BEITUNIA, Nov 25:** Over three dozen Palestinian prisoners returned home to a hero's welcome in the occupied West Bank on Friday following their release from Israeli prisons as part of a cease-fire deal between Israel and Hamas.

The procession of freed prisoners, some accused of minor offenses and others convicted in attacks, at a checkpoint outside of Jerusalem stoked massive crowds of Palestinians into a chanting, clapping, hand-waving, screaming frenzy.

Fifteen dazed young men, all in stained grey prison sweatsuits and looking gaunt with exhaustion, glided through the streets on the shoulders of their teary-eyed fathers as fireworks turned the night sky to blazing color and patriotic Palestinian pop music blared.

Some of those released were draped in Palestinian flags, others in the green flags of Hamas. They flashed victory signs as they crowd-surfed.

"I have no words, I have no words," said newly released 17-year-old Jamal Brahma, searching

for something to say to the hordes of jostling journalists and thousands of chanting Palestinians, many in national dress. "Thank God."

Families of hostages not slated for release from Gaza during current truce face enduring nightmare

Tears fell down his father Khalil Brahma's cheeks as he brought his son down from his shoulders and looked him in the eye for the first time in seven months. Israeli forces had arrested Jamal at his home in the Palestinian city of Jericho last spring and detained him without charge or trial.

"I just want to be his father again," he said.

The release of the Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails came just hours after two dozen hostages, including 13 Israelis, were released from captivity in Gaza in the initial exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners during the four-day cease-fire that started Friday.

Under the deal, Hamas is to release at least 50 hostages, and Israel 150 Palestinian prisoners, over



the four days. Israel said the truce can be extended an extra day for every additional 10 hostages freed.

Although the atmosphere was festive in the town of Beitunia near Israel's hulking Ofer Prison in the West Bank, people were on edge.

The Israeli government has ordered police to shut down celebrations over the release. Israeli security forces at one point unleashed tear gas canisters on the crowds, sending young men, old women and small children sprinting away as they wept and screamed in pain.

"The army is trying to take this moment away from us but they can't," Mays Fogaqa said as she tumbled into the arms of her newly

released 18-year-old friend, Nour al-Taher from Nablus, who was arrested during a protest in September at the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. "This is our day of victory."

The Palestinian detainees freed Friday included 24 women, some of whom had been sentenced to years-long prison terms over attempted stabbings and other attacks on Israeli security forces. Others had been accused of incitement on social media.

There were also the 15 male teenagers, most of them charged with stone-throwing and "supporting terrorism," a broadly defined accusation that underscores Israel's long-running crackdown on young

Palestinian men as violence surges in the occupied territory.

For families on both sides of the conflict, news of the exchange — perhaps the first hopeful moment in 49 days of war — stirred a bitter-sweet jumble of joy and anguish.

"As a Palestinian, my heart is broken for my brothers in Gaza, so I can't really celebrate," said Abdulqader Khatib, a U.N. worker whose 17-year-old son, Iyas, was placed last year in "administrative detention," without charges or trial and based on secret evidence. "But I am a father. And deep inside, I am very happy."

Israel is now holding an all-time high of 2,200 Palestinians in administrative detention, according to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, an advocacy group, in a controversial policy that Israel defends as a counter-terrorism measure.

Since Oct. 7, when Hamas took roughly 240 Israeli and foreign citizens hostage and killed 1,200 Israelis in its unprecedented rampage through southern Israel, Palestinians have wondered about the fate of their own prisoners. (AP)

## UK police leaflet Israel-Hamas conflict protesters to warn against racist chants

**LONDON, Nov 25:** The Metropolitan Police in London are using leaflets warning protesters against using racist language or inciteful activities that could lead to their arrest as another set of demonstrations related to the Israel-Hamas conflict hits the streets on Saturday.

Organisers expect 100,000 people to demonstrate in London on Saturday with up to 50,000 planning to attend a march against antisemitism on Sunday. The Met Police said more than 1,500 officers will be on duty this weekend, including 500 from outside London, and that there will be "robust intervention" against any criminal activities.

"The conflict in the Middle East is continuing and here in London we are still seeing the cumulative impact of continued protest, increasing tensions, and rising hate crime," said Deputy Assistant Commissioner Ade Adegboye, who will lead the Met's policing operation this weekend.

"That fear and anxiety is particularly felt by our Jewish and Muslim communities. We know a lot more about the cumulative impact of these protests than we did seven weeks ago and that is reflected in our approach," he said.

He said the public will see further communication over the weekend, both online and in the form of leaflets, which officers will share with protesters along the march



route.

"As you would expect, this sets out that anyone who is racist or incites hatred against any group should expect to be arrested. As should anyone who supports Hamas or any other banned organisation. We will not tolerate anyone who celebrates or promotes acts of terrorism — such as the killing or kidnap of innocent people — or who spreads hate speech," said Adegboye.

With reference to a static protest planned by the Hizb-ut-Tahrir group at the Egyptian Embassy in London, the force issued a specific warning against chants of "jihad" which had been heard at the outfit's last protest on October 21.

"There was considerable debate about the use of the word 'jihad'... It is a word that clearly causes upset and concern, but it's always contextual. If we think people are chanting this to incite violence, terrorism or antisemitism — we will act decisively

and quickly," the Met Police statement warns.

The force said it has been "working positively" with organisers, including the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), and that they will have extra stewards as well who have agreed with the police to be clear in their communications about how supporters must behave.

"The Met supports the right for people to make their voices heard through protest providing it is done lawfully. However, the law also protects people from racist and religious abuse and prohibits the promotion of terrorism. While the majority of protesters have complied with these rules, a minority have crossed the line," added Adegboye.

The Met Police urged fellow protesters that if they spot behaviour that has crossed the line into criminality, they must challenge it or to report it immediately to one of the officers present for them to "act quickly".

Under the weekend policing plans, there will be trained spotters at specific points of the march looking out for criminal activity, including hate placards and clothing, and identifying those responsible. They will also be using technology to identify and track offenders within large groups of people and deploying intervention teams where they need to extract suspects. (PTI)

## Putin's first PM and later his opponent has been added to Russia's 'foreign agent' list

**MOSCOW, Nov 25:** Russia's Justice Ministry on Friday added Mikhail Kasyanov, who was President Vladimir Putin's first prime minister but then became one of his opponents, to its register of "foreign agents."

Russian law allows for figures and organizations receiving money or support from outside the country to be designated as foreign agents, a term whose pejorative connotations could undermine the designee's credibility.

The law, which has been extensively used against opposition figures and independent news media, also requires material published by a designee to carry a prominent disclaimer stating that it comes from a foreign agent.

The ministry's website says Kasyanov "took part in the creation and dissemination of messages and materials of foreign agents to an unlimited circle of people, disseminated false information about the decisions taken by public authorities of the Russian Federation and the policies pursued by them" and "opposed the special military operation in Ukraine."

Kasyanov became prime minister in 2000 after Putin was elected to the presidency and served through 2004, when he was dismissed. He was primarily responsible for economic reforms, including Russia's adoption of a flat income tax.

He became a prominent opposition figure after leaving office and attempted to run for president in 2008, but his candidacy was rejected by the national election commission. Kasyanov later faded from view as Russia's opposition weakened under arrests and repressions. After Putin sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022, Kasyanov left the country and has been reported to be in Latvia. (AP)

## Imran Khan's party approaches court against election commission's order for intra-party polls within 20 days

**KARACHI, Nov 25:** Alleging "complete connivance" to keep it away from general elections, jailed former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan's party has moved the Sindh High Court against the election commission's directive to hold intra-party elections within 20 days to retain 'bat' as its electoral symbol.

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party sought directives for respondents to give a level playing field to all political parties for upcoming general elections and hold free and fair polls under judicial oversight through the appointment of judicial officers as district returning officers. General elections are scheduled to be held in Pakistan on February 8. The petition, which cited the Federation through cabinet secretary, chief secretary and

the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) as respondents, was filed by PTI's Sindh president Haleem Adil Shaikh and retired Justice Noorul Haq N. Qureshi through their counsel on Friday, the Dawn newspaper reported on Saturday.

The petition was filed on Friday, a day after the ECP ordered the cricket-turned-politician's party to hold intra-party elections within 20 days to retain the bat as its poll symbol stating that it did not conduct transparent elections according to its Constitution.

The ECP also sought a comprehensive report within the next seven days.

The petitioners alleged a "complete connivance" between the respondents indicated an effort to prevent the PTI from elections and asserted that the party faced numerous challenges, in-



cluding cases against its leadership, and restrictions on freedom of speech.

The party further alleged that it was not allowed to hold conventions and meetings and authorities were demolishing the houses of the party's leaders.

These actions were aimed at sidelining the party from participating freely in the elections and a systematic effort to curb its influence and suppress the fundamental rights of its members, the PTI said. The petitioners also alleged

that they were under "severe apprehension that all such was done to give the election symbol of PTI to another 'favorite' party of the respondents." Khan, being a former iconic international cricketer, is considered synonymous with the (cricket) bat. He is lodged in Adiala Jail at Rawalpindi facing dozens of cases.

The election commission had in August given a final warning to the PTI to hold the polls or it could be declared ineligible to obtain an election symbol.

The PTI elections were due on June 13, 2021, under the party's Constitution but an extension was granted by the election body. Finally, the party held the election on June 10, 2022 but the ECP rejected it, saying that the party had amended its Constitution two days before holding the polls. (PTI)

## Ireland's prime minister condemns anti-immigrant protesters who rampaged through central Dublin

**LONDON, Nov 25:** Ireland's prime minister on Friday condemned anti-immigrant protesters who rampaged through central Dublin after three young children were stabbed, saying the rioters simply wanted to cause chaos, not protect the country's way of life.

Police made a number of further arrests on Friday evening as they mounted a significant security operation in Dublin to ensure that there was no repeat of Thursday's disorder. A number of people were taken away in police vans following sporadic altercations.

Police arrested 34 people after Thursday night's rioting when up to 500 people looted shops, set fire to vehicles and threw rocks at crowd control officers equipped with helmets and shields.

The violence began after rumors circulated that a foreign national was responsible for the attack outside a Dublin school on Thursday afternoon. Authorities haven't disclosed the suspect's nationality.

Violent clashes break out in



Dublin after knife attack that injured 3 children, one seriously

Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said Ireland's capital had endured two attacks, one on innocent children and the other on "our society and the rule of law."

"These criminals did not do what they did because they love Ireland, they did not do what they did because they wanted to protect Irish people, they did not do it out of any sense of patriotism, however warped," Varadkar told reporters on Friday morning. "They did so because they're filled with

hate, they love violence, they love chaos and they love causing pain to others."

A 5-year-old girl was in critical condition at a Dublin hospital and a teacher's aide was in serious condition, police said. A 6-year-old girl continues to receive treatment for less serious injuries and another child was discharged overnight. The alleged assailant, who was tackled by witnesses, remains hospitalized in serious condition.

Thursday's unrest came amid rising tensions over immigration

in Ireland that mirror trends in other parts of Europe. Earlier this year, people carrying signs reading "Ireland is full" demonstrated in Dublin, and protesters blockaded a hotel housing asylum-seekers in County Clare on the west coast.

An analysis of more than 13 million social media posts over the past three years found that right-wing groups were increasingly using platforms such as X, formerly known as Twitter, to stir up opposition to immigration.

Recent activity has characterized the refugees and asylum-seekers as an "existential threat to Ireland," according to a report from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, a London-based group that seeks to combat extremism.

Ireland received more than 141,000 immigrants in the 12 months through April, the highest total since 2007, the latest government statistics show. The influx of migrants drove an 11.7% increase in Ireland's population over the past 11 years, contributing to a

steady increase in housing prices.

When he was questioned about anti-immigration tensions earlier this year, Varadkar told Ireland's parliament that there was always a place for peaceful protest, but violence, intimidation and racism were never legitimate.

"I think when it comes to this matter, we should never lose sight of the bigger picture — we're facing a major refugee crisis not just here in Ireland but all across Europe," he said in May.

Commissioner Drew Harris, head of Ireland's national police force, described those who took part in Thursday's unrest as a "complete lunatic hooligan faction driven by far-right ideology."

More than 400 officers, including many in riot gear, were deployed throughout the city center to contain the violence. A cordon was set up around the Irish Parliament building, Leinster House, and mounted officers were dispatched to nearby Grafton Street. (AP)



# Kuki Zo MLAs removed from Manipur Assembly committees chairmanship

*Mayanglambam is the NPP MLA from the Kakching assembly constituency*

**IMPHAL, Nov 25:** Three Manipur legislators, hailing from the Kuki Zo community, were removed from the chairmanship of various committees of the Manipur Assembly, official notifications said.

An assembly bulletin said that Mayanglambam Rameshwar was appointed by the Speaker as the chairman of the Committee on Public Undertakings in place of its previous chairman.

Mayanglambam is the National People's Party (NPP) MLA from the Kakching assembly constituency. The post was previously held by LM Khaute, who represents the Churachandpur seat.

A separate bulletin stated that Mao constituency's Naga People's Front (NPF) MLA Losii Dikho was appointed as the chairman of the Committee on Government Assurances. The



post was earlier held by Saitu constituency's Independent MLA Haokholet Kipgen.

Lamlai BJP MLA K Ibomcha was appointed as chairman of the Assembly Library Committee in place of Yungzigin Valte, BJP MLA from Thanlon constituency in Churachandpur district.

Valte had suffered serious injuries after being assaulted by a mob during the onset of the ethnic violence in Manipur between Meiteis and Kukis.

The bulletins concerning the appointments were issued on Wednesday.

However, the notifications did not cite any reason for replacements, but as per Rule 198 (2) of the Assembly, "if the chairman is for any reason unable to act, the Speaker may appoint another chairman in his place". (PTI)

## Arunachal to set up development cell for women entrepreneurs

**ITANAGAR, Nov 25:** Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu recently said the state government will set up a dedicated development cell for women entrepreneurs with a seed money of Rs 5 crore.

Speaking at the opening session of the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) state workshop organised by NITI Aayog here, Khandu said the centre will function as a hub for women entrepreneurs providing access to mentorship, capacity building exercises, and other programmes beneficial for women-led startups.

The centre will also run dedicated incubation and acceleration programmes for women, he added.

He also rolled out five new initiatives under WEP which will be implemented by NITI Aayog.

Lauding the NITI Aayog for conducting the workshop for women entrepreneurs of the Northeast in Itanagar, Khandu said over the past seven years, his government has adopted a holistic approach to creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs that includes multiple interventions such as policy support, monetary support through front-ended subsidies, earmarking of schemes for women entrepreneurs and micro-entrepreneurs, etc.

He mentioned that approximately 6,500 of the more

than 20,000 MSMEs in Arunachal Pradesh are owned by women.

Referring to the Arunachal Pradesh Start-up Policy, Khandu said under the scheme, a minimum of one incubation centre will be established in the state and later extend the facilities to at least 50 per cent of the districts over the next five years.

He informed that a special clause to support women entrepreneurs has also been included in the Arunachal Pradesh Start-up Policy 2022-23.

"Women-led development has always been the priority of the government of India and the government of Arunachal Pradesh," he asserted.

"I request all aspiring entrepreneurs of Arunachal Pradesh to take advantage of these initiatives. Let this platform pave the way for a future for women entrepreneurship promotion," he added.

NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission mission director Dr Chintan Vaishnav, co-lead for WEP in states Yashodhara Rajoria, WEP executive committee member Anna Roy, chief secretary Dharmendra, central and state government officials and women entrepreneurs from various North-Eastern states attended the programme. (PTI)

## GNHS researcher centre pays visit to KHADC



**SHILLONG, Nov 25:** The Researcher Centre for Bhutan Gross National Happiness Studies (GNHS) recently paid a visit to the office to the Khasi Hill Autonomous District Council (KHADC) to understand on the function and role of the three autonomous district council (ADCs) in Meghalaya.

Speaking to media persons, Kencho Dema, a research scholar

from GNHS said that the objective is to learn and study on how the ADCs draw its power, especially when it comes to the judiciary system and the function of the ADCs.

"In the process of the meeting, I think we have found a lot of connections and issues that are mutual to this state and our country and we hope that in the future we will be able to take good lessons from the ADCs of your state," said

Dema.

Dema said that this meeting is a learning process as information is being shared by both the GNHS and the KHADC.

"Let us learn from each other and let us try to implement, what is the best part from our country and from your state so that maybe in the near future this region becomes that best region around the world," she added.

Meanwhile, chief executive member (CEM) of the KHADC Pyniaid Sing Syiem said that the objective of the visit of the delegation from the GNHS is to learn about the power and function of the ADCs in Meghalaya.

Syiem said that during the course of the research, the scholars from Bhutan had conducted studies on the ways, the traditions, culture, and language of the people in the three ADCs and also to learn about the land ownership system in Meghalaya. (NNN)

## OFFICIAL MEET



Governor of Manipur Ansuuya Uikey paid a courtesy call on the Governor of Meghalaya Phagu Chauhan at Raj Bhavan, Shillong on Saturday. UB Photos

## Pick-up truck hits pilot car of M'laya CM's convoy

**SHILLONG, Nov 25:** The pilot car of Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma's convoy was hit by a pick-up truck at Upper Shillong on Saturday, police said.

The chief minister was safe, a police officer said.

The incident took place at around 9:30 am at Upper Shillong while the CM was en route to Dawki town close to the Indo-Bangladesh border for an official programme.

According to the police, a pick-up truck hit the pilot car of the CM's convoy which partially caused damage to both the vehicles. (PTI)

## RPF apprehend 10 illegal migrants

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 25:** The RPF during regular checks and drives RPF apprehended 10 Bangladeshi nationals from Agartala railway station along with 2 Indian agents involved in helping the Bangladeshi migrants.

On November 21, during regular checks and drives, a joint team of RPF and GRP team of Agartala post at N F Railway along with BSF personnel, apprehended 03 male illegal Bangladeshi migrants from Agartala railway station. An agent with Indian identity was also apprehended who was involved in helping those illegal migrants crossing the Indian territory. Later, all the apprehended persons were handed over to OC/GRP of Agartala for further legal course of action.

On November 23 during a similar check and drive, RPF and GRP team of Agartala at N F Railway apprehended 07 illegal Bangladeshi migrants from Agartala railway station along with an Indian agent helping them in the migration process. All the apprehended persons were handed over to GRP post of Agartala for further legal course of action.

## Myanmar national held with heroin in Mizoram

**AIZAWL, Nov 25:** A 47-year-old Myanmar national was arrested with 248 grams of heroin in east Mizoram's Champhai district near the Myanmar border recently, state excise and narcotics department said in a statement.

The man identified as Thangkhenlian is a resident of Bulfuk in the neighbouring country, it said.

The heroin was smuggled from Myanmar to be sold in Mizoram, it added.

The accused was booked under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 and was produced before a magistrate on Friday, it added. (PTI)

### NAME CORRECTION

I, Inamul Hoque of the below mentioned address do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that my actual and correct name is Inamul Hoque and my father's name is Abdul Malik. But my name has wrongly been recorded in my school documents as Md Inamul Hoque in place of Inamul Hoque and my father's name as Md Abdul Malek in place of Abdul Malik respectively. That both Inamul Hoque and Md Inamul hoque are the same and one person. That Abdul Malik and Md Abdul Malek are the same and one person who is my father.

Sd/-  
Inamul Hoque  
SO- Abdul Malik  
Vill- No. 1/2 Barujhar  
PO- Galandi, Darrang.

## District Prabhari Officer visits East Garo Hills

**HT Correspondent**

**WILLIAMNAGAR, Nov 25:** The District Prabhari Officer of VBSY for East Garo Hills and the director of MSME, Vinamra Mishra, accompanied by the deputy commissioner of East Garo Hills, Vibhor Aggarwal, visited Bijasik Chisim A-pal and Koksi Rongkong villages under Songsak C&RD Block to raise awareness on Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat recently.

Speaking at function at Bijasik Chisim A-pal, Vinamra Mishra, highlighted the schemes and benefits being provided to the villagers under the Viksit Bharat. He also said the govt of India and the govt of Meghalaya have brought schemes and programs for the welfare of the people.

Highlighting the schemes under the Viksit Bharat, the deputy commissioner of the district, Vibhor Aggarwal, urged the villagers to get themselves enrolled to avail the benefits being provided to them by the Central and state governments.

## JAC defers proposed agitation as per request from govt

**IMPHAL, Nov 25:** The proposed agitation put forth by the Joint Action Committee (JAC) against the killing of Z Asongbou and Amangliu Pamai in a tragic accident which occurred on November 15, 2023, has been deferred for a time being as per the request of the government and the present prevailing law and order situation in the state.

The JAC gave an ultimatum to the chief minister of Manipur demanding immediate arrest of the truck owner Bishwajit Dey of Kamrup, Assam; ex-gratia to the demise family; appointment of a primary teacher to one of the two sons of the deceased against the post of Amangliu TADC under die-in-harness scheme; re-

imbursement of the medical expenses incurred by the injuries of all the victim's family members and to compensate the damaged vehicle.

The said JAC was formed due to the tragic accident that occurred at Laikot village along NH-2 under Sapomeina police station of Kangpokpi district where a Bolero SUV coming from Dimapur side towards Imphal was hit by speeding the empty goods carrier truck coming from Imphal. "The accident occurred due to drunk, rash and negligent driving on the part of the truck driver. The owner of the truck has not given any cooperation in spite of several attempts made by the police and the victim's family," the JAC alleged. (NNN)

## Battle against drugs needs to be fought at 4 levels: AR

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMPUR, Nov 25:** The battle against drugs required to be fought at government, community, family and individual levels, said Brig Vikram Singh, commander, 7 Sector Assam Rifles, at an anti-drugs campaign at DC ground in Tuensang. Assam Rifles, in collaboration with Kripa Foundation and Miss Nagaland 2023 Hikali Achumi, conducted

the anti-drug campaign at Tuensang on Thursday. Speaking as the chief guest, Brig Singh highlighted the role of Assam Rifles in prevention of drug menace in the border areas. He underlined the importance of cooperation amongst the government, Assam Rifles, civil administration, civil society organisations and church organisations to prevent this menace and spread awareness

among the masses to create a drug-free environment. Miss Nagaland Achumi appreciated the efforts of Assam Rifles in combating drug abuse in the whole of the North-east. A total of 900 students and 22 civil society leaders from Tuensang attended the campaign. The event ended with an anti-drug pledge and a mass bike rally for anti-drug awareness.

## Alteration in water flow patterns, adversely affecting the flora and fauna of the Ramsar site Hydro project threat to Loktak Lake raises concerns

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 25:** The chairman of the Loktak Development Authority (LDA), M Asnikumar Singh has raised concerns on safety of the ecosystem of the Loktak Lake given the commissioning of Loktak Hydro Electric project. Recently, he held a joint meeting at the Ministry of environment, forest & climate change, govt of India, Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi focusing on environmental safeguard measures essential for the ongoing renovation and modernization of the Loktak Power Station.

The meeting is a result of multiple letters written by the chairman, LDA to concerned ministries (including PMO) after NHPC proposed a DPR for the modernisation of Loktak Hydro Project without the consultation of LDA & forest & wildlife dept, Manipur, Ministry of EF&CC, govt of India.

"The disruptions to the natural flow of Loktak Lake have not only impacted biodiversity but have also led to the displacement of communities reliant on the lake for their livelihoods," he felt.

posing challenges to water quality and raising apprehensions about the long-term sustainability of the lake's ecosystem.

In response to these challenges, the LDA chairman emphasized the need for a comprehensive assessment that considers not only the immediate implications but also the long-term environmental and social repercussions. He stressed the importance of incorporating sustainable practices into renovation and modernization plans to mitigate the adverse effects on the ecosystem and the communities dependent on it.

Furthermore, chairman Asnikumar highlighted the commitment of the Loktak Development Authority to engage in a collaborative effort with relevant authorities & stakeholders, including officials from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Power, Central Water Commission, Ministry of water resources, NHPC, state forest & wildlife dept, and WISA (Wetland International South Asia). This collective approach aims to foster a meaningful dialogue, ensuring that diverse perspectives contribute to the decision-making process. Furthermore, the LDA chairman outlined the problems created by the Loktak Hydro Project since its commission, addressing concerns related to water quality, siltation, and the overall ecological balance of the region. The chairman ex-



pressed a commitment to addressing these challenges through responsible and sustainable modernization efforts and the removal of Loktak Lake from the Montreux records. He stressed that Loktak Lake is the cradle of the civilization of Manipur and stated that Manipur can live without Loktak Lake. Chairman Asnikumar Singh's vision extends beyond the immediate concerns, as he proposed the incorporation of changed hydrological patterns, provisions for the enhancement of the livelihood of affected people and recommendations of the Expert Advisory Committee constituted by LDA to address the environmental and social challenges associated with the Loktak Hydro

Electric Project. This proactive stance reflects the commitment to responsible and sustainable development practices, aligning progress with the preservation of the unique ecology of Loktak Lake. Pr CCF cum chief Wildlife Warden Manipur S Chhabra IFS also highlighted the critical ecological status of Keibul Lamjao Floating National Park & the alarming situation of its biodiversity, which is a serious threat to the existence of world-famous Sangai (unique deer species of the world). He strongly suggested revisiting the modernisation plan of the Loktak Hydel Project before execution to avoid further adverse impacts. Also Read | It's official now! Bollywood's Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram to tie knot in Imphal The chairman of LDA also conveyed

the Manipur government's earnest commitment to conserving and effectively managing Loktak Lake and its associated wetlands.

He emphasised chief minister N Biren Singh's aspiration to restore the lake to its pristine grandeur. The chairman extended a warm invitation, on behalf of the CM, to officials from various ministries and agencies under the union government for a chief minister-level joint meeting in Imphal soon. This meeting aims to establish a platform for in-depth discussions, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the pertinent issues, and facilitating collaborative solutions for a balanced and sustainable future. He also expressed sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEF&CC), government of India, for organizing such an important meeting. The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of environment, forest & climate change, water resources (jal shakti), power, govt of India, Central Water Commission, NHPC Ltd, WISA, Pr CCF, Manipur & PD, SE (wetland), LDA, paddy at the fields of Bamungao under the Khagarijan block. The event, conducted on Thursday, featured the utilisation of a mini combine harvester, bringing a wave of enthusiasm among local farmers.

The initiative, part of the Assam

Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART), was inaugurated by Dr Niranjana Deka, principal scientist, and head of KVK, Nagaon. Dr Deka, in his inaugural speech, welcomed distinguished guests and participants, highlighting the program's objectives and the benefits of employing the mini combine harvester. Dr Vipin Kumar, associate scientist at IRRI, emphasised the various objectives achieved under the APART, IRRI project, highlighting the introduced mechanisation and the advantages of utilising modern machinery in agriculture. The event saw the participation of Ranjan P Deka, DAO, Nagaon; Kanchar Pator Bordoloi, ZPC Khagarijan block, and over a hundred farmers from different blocks of Nagaon district. The program included a hands-on demonstration of the mini combine harvester by Priyanka Deka and Rajib Panging, showcasing the efficient harvesting of Bahadur Sub1 variety paddy.

Pabitra Kumar Nath and Janmejy Biswal, experts in their field, operated the mini combine harvester, leaving participants impressed with its capabilities. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr N. Deka, head of KVK, Nagaon, as per an official release. This grand harvest marks a significant step towards agricultural modernisation in the region.



# No anti-incumbency, Congress will form govt in Rajasthan again: CM Ashok Gehlot

**JODHPUR, Nov 25:** Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday said there is no anti-incumbency against the Congress and the party will form the government in the state again.

"There seems to be an undercurrent. Looks like the (Congress) government will be repeated," he said as voting got underway in the state.

Gehlot told PTI in Jodhpur that the Congress focused its campaign on development issues while BJP leaders, including the prime minister, home minister and chief ministers of BJP-ruled states, used provocative language.

He said the BJP leaders who came from outside, including the prime minister and the Union home minister, tried to instigate people.

"The public has understood. It appears that the Congress government will come again," he told PTI in Jodhpur.

"We made good laws for the welfare of gig workers and on right to health and brought schemes for people and gave guarantees," he said.

The Congress has given seven guarantees, or promises, to people if the party retains power in the state, including an annual honorarium of ₹ 10,000 to the woman head of a family and LPG cylinders for ₹ 500 to 1.05 crore families.

Citing the example of Kerala, he said that the government there was repeated based on its work for the management of the coronavirus pandemic and in Rajasthan also, the Congress government did excellent work on this front.

Asked why the BJP was targeting only him over various issues such as the "red diary", he said BJP leaders are upset that they could not topple his government despite indulging in horse-trading. A sacked minister had claimed that the "red diary" contained financial dealings of the chief minister.

"They are bringing down elected governments through horse-trading. The method they have adopted is a matter of concern for democracy. We tried our best in Rajasthan and did not let the government fall. The public was with us," Gehlot said.

The chief minister said the language the BJP leaders used was unacceptable. "They were talking provocatively. We challenged them to talk on local issues, talk on our schemes," he said.

Asked whether he will be the chief minister if the Congress forms the government again, he said that it is a tradition in the Congress that the AICC sends observers to take opinion of MLAs and then a resolution is passed, leaving all things for the high command and the decision of the high command



is acceptable to all.

After casting his vote in Jodhpur later in the day, Gehlot told reporters, the credibility of his government was high and he feels the government will be repeated.

He said the BJP leaders who came from outside to campaign in Rajasthan will not be seen here for five years.

"This is not the election of Modi.

This is the state assembly elections. They will not be seen in the state for five years. We will remain here, among the people," he said.

He was reacting to a question on the BJP's election campaign led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Expressing confidence about retaining power, he said, "The kind of atmosphere that is there, I can say that the

Congress government will come again."

The chief minister's son and Rajasthan Cricket Association president Vaibhav Gehlot said the seven guarantees promised by the Congress to the people of Rajasthan will turn out to be a masterstroke.

He also said the allegations against his father regarding the "red diary" were "fabricated".

"The seven guarantees will prove to be a masterstroke for the Congress," Vaibhav Gehlot told reporters in Jodhpur before going to cast his vote.

Asked whether his father will become the chief minister for a fourth time if the party retains power, he said it is for the party high command to take a decision on it.

He asserted that all leaders in the Congress were united.

Polling began Saturday morning for the 199 assembly seats in Rajasthan where the BJP is going all out to wrest power from the Congress which hopes to beat the state's anti-incumbency tradition.

Rajasthan has a total of 200 assembly seats but polling will be held on 199 seats as election in Karanpur of Sriganganagar district was postponed following the death of Congress candidate Gurmeet Singh Koonar. (PTI)

BJP accuses Rahul, Priyanka of poll code violation with their X posts, seeks EC's action

**NEW DELHI, Nov 25:** The BJP Saturday accused Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of violating poll guidelines with their posts on X on the day of the Rajasthan assembly polls and urged the Election Commission to seek suspension of their social media accounts and initiate other actions against them.

In their posts, both Congress leaders have urged people to vote for their party.

The BJP wrote to the Election Commission, saying their posts violate the silence period of 48 hours in the run-up to polls, a period during which most form of campaigning is barred.

The party accused the former Congress president and his sister, a general secretary of the party, of violating the Representation of the People Act and the Model Code of Conduct and sought the EC's action.

The poll watchdog has reiterated that TV, radio channels, cable networks, internet websites and social media platforms should ensure that the contents of the programmes by them during 48 hours referred to in Section 126 (RP Act) do not contain any material that may be construed as promoting or prejudicing the prospect of any particular party or candidate.

In his post, Gandhi urged people to elect the Congress and said, "Rajasthan will choose free treatment. Rajasthan will choose cheaper gas cylinder. Rajasthan will choose interest-free agricultural loan. Rajasthan will choose English education. Rajasthan will choose OPS. Rajasthan will choose caste census."

Vadra urged the people of Rajasthan to cast their ballot. "Your every vote, for a beautiful future, for rights, for Congress' guarantees," she said, listing the promises made by her party.

The BJP, in its complaint to the EC, said, "The social media platform X and its functionalities may also be directed to immediately suspend the account and remove the aforesaid offending contents with immediate effect lest it further violates the 48-hour silence zone and cause irreparable injury to the doctrine of free and fair elections."

It said the poll panel should also direct the chief election officer, Rajasthan, to file a criminal complaint and initiate criminal prosecution against them. (PTI)

## Security situation not alarming in J&K, terror attacks nothing but pin-pricks caused by Pak: DGP

**JAMMU, Nov 25:** Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police (DGP) R R Swain on Saturday said the situation in the Union Territory is not alarming as is being projected, while describing terror attacks in the valley as "pin-pricks" orchestrated at the behest of Pakistan with a sole motive to sell the bloodshed to keep its politics and economy running.

However, Swain said all the security agencies, with active public support, are determined to put an end to such "pin-pricks or cuts" as the Indian State and its government have the will to defeat terrorism and not allow it to become a cause of concern where normal life is derailed.

The police chief also said they have, at times, thought of getting photographs of slain foreign terrorists circulated through the Interpol so that their parents at least get to know that their children are dead.

The DGP was interacting with reporters during his first public grievance redressal meeting at the police headquarters in the winter capital of Jammu.

Replying to a question on the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of a recent encounter in Rajouri where five Army personnel and two foreign terrorists were killed, he said, "I do not think we should be over-alarmed. Yes, there is a porous and difficult border and a whole country (Pakistan) and a whole system is subverted and convoluted, so we have a challenge.

"No one is shying away from the reality that there is a challenge, but the Indian State and its government have the will and resoluteness to defeat it (terrorism) and not allow it to become a cause of concern where normal life, business activities, peace and security would be derailed (in Jammu and Kashmir)," Swain said.

He said people, especially those living in Jammu province, should remain mentally alert because the intent of the adversary

continues to be inimical even as its capability to harm is not as it intends to project.

The DGP said isolated incidents keep taking place but a terror attack does not mean that terrorists are in a position to take over the region.

He said Jammu and Kashmir is a border state with legacy issues.

"There is an enemy with an intent which is linked to its politics and economy. They are moving in their own ecosystem and we have to remain prepared mentally to fight it (terrorism)."

"Today, we had a meeting with the Army and other security agencies, and we were very satisfied that people themselves are coming forward to inform us (about terrorists). The flow of information shows that the people are willing to be a partner in this fight," the police chief said.

He said the enemy can only "pin-prick us or go for a cut, but we are like an elephant, a lion and if they think by doing so, they will pull us down, they are mistaken".

Swain said the perpetrators of violence are selling the bloodshed in Jammu and Kashmir to serve their interest.

"They are misleading their public and recruiting the children of poor citizens (for terrorism) even as they themselves are living a lavish life in bungalows and playing golf," he said.

Swain said the security agencies are working to put an end to the pin-pricks and cuts from the enemy. "We are finding ways, collecting all our energies and sitting with the public to end terrorism," he added.

The DGP said there are elements who have infiltrated into the Indian side from across the border and when they are killed in encounters, their identities remain unknown.

"We have thought of getting their photos circulated through the Interpol, so that their parents at least get to know that their children have been killed," he said. (PTI)

## BJP alone can bring in change in Telangana: Union Home Minister Amit Shah

**HYDERABAD, Nov 25:** Asserting that only the BJP can bring change in Telangana, union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday said a vote for either the Congress or AIMIM would be a vote for the BRS. Speaking to reporters here, he alleged that the track record of AIMIM and Congress indicated that the two parties had supported the BRS.

"Whenever Owaisi's MLAs were elected due to appeasement politics, they supported BRS. The Congress legislators who were elected, they later joined BRS. That means, your vote for change of regime in the state would definitely be wasted if it is for Congress," he said.

Reacting to Congress' allegation of a tacit understanding between the BJP and BRS, he said both the parties cannot have any truck.

"Question does not arise at all. I would like to make it clear that there can never be any ideological understanding between BJP and BRS. There can neither be political

nor tactical alliance," Shah said.

To a question on Congress' charge that BJP-led Centre is protecting the BRS vis-a-vis corruption, he said the issues which are in domain of the Centre, the process of investigation is underway.

"But probe cannot take place as per the poll calendar," the BJP leader said. If BJP comes to power in Telangana, it will order investigation into each allegation of corruption and those responsible would be sent to jail, he assured.

Targeting the BRS government over its alleged failures, Shah said barring engaging in corruption in the last 10 years, the chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao-led dispensation has done nothing concrete for the people.

"Today youth, farmers, Dalits and backward people are totally disappointed. Telangana people believe that BRS did nothing else, but corruption," he claimed and said the state which was revenue surplus is now reeling under debt

of lakhs of crores of rupees.

Appealing to voters to vote for the BJP, Shah said the NDA government has fulfilled all the promises it made, ranging from construction of Ram Temple, abrogation of article 370 or abolishing triple talaq.

"Your (people of Telangana) vote will not just decide the fate of an MLA or a government, but the future of Telangana and the country. I appeal to you to vote only after analysing the performance of each and every party. I am confident that you will vote for PM Modi-led BJP once you do an analysis of all parties," he added.

Asked about his reported comments in the past on Rohingyas, he said NIA has taken steps vis-a-vis intruders and Rohingyas.

Reacting to reports of documents like voter cards being "sold" in West Bengal, the union home minister said a detailed investigation is underway and that none will be spared.

Shah also highlighted BJP's election promises, including four LPG

## Operation to rescue 41 workers trapped in Silkyara tunnel may take long time: NDMA

**NEW DELHI, Nov 25:** The operation to rescue 41 workers trapped in the Silkyara tunnel may take a long time with the auger machine for horizontal drilling facing repeated hurdles and rescuers are now preparing to start vertical drilling, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said on Saturday.

The vertical drilling will start in the next 24 to 36 hours, NDMA member Lt Gen (retd) Syed Ata Hasnain said, adding the front part of the auger machine was broken and efforts are being made to retrieve those from the tunnel.

"We need to have patience as it is a dangerous operation ... 'is operation main lamba samay lag sakta hai' (this operation may take a long time)," he said, without mentioning any timeline for the completion of rescue operations.

Drilling at the collapsed portion of the Silkyara tunnel to rescue the trapped men halted again on Friday night after the auger machine engaged in drilling through the rubble to prepare an escape passage faced a hurdle, apparently a metal object, and busted.

The NDMA member said 47 meters of horizontal drilling have been done, and efforts are on to remove the broken part of the auger machine.

Rescuers are exploring other options such as drilling the remaining stretch manually and undertaking vertical drilling.

On the vertical drilling option, the NDMA member said that machines are being placed on a platform on top of the tunnel and vertical drilling operations will start in the "next 24 to 36 hours". (PTI)

## Soumya Vishwanathan murder: Four convicts sentenced to life imprisonment

**NEW DELHI, Nov 25:** A court here on Saturday sentenced four convicts to life imprisonment for killing TV journalist Soumya Vishwanathan in 2008 while the fifth convict was sent to three years in jail.

While sentencing Ravi Kapoor, Amit Shukla, Baljeet Malik and Ajay Kumar to life imprisonment, the court of Additional Sessions Judge Ravindra Kumar Pandey also imposed a fine of ₹ 1.25 lakh on each of them.

The fifth convict, Ajay Sethi, was sentenced to three years of simple imprisonment along with a fine of ₹ 7.25 lakh. The court, however, noted that he had already undergone more than 14 years of imprisonment.

The court also ordered that of the total fine amount imposed on the convicts, ₹ 12 lakh will be paid to the victim's family.

Ordering the quantum of punishment, the additional sessions judge said the offence does not fall in the category of rarest of rare cases. So request for death penalty is refused, he



said.

During the proceedings, the victim's mother Madhavi Vishwanathan told the court that she has been waiting for justice for over 15 years.

Soumya Vishwanathan, who was working with a leading English news channel, was shot dead in the early hours of September 30, 2008, on south Delhi's Nelson Mandela Marg while she was returning home from work. Police claimed the motive was robbery.

On October 18, the court convicted Ravi Kapoor, Amit Shukla, Baljeet Malik, and Ajay Kumar under Indian Penal Code section 302 (murder) and Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) provisions for committing organised crime resulting in the death of any person.

Ajay Sethi was convicted under IPC section 411 (dishonestly receiving stolen property) and MCOCA provisions for conspiring to abet, aid, or knowingly facilitate organised crime and receiving proceeds of organised crime.

According to the prosecution, Ravi Kapoor shot Vishwanathan with a country-made pistol on September 30, 2008, on Nelson Mandela Marg in South Delhi while chasing the victim's car to rob her. Amit Shukla, Ajay Kumar and Baljeet Malik were also with Kapoor.

Police recovered the car used in the murder from the fifth accused Ajay Sethi alias Chacha. (PTI)

## PM Modi undertakes sortie on Tejas aircraft, says experience was incredibly enriching

**BENGALURU, Nov 25:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday undertook a sortie on the Tejas aircraft and said the experience has bolstered his confidence in the country's indigenous capabilities.

Clad in the uniform of an Air Force pilot, a delightful Modi seemed to enjoy the moments as he waved multiple times.

Taking to social media platform 'X', the prime minister said, "Successfully completed a sortie on the Tejas."

"The experience was incredibly enriching, significantly bolstering my confidence in our country's indigenous capabilities, and leaving me with a renewed sense of pride and optimism about our national potential," he said.

In the videos and pictures, the prime minister can be seen flash-



ing thumbs-up gestures with a broad smile, after boarding the aircraft and on landing.

He also posed standing next to the aircraft, pointing at 'Tejas'

writing on it.

"Flying in Tejas today, I can say with immense pride that due to our hard work and dedication, we are no less than anyone in the world in

the field of self-reliance. Heartiest congratulations to the Indian Air Force, DRDO and HAL as well as all Indians," he added.

Modi earlier walked towards the waiting pilot and had a short chat with him, before boarding the twin-seater aircraft and positioning himself properly with the help of Air Force staff.

During the sortie, he can be seen keenly observing the surroundings and waving at another fighter aircraft, flying at a visible distance -- taken from cameras inside the cabin and the other aircraft.

On landing, the prime minister, waved and made thumbs-up gestures again, applauding the Air Force officials. Modi arrived in the city earlier today and visited Defence PSU Hindustan Aeronautics Limited to review the ongoing

work at its manufacturing facilities, officials said.

The prime minister has been pushing for indigenous production of defence products and highlighting how his government has boosted their manufacturing in India and also their exports.

Several countries have evinced interest in buying Tejas, a light combat aircraft, and US defence giant GE Aerospace had inked a pact with HAL to jointly produce engines for the Mk-II-Tejas during the prime minister's recent state visit to the US.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh noted in April this year that India's defence exports have reached an all-time high of ₹ 15,920 crore in 2022-2023. It is a remarkable achievement for the country, he had said. (PTI)

## Jitendra Singh inaugurates 60th anniversary celebrations of ISRO's rocket launch

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Nov 25:** Union minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday inaugurated the 60th-anniversary celebrations of ISRO's rocket launch and lauded the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) for its pivotal role in turning India's space aspirations into reality.

Addressing the programme here, union minister of state for science and technology & atomic energy and space (Independent Charge) noted that the success of the Chandrayaan mission aligns with the 60th year of ISRO's inaugural rocket launch.

In his address, minister of state for external affairs and parliamentary affairs V Muralidharan commended ISRO's global contributions, citing the praise received from dignitaries during official foreign visits.

He emphasised that India's

achievements, not just in space but also in science and technology, are a source of pride for many heads of state.

Presided over by ISRO chairman S Somanath, the event was attended by VSSC director Dr S Unnikrishnan Nair, IIST Chancellor Dr B N Suresh, former SPL director Prof R Sasidharan, and other dignitaries.

A rocket launch, reminiscent of the historic 1963 event, was organised from the same spot.

The celebration featured an RH 200 rocket launch, a space technology exhibition, interactions with students, and enlightening lectures by scientists.

The gathering highlighted the journey of ISRO and VSSC in shaping India's standing in space exploration, reaffirming the country's prowess in the field. (PTI)



# Delhi LG gives nod to filing appeal in SC against acquittal of six accused in 1984 anti-Sikh riots case

**NEW DELHI, Nov 25:** Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has given his approval for filing a special leave petition in the Supreme Court against a July 10 Delhi High Court order which acquitted six accused in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case, officials said on Saturday.

Saxena also "slammed" the prosecution department of the Delhi government for the alleged "callous delay" in the matter, the officials of the LG's office said.

The LG directed the Home Department to identify and fix accountability of officials responsible for causing the delay and sought a report within seven days, they said.

The case pertains to looting and rioting during the anti-Sikh riots in the Saraswati Vihar police station (now Subhash Place) area in north-west Delhi, involving the six accused -- Hari Lal, Mangal, Dharampal, Azad, Om Prakash and Abdul Habib.

"The LG approved the proposal of the Home Department for filing a special leave petition in the apex court against the judgement of the High Court on July 10, 2023, in



which it dismissed the government's appeal against the trial court verdict acquitting all the accused," the officials said.

The High Court had said that there was no explanation for the "inordinate delay" of 28 years in filing the appeal against the March 28, 1995 trial court verdict and the grounds taken by the state were "not justifiable", they said.

In a similar case, Saxena had earlier granted his approval for filing a special leave petition in the

Supreme Court against the acquittal of 12 people in another anti-Sikh riots case registered at Nangloi police station.

After going through the chronology of litigation in the present case, the LG noted that though the approval for filing an appeal before the Delhi High Court was accorded in December 2020, the appeal was filed in 2023, after a delay of more than two years, the officials said.

Saxena observed that it is a mat-

ter of "grave concern" that such cases of "crime against humanity" are dealt with in a "very casual and routine manner", leading to an "inordinate delay" in filing the appeal, they said.

He said "inordinate delays" in such cases should be viewed seriously and stringent action should be taken against the delinquent officers. In its order on January 11, 2018, the Supreme Court ordered the constitution of a special investigation team (SIT) for further investigation with respect to 186 cases related to the 1984 riots and the instant case was a part of these cases, officials said.

The SIT comprising Justice (ret'd) S N Dhingra and IPS officer Abhishek, was constituted to examine the matter related to the riots through a notification dated February 9, 2018.

The SIT submitted its report on April 15, 2019, saying that the present case was a fit case where the prosecution should have filed an appeal immediately after the judgement. It also recommended that an appeal with an application of condonation of the delay may be filed, the officials said. (PTI)

## Property dealer shot at by four youths at his house in Faridabad

**FARIDABAD, Nov 25:** A 68-year-old property dealer was allegedly shot at by four youths at his house on Friday late evening, police said.

The bullet hit Naresh Mittal in the chest, leaving him critically injured and he is being treated at a hospital, police said on Saturday.

It is being said that there was a dispute between the accused and Naresh Mittal regarding the purchase and sale of land in Nainital (Uttarakhand). Following the complaint of the dealer's son, an FIR was registered at the Faridabad Central police station and two accused were arrested, said police.

The property dealer lives alone at his house in sector 15 A, where he has kept a woman named Tulsi at home as a domestic

help, according to the complaint filed by the victim's son Ashok Mittal.

"On Friday evening, around 7.15 pm, one of my acquaintances informed me on the phone that Kulwant Chahal, a resident of Sector 15 A, had shot my father. I reached there and rushed my father to the hospital.

My father told me that Kulwant had come along with three other people to transact money in a land-related matter and during the argument they shot at him," as Naresh said in his complaint.

Following the complaint, an FIR was registered against Kulwant and others under relevant sections of the IPC and the Arms Act on Friday night. (PTI)

## Haryana State Crime Records Bureau initiates overhaul of its Fingerprint Bureau

**CHANDIGARH, Nov 25:** In a move to bolster efficiency in crime investigation, the Haryana State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) has initiated a comprehensive overhaul of its Fingerprint Bureau.

This revamp focuses on enhancing fingerprint analysis by deploying experts directly to district Superintendent of Police (SP) offices and equipping mobile forensic science units, officials said on Saturday.

The initiative aims to maximize the collection and verification of 'chance prints' at crime scenes, which are often crucial in solving cases. Chance impressions are often the invisible patterns made by fingerprints that are usually left at crime scenes or on objects recovered from crime scenes.

The verification process will be conducted through the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS), operated by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The move is expected to significantly improve the accuracy and speed of criminal investigations, they said.

The SCRB has also launched refresher courses for hundreds of police officials.

These courses are designed to update and sharpen their skills in lifting and analysing fingerprints, a fundamental aspect of forensic science that can often be the key to unlocking a case, said Additional DGP O P Singh, the director of SCRB.

The emphasis on fingerprint analysis is not new, but the scale and integration of this initiative are unprecedented. By situating fingerprint experts within district SP offices and mobile units, the SCRB ensures immediate and expert analysis of prints collected at crime scenes, streamlining the process

which previously faced delays or other hurdles.

Additionally, a proposal is underway to incentivize postings in the Fingerprint Bureau. Such incentives are expected to attract more skilled personnel to the field of fingerprint analysis, officials said. Underpinning this initiative is the extensive use of NAFIS, a powerful tool in the arsenal of forensic science. NAFIS, with its database of fingerprints from arrestees and convicts, has 64 locations across the state.

The integration of district-level efforts with this centralized system will facilitate a more cohesive approach to crime solving, they said.

"Uploading of fingerprints from all arrestees and convicts into the NAFIS database is a critical component of this overhaul. It allows for a comprehensive database that aids in not just solving current cases but also in re-examining past unsolved crimes.

"The potential for cross-referencing and identifying repeat offenders is greatly enhanced, making this a formidable tool against crime," Singh said.

The SCRB's initiative marks a significant advancement in forensic science application within law enforcement in the state. By improving the speed and accuracy of fingerprint analysis and integrating these efforts with a centralized database, the SCRB is poised to make a substantial impact on crime investigation and resolution, he said.

"As we embark on this transformative journey with the revamp of our Fingerprint Bureau, our focus remains steadfast on harnessing the power of advanced forensic science for the betterment of law enforcement," Singh said. (PTI)

## J&K admin sanctions ₹ 32 cr for restoration of Doodh Ganga

**SRINAGAR, Nov 25:** The Jammu and Kashmir administration has sanctioned Rs 32 crore for the restoration of the Doodh Ganga and Mamath Kull streams in the valley after the NGT directed it to pay compensation for discharging untreated sewage into the water bodies.

In October last year, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) said there were "serious lapses" on the part of the administration in waste management as well as in failing to control illegal mining and asked it to pay a compensation of Rs 35 crore.

"There are serious lapses on the part of the administration in waste management and in failing to control illegal mining which has resulted in huge damage to the environment and public health," the NGT had said in an order while hearing an application moved by activist Raja Muzaffar Bhat.

The tribunal said the amount to be used for the restoration of the environment, which will include preventing the discharge of sewage in an unsanitary manner in drains or otherwise and improving the water quality of the drain.

While filing its response in the tribunal on Thursday, the Counsel appearing for the State submitted that the action plan in terms of the directions of the tribunal has been approved.

He provided the details of the sanctioned amount of Rs 32 crore which included a Sewerage Treatment Plant for daily dry weather flow discharging into Doodh Ganga Nallah at an amount of Rs 28.93 crore. The counsel also told the tribunal that Rs 3.07 crore has been sanctioned for the beautification and restoration of the aesthetic view of the Mamath Kull and Doodh Ganga in Budgam district.

The tribunal has directed the counsel for the state to disclose if the aforesaid sanctioned amount has been released by filing of the fresh report, on the next date of hearing -- February 7, 2024.

"He is directed to place on record the copy of the action plan as well as the details relating to the release of the amount for the specified purpose. Let the fresh report disclosing the current status be filed at least one week before the next date of hearing," the NGT said. (PTI)

be unfulfilled without the operation of a new airport (expansion of the existing airport), it said. Moreover, adequate and efficient cargo transportation and handling capacity are critically essential for the several high-tech industries that Tamil Nadu presently has and intends to attract, it added.

The proposed new greenfield airport would be beneficial as it would see increased and improved facilities to handle domestic and international passengers and cargo, catalytic effect on economic growth by increased tourists and business travel, and boost the progress of hospitality.

Quoting a study by the Airport Authority of India, the order said the proposed site in Parandur is more feasible for the development of a greenfield airport due to the availability of airspace and relatively free of natural obstructions. As per the findings of the feasibility study carried out by AAI and detailed analysis by TIDCO the Parandur site is the most suitable for the development of a greenfield airport as it is nearer to the upcoming Chennai-Bengaluru expressway.

Further, the number of families to be displaced is lesser, it said. (PTI)

## Centre open to states' suggestions for cooperation policy: Suresh Prabhu

**PATNA, Nov 25:** National Cooperation Policy Committee Chairman Suresh Prabhu on Saturday said the Centre is open to consider suggestions from states for inclusion in the proposed policy.

Addressing a workshop for the East and North-East zones, Prabhu said the New Cooperation Policy 2023 is being finalised.

"The central government is open to incorporate valuable suggestions from all stakeholders (states) in the New Cooperation Policy 2023, which is being finalised. The objective of the Centre is to bring structural reforms and governance, make cooperatives vibrant economic entities and provide a level playing field for them (cooperatives)," he said.

Besides, the inclusion of priority sections, use of technology, upskilling and training and sustainability are other objectives of the proposed policy, the former union minister said.

"Cooperative societies in Bihar have a lot of potential. They can play a pivotal role in strengthening the rural economy and also bringing a cooperative movement in the country," Prabhu said.

He assured the officials that the draft committee has taken utmost care in protecting the states' autonomy and federal characters.

"Cooperatives must penetrate in all spheres of sectors for better survival and wider outreach", he said.

The panel for drafting the new National Cooperation Policy was

formed by the Centre in September last year.

Speaking at the workshop, Bihar Cooperative Department Additional Chief Secretary Dipak Kumar Singh emphasised that states must be given autonomy to set the financial parameters towards ranking the cooperative institutions.

"While considering universal branding, we must give importance to already established brands of states for inclusiveness of marketing in this era of globalisation," he said. The workshop was attended by Cooperative department officials of Bihar, Jharkhand, Sikkim, Odisha and several other states of the East and North-East zones. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Govt takes new step to bring

across the state over the last two years. Out of them, the highest 4,203 cadres belonged to the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB), followed by 1,926 from various Karbi militant organisations and 1,182 from a number of Adivasi extremist groups.

They received skill development training under the surrender-cum-rehabilitation policy and 'Swavalamban' scheme and are now leading a dignified life, Sarma had earlier posted on X. (With inputs from PTI)

## Assam products have great

and appreciated the array of products on display. In the visitors' notebook, Chauhan wrote, 'Very nice display of handicrafts and handloom of Assam. Good that the old and traditional culture of Assam has been preserved...'

## Former militants' organisation marks

informed that the government has disbursed Rs. 1,50,000 each to the cadres of UPDS after signing the Accord and nothing after that. They were tricked by the sweet words of the political leaders. The Centre and Assam government should stop cheating them again. The MoS is hanging in the middle.

Former leaders and cadres of the organisation also attended the program.

## Village volunteer killed in

people, including an IRB (Indian Reserve Battalion) personnel, were killed in an ambush near Haraothel village in Kangpokpi district. (PTI)

## 14 more Israeli hostages likely

2007, led a deadly attack on Israel on October 7 killing about 1,200 people and taking around 240 hostage prompting Israel to declare a full-fledged war in Gaza which has seen massive destruction in the choked coastal Strip and loss of more than 14,000 lives as per the Gaza Health ministry.

Israel has released a list of 300 Palestinian prisoners that can be set free on the basis of the 1:3 exchange method, meaning three Palestinian prisoners will be released for every Israeli hostage coming out of captivity.

This has set anxiety and expectations in the related Palestinian families who see a possibility of their family member coming out but also uncertainty given that it is based on the number of hostages that get released.

The deal brokered by Qatar, Egypt and the United States leaves room for extending the "pause in fighting" with Israel agreeing to extend it by an extra day for every ten captives being released beyond the 50 agreed.

The remaining 24 hostages out of the 50 agreed for release are likely to come out in batches of 12 on Sunday and Monday.

The "pause in fighting" or "temporary ceasefire" went into effect on Friday morning and 7 AM.

According to local media reports, eight of the 13 hostages to be released on Saturday will be children. Only four of the 13 Israelis released on Friday were children.

After reviewing the list, Israeli security officials notified the hostages' families, the PMO said.

Israeli authorities had notified both the families of the hostages being released Friday as well as those who were not on the first list.

As part of a separate deal, 11 foreign nationals, including 10 Thai nationals and a Filipino, were released by Hamas on Friday. (PTI)

## Govt convenes all party

of the Ethics Committee on the "cash-for-query" allegations against TMC MP Mahua Moitra will be tabled in Lok Sabha during the session.

The House will have to adopt the report before the expulsion recommended by the panel comes into effect. Three key bills which seek to replace the IPC, CrPC and the Evidence Act are likely to be taken up for consideration during the session as the standing committee on Home has already adopted the three reports recently.

Another key bill pending in Parliament relates to the appointment of the chief election commissioner and election commissioners.

Introduced in the Monsoon session, the government had not pushed for its passage in the special session of Parliament amid protests from the opposition and former chief election commissioners as it seeks to bring on a par the status of the CEC and ECs with that of the cabinet secretary. At present, they enjoy the status of a Supreme Court judge. (PTI)

## Caste survey must, Centre should

to do it along with the national census, he pointed out.

"Chhattisgarh is doing a separate caste census, Karnataka has already done a separate caste census, Odisha has announced that it will do a caste census. This will vary from state to state," the Congress leader said.

However, he pointed out that the national census is within the jurisdiction of the central government only.

"The state governments cannot do a national census. Therefore they have decided to do a caste census. But the correct thing to do is (to follow the) 1931 (pattern, when), in the national census you asked people about caste. In the census conducted between 1941 and 2011, you dropped that question. But now if you are doing a national census you must do a caste survey," he said.

Chidambaram went on to pose a question on who will be eligible for the 10 per cent quota for the 'economically weak section (EWS)' in India and said that is why the caste count is necessary.

"Who will access the 10 per cent quota? You must count the SC/ST and OBC and identify what percentages are excluded before you can say who will access the 10 per cent (reservation for EWS). In the judgement of the Supreme Court, only 82 per cent are excluded but this is only an estimation by somebody," he said.

Without a caste survey, it is not possible to know how many are excluded, the former union minister said. "The OBC is now divided into OBC and MBC (most backward class). If you have 27 per cent for the OBC, it is far less than their proportion in the population. Leave that aside. Because in the SC judgement, the total reservation cannot exceed 50, only economically weaker sections reservation of 10 per cent is allowed (beyond that)," he said.

A caste survey is also necessary for two reasons - to know the number of MBC people and to ascertain whether their reservation is justified, Chidambaram said.

"Unless you do a count who is MBC, how do you know whether the reservation is equal or disproportional or more than justified or less than justified," he pointed out. (PTI)

## Health experts urge govt to

six years have passed since the implementation of the GST, and there has been no substantial tax hike on tobacco products during this period, it is crucial for the Union government to consider increasing taxes on tobacco beyond minor increments in NCCD, which make up less than 10 per cent of the overall taxes imposed on tobacco.

"When the government refrains from raising taxes on tobacco, the tobacco companies independently elevate prices, thereby boosting their profits. Consequently, the augmented revenue that the government could have collected is redirected toward industry profits," Dr John said.

According to the experts, increasing excise on all tobacco products can be a very effective policy measure to address the immediate need to raise revenue by the central government. It will be a winning proposition for generating revenue and reducing tobacco use and related diseases.

"Tobacco use which is a slow-moving pandemic itself claims the lives of 13 lakh Indians each year. It is critical that never before to keep tobacco products out of the hands of vulnerable populations like youth and the underprivileged sections of society.

"Nearly 50 per cent of all cancers in India are due to tobacco. It is in the interest of the users as well as for the country to increase taxes on all tobacco products. This will reduce their affordability and consumption," said Pankaj Chaturvedi, head and neck cancer surgeon at the Tata Memorial Hospital.

The Parliament Standing Committee on health recently submitted a comprehensive report on Cancer Care Plan and Management in which it undertook a detailed study of the causes of cancer in India and noted with concern that in India, "the highest number of lives lost is due to oral cancer caused by tobacco, followed by cancer of the lungs, oesophagus and stomach."

It also noted that tobacco use is one of the most prominent risk factors associated with cancer.

In view of these alarming observations, the committee has noted that India has one of the lowest prices for tobacco products and there is a need to increase taxes on tobacco products. The Committee recommended the government to raise taxes on tobacco and utilize the additional revenue gained for cancer prevention and awareness.

India has the second largest number (268 million) of tobacco users in the world and of these 13 lakh die every year from tobacco-related diseases, experts said.

Nearly 27 per cent of all cancers in India are due to tobacco. (PTI)

## TN govt gives nod for acquiring 3,774 acres of patta land for Greenfield airport for Chennai

**CHENNAI, Nov 25:** The Tamil Nadu government has issued orders to facilitate acquisition of 3,774.01 acres of land in Parandur and 19 other villages in Kancheepuram district for setting up a greenfield airport for Chennai, and the people who are likely to be displaced by the project staunchly opposed the move and held protests.

The government has also cleared the decks for the alienation of 1,972.12 acres of government lands in the 19 villages for the airport project. The Government Order for administrative sanction for the special land acquisition and financial sanction has been issued.

Supported by environment activists, villagers descended upon the Kancheepuram collectorate and staged a protest urging the state government to drop its move to acquire their patta (land owned by them) lands. For over a year, people in villages including Ekanapuram are holding daily protests against the land acquisition for the airport project, which is expected to come up at an outlay of approximately ₹ 20,000 crore.

The lands for the second airport would be acquired under the provi-



sions of the Tamil Nadu Acquisition of Lands for Industrial Purposes Act, 1997, in Kancheepuram and Sriperumbudur Taluks in favour of TIDCO for setting up the greenfield airport at Parandur.

Totally, about 5,746.18 acres of land including 3,774.01 acres of patta land and 1,972.17 acres of government lands to be alienated are required for the project.

The state government has proposed to set up a greenfield international airport to augment airport infrastructure and facilities to cater to the ever-growing air connectivity needs of passenger transportation

and cargo movement to and from the state.

"It is a strategic imperative to have robust air connectivity for a wide range of economic reasons for industrial growth, tourism, health-care, logistics, and e-commerce," the order issued recently said.

The air passenger traffic of Chennai region is expected to reach 50 million by 2037 and grow further, the 21-page order said. As per the traffic growth forecast, Chennai International Airport will reach its saturation by 2028, and beyond 2028 the air passenger traffic demands of the Chennai metropolitan area will



## Film festivals play important role in nurturing students of cinema, says Nawazuddin Siddiqui

**PANAJI, Nov 25:** Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui believes film festivals play a significant role in enriching and helping students of cinema.

Siddiqui, the star of movies such as "Kahaani", "Talaash", "Gangs of Wasseypur" series and OTT show "Sacred Games" is attending the 54th edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) here.

"A festival like IFFI is very important for our country as it will help all the students of cinema and storytellers, who have interests in writing and directing. There are various master-classes and sessions happening here. You see movies and now they are developing a great platform for short films. A lot of good initiatives and programs are being introduced," the 49-year-old actor said. During his student days, the actor said, there wasn't much programming at film festivals but the scenario has changed immensely.

"Today, a lot of experts come to this festival and tell us about their crafts. And then, there are a lot of activities which will only enrich students and help them in pursuit," he added.

At the NFDC Film Bazaar, organised at the sidelines of the IFFI, Siddiqui participated in a session titled "Books to Screen".

The actor has a wishlist of books and literary works that he believes can be brought alive on the big screen. "There are a lot of books that should be adapted, like the satire of Harishankar Parsai, and then there are authors like Munshi Premchand, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, even the thoughts of Kabir and plays and books of Mohan Rakesh, and there is even Rahi Masoom Raza," Siddiqui said. (PTI)



## THERE WAS NO SCOPE FOR HUMOUR IN 'KADAK SINGH': PANKAJ TRIPATHI

**PANAJI, Nov 25:** Actor Pankaj Tripathi says his upcoming movie "Kadak Singh" marks a departure for him from the slew of comedies he did in the recent past.

Tripathi has tickled the funny bone of the viewers with his performances in movies such as "Fukrey" series, "OMG 2", "Bareilly Ki Barfi", "Mimi", "Ludo" and "Stree". But there was no scope for humour in "Kadak Singh", which is directed by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, said the National Award-winning actor.

"It's a very deep and delicate role, I had to walk a very thin line. I had to ensure that I don't overdo it. There was no place for the bestselling item of my acting -- comedy. There was no scope for humour and I had to be at the edge. The role has multiple shades, it is an intense character," Tripathi told PTI.

According to the makers, "Kadak Singh" follows the perplexing journey of AK Shrivastav (Tripathi) as he battles retrograde amnesia, uncovering a web of conflicting



narratives from his past.

The film was screened at the ongoing 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) as part of the 'World Gala Premiere' section.

The actor said he was moved to tears while watching the film during the screening.

"Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury has made a

very fantastic film and I was watching it on the big screen for the first time. I really feel good because people have liked the film. They watched it non-stop for two hours without getting up from their seats. I also liked it and cried once or twice during the screening," he added. Tripathi, 47, said "Kadak Singh" has a well-written script which delves into "social concerns".

"There is also thriller, human drama and relationship drama, it's a very well-written screenplay and has great dialogues. This film is made with immense love," the actor said.

Also starring Sanjana Sanghi and Parvathy Thiruvothu, "Kadak Singh" is produced by Wiz Films, HT Content Studio, and KVN and co-produced by Shyam Sunder and Indrani Mukherjee. (PTI)

## Want to tell authentic stories about Bihar: 'Pokhar Ke Dunu Paar' director Parth Saurabh

**NEW DELHI, Nov 25:** With "Pokhar Ke Dunu Paar", a film set in his hometown Darbhanga, filmmaker Parth Saurabh believes he has managed to tell an "authentic and lived in" story about Bihar, whose representation in cinema has been mostly as a place riddled with crime.

Saurabh, along with his producer friend Achal Mishra of "Gamak Ghar" and "Dhuin" fame, is quietly bringing about a change in how the city and the state is viewed in cinema. Critics have dubbed their movies as the "Darbhanga wave".

"Growing up, there was very little representation of where I was coming from. Even now, there is very little representation of actual India... Bihar is shown only as the place where crime happens," Saurabh told PTI in an interview.

"That's the only story you saw about your space when you knew there were other more authentic and lived in stories in that space. I am kind of glad that I can tell them while being fresh at it, while preserving some novelty," he added.

"Pokhar Ke Dunu Paar" (On Either Sides of the Pond) has had a glorious run in the film festival circles with critics praising the first time director for his astute storytelling.

The film was screened at the Mumbai Film Festival, Dharamshala International Film Festival, the Habitat India Film Festival and re-

ceived a special mention for the Kutxabank-New Directors Award at the San Sebastian International Film Festival.

While he would want his stories to reach a wider audience, Saurabh is happy that he and Mishra have changed the perception about stories from Bihar.

"It empowered a lot of filmmakers to go back home and tell their own stories in their setting. It's allowed people to realise that telling these stories is okay. And there is an audience for these stories," he said.

The germ of the idea for the film came from a conversation Saurabh had with his sister about their hometown.

"I actually love our hometown Darbhanga and she has a very different opinion of the city. So, that's where the idea took place of telling a gender-based perspective on our small town."

"In 2020 when I went back, I saw the unemployment that was in the city and it found its way in the script. The atmosphere post Covid, the feeling of just being stuck in a place and in time, it kind of combined with this relationship drama and became the film," Saurabh recalled.

The film revolves around Sumit (Abhinav Jha) and Priyanka (Tanaya Khan Jha), a couple who elopes to Delhi but is forced to return to Darbhanga during Covid.

Sumit slips into the comfort of old

friendships and habits but Priyanka feels stuck in the city that she left behind. She wants Sumit to find a job but he whines away his time. Her conservative father lets her know through a go-between that she can come home if she leaves Sumit.

The filmmaker was also keen to explore the idea of love and elopement in a different way than what's depicted in movies, with most sto-



ries revolving around either in easy resolutions or a violent end for lovers.

Saurabh counts Federico Fellini's film "I Vitelloni", Charlie Kaufman's "I'm Thinking of Ending Things" and Dilip Chitre's "Godam" as major influences for his film.

"I knew a lot of stories where peo-

ple elope and they realise their mistake or when things don't work out, I have seen these people return to their old lives. I thought they are not reflected and I wanted to include that in my film," he said.

The film is also an exploration of the idea of home and how it can mean different things to different genders. In fact, the film was initially called "No Road Home", a title

that was changed later.

"Priyanka's search for home is still there. She hasn't found it. Sumit wants to probably exist in his hometown and Priyanka found it when she eloped with him to Delhi. It's kind of a relationship coming to terms with the idea that maybe they want different things," he said. (PTI)

## RANDEEP HOODA, LIN LAISHRAM TO GET MARRIED IN IMPHAL ON NOVEMBER 29



**MUMBAI, Nov 25:** Actors Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram on Saturday announced that they are getting married on November 29 in Imphal, Manipur.

Randeep, 47, and Lin took to Instagram to share the details about their wedding in the latter's hometown, which will be followed by a reception in Mumbai for their film industry friends.

"Taking a leaf out of Mahabharata where Arjuna married Manipuri warrior princess Chitrangada, we are getting married with the blessing from our family and friends."

"We are filled with immense joy to share that our marriage will take

place on the 29th November, 2023, Imphal, Manipur, followed by a reception in Mumbai. As we set to embark on this journey, we seek your blessing and love for this union of cultures, for which we are forever indebted and grateful," the couple said in a joint statement.

The duo has been in a relationship for sometime. Lin, 37, is a model, actor and businesswoman, who has featured in films such as "Mary Kom", "Rangoon" and recently "Jaane Jaan".

Hooda was last seen in movie "Sergeant". His upcoming film is "Swatantrya Veer Savarkar", which he has also directed. (PTI)

## Manoj Bajpayee on lack of independent content on OTT platforms: It's a sad development

**PANAJI, Nov 25:** New voices should be applauded and given a platform, said Manoj Bajpayee as he lamented the lack of mentorship provided by the streaming services to independent filmmakers.

At a panel discussion at the 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), the actor said when the streaming services started in India, they backed independent storytellers but now these platforms are giving priority to blockbuster films.

"One thing that all streaming services started with initially was that they were making independent cinema but that got lost somewhere. For some reason, it has gone down completely and now we see blockbuster films making their way big time. "But the independent cinema movement that started and was getting such mentorship from the OTT platforms, is gone. And that is a very sad development," Bajpayee said.

If there is no independent cinema, then the Indian film industry will not evolve, he stressed.

"We will only grow in terms of money but we will not grow as creative people. New voices should be applauded and given platforms. I think they were doing so beautifully well earlier," he added.

Bajpayee said it is unimaginable for independent films to get funding at par with tentpoles such as Jawan, Pathaan or Tiger 3. "It can't stand a chance and if you're giving shows at 9 am for an independent film, it will never do well. It will fall flat. I really request from this stage to all these platforms that they should revive that mentorship," the actor said.

Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK, the co-creators of Bajpayee's popular OTT series The Family Man, agreed with Bajpayee. "Earlier, all these films were directly made or shown on OTT. Now it is a clause

that it has to play in theatres and only then we will take it," Nidimoru said.

Krishna added, "This is happening worldwide right now. There used to be a time when there would be a film and then there would be an OTT movie. But The Russo Brothers made 'The Gray Man' for Netflix and it is as big as any theatrical film. So now every film is a big film."

Apoorva Bakshi, who backed International Emmy-winning series Delhi Crime and Hunt for Veerappan, said streamers are pouring in resources into making "blockbusters".

"There is no safe home left for independent films and that is happening because a lot of resources are going into the blockbusters. I believe independents help filmmakers to become better show creators and directors," she said.

Raj said being an independent filmmaker taught him and Krishna to be self-

sufficient.

"We didn't know anyone in the industry, we taught ourselves. So this whole package of indie cinema gave us the confidence that wherever you give us, we can make a film, irrespective of the budget and the stars. I think that's what still keeps us going," he said.

Krishna believes independent filmmaking helps in coming to terms with the fact that "you won't get everything you want".

"You kind of adapt then, I think 'jugaad' is the word. You somehow get the job done and that's how we started making films... Then this OTT and series concept came to India. We were fans of the shows from the West but nobody knew how to make a series in India. I think that jugaad mentality and idea of going back and figuring out how it is done, that came in handy," he added. The 54th edition of IFFI will conclude on November 28. (PTI)





SURYA'S 80 AND KISHAN'S HALF-CENTURY LAID THE FOUNDATION OF INDIA'S WIN

# Being one step ahead of 'SKY' is often hard at times, admits Behrendorff



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Nov 25:** Trying to stay a step ahead of players like Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan has always been left-arm pacer Jason Behrendorff's endeavour but it is easier said than done at times, admitted the Australian speedster ahead of the second T20 International against India.

Behrendorff was the only Aussie bowler, who came out unscathed with figures of 1/25 in his full quota even as all others conceded well over 11 runs on an average during India's record run-chase of 209 in the opening game in Visakhapatnam.

Skipper Surya's 80 off 42 balls and Kishan's half-century laid the foundation of India's win.

So, when asked what could possibly be his strategy to stop his Mumbai Indians teammate, Behrendorff replied in jest, "Give the ball to someone else

may be."

"They are all pretty good players and may be try to keep them guessing, just to stay one step ahead which is hard to do at times. Maybe, do what we can in terms of change in pace, line and length," the lanky seamer said during the pre-match media conference on Saturday.

The team management's brief to Behrendorff has been simple, get the ball to jag around and get some breakthroughs in the first six overs of Powerplay.

"I have been pretty fortunate that the ball swung pretty much whenever I have played in India."

"So, sticking to my strength and trying to swing the ball upfront and take wickets in Powerplay, that's what I have been able to do over a period of time," the seamer explained his role.

The man who took 14 wickets in 12 IPL games for Mumbai In-

dians during the 2023 IPL, believes in keeping the line of his deliveries straight as the margin of error is miniscule.

"The main thing was to see if there's any swing upfront and that's my main strength and trying to stick to that. Line-wise, I was generally trying to be straighter than anything because you know in India it can travel to the fence quickly."

"In terms of variations, I try it depending upon the surface and at some places it grips more than others," he explained his thought process.

Behrendorff wasn't a part of the World Cup-winning squad and he utilised the time well, playing domestic cricket and working on improving his existing skill-set.

"I was playing domestic cricket back home and getting ready for this series. Coming to India and playing against them is always a great challenge," he said. (PTI)

## Napoli coach takes some credit for last Serie A title



**NAPLES, ITALY, Nov 25:** Walter Mazzarri believes he contributed to Napoli's runaway title run last season because of the progress he made coaching the southern club a decade ago.

Napoli's Italian Cup triumph in 2012 under Mazzarri was its first trophy since the days when Diego Maradona played for the club. He also coached the team to a runner-up finish in Serie A a season later.

Now Mazzarri is back in charge, having replaced the fired Rudi Garcia, and will make his debut at Atalanta on Saturday with Napoli in fourth place, 10 points behind leader Inter Milan.

"We did a lot. All the progress that the club has made started with me," Mazzarri said Friday in his first news conference since the coaching change was made at the start of the international break. "Then the club did a good job of always improving every year."

So much so that Mazzarri — who has also managed Sampdoria, Inter Milan, Watford, Torino and Cagliari — already maintains that this is the best team he's ever coached.

So can he get Napoli back into the title chase?

"What's the point in making proclamations?" the 62-year-old Mazzarri said. "Let's start winning games, then eventually we can look up. When you come in mid-season like this in such a delicate moment you can't declare goals. We'll take stock at the end of the season."

Garcia's firing came after Napoli lost at home to Empoli — its third home loss this campaign after only two all of last season.

But Napoli striker Victor Osimhen could return against Atalanta from a right thigh injury that has kept him out for more than a month. Still, it's not an easy debut against an Atalanta team only one point behind Napoli. "It's one of the toughest matches," Mazzarri said. "It's not easy for anyone to face Atalanta." (AP)

## Craig Fulton conducts coaching session for domestic head coaches

**CHENNAI, Nov 25:** Indian men's hockey team chief coach Craig Fulton has conducted a coaching session for the head coaches of member units, who are currently participating in the 13th Senior Men National Championship.

The session was organised at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium here on Friday to upgrade coaching standards at the domestic level. The session allowed a platform for the coaches to exchange knowledge among themselves.

"It was very satisfying to interact with coaches from the home setup. It was an interactive session, and I think we learned a lot," Fulton said in a release.

"It is essential to keep raising the bar for coaching across the nation. The players who advance to the Indian setup will be more

prepared to make big career advancements if this is done."

The notable coaches who participated in the session include Batham Sumit (Jharkhand), Vinay Kishor (Uttarakhand), Daljeet Singh (Punjab), Mukesh Kumar (Haryana), Yendala Sagar (Telangana), Satender Sharma of (Delhi), Moirangthem Rinash Mettei (Manipur), Aravindan Ramachandran (Puducherry), Charles Dixon (Tamil Nadu), and Deepak Saini (Arunachal Pradesh). The interactive coaching session delved into diverse topics, including the Indian principles of play both with and without the ball, strategic game management to the score and remaining time, and effective player management considering the demanding schedule, among other crucial aspects. (PTI)

## PSG MOVE FOUR POINTS CLEAR AT THE TOP Mbappé scores a penalty as PSG beat Monaco 5-2

**PARIS, Nov 25:** Star striker Kylian Mbappé scored his 14th league goal of the season as French leader Paris Saint-Germain beat third-place Monaco 5-2 to move four points clear at the top on Friday.

Second-place Nice can keep the gap at one point if it beats Toulouse at home on Sunday.

After striker Gonçalo Ramos put PSG ahead in the 18th minute, Monaco equalized four minutes later following a mistake from goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

He was under pressure from Monaco forward Folarin Balogun, hesitated, and shot the ball straight at Japan forward Takumi Minamino, who finished confidently for his fourth league goal of the season.

PSG regained the lead through Mbappé in the 39th when defender Soungoutou Ma-



gassa tried to clear the ball and clipped the leg of winger Ousmane Dembélé for a penalty.

Mbappé, who joined PSG from Monaco for 180 million euros (\$197 million) in 2017, sent his

spot kick into the top left corner. Dembélé made it 3-1 in the 70th, expertly controlling a long pass from midfielder Fabian Ruiz and netting with a powerful shot. It was his first PSG goal since joining in August from Barcelona.

Two minutes later, Mbappé picked out Portugal midfielder Vitinha and he curled a fine shot into the top right corner.

Moments after that goal, however, PSG's defense fell asleep and allowed Balogun to score with a low shot after being put through by Minamino. It was the United States forward's fourth league goal of the season.

There was still enough time for France forward Randal Kolo Muani to grab PSG's fifth goal in the sixth minute of stoppage time, as Monaco fell six points behind PSG with its third defeat of the campaign. (AP)

## Australian spinner Nathan Lyon mocks 'Bazball'

**LONDON, Nov 25:** Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon has dismissed assertions that "Bazball", an aggressive brand of cricket displayed by the England Test team, has revolutionised the game.

Lyon, who is just four wickets shy of 500 wickets in Test cricket, said he did not see 'Bazball' in the two Ashes fixtures he was part of last year before getting injured for the remaining three.

The term "Bazball" came into being after Brendon McCullum, who is nicknamed Baz, was appointed England Test coach last year. "I'm 2-0 against Bazball so I am happy," Lyon joked on Channel 7's Front Bar programme. "It's a load of s\*\*\*, if you ask me. It's a brand of cricket that the English want to keep going with. Now, it's in the dictionary, which is pretty extraordinary."

It was not the first time Lyon mocked 'Bazball' and here again he termed aggression as an ability to shift through the gears during the course of a Test match.

"I know everyone keeps talking about BazBall, to be honest, I didn't really see BazBall throughout my two Tests against them." "I look at the Australian cricket team and the batters we've had, David Warner for example I've seen him score hundreds in a session and that's off playing an attacking brand of cricket."

"I think there's a lot of smoke and mirrors with BazBall, if I'm being honest with you, and I feel like if you're going to play an aggressive brand of cricket anyway, it's about being able to go up and down in gears and understanding the moments in the game," he added. (PTI)

## Alaves records rare win in Spain with 3-1 victory over Granada

**MADRID, Nov 25:** Alaves got just its second win in the last 10 Spanish league games on Friday, with forwards Samu Omorodion and Abde Rebbach playing starring roles in its 3-1 triumph at home to struggling Granada.

The home side took the lead after 11 minutes. Former Granada player Omorodion and defender Raul Torrente both dived for Rebbach's low cross from the left but it was the defender who was adjudged to have touched the ball over his 'keeper and into the net.

Rebbach doubled Alaves' lead after 37 minutes with a fine right-foot shot from the left and then Omorodion got his fifth goal of the season nine minutes into the second half with a solid header.

"We knew this was an im-



portant game and we've played brilliantly, both the 11 starters and the subs as well," Omorodion told broadcaster

Movistar. "I've been playing well recently and feeling good. I knew that if I scored I wouldn't celebrate because Granada gave me so much and it's thanks to them that I am here today."

Granada was without top scorer Bryan Zaragoza, who missed the game through suspension, and created little threat up front until late in the match.

Its consolation goal in the 86th came from Myrto Uzuni's penalty after Famara Diedhiou was toppled in the box.

Granada remains second from last in the league with just seven points from 14 matches. It faces Real Madrid away in its next game on Dec. 2. Alaves moved up to 12th and can add more points when it plays struggling Mallorca on Dec. 3. (AP)

## Kane scores again as Bayern back on top of the Bundesliga with 1-0 win over Cologne

**BERLIN, Nov 25:** Harry Kane scored yet again Friday to lead Bayern Munich to the top of the Bundesliga with a 1-0 win at Cologne.

No other player has ever scored 18 goals in the first 12 rounds of the Bundesliga, while Kane also became the first English player to reach 18 goals in a single Bundesliga season, overtaking the 17 scored both by Jadon Sancho for Borussia Dortmund (2019-20) and Kevin Keegan for Hamburger SV (1978-79).

From Bayern's point of view, Kane's goal put the pressure on early season leader Bayer Leverkusen, which can reclaim first place Saturday with a win at Werder Bremen.

But Bayern, the 11-time defending champion, missed several opportunities to put the result beyond doubt and had to endure unnecessarily nervy final minutes in Cologne, where Jamal Musiala scored late on the final day last season to snatch the title from Dortmund.

"One-nil, we probably know we could have scored a couple more in the first half but, really, a great victory," Kane said.

Thomas Müller had to be content to watch from the sideline again Friday as coach Thomas Tuchel opted for Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting in support of star forward Kane. It was the eighth league game in which the

Bayern veteran sat among the substitutes — this time for the whole match.

Müller hasn't started in any of Bayern's four Champions League games so far, while the only time he played a full match this season was in Bayern's shock 2-1 loss to third-division team Saarbrücken in the German Cup.

Bayern almost scored when Cologne defender Timo Hübers deflected the ball against his own post, but the visitors didn't have to wait long for Kane to strike in the 20th minute.

It came on a counterattack when Choupo-Moting's shot was cleared off the line by Julian Chabot — but only as far as Kane, who gratefully sent the ball inside the right post. "It was a nice one that fell to me, probably one of the easier ones I'll score in my career," Kane said. "But that first half, we created some really good chances, some clear chances. It was just unlucky, a few bobbles on the pitch."

Cologne 'keeper Marvin Schwäbe got the better of Leroy Sané, who was frustrated again in the second half. Kingsley Coman also struck the crossbar with a header for Bayern.

Tuchel made no changes at all during the game despite complaining about the burden on players playing so soon after returning from international duty. (AP)

## Two-step selection process to pick wrestlers for Olympics, Antim to compete against challenger

**NEW DELHI, Nov 25:** The wrestling squad for the 2024 Paris Olympics will be finalised through a two-step selection process, where the grapplers who have earned the quota places for the country, will compete against a challenger in June and the winner will represent India in the quadrennial showpiece.

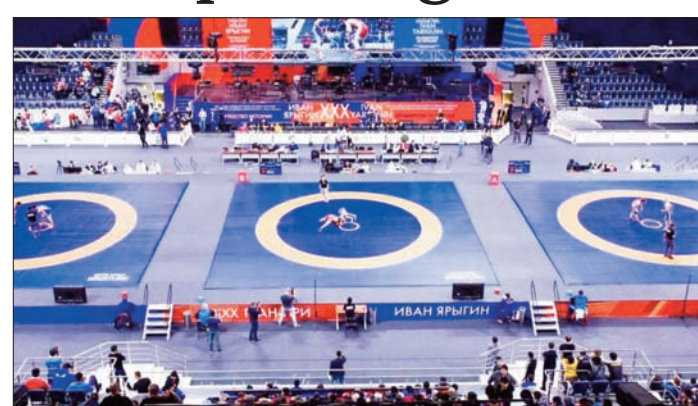
So far only Antim Panghal, the world championships bronze medalist in 53kg category, has earned a quota place for the country and she too will have to compete against a challenger on June 1 to know whether she will go to Paris or not.

The young Antim could end up competing against arch-rival Vinesh Phogat for the Paris berth if the 2018 Asian Games gold medalist emerges a "challenger",

which will be determined on May 31. The IOA constituted ad-hoc committee stated in a statement on Saturday that all the challengers will be determined on May 31 and the "wrestle-off" between the "Challenger" and Olympic quota winner will take place on June 1.

While only Antim has been able to clinch an Olympic quota place for the country, more wrestlers are expected to earn slots for India in the two upcoming events -- the Asian Olympic Qualifier in Kyrgyzstan (April 19-21) and the World Olympic Qualifiers in Turkey (May 9-12).

India can earn 17 more Paris quota places in the two tournaments -- six each in men's freestyle and greco-roman and five in the women's category.



All the future quota places winners too will have to compete against a challenger to secure a Paris spot.

The ad-hoc committee, led by Bhopender Singh Bajwa, said in a statement that the "comprehen-

sive selection policy" for the 2024 Paris Olympics will ensure a "fair and transparent process in determining the athletes who will represent India on the global stage". Antim, the two-time under-20 world champion, has,

however, been exempted from appearing in the trials in February to select the team for the two Olympic qualifying events in Kyrgyzstan and Turkey.

The other members of the Indian contingent for the two Olympic qualifying events will be selected on the basis of trials, to be conducted in all 30 Olympic and non-Olympic categories, from February 27-29.

All grapplers who were part of the Hangzhou Asian Games and 2023 Senior World Championships can compete in the February trials, besides international medalists in various championships, winners of open trials in U-17, U-20, U-23 categories and all senior Nationals and National Games medalists this year. (PTI)



## Indian bowlers look for improved outing against Australia in second T20I



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Nov 25:** The young Indian bowling unit will have to push behind the timid show in the series opener and find its flow against a forceful Australian batting line-up in the second T20I here on Sunday.

India had won the first game at Visakhapatnam by two wickets to take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series, but their bowlers, except pacer Mukesh Kumar, looked incapable of stemming the run-flow.

The pitch and conditions at the Greenfield International Stadium will not be massively different, and that makes it imperative for the Indian bowlers to fire collectively.

Despite that, the management might not look to shake the order for this match.

In the opening encounter, pacers Arshdeep Singh and Prasidh Krishna went for 10.25 and 12.50 runs per over while leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi were carted around for 13.50 runs per over. In a format like T20, it is not an uncommon sight to see bowlers getting the stick, but those three bowlers lacked imagination and variety needed on such surfaces on that day.

India's ambition to double the series lead will depend a lot on them significantly improving their produce here.

It's not an impossible task either as Mukesh showed. The pace bowler mixed up his deliveries well – the yorkers, bouncers, wide deliveries around off-stump and so on – to contain the Aussie batters.

So, the other frontline bowlers now have a route map to follow in the second match.

In their defence, one can say that many of them were playing top-level cricket after a gap, but such is the nature of schedule these days the players need to put their best foot forward in the first available opportunity.

It is particularly true in the case of someone like Bishnoi, who has been talked about as one to look forward to as far as the white ball formats are concerned.

But he was vastly disappointing at Vizag and looked rudderless once Josh Inglis went on the offensive against him.

Bishnoi will have to realise that he cannot rely on a sequence of googlies to make an impact as it can lead to a sense of familiarity in batters, and he will require drastic course correction here. Prasidh too was equally underwhelming, more so because he was a part of India's 50-over World Cup squad recently and had a chance to work with the top-tier players and coaches at nets.

However, there was no trace of that effort in his bowling as his attempt to purchase bounce from the track was treated with disdain by Australian batters.

However, India will have not much to complain about in the batting department as skipper Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan, Rinku Singh and Yashasvi Jaiswal displayed fine touch against the Aussie bowlers, though a bit second

string. Suryakumar, Rinku and Jaiswal met the quick-scoring demands of a high chase effortlessly, though Kishan took a few overs to settle down before hitting the overdrive.

India will hope for a similar fire from them in the second match as well, and will bank on Kishan to reduce the number of dot balls during his tenure.

He was able to accelerate in the opening game after making 21 off 19 balls but the left-hander would not want an encore of that in this match.

Ruturaj Gaikwad, who was run out in the previous match, and Tilak Varma too will be eyeing some runs against their name as they are part of India's journey into T20 future.

The Aussie camp, on the other hand, will be looking to build on a few nuggets of positives from the first match.

Inglis' hundred, his first in top-flight cricket across formats, while coming in as an opener might have given them a breathing space on the road that leads to the T20 World Cup.

But the move to promote Steve Smith as opener might not have fetched the desired result in its entirety.

The veteran right-hander made a 52 off 41 balls, but he laboured to manufacture runs even on a smooth deck as Inglis' daredevilry ably masked Smith's struggles.

Like their Indian counterparts, the Aussie bowlers, except Jason Behrendorff, also could not apply the squeeze on the rampaging Suryakumar and company. They will also be looking for a markedly improved outing in that department here and as part of that the Aussies might just give a go to leg-spinner Adam Zampa in place of Tanvir Sangha.

Squads: India: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad (vice-captain), Ishan Kishan, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Shivam Dubey, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan, Mukesh Kumar.

Australia: Matthew Wade (captain), Aaron Hardie, Jason Behrendorff, Sean Abbott, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Matt Short, Steve Smith, Marcus Stoinis, Kane Richardson, Adam Zampa.

Match starts at 7 PM. (PTI)

## Hooda, Chahar headline Rajasthan's five-wicket win over Gujarat

**CHANDIGARH, Nov 25:** Deepak Hooda and Deepak Chahar underlined their white ball credentials with an unbeaten fifty and a six-wicket haul respectively, guiding Rajasthan to a five-wicket win over Gujarat in a Group D Vijay Hazare match here on Saturday. Chahar's six for 41 was instrumental in Rajasthan bowling out Gujarat for 128 in 29 overs at the Sector-26 Cricket Ground.

Rajasthan were in some early turmoil at 18 for 4, but Hooda calmed the nerves with a gritty 76 off 79 balls (8x4, 3x6) as they went past the target in 28.4 overs.

**Mumbai overcome Kerala**  
In a Group A match, Mumbai braved a gritty Kerala and a couple of rain delays to carve an eight-wicket victory at the Alur-KSCA Oval. Angkrish Raghuvanshi (57 off 47 balls, 5x4, 4x6) and captain Ajinkya Rahane (34 n.o off 20 balls, 4x6) propelled Mumbai past the revised target (under VJD method) of 159 in 30 overs in 24.2 overs.

Earlier, Sachin Baby made a hundred (104, 134 balls, 8x4, 2x6) and Sanju Samson (55, 83 balls, 3x4, 2x6) played around a batting collapse to take Kerala to 231 all out in 49.1 overs.

**Himmat, Suyash spur Delhi**  
Leg-spinner Suyash Sharma's four-wicket haul and Himmat Singh's quickfire fifty powered Delhi to a facile eight-wicket win over Mizoram in their Group C match. Sharma's 4 for 25 enabled Delhi to bowl out Mizoram for 128 and then chased down the target in just 17 over, losing two wickets.

Himmat (52 off 43 balls) and Badoni (45 off 24 balls) made light work of the target.

**Haryana trounce Bihar**  
In a Group C match, pacer Harshal Patel (4/49) and SP Kumar (3/25) helped Haryana restrict Bihar to 112 all out in 30.4 overs. With openers Yuvraj Singh (50 off 57 balls) and Ankit Kumar (61 off 60 balls) scoring briskly, Haryana overhauled the target in just under 20 overs for a 10-wicket win.

**Sai Sudarshan, Warrier shine for TN**

B Sai Sudarshan's 125 off 144 balls lifted Tamil Nadu to 296 for



eight in a Group E match against Goa. The total proved too strong for the Goans as pacer Sandeep Warrier's 4 for 20 in seven overs helped TN shot out them for 263 to etch a 33-run victory.

**Brief scores:**  
**Group A:** Kerala: 231 all out in 49.1 overs (Sachin Baby 104, Sanju Samson 55; Mohit Avasthi 4/24, Tushar Deshpande 3/56) lost to Mumbai (revised target under VJD method: 159 in 30 overs); 161/2 in 24.2 overs (Angkrish Raghuvanshi 57, Ajinkya Rahane 34 not out, Suved Parkar 27 not out) by 8 wickets.

**Group B:** Manipur: 113 all out in 45.4 overs (Johnson 51 not out; Rajaneesh Gurbani 3/36, Akshay Karnewar 4/18) lost to Vidarbha: 115 for 2 in 16.5 overs (A Mkhade 49, SR Ramaswamy 30 not out, Karun Nair 18 not out) by 8 wickets.

**Group C:**  
**Mizoram:** 128 all out in 42.1 overs (Jehu Anderson 38; Suyash Sharma 4/25) lost to Delhi: 132/2 in 16.5 overs (Ayush Badoni 45 not out, Himmat Singh 52 not out) by 8 wickets.

**Bihar:** 112 all out (Pratap 46 not out; Harshal Patel 4/49, SP Kumar

3/25) lost to Haryana: 117 for no loss in 19.1 overs (Yuvraj Singh 50 not out, Ankit Kumar 61 not out) by 10 wickets.

**Group D:**  
**Gujarat:** 128 all out in 29 overs (Chirag Gandhi 43 not out; Deepak Chahar 6/41) lost to Rajasthan: 129/5 in 28.4 overs (Deepak Hooda 76 not out, Mahipal Lomror 26 not out; Arzan Nagwaswalla 3/31) by 5 wickets.

**Himachal Pradesh:** 276 all out in 50 overs (PS Chopra 61, Rishi Dhawan 48; Kartik Tyagi 3/46, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 1/36) lost to Uttar Pradesh: 277/3 in 37 overs (Swastik 117, Priyam Garg 74, Nitish Rana 42 not out) by 7 wickets.

**Group E:** Bengal: 314/8 in 50 overs (Abhimanyu Easwaran 141, Abhishek Porel 59, Anustup Majumdar 41; Atit Sheth 3/51) beat Baroda: 219 all out in 44.2 overs (Shashwat Rawat 59, Shivalik Sharma 39; Karan Lal 3/43, Pradipta Pramanik 3/46) by 95 runs.

**Tamil Nadu:** 296/8 in 50 overs (B Sai Sudarshan 125, Dinesh Karthik 47 not out; Darshan Mihal 2/44) beat Goa: 263 all out in 50 overs (KV Siddharth 61, Snehal Kauthankar 55; Sandeep Warrier 4/20, R Sai Kishore 3/32). (PTI)

## Young sports enthusiasts champion sustainable farming with BVFCL

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 25:** In the picturesque Samaguri village in Karbi Anglong, a wave of enthusiasm swept through as a group of young football players eagerly gathered around the Vikshit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) van. Their excitement was palpable as they witnessed a captivating demonstration by Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Limited (BVFCL) featuring a drone equipped with nano urea dispersal technology - a ground-breaking development aimed at revolutionizing farming methods. Beyond the sheer spectacle of sophisticated technology, the demonstration underscored a significant stride towards adopting sustainable and eco-friendly agricultural practices in the region. The young players, usually found on the football field, shifted their focus to the skies as they became captivated by the presentation. Their genuine interest reflected a collective eagerness to understand how this advanced technology could positively impact local farming. These young minds, filled with enthusiasm and curiosity, have the potential to become torchbearers for change in Samaguri village. By embracing and absorbing the knowledge of these innovative farming techniques, they are metaphorically planting seeds for growth and success in not only their village but also in the broader northeastern part of the country. As they recognize the transformative power of technology in agriculture, these young sports enthusiasts have an opportunity to pave the way for their fellow villagers by raising awareness about sustainable practices. Their engagement in initiatives like VBSY marks a pivotal moment in the community's journey towards a more sustainable and prosperous agricultural future.

## Assam Rifles organises friendly basketball match

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 25:** Assam Rifles organised a 'Friendly Basketball Match' with local youths of Lokra at Battalion Headquarters, Lokra under Sonitpur district on Saturday.

The aim of the event was to promote the 'Fit India Movement' and encourage local youths to adopt a healthy lifestyle. During the basketball match between the seasoned Assam Rifles team and the spirited local youth, the court became a battleground where skill and determination clashed. The disciplined strategy of the Assam Rifles players, honed through rigorous training, faced off against the raw talent and exuberance of the local youth. The spectators were treated to a display of athleticism and teamwork as both sides showcased their prowess on the court.

The game unfolded with intense moments of fast breaks, skillful dribbling, and precision three-pointers. Ultimately, the match left a lasting impression, making the match not only a competition but also a celebration of the spirit of basketball within the community. A total of 7 players from the Lokra Youth Club & 10 personnel participated in the subject event. The event was witnessed by 59 Assam Rifles personnel and 36 locals with full zeal and enthusiasm.

economical spells.

"I found Siraj to be bowling really well throughout the World Cup, though his wickets column may not suggest that. But, the breakthroughs he gave in Asia Cup and his recent performances have established him as the future of Indian cricket," he continued.

Like many others, Akram also didn't endorse Rohit introducing Shami with new ball after the bowler got such success as one change throughout the tournament.

"In this match, they straight away brought in Shami, and he did have impact on the game right away by getting Warner out, though it was more like Warner got himself out by slashing at a wide ball."

"Another factor is that after losing the three wickets within the first 15 overs, the dew set in, which made it easier for batting as the ball wasn't doing much after that."

Akram maintained that he didn't want to take any credit away from centurion Travis Head or Marnus Labuschagne.

"I'm not taking credit away from Australia's batting, but it does psychologically affect the bowlers. I think in big games like the finals, teams should always stick to what they have been doing and what's been working for them," he concluded. (PTI)

## Rahul couldn't bat fearlessly as there was no one after Jadeja: Akram

**MUMBAI, Nov 25:** KL Rahul didn't play with a "do-or-die" mindset as he didn't want to expose India's tail-enders, which is probably one of the biggest reasons for host country's World Cup final defeat, feels Pakistan legend Wasim Akram.

Batting first, India posted a modest total of 240 in 50 overs and Rahul scored a painstaking 66 off 107 balls with a solitary boundary to his credit.

"If I have to pick any particular reason, I suppose the middle order should have played with a 'do or die' mindset," he told Star Sports.

"I can understand what was going through Rahul's mind, that there was no batting to come after Jadeja and that he had to bat deep, and batting deep meant he couldn't take risks of getting out," Akram added. Final was one game possibly when team missed all-rounder Hardik Pandya more than ever as he lends that balance in the middle-order with his power-hitting.

"If possibly Hardik was in the team, he (Rahul) probably would take that risk. But, if he had taken a risk and gotten out in this situation, then people would have criticised him for that as well," the 'Sultan of Swing' explained. Not scoring quickly enough between overs 20 to 40, certainly became



India's undoing. "If they had kept pace and scored quickly in the middle overs, then it would have been a different ball game." For the 'Men in Blue', Rohit finished the tournament as the second-highest run-scorer after Virat Kohli, thanks to his attacking intent.

Meanwhile, Akram felt that captain Rohit Sharma was right in moving ahead with his attacking approach in the final, as it is what had given him success throughout the tournament. "He's played like that in the entire World Cup, that's his game. Nobody complained throughout the World Cup with the starts he's giving, or that he was constantly getting out in the 40s, and now that he's done the same in the finals, people are finding a reason to complain." "And, he's also one of the best players of spin in the

world, though he got out to Maxwell in that game, and credit to Maxwell and Cummins. But, that's the nature of Rohit's game, and I don't think he should change it," he added. While defending the total, the Indians could manage to hold only four Australian wickets, with the pacers being the most effective ones on the Motera track.

Besides Jasprit Bumrah, who seized a couple of wickets, Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj clutched a wicket each.

Also, during the Aussie chase, Shami was brought in during the powerplay, while Siraj was handed the duties only after the powerplay.

On the same note, Akram feels bringing in Siraj ahead of Shami could have worked better, given his ability to bowl

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