

**6** WORLD

**8** NATION

- Netanyahu opposes a Palestinian state in any postwar scenario
- New envoy to the US offers assurances to Washington and Beijing
- One nation, one election against basic structure
- 'AAP holding talks on Lok Sabha seat from Goa with INDIA bloc partners'

**Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee**  
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**Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat**

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## HT BRIEFS

### Fire breaks out

**BOKAJAN:** A house caught fire in the morning, near Bokajan Civil Hospital. The house is owned by Bijoy Borah. He rents out four rooms and it's suspected that a short circuit caused the fire. Most of the goods inside the house had been destroyed and reduced to ashes and one was injured. The injured has been hospitalised.

### Meghalaya Anthem

**SHILLONG:** In a historic move, Meghalaya is set to launch its official state anthem after 52 years of statehood, as announced by chief minister Conrad K Sangma on Friday. The approval of the Meghalaya state anthem by the state cabinet marks a significant milestone for the region. Expressing his joy, chief minister Sangma stated, "I am very happy to announce to all of you that the official Meghalaya state anthem has been approved by the state cabinet today." The formal launch of the anthem is scheduled to take place during the Meghalaya Day celebration on Saturday. Sangma highlighted the significance of this moment, noting, "This is indeed a very proud and happy moment for us because the state has been without a state anthem for the last 52 years."

'Modi government has always considered the NE as an important part of India'

## 10 years under Modi govt have been golden era for Northeast: Amit Shah

**SHILLONG, Jan 19:** The last 10 years under the Modi government have been a golden era for the Northeast with an unprecedented focus on infrastructure development and conflict resolution, Union home minister Amit Shah said on Friday.

The Northeast is today shifting away from its history of blockades and unrest and is pacing towards peace and development, he said.

Addressing the 71st plenary session of the North Eastern Council (NEC) here, Shah also said that under the leadership of PM Modi, not only the distance from the Northeast to Delhi and the rest of India has reduced due to the creation of infrastructure, but the difference of hearts has also come down.

"The last 10 years under the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been the most significant decade for the Northeast as it has seen most development in the 75 years since independence," he said.

He said the Northeast, which was struggling with various prob-



lem caused by ethnic, linguistic, border and extremist groups, also got the beginning of a fresh and durable era of peace in these 10 years.

The home minister said if these 10 years for the Northeast are compared with the 75 years after the country's independence, then this decade will definitely be considered as the golden period for the region.

He said the Modi government has always considered the Northeast as an important part of India. Shah said that between 2004 and

2014, a total of 11,121 violent incidents took place in the Northeast and it has declined by 73 per cent to 3,114 between 2014 and 2023.

Deaths among security forces dropped by 71 per cent from 458 to 132, while civilian deaths declined by 86 per cent, he said.

He said the incidents of insurgency have come down because in the last five years more than 8,900 members of militant groups have surrendered and joined the mainstream. This has given a message to the entire country that peace and prosperity are interconnected and

without them the states cannot develop, he said.

The home minister said that to bring peace and stability in the Northeast, the Modi government has signed nine agreements and many pending law and order issues have been successfully resolved through these.

He said that except some parts of Assam and Manipur, 75 per cent of the areas covered under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in 2018 are no longer under it.

The home minister said that priority was accorded to the development of the Northeast during the time of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee when a separate ministry was created for the region. And today, the three mantras of 'Act East, Act Fast and Act First' are being implemented under the leadership of PM Modi, he said.

Along with this, impetus is being given to the Northeast by giving priority to it in all ministries of the government, he said. He said the Modi government has allocated ₹ 4,800 (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Himanta urges Centre for New Industrial Policy in Northeast

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Jan 19:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday urged Centre to formulate new industrial policy for Northeast, said an official statement.

While speaking at the 71st Plenary of the North Eastern Council (NEC), Sarma said that the current phase of unprecedented positive developments on multiple fronts, including economic, in the state can largely be attributed to the climate of general peace that has been prevalent for the past couple of years.

The chief minister also claimed that the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) for the next financial year would register a significant growth over the current level.

He also referred to the measures the state government has taken to improve Assam's standing in the Ease of Doing Business (EODB) rankings.

"These and the other measures have led to creation of a conducive investment climate in the state which has resulted in many big-ticket investments in the past few years. I urge the Centre to bring out

a new industrial policy for the Northeast so that the region can attract more private investors," the statement quoted him as saying.

Sarma also expressed his gratitude towards the current administration at the Centre led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking relentless measures for the socio-economic growth and development of the Northeastern region.

"The Northeastern region has embarked on a transformative journey owing to the continued focus it has received from the current government at the Centre," he added.

Sarma cited the example of the Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024 recently published by the NITI Aayog that shows Assam's multidimensional poverty registering a sharp decline from 36.97 per cent in 2013-14 to 14.47 per cent in 2022-23.

"The decline in poverty rate pulled nearly 80 lakh people in the State out of poverty in the last 9 years," Sarma said.

He said that owing to the government's focus on fulfilling the genuine hopes and aspirations of the various (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Golden Jubilee celebration of KYF culminates with felicitation

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Jan 19:** In the grand conclusion of the eight-day golden jubilee celebration of the Karbi Youth Festival (KYF), organised by the Karbi Cultural Society (KCS) at Taralango in Diphu, the KCS honoured individuals associated with KYF since its inception in 1974.

The ceremony, held at the golden jubilee memorial auditorium, recognised their outstanding contributions to the festival.

The felicitation extended to the founding president, secretary, and members of KYF, KCS presidents, secretaries, members, the Reception Committee, its convenors, and others. Additionally, former and present leaders of KYF and KCS received traditional Karbi turbans and citations in recognition of their service.



Lunse Timung, the founding President of KCS, emphasised the importance of preserving the originality of traditional dances, songs, and music amidst the modernization and the festival's 50th-year milestone. He urged the younger generation to learn and retain the authenticity of Karbi traditions.

"Too much modification in adapting with the change of time and modernisation will lose its originality. In KCS Zones during rehearsal dancers should be taught the original form of the dance as well as songs before coming to participate in the festival," Timung added.

Tuliram Ronghang, chief executive member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), attended the closing program as the chief guest.

Addressing the audience, he clarified the absence of President Droupadi Murmu, during the festival, attributing it to unfavorable weather conditions preventing the President's helicopter from landing at Taralango.

Ronghang further shared insights into the challenges faced, including symbolic signs like the animal sacrifice (seh karkli) indicating unfavorable conditions.

He also dismissed any political motives behind the President's absence, emphasising the need for understanding the circumstances.

"When animal sacrifice (seh karkli) was performed to begin preparation (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



A girls' troupe performing a traditional dance at the Shilpagram Mahotsav in Panjabari, Guwahati on Friday. UB Photos

## Newly elected members of NC Hills take oath



**HT Correspondent**  
**HAFLONG, Jan 19:** In a momentous event, the district library auditorium in Haflong witnessed the swearing-in ceremony of the 28 Members of the Autonomous Council (MAC) of the 13th North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC).

The oath of office was administered at a brief but culturally rich function, echoing the diverse linguistic and cultural tapestry of the region.

The distinguished Members took their oaths in English, Hindi, Dimas, and other local languages, underlining the cultural plurality of the North Cachar Hills.

District Commissioner (DC) Simanta Kumar Das, in accordance with state government directives, presided over the first meeting for

the oath or affirmation, setting the stage for the subsequent election of the chairman of NCHAC.

The auspicious event commenced with the harmonious rendition of Jatiya sangeet, resonating the unity and diversity of the community. Elected members graced the ceremony in their traditional attire, accompanied by their families.

Notably, Debolal Gorlosa, chief executive member (CEM) of NCHAC, donned the Dimasa traditional risha, adding a touch of cultural significance to the occasion.

As the swearing-in unfolded, the notice for the election of the chairman was officially issued today. The last date for the submission of nominations to the secretary of the Legislature at NCHAC is set until 12 noon on January 20, 2024.

The highly anticipated election for the chairman's post is scheduled to take place on January 21, 2024, signifying the next crucial step in shaping the leadership of NCHAC.

The ceremony not only marked a formal beginning for the newly elected MAC members but also laid the foundation for the democratic governance and representation that will unfold under the 13th North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council.

## 'This alliance is about the global good, as the name suggests' India sets up alliance for Global Good-Gender Equity and Equality



**DAVOS, Jan 19:** India on Thursday announced here a new alliance for global good, gender equity and equality, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, with the WEF Founder and Chairman Klaus Schwab offering to partner this initiative with full support.

The announcement was made at an India Reception on the sidelines of the WEF Annual Meeting, hosted by apex industry chamber CII and attended by union minis-

ters Smriti Irani and Hardeep Singh Puri as well as WEF Founder and executive chairman Klaus Schwab, among others.

The idea of this alliance emerged from the G20 Leaders' Declaration and India's abiding commitment to the cause of women-led development as propounded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Women and Child Development minister Smriti Irani said.

As a follow-up to the activities

Irani lauded the prime minister's governance agenda in bringing out a social revolution in the country, keeping women at the centre of good governance

of the Engagement Group and initiatives under the G20 framework, the Business 20, Women 20 and G20 EMPOWER, this alliance aims to take forward the commitments of the G20 leaders for the benefit of the larger global community.

Irani also congratulated WEF for being a very strong support to India.

"Prime Minister Modi has not only given a high growth rate and contained inflation but has also ensured food security to 800 million Indian citizens and also supported people overseas. This alliance is about the global good, as the name suggests," she said.

Irani lauded the prime minister's governance agenda in bringing out a social revolution in the country,

keeping women at the centre of good governance.

Minister Puri said India has always had a special relationship with the WEF.

India has moved from women-centric development to women-led development, he said.

Schwab said India is one of the main topics of discussion at Davos in addition to climate, conflicts and AI.

"We will not only support this alliance but will be a strong partner," he added.

He also thanked India for sending such a strong delegation in an election year.

The alliance has garnered support from industry leaders such as Mastercard, Uber, Tata, TVS, Bayer, (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra organiser faces case for route deviation

**HT Correspondent**  
**JORHAT, Jan 19:** A case has been filed against KB Byju, a prominent organiser of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, for allegedly deviating from the authorised route set by the district administration in Jorhat town on Thursday.

The incident led to chaos, prompting the police to register the case.

The case, with registration number 20/2024, has been filed at Jorhat Police Station under various sections including 120(B), 115(II), 143, 147, 188, 283, 323, 353, and section 3 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property (PDPP) Act.

The police initiated the case after taking action against the reported deviation from the approved route.

The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, led by Rahul Gandhi, has been traversing various parts of the country to highlight socio-economic issues and connect with the public. However, this recent incident in Jorhat has led to legal consequences for one of its key organisers, KB Byju.



# Forex reserves jump USD 1.63 bn to USD 618.9 bn

India's reserve position with the Indian Monetary Fund increased USD 6 million to USD 4.872 billion



**MUMBAI, Jan 19:** India's forex reserves jumped USD 1.634 billion to USD 618.937 billion for the week ended January 12, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined

sharply by USD 5.89 billion to USD 617.3 billion.

The country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of USD 645 billion in October 2021. The reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused

majorly by global developments since last year.

For the week ended January 12, the foreign currency assets -- a major component of the reserves -- increased USD 1.859 billion to USD 548.508 billion, the data said.

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

Gold reserves were down USD 242 million to USD 47,247 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up USD 12 million to USD 18.31 billion, the apex bank said. India's reserve position with the Indian Monetary Fund increased USD 6 million to USD 4.872 billion in the reporting week, the RBI data added. (PTI)

## Money markets to open at 2.30 pm on Jan 22: RBI

**MUMBAI, Jan 19:** The Reserve Bank (RBI) on Friday said money markets will open at 2.30 pm instead of 9 am on January 22, with the government announcing a half-day holiday in connection with the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

In view of the half-day closing on January 22 announced by the Union government, the trading hours for the various markets regulated by the Reserve Bank of India have also been truncated, according to a circular.

The trading hours for the central bank regulated markets will be from 2.30 pm to 5 pm on Monday, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in the circular.

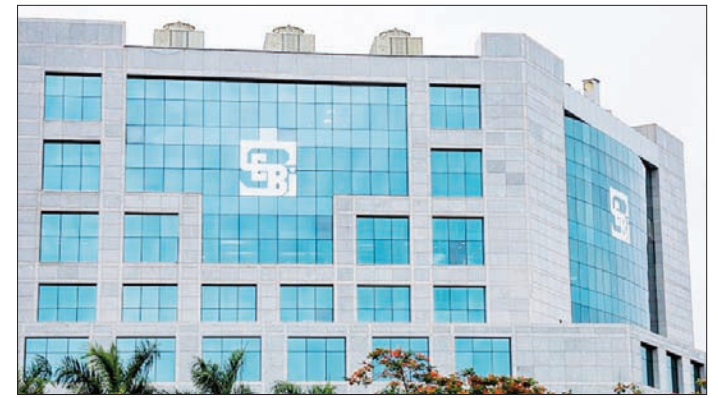
The central bank regulated markets are : Call/notice/term money; Market repo in Government Securities; Tri-party repo in Government Securities; Commercial paper and Certificates of Deposit; Repo in Corporate Bonds; Government Securities (Central Government Securities, State Government Securities and Treasury Bills); Foreign Currency (FCY)/Indian Rupee (₹). (PTI)

## Sebi to act against 3 i-bankers found inflating IPO subscriptions: Buch

**MUMBAI, Jan 19:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch on Friday said the capital markets regulator has found that three merchant bankers are frequently indulging in inflating subscriptions during share sales, and promised action against them.

Speaking at an annual convention organised by a lobby grouping of investment bankers here, Buch said the Sebi also has data and evidence on "mule accounts", wherein the credentials of an innocent person are used to typically front-run on stocks by those wanting to not leave a trace of trades.

There is also a tendency of "inflating the initial public offering (IPO) application numbers to give an impression of high amount of subscriptions", Buch said, adding that Sebi has data and evidence on this.



"We are also seeing practices where there is a pattern of which kind of merchant bankers tend to be... frequent names occurring in such malpractices. Therefore, in the interest of the investors, we will be required to both review policy as well as (start) enforcement actions," Buch said.

It can be noted that the comments come amid a huge surge in IPO activity, wherein many companies have witnessed very high investor demand in the run-up to the listing.

The high interest typically leads to a company listing at a premium to the offer price. (PTI)

## Gold jumps ₹ 250; silver rallies ₹ 400

**NEW DELHI, Jan 19:** Gold prices jumped by ₹ 250 to ₹ 63,000 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid a global rally in the precious metal, according to HDFC Securities.

The yellow metal had closed at ₹ 62,750 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver also rallied ₹ 400 to ₹ 76,000 per kg from ₹ 75,600 per kg in the previous close.

Snapping its three-day losing streak, spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at ₹ 63,000 per 10 grams, up by ₹ 250, amid recovery in the overseas markets, Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the overseas markets, gold was trading higher at USD 2,027 per ounce, while it had finished at USD 2,010 per ounce in the previous trade.

Silver was also marginally higher at USD 22.81 per ounce.

Uncertainty surrounding the Middle East conflict is contributing to the safe-haven demand for gold prices. Additionally, investors are closely monitoring the Federal Reserve's stance on interest rates following positive US economic data, Navneet Damani, Senior VP of commodity research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said. (PTI)

## Sensex rebounds 496 pts on value buying in oil, metal shares

**MUMBAI, Jan 19:** Benchmark Sensex rebounded 496 points while Nifty closed above the 21,600 level on Friday as value buying in heavyweight stocks and a firm trend in global markets helped indices cut short three days of losses.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 496.37 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 71,683.23. During the day, it zoomed 708.78 points or 0.99 per cent to 71,895.64.

The Nifty climbed 160.15 points or 0.75 per cent to close at 21,622.40 with 43 of its shares closing in the green and seven in the red.

In the past three days, the BSE benchmark fell by 2.91 per cent, and the Nifty declined 2.87 per cent.

"A 'buy on dips' and encouraging global cues propelled the market's recovery," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

"Today's rebound was broad based; however, investors are disappointed and expect moderation in the rally. FIIs persist with risk-off sparked by the likelihood that interest rates may not moderate and domestic earnings growth can slow down as per the initial Q3 results announced," Nair said.

Among the Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel rose the most by 3.52 per cent. NTPC rose by 3.04 per cent and Tech Mahindra by 2.56 per cent. Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement, Titan, Axis Bank, JSW Steel ICICI Bank and Larsen & Toubro were the major gainers.

IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and State Bank of India were the laggards.

HDFC Bank extended its losses for the fourth straight day, falling by 1.08 per cent. The stock declined around 10 per cent in the four sessions after the release of its third quarter financial results.

"Firm global cues triggered a gap-up start in Nifty, followed by range bound movement till the end," Ajit



Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.69 per cent and smallcap index climbed 1.06 per cent.

All the indices ended higher. Oil & gas rallied 2.17 per cent, metal zoomed 1.69 per cent, industrials went up by 1.62 per cent, energy climbed 1.58 per cent, commodities jumped 1.44 per cent, tech (1.29 per cent) and IT (1.06 per cent).

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark fell 885.22 points or 1.21 per cent, and the Nifty declined 272.15 points or 1.24 per cent.

In Asian markets, Seoul, and Tokyo settled in the green while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading higher. The US markets ended with gains on Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.63 per cent to USD 79.60 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 9,901.56 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. (PTI)

## Homegrown Tiger Logistics, Sikder Group ink initial pact to increase trade

**NEW DELHI, Jan 19:** Homegrown Tiger Logistics (India) on Friday said it has signed an agreement with Bangladesh-based Sikder Group to establish a Joint Venture (JV) for global trade.

Sikder Group handles the development and operations of the Mongla Economic Zone at Mongla Port, which is the second-largest seaport in Bangladesh. Tiger Logistics (India) said in an exchange filing.

The development comes in continuation of the strengthening of connectivity between the two nations, as Bangladesh granted India permanent access to Chattogram and Mongla Port in April 2023.

Recognising the increasing demand for international logistics, particularly between India and Bangladesh, the company aims to play a pivotal role in stimulating economic growth in the region. (PTI)

## Defsys Solutions awarded best SEZ MSME at EPCES Export Awards



**NEW DELHI, Jan 19:** Defsys Solutions, Gurgaon has announced that it has been named the Best SEZ MSME in the Engineering category at the EPCES Export Awards, held by Export Promotion Council for EOUs and SEZs.

The EPCES Export award, hailed as a prestigious award in the industry is a coveted prize bestowed by the Export Promotion Council, a leading national organization honouring excellence in exports.

Defsys Solutions was presented the award by the zonal development commissioner of Noida, LB Singhal at the Lalit Hotel, Connaught Place, New Delhi.

The event was graced by industry veterans and leading players in the export segment and was organized by the members of the Regional Governing Council - NSEZ.

"This award is a testament to the skill, ingenuity, and vision of the Defsys family and we are proud of this momentous achievement. We aim to take the company to even greater heights in the coming years and are thrilled to have received this award which honours our expertise in the industry," said Samar Bhargava, executive director of Defsys.

The Council, which has been set up by the Union ministry of commerce and industry, is comprised

of industry experts and provides financial assistance to EOUs/SEZ units through market development assistance (MDA) for export promotion activities abroad.

It plays a vital role in taking up issues affecting EOUs/SEZs with various Ministries like Commerce, Finance, CBEC, CBDT, RBI, State governments etc, organizes trade fairs in India and abroad, and informs members about the latest development and changes in the national and international trade scenario.

Defsys Solutions Private Limited (Defsys), established in 2007, is a leading Indian defence integrated systems company committed to providing a total solution from concept to realization, with high quality and reliable products.

Defsys is a private Indian entity and one of the fastest-growing defence MSMEs in the country, clocking an order book of over ₹ 2000 Crores.

With over 180 employees across four locations with group businesses including civil Aviation MRO and technical services, Defsys has successfully executed a large number of defence projects for global defence OEMs and Indian defence and aerospace customers like Indian Army, Indian Air force, HAL, DRDO and other DPSUs. (PTI)

## Wheat production likely to be good this year: Agriculture minister Arjun Munda

Total acreage under wheat crop remained high at 336.96 lakh hectares till last week of current rabi season

**NEW DELHI, Jan 19:** The country's wheat production is expected to be good this year amid higher coverage, according to Union agriculture minister Arjun Munda.

The sowing of wheat, the main rabi (winter) crop, that began in October has been completed. Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Punjab are the top three states having the maximum area under wheat coverage.

"As per the sowing data, wheat has been covered in more area and we expect good production this year," Munda told PTI.

As per the ministry's data, the total acreage under the wheat crop remained higher at 336.96 lakh hectares till the last week of the current rabi season of the 2023-24 crop year (July-June), as against 335.67 lakh hectares in the year-ago period.

On January 3, Food Corporation of India Chairman and Managing Director Ashok K Meena indicated that the country could achieve a new record in wheat production at 114 million tonnes in the ongoing 2023-24 crop year provided weather conditions remain normal.

Wheat production stood at a



record 110.55 million tonnes in the 2022-23 crop year, compared to 107.7 million tonnes achieved in the preceding year.

Sharing about wheat crop prospects this year, a senior agriculture ministry official said the crop is in good condition and there are no reports of any damage to the crop till date.

"The current cold weather condition is good for the growth of wheat and other rabi crops," he said.

Climate-resistant seeds have been sown in more than 70 per cent of the total wheat area covered in both Punjab and Haryana

this year, he said. The two states have sown wheat in a total area of around 59 lakh hectares this year, the data showed.

Meanwhile, the agriculture ministry has started issuing regular advisories to help farmers take care of the wheat crop after the completion of sowing.

As per the latest advisory for the period covering January 16-30, the ministry has asked farmers to complete the application of nitrogen fertilizer up to 40-45 days after sowing. Farmers have been asked to apply urea just before irrigation for better results.

In case of late sown, if farmers

notice both narrow and broad leaf weeds in their wheat field, they have been advised to spray herbicide Sulfosulfuron 75WG of about 13.5 grams per acre or Sulfosulfuron plus Metsulfuron of 16 grams per acre in 120-150 litres of water before the first irrigation or 10-15 days after irrigation.

Keeping in view the favourable humid weather for yellow rust disease, farmers are advised to visit their crops regularly to observe 'stripe rust' (yellow rust) incidence.

To tackle lodging in early sown wheat crops, farmers have been asked to provide 'growth regulators' in high fertility irrigated conditions. For frost management, light irrigation should be applied to wheat crops taking due care of the Met Department forecast.

The Met Department has forecast rain in northeast and central areas of India during January 16-30 and the temperature is expected to drop below normal in the forthcoming week.

The government is taking proactive steps to help farmers prepare to save the wheat crop in the events of extreme weather conditions. (PTI)

## ICICI Pru Life Unveils Annuity Plan with Zero Surrender Charges

**GUWAHATI, Jan 19:** ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched the ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan Flexi with Benefit Enhancer, setting a milestone as the industry's first annuity plan offering a 100% refund of premiums at any time from the date of purchase.

This innovative annuity product is designed to provide customers with a guaranteed income for life, ensuring financial independence during retirement. A notable feature of the ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan is the option for customers to select the Joint Life with Waiver of Premium, which waives all future premiums in the unfortunate event of the customer's demise. Importantly, the guaranteed regular life-long income benefit will be paid to the second annuitant or joint holder. Customers can choose the second annuitant to be their spouse, parents, children, etc.

To further support customers in managing unexpected financial obligations, the product offers a loan facility, ensuring that retirement planning goals remain uncompromised.

ICICI Prudential Life, promoted by ICICI Bank Limited and Prudential Corporation Holdings Limited, commenced operations in fiscal 2001 and has consistently ranked among the top private sector life insurance companies in India based on Retail Weighted Received Premium (RWRP). The company provides a range of Protection and Savings category products catering to different life stage requirements. Its digital platform offers a paperless buying experience, facilitating self-service transactions, digital payments, and a streamlined claims settlement process.



## Rupee rises 7 paise to settle at 83.06 against US dollar

**MUMBAI, Jan 19:** The rupee gained 7 paise to settle at 83.06 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, tracking robust buying in domestic equity markets and weak American currency overseas.

However, strengthening crude oil prices and foreign capital outflows capped the sharp gain in the domestic currency, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic currency opened at 83.15 and traded between the peak of 83.06 and the lowest level of 83.16 against the greenback.

The local unit finally settled at 83.06 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 7 paise against its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee settled 1 paise higher at 83.13 against the US dollar.

The rupee appreciated following a positive trend in domestic markets and softness in the US dollar, Anuj Choudhary Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said.

"However, recovery in crude oil prices and FII outflows over the past couple of sessions capped sharp gains."

He said the rupee is likely to trade with a slight positive bias on positive global equities and a weak US dollar.

"USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of ₹ 82.80 to ₹ 83.50," Choudhary added. (PTI)

### NAME CORRECTION

I have corrected my name as Shabina Begum W/O: Md. Ibrahim Ali Chowdhury from Begume Sabina vide Notary Hojai District. From now I will be known as Shabina Begum.

**Shabina Begum Dakhin Debosthan Murajhar, Hojai**

### NAME CORRECTION

I have corrected my name as Abdul Kadir Chowdhury from Mohammed Abdul Kadir in Nagaon District Magistrate Court. From now I will be known as Abdul Kadir Chowdhury.

**Abdul Kadir Chowdhury Dakhin Debosthan Murajhar, Hojai**



# IN-SPACe and Skytrack Technologies Private Limited sign MoU

*The MoU aims to leverage ISRO's space technology & APIs for innovative solutions in transportation management*

**HT Correspondent**  
**MARGHERITA, Jan 19:** In a significant move towards harnessing space technology for Earth applications, the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe), under the Department of Space, Government of India, has signed a Framework Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Skytrack Technologies Private Limited, a start-up based in Guwahati. The collaboration aims to catalyse the design and development of an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) using cutting-edge technologies.

The MoU, signed on Friday by Sujol Bordoloi, managing director of Skytrack Technologies Private Limited, outlines the collaboration for the design and development of an intelligent transportation system using APIs and data products from the Indian Space Research Organ-



isation (ISRO). Skytrack Technologies, registered as a start-up under DPIIT and a small industry

under the Ministry of Medium, Small, and Micro Enterprises, specialises in developing technologies

for intelligent transportation systems using Geographic Information System (GIS) applications, APIs, and data products.

Under the agreement, Skytrack will leverage remote sensing data products and APIs from the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), a part of ISRO, to validate and develop new applications for an intelligent transportation system. The collaboration aims to enhance the utilisation of space-derived technologies for practical applications on Earth, redefining the landscape of space technology and transportation systems.

ISRO will provide support to Skytrack under the framework agreement, enabling access to pre-processed user products and collaborating on technology development. Skytrack will gain access to pre-processed data, APIs, and related requirements from

NRSC, ISRO, facilitating the exchange of technical information and support.

The Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) revolutionises traditional transportation by integrating advanced technologies to enhance efficiency, safety, and sustainability. The system employs real-time data, communication networks, and smart devices to optimise traffic flow, reduce congestion, and improve overall transportation management. ITS addresses the challenges of urbanisation, offering benefits such as reduced travel time, lower fuel consumption, enhanced safety through predictive analytics, and a more sustainable transportation ecosystem.

The signing ceremony took place at IN-SPACe's headquarters in Ahmedabad, marking a pivotal moment in Assam's technological journey.

## BTR's 100 Days 150 Targets program summary & reports unveiled

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, Jan 19:** The chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Pramod Boro, along with Madhav Pai, chief executive officer of the World Resource Institute, New Delhi, released the summary and analysis report of the 100 Days 150 Targets program at a ceremony held in Central Institute of Technology, Kokrajhar.

The program was launched alongside the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the BTC government and WRI, aiming to establish a new paradigm of urban sustainable development in the five districts of the Bodoland region.

The 100 Days 150 Targets program focused on specific development targets aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (UN SDGs 2030) framework. Forty-two departments of BTC implemented their respective targets, achieving a cumulative completion rate of 57.3%. Out of the allotted 150 targets, 86 were completed, 60 are in progress, and 4 were discarded due to technical difficulties.

While releasing the report, CEM Pramod Boro mentioned that the remaining 47% of the targets are in progress with the support of central and state agencies and are expected to be completed shortly. The program aimed to fast-track priority development areas and

align with the SDG goals. It was implemented through a comprehensive framework, increasing departmental capacity, engaging expertise in multiple sectors, and encouraging collaboration.

Boro highlighted the commitment of the BTR government to sustainable development despite limited resources, following an Antyodaya approach of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB). The program was launched last year by the state Education minister, Ranaj Pegu.

The report's analysis showcased the success of eight departments that achieved 100% of their assigned targets, including Education, Agriculture, Sericulture, Women & Child Development, and Flagship Missions like Bodoland Sericulture Mission. Four other departments, including Forest and Environment and Water Resources, completed more than 75% of the allotted targets, while 23 others achieved more than 50% of the targets.

The report also outlined the need for viability gap funding from different agencies to boost activities in the handloom and sericulture sector, which is a significant source of subsistence, especially for women in the BTR region. Notable achievements highlighted in the report included mapping the fish and fish seed potential in BTR and registering 75% of the livestock population in a comprehensive database.

## Huge quantity of smuggled timber, two vehicles seized

**HT Correspondent**  
**GOSSAIGAON, Jan 19:** Acting on a tip-off, a dedicated team from the Central Range of the Forest Department, under Kachugaon Forest Department, conducted a raid in the early hours of Friday. The operation resulted in the successful seizure of smuggled timber valued at 4 lakhs, loaded onto two vehicles from Ultapani-Saralpara, adjacent to the Indo-Bhutan border.

The forest officials intercepted the two vehicles transporting the large quantity of smuggled timber, identified as Max Pickup Vans with registration numbers AS25-A-8933 and AS-C-4596. The seized timber and vehicles were taken to Kachugaon Forest Division for further investigation.

## Putali Borbaruah passes away

**HT Correspondent**  
**SIVASAGAR, Jan 19:** Putali Borbaruah, the wife of the revolutionary socialist leader and three-time MLA from Amguri LAC, Khagen Borbaruah, passed away due to old age ailments on Thursday in a hospital in Dibrugarh. Putali Borbaruah played a leading role in spreading socialist principles among the rural people of the region and led a very simple life. She took an active interest in the preservation of Namtoudul and the Borpuhuri excavated by Bhagati Borbaruah in 1875. Her husband and her only son pre-deceased her, while she leaves behind four daughters. Her mortal remains were consigned to flames in Namti Borahigaon on Thursday in the presence of a large crowd, including Pradip Hazarika, MLA Amguri, members of Sivasagar district AASU, Namti Press Guild, BJP Namti Amguri committee, Ahom Sabha, Samaguri HS School staff, and many other organisations.



## Tezpur University set to celebrate 31<sup>st</sup> Foundation Day

**HT Correspondent**  
**TEZPUR, Jan 19:** Tezpur University, established in 1994, is gearing up with enthusiasm and fervour to celebrate its 31st Foundation Day on January 21, 2024. This significant milestone marks three decades of excellence in academics and research.

Prof Virander Singh Chauhan, a noted scientist, former chairman of the University Grants Commission, and National Assessment and Accreditation Council, will be present on the occasion as the chief guest and deliver the foundation day oration. Chayan Dutta, a Tezpur University alumnus from the department of Electronic and Communication Engineering, who successfully oversaw the launch control operations of the Chandrayaan-3 mission, will also be present.

"The Foundation Day celebrations aim to reflect upon the university's journey, recognise its achievements, and set the stage for future endeavours," remarked Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, vice chancellor of the University. In order to recognise and appreciate the hard work of students and alumni, the University will now give away two awards: Distinguished Alumnus Award and Distinguished Student Achiever Award.

"I am happy to inform that Chayan Dutta is receiving the Alumnus Award, and Janmejy Sarkar, a PhD scholar from the department of Physics, is receiving the Distinguished Student Achiever Award for developing the Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) payload on-board the Aditya-L1 mission," Prof Singh said.

Other than students and alumni, faculty members will also be commended during the event for their work.

## Margherita College inaugurates five-day book fair

**HT Correspondent**  
**MARGHERITA, Jan 19:** The Margherita College commenced its five-day-long book fair on Friday, with the inauguration conducted by esteemed writer and satirist Dr Bhringeswar Sharma. Dr Sharma, addressing the audience, encouraged the younger generation to cultivate a habit of reading books.

The inaugural program, chaired by Dr Atanu Kakoti, the principal of Margherita College, featured addresses from social activist Krishna Kumar Saikia, renowned poet Ashwini Gogoi, and the general secretary of Tinsukia District Journalists Association, Ranajyoti Neog.

During the event, the latest edition of the college magazine 'Eshana' and a collection of articles by Nikunja Gogoi were also inaugurated. The gathering included Pranab Gogoi, the president of the governing body of Margherita College, Dr Kripa Prasad Upadhyay, the principal of Ledo College, Sanjita Chetia, Dr Anjumoni Baruah, Gautam Purkayastha, and several others. The program was skillfully anchored by Dr Ramen Hazarika and Dr Runjun Saikia of Margherita College.

## Demise of retired ONGC officer

**HT Correspondent**  
**SIVASAGAR, Jan 19:** Retired ONGC officer and resident of Serekapara Hatimuria Gaon, Alah Nurul Haque (63), passed away due to a complicated illness in Mumbai Kokilaben Hospital on Wednesday morning. His janaja was performed in the presence of a large number of friends and relatives at Sivasagar Durbar Field crematorium on Thursday. He leaves behind his wife and a daughter. His death is mourned by the Serekapar Masjid Committee, Kerimuddin Ahmed Memorial Trust, and Muslim Kalyan Parishad here.

## Historic drama 'Bhogjora' to be staged at Jamugurihat

**HT Correspondent**  
**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Jan 19:** The iconic Assamese drama 'Bhogjora' is set to be staged at Bapuji Bhawan on February 2, as announced in a press meet held at Bapuji Bhawan on Friday. The drama concert is organised by Bapuji Bhawan Natya Samaj and sponsored by Delhi Public School, Solmara. The press meet witnessed the presence of Shailen Borkataky, president of Bapuji Bhawan Natya Samaj, Pradumna Hazarika, secretary, Nitumani Bora, vice president, Dr Dhanbir Singh, dean of Delhi Public School, Jitu Agarwala, managing director, and Pankaj Yadav, principal of Delhi Public School, among other dignitaries.

The historic drama 'Bhogjora' will be jointly directed by eminent dramatists Pankaj Jyoti Bhuyan and Bhabani Bhuyan. The Bapuji Bhawana Natya Samaj plans to perform the historic drama in various stages across the greater Jamugurihat area in a staged manner.

Soota MLA Padma Hazarika will play the role of the historic character Lakhi Singha in the performance. The decision to stage the drama in different locations has been welcomed by Bapuji Bhawana Natya Samaj and the community.

## Security review meeting held for Republic Day celebration

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, Jan 19:** To ensure the safety and security of railway passengers, their belongings, and other railway properties during the upcoming Republic Day celebrations, the Lumding Division hosted a divisional crime review meeting on Thursday at Lumding. The meeting, chaired by Abhishek Kumar, IRPFS, involved stakeholders scrutinising and reviewing current crime trends, formulating proactive strategies to enhance railway properties and passenger safety.

Chief security commissioner Abhishek Kumar emphasised the importance of collaborative efforts among various agencies to combat crime effectively. Stakeholders shared their views on emerging challenges and insights into recent



criminal activities on running trains and railway areas. Innovative solutions were tabled to tackle these issues, referencing the recent Balasore (Odisha) train accident.

All divisional and branch RPF officers, along with RPF post commanders of Lumding Railway Division, attended the review meeting, as mentioned in a release.

## Scholarship opportunity for underprivileged students

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Jan 19:** Cluster of Stars, a charitable Trust, is celebrating six successful years of providing free boarding and education to 12 students in classes 5, 6, and 7. As it enters its 7th year, the trust is expanding its reach by offering scholarships to 5 more students in classes 6 and 7.

The scholarship encompasses free lodging, meals, and clothing throughout the academic journey, supporting students aspiring for various career paths such as Medical, Engineering, MBA, CA, etc. The trust specifically targets male students who are physically and medically fit, hailing from the North Eastern Region (NER), and belonging to the Below Poverty

Line (BPL) category or with an annual family income below ₹ 100,000.

Eligible candidates, who have passed the last standard required for admission in the academic year 2024 and are willing to stay in the trust's hostel, can appear for the scholarship test scheduled for March 17, 2024, at Pragjyotish Senior Secondary School, West Boragaon, Guwahati.

Application forms are available at the office of the Charitable Trust, located at 3rd Floor, Late Leturam Das Market, Pandav Nagar, Pandu, Guwahati. For further information, interested candidates can contact 84865-35639. The last date for the receipt of applications is February 26, 2024.

## Demow's Dilakhi Kalita clears APSC CCE

**HT Correspondent**  
**DEMOW, Jan 19:** Dilakhi Kalita from Demow Sukapha Nagar has cleared the Assam Public Service Commission (APSC) Combined Competitive Examination (CCE), 2022, as announced by APSC on Wednesday. Dilakhi Kalita, daughter of Dulal Kalita and Joba Kakoty Kalita, secured the 26th position as an executive officer in the Assam Urban Administrative Service. A resident of Demow Sukapha Nagar, Dilakhi expressed her happiness in achieving this feat, attributing her success to God and her parents. She said that studying in Assamese medium was not a barrier, underscoring the importance of consistency. Dilakhi had previously been selected in ADRE and worked as a junior assistant in the Irrigation Department. The Demow Press Club, local organisations, and well-wishers felicitated Dilakhi Kalita at her residence on Thursday.



## NFR's roof-top solar panels generate 6110.233 kWp

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Jan 19:** The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is making significant strides toward achieving the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. In a concerted effort to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, NFR has been installing solar power plants across the zone. As of December 2023, roof-top solar power plants have been commissioned, generating a total of 6110.233 kilowatt peak (kWp). This initiative is expected to save approximately 46.83 lakh units, equivalent to around Rs 3.74 crore annually in energy bills.

Under the 'Go-Green' mission, 45 stations and other service buildings in Assam have been equipped with solar roof-top panels, generating 4509 kWp. Additionally, 24 stations in West Bengal, 11 stations in Bihar, 16 stations in Tripura, and 02 stations in Nagaland, along with 01 station in Meghalaya, have been fitted with solar roof-top panels, collectively generating 554.20 kWp, 390 kWp, 335 kWp, 120



kWp, and 10 kWp, respectively. Furthermore, 192.033 kWp of solar roof-top systems have been commissioned at 388 level crossing gates in Assam, Bihar, and West Bengal.

In the last quarter of the current financial year, NFR plans to commission an additional 1871 kWp capacity of solar roof-top systems. This includes 892 kWp in various

locations of Rangia Division, 384 kWp in Northeast Frontier Railway Sports Complex, Maligaon, 495 kWp in Lumding division, and 100 kWp in Alipurduar division.

NFR remains committed to harnessing solar energy to meet its power needs, resulting in substantial cost savings for the railways and the country while promoting environmental sustainability.

## State govt honours artists and grants pensions on Silpi Diwas in Tezpur



**HT Correspondent**  
**TEZPUR, Jan 19:** To commemorate the doyen of Assamese culture Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala on his 74th death anniversary, the Cultural Affairs Department of the state government centrally organised 'Silpi Divas' here at Collegiate Field with a day-long program on Wednesday in association with the Sonitpur district administration.

During the program, the government conferred the Artists Award (Silpi Bota) for the year 2024 on eminent artist Manisha Hazarika, along with seven other distinguished personalities who have contributed significantly to the Assamese socio-cultural and literary world. For the session 2023, three national awards, in-

cluding the Gopinath Bordoloi Award for national integration, Krishna Kanta Handique Award, and Sukapha Award, were conferred on the eminent journalist Dharendra Nath Chakravarty, renowned scholar and researcher Dr Pradipjyoti Mahanta, and noted journalist and litterateur Dharendra Nath Bezbaruah, respectively. Noted actress Chetana Das, journalist Prashanta Baruah, noted social worker Dr Malati Baruah, and veteran folk artist Jagadish Barman were honoured with Natsurjya Phani Sarma Award, Dr Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya Award, Sati Radhika Award, and Silpi Sainik Brajanath Sarma Award, respectively. During the program, 60 noted artists were felicitated with artist's pensions,

while annual artist awards were given to 151 artists of the region. Additionally, 10 divyang artists and 10 families of deceased artists were granted one-time financial assistance.

Conferring the awards, state Cultural Affairs minister Bimal Borah, stated that Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala always dreamt of a beautiful society, and the creations of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala continue to inspire the new generation. The minister also launched a book titled 'Cultural Mosaic of Assam' during the program. State cabinet minister Ashok Singhal, while addressing the gathering, said that artists dedicate themselves to the overall benevolence of society, and they should be honoured with adequate respect. Tezpur MLA Priithi Raj Rabha, Tezpur MP Pallab Lochan Das, and noted educationist Dr Swadhinata Mahanta also highlighted the contributions made by Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala. The event was attended by Ritubaran Sarmah, vice chairman, AMTRON, director of Cultural Affairs, Government of Assam, Minakshi Das Nath, district commissioner, Deba Kumar Mishra, distinguished social worker, Dipamoni Saikia, president of Assam Natya Sammilan, Kumar Dipak Das, and officials of the Cultural Affairs Department of the state government.

## BCPL achieves milestone in global expansion with polymer export

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIBRUGARH, Jan 19:** BCPL has successfully exported its first truckload of polymer to the neighbouring country of Bhutan.

With a commitment to quality and innovation, the company's step is a testament to the dedication of international expansion, meeting the diverse needs of customers worldwide, especially in SAARC countries.

"Bhutan, known for its unique culture and growing economy, presents an excellent opportunity for BCPL to contribute to the nation's development. We believe they will resonate well with the values and preferences of the Bhutanese market. By entering Bhutan, we aim to establish strong partnerships, foster economic growth, and create lasting connections with businesses and consumers alike," stated a BCPL press release.

This landmark export marks a significant stride in BCPL's commitment to expanding its reach and contributing to regional economic growth. The high-quality polymer,



produced at BCPL's state-of-the-art facility, adheres to international standards, showcasing the company's dedication to global excellence.

The flag-off of the occasion was done by Vijay Kr Pal, chief operating officer BCPL, Alak Baruah, chief general manager BCPL, Pradeep Rawat, general manager (Chemical & HR), Abhijit Nath, deputy general manager along with Prantik Sharma, chief manager, Marketing, Arnab J Baruah (senior manager), Swastik Mohanty (senior manager), etc., at BCPL Petrochemical Complex on Thursday.

This export initiative underscores BCPL's position as a reliable and competitive player in the polymer industry.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.*  
-Napoleon Bonaparte

## RaGa Yatra Sparks Political Turmoil in NE

The inaugural week of Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, spearheaded by former Congress President Rahul Gandhi, has ignited political fervor in Northeast India. The journey, launched on January 14 from Toubal in Manipur, has set off alarms among BJP leaders, notably Himanta Biswa Sarma, chief minister of Assam, who appears visibly concerned about the potential ramifications. The Northeast, a stronghold with 20 out of 25 Lok Sabha seats belonging to the NDA, including 15 held by the BJP, is crucial for the party's success in the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha Election. Himanta Biswa Sarma's political fate hangs in the balance, given his leadership role in the BJP and NDA in the region. Rahul Gandhi's Nyay Yatra has traversed Manipur and Nagaland, drawing attention to the prevailing issues. In Manipur, where BJP won one of the two Lok Sabha seats in 2019, the Yatra gained substantial local support, reflecting growing discontent with the BJP-led government's handling of violence since May 2023. Similarly, in Nagaland, the Nyay Yatra strengthened the Congress, posing a potential threat to the political landscape dominated by the NDA. The swing in favor of Congress in 2019 and positive responses from the public indicate a shifting dynamic.

As the Yatra entered Assam on January 18, Himanta Biswa Sarma witnessed its successful progression. With 14 Lok Sabha seats at stake in Assam, where BJP secured nine seats in 2019 with a narrow vote margin, Himanta has much to worry about. The Nyay Yatra is slated to cover 833 km in Assam over 8 days, addressing concerns in 17 districts, including key places like Jorhat, Dispur, and Guwahati. AIUDF and Congress have already settled seat-sharing in Assam, with AIUDF contesting on 3 seats and Congress on 11. This alliance poses a substantial challenge for the BJP, as the combined vote share is expected to surpass the BJP's in the upcoming election, intensifying Himanta's concerns. The Nyay Yatra is proving instrumental in reviving Congress's presence in the Northeast, appealing to diverse ethnic groups disillusioned by violence, discrimination, and neglect from the central and state governments. The Yatra sheds light on unresolved issues like peace talks, the Citizenship Amendment Act, and the Inner Line Permit System, fostering resentment and unrest in the region.

Despite facing legal disruptions and criticism, particularly from Assam's CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Yatra continues to gain traction. Allegations of the Congress being anti-national and corrupt, countered by Rahul Gandhi's claims against Assam and its chief minister, add to the political heat. However, the Yatra grapples with organizational weaknesses and factionalism, demanding better coordination within the party and its INDIA alliance partners. The narrative for the Lok Sabha Election 2024 needs refinement to truly challenge the BJP's dominance in the Northeast. In the coming days, the Nyay Yatra will traverse Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya, covering one district each. With its initial success, it appears poised to impact the political outcome in favor of the Congress and its allies in the INDIA alliance. The BJP faces not only the challenge posed by the Yatra but also the potential desertion by its allies in Northeast India. Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, led by Rahul Gandhi, is reshaping Northeast politics, amplifying concerns for the BJP, particularly in Assam. The Yatra's success raises stakes for the upcoming Lok Sabha Election 2024.

## 'Ramavtar' inspired the people against Mughal-misrule

By: Er. Rajesh Pathak

Divided into 26 chapters, consisting 864 verses is the treatise on the episode of the life of Rama which is called 'Ramavtar' written by Sikh guru Shri Guru Govind Singh. Half of the verses in the book are based on war-stories. Guru Govind Singh wanted to inspire people against the Mughals' atrocities, and he found the way to it through reminding them the war tradition of their great Hindu ancestors. And most suitable of them in the given condition could be the character of Rama, the very embodiment of organization-valor-provess. And he choose to write 'Ramavtar' to fulfill the cause of inspiring national selfhood among the common-mass, therefore.

Initially who drew towards Sikhism of Guru Nanakdev [its exponent] by instinct were peace-loving, and religiously devotional. But latter the way with heart rending cruelty Guru Arjundeve-one who did great historic work of compilation of Guru Granth Sahib-was killed by Jahangir; and then Guru Tegbahadur by Aurangzeb that the course of Sikhism underwent transformation.

It was no longer untenable to those at the helm of the affair of Sikhism to have learnt that bhajans [devotional songs], keertan [prayers] and fast may bring spiritual peace to mind. But as far as security of community is concerned that can't be achieved without arousing the spirit of organisation, fearlessness and martialism among the people, as Rama once did against demonic tendency then ruling the roost in his time. Thus came into being Khalsa-Panth initiated by Guru Govind Singh. First five who came forward to fulfil the resolutions of Khalsa were venerably known as 'Panj-Pyare'.

One among them was from Dholi-community; second, Bhisti; third, Darji; fourth, khatri; fifth from Jat community. As also three among them were from

Beedar, Dwarkapuri and Jagannathpuri respectively; and other two from Punjab. Having been initiated in Khalsa, it was mandatory keeping kesh [long hair], kataar [dagger] and kanghi [comb]; and wearing kachha [small-piece of loin-cloth] and kada [bracelet], which are popularly known as five 'Kakaar'.

Based on Veer rasa (the verses that triggers brevity), the latter part of the composition is predominantly refer to the victories of Rama in the wars he fought. Guru Govind Singh wanted to see country free of bondage of Mughal-rule. Fighting against Aurangzeb and his sons and their hard core cunning followers he and his four sons sacrificed their



lives. However the eternal ideals laid by Shri Ram and the motivation gained from the life of Guru Govind Singh never left fighting spirit among his followers die out a bit. Following the path shown by him, his descendant, great Maharaja Ranjit Singh later fulfilled his dream.

Though Marathas liberated Punjab in 1755-56 from Mughals but credit for strengthening of Indian sovereignty in the region actually goes to subsequent Sikh rule there. Not only this, breaking the Muslim dominance, invading army of Maharaja led by Hari Singh Nalwa even entered deep inside Afghanistan up to Kabul and earned the glory of bringing back after centuries the jewel studded Gate of Somnath temple back to India, establishing it to its original place. Likewise Hari Mandir Sahib Gurudwara of Amritsar that was once burnt down by Ahmad Shah Abdali was renovated with the gold, giving it the form of 'Swaran Mandir'. (The author can be reached at [rajeshpathakbpl@rediffmail.com](mailto:rajeshpathakbpl@rediffmail.com))

# Ayodhya overdrive: Will Modi's dreams match reality?

The line between Prime Minister Narendra Modi's enthusiasm and the preparations by the Trust for the Ram Mandir consecration on January 22 in Ayodhya is blurred. Modi visited Ayodhya on December 30, inaugurating the airport, launching trains, and announcing over 15,000 crore rupees for development projects.

With his characteristic flair, he touted these efforts as reviving India's cultural glory by transforming pilgrimage sites like Ayodhya, Ujjain, and Varanasi into tourist destinations. While the Trust manages the Mandir operations, Modi leverages the occasion to promote his agenda of cultural rejuvenation and economic growth. His active engagement risks overshadowing the event itself. Ultimately, it remains to be seen whether Modi's ambitious vision can align with the Trust's aims for this significant moment.

The sense of jubilation evident in Prime Minister Modi's speeches and gestures regarding the Ayodhya temple stems from his intuitive understanding of the temple's importance to the long-held Bharatiya Janata Party agenda. With the next Lok Sabha election looming just months after the inauguration, Modi aims to loudly beat the drums about the temple and closely associate himself with every aspect. He appointed confidante Nripendra Misra to head the temple committee rather than leaving it to another group, ensuring the credit for construction goes to the Prime Minister.



The nominal temple trust acts as Modi's proxy until the grand opening, when he and trusted aides will orchestrate the triumphant ceremony. Modi outshines even Lord Ram as he spearheads preparations for this momentous event.

Prime Minister Modi is known for his grandiose style, preferring the spectacular over the subdued. He embraces bold, flashy gestures undeterred by concerns of excessiveness or vulgarity. The Prime Minister excels as a master of political spectacle, outshining even the most lavish Indian weddings and Bollywood productions.

With the construction and inauguration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, Modi aims to capitalize on this achievement as an impactful campaign theme. The fanfare surrounding Ayodhya is crafted to maximize political advantage in the upcoming Lok

Sabha polls.

For over 20 years, the BJP has

### DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Dipak Kurmi

capitalized on the Ram temple issue in Uttar Pradesh to gain votes. Now that the temple has finally been built, it remains to be seen whether it will continue to deliver electoral dividends.

The BJP has turned Uttar Pradesh into an almost impregnable stronghold for Hindu nationalism. It is unclear how much more the Ram temple will bolster the party's position. That Prime Minister Modi is orchestrating a grand inauguration for the temple indicates the BJP still seeks to tap into the emotional resonance of the temple for voters, as the party is uncertain about touting its economic and governance record in the state.

The BJP's return to the Ayodhya temple issue after 10 years in power should come as a disappointment. It indicates that Modi has failed to establish a compelling record of governance and must resort to divisive religious themes to win elections. This tactic of exploiting religious divides for political gain also extends to other Hindi heartland states, with the exception of Bihar.

However, Modi seems unconcerned with such ethical qualms. His sole focus is victory, regardless of the means. For him, any issue that proves politically useful, like the temple, is fair game.

Modi and the BJP are traveling a dangerous path of right-wing nationalism by seeking to revive Hindu glory in Ayodhya. Their plan to transform Ayodhya into an internationally renowned Hindu pilgrimage site marks a concerning shift from realism to fantasy.

While aiming to spotlight India's past achievements, this backward-looking approach contradicts the modernization and progress promised by technology. A country led by those focused on recreating an unrecoverable past cannot truly embrace the future.

The BJP remains firmly entrenched in an imagined version of India's history yet lacks nuance in how they invoke the past. Their fervent push to reconstruct the Ram temple is an attempt to bring to life a utopian myth rather than engage thoughtfully with ancient texts.

Building a theme park version of Ayodhya dishonors its complex history as a Buddhist, Jain and Hindu center of significance. If India is to ride the twin horses of innovation and tradition into the future, leaders must look forward with clear eyes, not backward with blind nostalgia.

The inability to separate past and present, dreams and reality reveals flaws in the national psyche. This confusion leads to turmoil in daily life. For centuries, Indians held myths in mind yet lived in the present, keeping myth and emotion apart from daily challenges.

Now the RSS, BJP, and Modi lead India down a slippery path, seeking to revive past glories artificially, and disrupting normal life. India's mythic past imparts values; Indians have lived by those tales and values without resorting to flashy theatrics. (The writer can be reached at [dipaknewslive@gmail.com](mailto:dipaknewslive@gmail.com))

## Why ISRO's collaboration with Russia for Gaganyaan mission is crucial?



By: Girish Linganna

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is considering sending its astronauts on the highly ambitious Gaganyaan mission with spacesuits made in Russia, according to a document reviewed by Hindustan Times. There are signs that Russian spacesuits will be used for the Gaganyaan mission, although Vikram Sarabhai Space's locally produced Intra-Vehicular Activity (IVA) suits are almost finished and being tested.

The initial plan was for Indian astronauts to wear the IVA suits made in India. Recent mission planning, however, indicates that Russian spacesuits are preferred due to programmatic needs and an extra degree of assurance for crew safety. "Considering the programmatic requirements and to doubly ensure crew safety, it is planned to induct Russian space suits for the (Gaganyaan) mission," an official document sent to the English daily said. The year, 2024, is marked as 'The Year of Gaganyaan' by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief, S. Somnath, who emphasised its importance in the Gaganyaan timeline. At this critical juncture in the planning and implementation of this historic space project, ISRO has scheduled important mission-related tests and demonstrations throughout the entire year.

ISRO Gaganyaan Mission: is aimed at showcasing India's capacity to carry out its first human spaceflight programme, ISRO is gearing up for a momentous milestone with its ambitious Gaganyaan mission. The goal of the project is to safely return a crew of three people to Earth by putting them into orbit at a height of 400 kilometres for a three-day stay.

To ensure the programme's complete success, ISRO is concentrating on several tests and programmes in advance of the historic human mission. The production of a human-rated launch vehicle that can safely carry the crew into space is at the forefront of this endeavour, alongside the development of crucial technologies. Furthermore, construction is being done on a life-support system that will give the crew an Earth-like environment while they are in space. Developing a thorough framework for crew management that addresses such issues as training, recuperation and rehabilitation is another priority for ISRO.

ISRO is scheduled to carry out some critical preparatory missions before the Gaganyaan spacecraft is launched. Test

Vehicle (TV) flights, the Pad Abort Test (PAT) and the Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT) are a few of these. These test flights are essential for evaluating and improving different systems to ensure they are safe and reliable in the harsh environment of space. Before commencing manned operations, unmanned missions will also be carried out to confirm and improve the overall robustness of the systems.

A major step forward for India in the field of human space exploration, ISRO's devotion to meticulous testing, technological developments and exhaustive preparations demonstrates its dedication towards accomplishing a successful Gaganyaan mission.

Since it was first introduced in 1973, the Sokol space suit—also referred to as the Sokol IVA suit, or just the Sokol (Russian: Cокoл, lit. 'Falcon') - has been a mainstay of Soviet and Russian space missions. As of 2023, it is still in use and was intended to be worn by every Soyuz spacecraft occupant. To differentiate it from suits meant for extravehicular activities or spacewalks, the Sokol is officially categorized as a rescue suit.

The Sokol is essential in the event of an unexpected spacecraft depressurization, unlike suits made for spacewalks. The major goal of the Sokol is to guarantee the wearer's survival in an emergency by preserving a life-sustaining environment within the suit, despite certain parallels with NASA's Advanced Crew Escape Suit (ACES), which is worn during space shuttle launches and landings.

The Sokol has been a life-support system under dire circumstances for a long time, which is proof of its dependability and efficiency in space exploration. Although it is not designed for extravehicular operations, its vital function in protecting astronauts in space highlights how important it is to the general safety of human missions.

Specifications and variants: Since its debut in 1973 with the Sokol-K model, the Sokol space suit - a crucial part of intra-vehicular activity (IVA) - has experienced multiple revisions. With a weight of 10 kg (22 lb) and an operating pressure of 400 hPa (5.8 psi), the Sokol-K was first deployed on the Soyuz-12 mission in September 1973. It was used on missions from Soyuz-12 to Soyuz-40 (1981) and was based on the Sokol aircraft full-pressure suit.

The Sokol-KR version was created particularly for the Almaz programme and the TKS spacecraft. Different from its counterparts, the Sokol-KR had a regen-

erative life support system, although the TKS spacecraft never flew with a crew.

The Sokol-KM and KV were intermediate variants that included several advancements after the Sokol-K. These included a liquid-cooled undergarment, a two-piece design secured with zip fasteners, and improvements to the joint fabric for better mobility. Yet, the Sokol-KM and KV were not successful in reaching orbit.

An upgraded model, the Sokol-KV, weighed 12 kg (26 lb) and operated at 400 hPa (5.8 psi). It had the liquid-cooled undergarment, which effectively removed body heat to maximize wearer comfort, although it was never used on a space mission.

Sokol& Mercury comparisons: In emergency scenarios, astronaut survivability is given priority by both the American Mercury spacesuit and the Russian Sokol spacesuit. However, the Sokol is unique given that it is dependable across many years of space flights, acting as a life-support system in the event of unplanned spacecraft depressurizations. As a result of its proven ability to maintain a life-sustaining environment within the suit—an essential feature for guaranteeing astronaut safety in space exploration emergencies - the Sokol has a strong reputation as a rescue suit.

The Sokol spacesuit shows improvements in design, while the Mercury spacesuit was revolutionary for its day, with features including an aluminium-coated nylon shell for thermal regulation. To effectively control body temperature and improve wearer comfort, the Sokol-KV version, for instance, incorporates a liquid-cooled undergarment. The Russian spacesuit temperature regulation is a vital component for astronaut well-being on long-duration missions and this invention demonstrates their dedication to enhancing this aspect of their suits.

Better joint fabric, a two-piece design fastened with zips and a liquid-cooled undergarment are all features of the Sokol spacesuit's progression, which enhances wearer comfort and mobility. Examples of these models are the Sokol-KM and KV. On the other hand, astronauts in the Mercury spacesuit expressed dissatisfaction with the suit due to inadequate temperature regulation and restricted head mobility. To improve mission efficiency as a whole, Sokol's design improvements are centred on resolving astronaut concerns.

With its simple zips and airtight seals, the Sokol spacesuit's design places strong emphasis on user-friendliness. Making sure every member of the Soyuz crew gets a custom-fit suit is important for the suit's operation during launch and re-entry. On the contrary, despite being functional in its intended capacity, the Mercury spacesuit needed to be specially tailored for every astronaut and, during missions, astronauts complained of pain. The Sokol's applicability in real-world space mission conditions is attributed to its user-friendly features and attention to fit customization.

In case of an emergency, both suits have pressure relief valves, with the Sokol enabling modifications to various pressure levels. As the Mercury spacesuit was made to withstand a maximum pres-

sure of 3.7 pounds per square inch, it was not flexible enough to change pressure levels in an emergency. By allowing astronauts to balance movement and survival, the Sokol's capacity to modify pressure settings - albeit under dire circumstances - illustrates a more flexible approach to managing emergencies.

The upcoming missions of ISRO apart from the Gaganyaan mission are: NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) Mission: Jointly developed by NASA and ISRO, the NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) is intended to be a Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) observatory. NISAR's main goal is to map the whole planet every 12 days. By doing this, it provides reliable spatial and temporal data that can be used to track changes in the planet's ecosystems, ice mass, biomass of flora, sea levels, groundwater and natural hazards, such as landslides, tsunamis and earthquakes.

The Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) equipment operating in L and S bands is dual-band and is used by the observatory. High-resolution data across a broad swath is made possible by the novel Sweep SAR technology. With the use of repeat-pass InSAR techniques, NISAR seeks to serve both national interests and the scientific community worldwide in its study of surface deformations.

NASA's contribution entails delivering the L-Band SAR payload system, engineering payloads and key equipment, such as the Payload Data Subsystem, High-rate Science Downlink System, GPS receivers, and a Solid State Recorder. In the interim, ISRO provides the S-Band SAR payload and the two agencies work together on a sizeable shared unfillable reflector antenna.

The capacity for high-resolution, high-repeat-cycle data collection has been improved by this ground-breaking project, which is the first dual-frequency radar imaging mission in the L- and S-bands. Encompassing a broad spectrum of phenomena from plant changes to ice sheet collapse and natural disasters, NISAR focuses on three primary disciplines: ecosystems, deformation studies and cryospheres sciences.

A 12-m wide deployable mesh reflector designed by JPL is installed on a 9-m boom at the observatory. The Integrated Radar Instrument Structure (IRIS) contains the SAR payloads and associated electronics, while the spacecraft incorporates attitude and orbit control elements, power systems and thermal management.

Three phases make up the development of NISAR: SIT-2, which is for the independent development of SAR payloads and engineering systems; SIT-3, which is for integration and testing at JPL; and the ongoing SIT-4 phase, which is for performance evaluation of the observatory as a whole. The mission will be launched in the first quarter of 2024 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota, utilizing the GSVL expendable launch vehicle provided by ISRO.

After launch, a 90-day commissioning phase will include an in-orbit checkout to get the observatory ready for science operations. The ultimate aim is to accomplish the Level-1 research goals and give the scientific community useful data. (IPA Service)



# Event Management as a career choice

By: Ranjan K Baruah

We have entered into another year with new hopes and expectations. Hopes and expectations can be a reality when we start planning and action. Hope and dream will be nothing if we do not take action and execute our plans and ideas. From career perspectives there are options which are also related to new year celebration or organizing different activities. One of the career options in this regard is event management. Let us look into the depth of these career avenues and how we can get associated with this option.

Event management is the application of project management to the creation and development of small and/or large-scale personal or corporate events such

as festivals, conferences, ceremonies, weddings, formal parties, concerts, or conventions. It involves studying the brand, identifying its target audience, devising the event concept, and coordinating the technical aspects before actually launching the event.

The events industry now includes events of all sizes from the Olympics down to business breakfast meetings. Many industries, celebrities, charitable organizations, and interest groups hold events in order to market their label, build business relationships, raise money, or celebrate achievement. Events may be purely commercial or charity based.

Though it seems to be easy, the fact is that it is one of the challenging and demanding options. It is always good for those

who are creative and punctual. One of the most important components is time management and people who are punctual are more fit into event management. The process of planning and coordinating the event is usually referred to as event planning and which can include budgeting, scheduling, site selection, acquiring necessary permits, coordinating transportation and parking, arranging for speakers or entertainers, arranging decor, event security, catering, coordinating with third-party vendors, and emergency plans.

We should learn that events can be classified into different categories which include cultural events and celebrations, arts and Entertainment events, business and trade events, different sports events, educational and scientific events, political



events, etc. Central government or different state governments also conducts and organizes events related to programmes or missions, etc. There are press events like press meets or press briefing, etc.

We are aware of different tourism marts of programmes

conducted by different agencies including departments.

Apart from big events there may be some smaller events like wedding or birthday party or New Year party, etc. big or small but the fact is that the event management industry of India is a dynamic and flourishing sec-

tor. So, the scope of event management as a career in India is immense for those who are trained, skilled or experienced. There are online events too which need technical expertise apart from other skills.

There are short term courses related to event management and this is part of management courses and mass communication. There are benefits of studying event planning and management as it is a fast-growing and dynamic industry. It is best for creative people and one may start working independently as freelance opportunities are also available. One must remember that there might be stress as lots of activities need to be coordinated and many people are associated with events. In spite of that it is profitable for those who know how to execute.

One must remember that creativity in event management helps to tackle problems by looking for solutions from different perspectives.

Effective communication and networking is a must in this field. The best part is that aspirants from any academic field or low academic records may excel in this field if they have the required skills. Hope the New Year shall be a great year for all our readers and we excel in our studies and professions. Once again, happy reading and happy new year to all our readers. *(The author is a career mentor and skill trainer and currently Adviser of Skill Employment and Entrepreneurship Department of Bodoland Territorial Council, Kokrajhar. He can be reached at 8473943734 or bkranjank@gmail.com)*

## NICL Recruitment 2024 – 274 Administrative Officer Posts

Last Date: 22/01/2024

National Insurance Company Ltd. has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 274 Administrative Officer (Specialist & Generalist) in Scale I cadre Vacancy. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

**Name of post:** Administrative Officer

**No of posts:** 274 posts

**Category-wise vacancy:**

# Generalist: 130 posts  
# Specialist: 142 posts

**Pay Scale:** The starting Basic pay would be ₹ 50,925 in the scale of ₹ 50925-2500(14)-85925-2710(4)-96765 and such other allowances as may be admissible under the rules in force from time to time in the company.

**Eligibility Criteria of NICL Recruitment**

**Age Limit:** Candidate age must be between 21 to 30 years as on 1st December 2023, i.e. a candidate must have been born not earlier than 02.12.1993 and not later than 01.12.2002 (both dates inclusive).

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

# SC/ ST: 5 years  
# OBC: 3 years  
# Ex-Servicemen: 3 years  
# PwBD: 10 years

**Educational Qualification:**

**Doctor (MBBS):** M.B.B.S / M.D. / M.S. or PG – Medical Degree from a recognized University.

OR

equivalent foreign degrees which are recognized as such by the National Medical Commission (Formerly Medical Council of India) with the prescribed benchmark. Furthermore, the candidate must be holding a valid registration from National Medical Commission (Formerly Medical Council of India) or any State Medical Council (as applicable for Allopathy) as on date of the scheduled interview.

**Legal:** Graduate / Post Graduate in Law from a recognized University with at least 60% marks in either of the degree examination (at least 55% for SC/ST) candidates.

**Finance:** Chartered Accountant (ICAI) / Cost Accountant (ICWA)

OR

B.COM / M.COM from a recognized University with at least 60% marks in either of the degree examination (at least 55% for SC/ST) candidates.

**Actuarial:** Bachelor / Masters degree in Statistics / Mathematics / Actuarial Science or any other quantitative discipline from a recognized University with at least 60% marks in either of the degree examination (at least 55% for SC/ST) candidates.

**Information Technology:** B.E / B.Tech / M.E. / M.Tech in Computer Science/Information Technology/ MCA from a recognized University with at least 60% marks in either of the degree examination (at least 55% for SC/ST) candidates.

**Automobile Engineering:** B.E. / B.Tech. / M.E. / M.Tech in Automobile Engineering from a recognized University with at least 60% marks in either of the degree examination (at least 55% for SC/ST) candidates.

**Generalist Officer:** Graduate / Post Graduate in any stream from a recognized University with at least 60% marks in either of the degree examination (at least 55% for SC/ST) candidates.

**Hindi (Rajbhasha) Officer:**

Master's Degree from a recognized University in Hindi with English as a compulsory or elective subject or as the medium of examination at the degree level with 60% marks (for SC/ST 55% marks)

OR

Master's Degree from a recognized University in English with Hindi as a compulsory or elective subject or as the medium of examination at the degree level with 60% marks (for SC/ST 55% marks)

OR

Master's Degree from a recognized University in any subject other than Hindi or English, with Hindi medium and English as a compulsory or elective subject or as the medium of examination at the degree level with 60% marks (for SC/ST 55% marks)

OR

Master's Degree from a recognized University in any subject other than Hindi or English, with English medium and Hindi as a compulsory or elective subject or as the medium of examination at the degree level with 60% marks (for SC/ST 55% marks)

OR

Master's Degree from a recognized University in any subject other than Hindi or English, with Hindi and English as the compulsory or elective subjects or either of the two as a medium of examination and the other as a compulsory or elective subject at the degree level with 60% marks (for SC/ST 55% marks)

**Application Fee:** Candidates have to pay a certain amount as application fee depending up on their category. The details are as given below:

Category	Fee
SC / ST / PwBD	₹ 250
Others	₹ 1000

**Important Dates of NICL Administrative Officer Recruitment 2024**

# Starting date of submission of online application: 2nd January, 2024  
# Last date of submission of online application: 22nd January, 2024

## UIIC Officer Recruitment 2024 – 250 Administrative Officer Posts

Last Date: 23/01/2024

United India Insurance Company Limited (UIIC) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 250 Administrative Officer (Scale I) posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

**Name of post:** Administrative Officer (Scale I)

**No of posts:** 250 posts

**Category-wise vacancy:**

# UR: 102  
# SC: 37  
# ST: 20  
# OBC: 67  
# EWS: 24

**Scale of pay:** ₹ 50925-2500(14)-85925-2710(4)-96765

**Eligibility Criteria of UIIC Officer Recruitment**

**Age Limit:** A candidate must be of the Minimum Age of 21 years and the Maximum Age of 30 years as on 31.12.2023. Candidate must have been born not earlier than 01.01.1994 and not later than 31.12.2002 (both days inclusive).

**Age Relaxation:** Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

# SC/ST: 5 years  
# OBC: 3 years  
# PwBD: 10 years

**Educational Qualification:** The minimum Educational Qualification required is degree with 60% marks (55% for SC/ST Category) from recognized university or any equivalent qualification recognized as such by Central Government.

**Computer Skills:** Working knowledge of Computer is a must.

**Application Fee:** The applicants shall be required to pay the application fee / service charges as indicated below:

Category	Fee
Others	₹ 1000 + GST
SC/ST/PwBD	₹ 250 + GST

**Important Dates of UIIC Recruitment 2024**

# Starting date of submission of online application: 08th January 2024  
# Last date of submission of online application: 23rd January 2024

## ASDMA Guwahati Recruitment 2024 – 6 Specialist Posts

Last Date: 24/01/2024

Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), Guwahati has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 6 Specialist Posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

**1. Land Taxation Modelling Specialist**

**No of posts:** 01

**Remuneration:** ₹ 1 lakh - ₹ 1,20,000 per month.  
**Mobility:** ₹ 9,000 and **Communication:** ₹ 2000

**Essential Qualification & Experience:**

# M. Sc Economics or M. Sc Mathematics/Statistics.

# Preferably with 5 years of relevant experience.

# Expertise in business research methods, statistics for business management, corporate data mining and financial mathematics.

# Worked as a Project Lead/Statistical Analyst for collaborative projects.

# Expertise of Quantitative Techniques, operational Research, Econometric Modelling, Business Research Methods, Corporate Data mining with SPSS, Financial Mathematics, Application of MS Excel, Minitab, SPSS, pH Stat, MS project, SpSS competitor.

# Undertook economic research and analysis on an extensive basis using regression models, model validation using simulation models.

**Age Limit:** Minimum 30 years

**2. Land Management Systems Specialist**

**No of posts:** 01

**Remuneration:** ₹ 1.5 – ₹ 1.7 lakh per month,  
**Mobility:** ₹ 9,000 and **Communication:** ₹ 2000

**Essential Qualification & Experience:**

# Master Degree or higher with minimum 10 years of extensive experience working land governance sector.

**Age Limit:** Minimum 40 years

**3. Geo – spatial Specialist**

**No of posts:** 01

**Remuneration:** ₹ 1.5 – ₹ 1.7 lakh per month,  
**Mobility:** ₹ 9,000 and **Communication:** ₹ 2000

**Essential Qualification & Experience:**

# M.Sc./ MTech in Geo informatics/ Remote sensing /Environmental Science/ Geography/ Geology.# Minimum of 5 years of professional experience in GIS related projects using various software such as ArcGIS, Eardas Imagine, Open-source Tools (QGIS, GRASS) having experience in the land management system.

**Age Limit:** Minimum 30 years

**4. Data Analytics Specialist**

**No of posts:** 01

**Remuneration:** ₹ 80,000 to ₹ 1 lakh per month,  
**Mobility:** ₹ 9,000 and **Communication:** ₹ 2000

**Essential Qualification & Experience:**

# M Sc/ M Tech in Computer Science/Data Science/IT with minimum 5 years experience.

**Age Limit:** Minimum 30 years

**5. Legal Drafting Specialist**

**No of posts:** 01

**Remuneration:** ₹ 80,000 to ₹ 1 lakh per month,  
**Mobility:** ₹ 9,000 and **Communication:** ₹ 2000

**Essential Qualification & Experience:**

# L.L.B./L.L.M/PhD in Law/Land Governance.

# Minimum of 5 years predominantly in a broad range of transactions at a leading law firm or in house position.

**Age Limit:** Minimum 30 years

**6. Legal System Analytics Specialist**

**No of posts:** 01

**Remuneration:** ₹80,000 to ₹1 lakh per month,  
**Mobility:** ₹9,000 and **Communication:** ₹2000

**Essential Qualification & Experience:**

# L.L.B./L.L.M/PhD in Law/Land Governance.

# Minimum of 5 years as Legal Analyst, Legal Assistant, Legal Counsel or a similar position at a leading law firm or in-house position.

**Age Limit:** Minimum 30 years

**Important Dates of ASDMA Recruitment 2024**

# Starting date of submission of application: 4th January, 2024

# Last date of submission of application: 24th January, 2024

## Reality Public School Kokrajhar Recruitment – 6 Faculty & Other Posts

Last Date: 31/01/2024

The Reality Public School, Kokrajhar has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 6 Faculty & Other Posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

**1. PRT**

**No of posts:** 4 [Assamese: 1, Bodo: 1, General Science, Maths: 1]

**Educational Qualification & Experience:**

# Assamese/ Bodo: M.A with B.Ed and minimum 3 years teaching experience in CBSE school.

# General Science/ Maths: B.Sc with B.Ed/M.SC with B.Ed and minimum 3 years teaching experience in CBSE school.

**Pay:** ₹ 23200 (negotiable for deserving candidate)

**2. Archery Coach**

**No of posts:** 1

**Educational Qualification & Experience:** National level player/State level Gold medalist or B.P.Ed/M.P.Ed with specialization of Archery.

**Pay:** ₹ 15000 to ₹ 20000 (negotiable for deserving candidate)

**3. House Master for Boy's Hostel**

**No of posts:** 1

**Educational Qualification & Experience:** Bachelor's degree in any discipline from a recognised University and Experience of minimum 2 years as housemaster from any reputed institution.

**Pay:** ₹ 15000 (negotiable for deserving candidate)

**Age Limit:** Age limit should be between 25 to 45 years.

**How to Apply for Reality Public School Recruitment?**

Interested candidates may send their updated CV with cover letter highlighting their past experience to hrrealitypsk@gmail.com or contact us at 9435278890/ 9435704380/ 9435293000/ 8453718880.

**Last date of submission of application is 31st January, 2024.**



Prime minister underscored deep divisions between close allies 3 months into Israel's assault on Gaza

# Netanyahu says he told the US that he opposes a Palestinian state in any postwar scenario

**JERUSALEM, Jan 19:** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday rejected calls from the United States to scale back Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip or take steps toward the establishment of a Palestinian state after the war, drawing an immediate scolding from the White House.

The tense back and forth reflected what has become a wide rift between the two allies over the scope of Israel's war and its plans for the future of the beleaguered territory. "We obviously see it differently," White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said.

Netanyahu spoke just a day after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Israel would never have "genuine security" without a pathway toward Palestinian independence. Earlier this week, the White House also announced that it was the "right time" for Israel to lower the intensity of its devastating military offensive in Gaza.

Chaotic wave of attacks and reprisals in Middle East fuel worries of a broader regional war.

In a nationally televised news conference, Netanyahu struck a defiant tone, repeatedly saying that Israel would not halt its offensive until it realizes its goals of destroying Gaza's Hamas militant group and bringing home all remaining hostages held by Hamas.

He rejected claims by a growing chorus of Israeli critics that those goals are not achievable, vowing to press ahead for many months. "We will not settle for anything short of an absolute victory," Netanyahu said. Israel launched the offensive after an unprecedented cross-border attack by Hamas on Oct. 7 that killed 1,200 people and took some 250 others hostage. Roughly 130 hostages are believed by Israel to remain in Hamas captivity. The war has stoked tensions across the re-



gion, threatening to ignite other conflicts.

Israel's assault, one of the deadliest and most destructive military campaigns in recent history, has killed nearly 25,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities, caused widespread destruction and uprooted over 80% of the territory's 2.3 million people from their homes.

The staggering cost of the war has led to increasing calls from the international community to halt the offensive. After initially giving Israel wall-to-wall support in the early days of the war, the United States, Israel's closest ally, has begun to express misgivings and urged Netanyahu to spell out his vision for postwar Gaza.

The United States has said the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority, which governs semi-autonomous zones in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, should be "revitalized" and return to Gaza. Hamas ousted the authority from Gaza in 2007. The U.S. has also called for steps toward the establishment of a Palestinian state. The Palestinians seek Gaza, the West Bank and east Jerusalem for their state. Those areas were captured by Israel in 1967.

Speaking Wednesday at the World Economic Forum in Davos,

Switzerland, Blinken said the two-state solution was the best way to protect Israel, unify moderate Arab countries and isolate Israel's arch-enemy, Iran. Without a "pathway to a Palestinian state," he said, Israel would not "get genuine security."

At the same conference, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said the kingdom is ready to establish full relations with Israel as part of a larger political agreement. "But that can only happen through peace for the Palestinians, through a Palestinian state," he said.

Netanyahu, who leads a far-right government opposed to Palestinian statehood, repeated his longstanding opposition to a two-state solution. He said a Palestinian state would become a launching pad for attacks on Israel.

He said Israel "must have security control over the entire territory west of the Jordan River," adding: "That collides with the idea of sovereignty. What can we do?"

"This truth I tell to our American friends, and I put the brakes on the attempt to coerce us to a reality that would endanger the state of Israel," he said. The comments prompted an immediate rebuke from the White House. Kirby said that President Joe Biden would "not stop working" toward a two-state solution. Before Oct. 7, Israeli society was

bitterly divided over Netanyahu's plan for a judicial overhaul. Since the attack, the country has rallied behind the war. But divisions have once again begun to surface over Netanyahu's handling of the war.

Families of the hostages and their many supporters have called for a new cease-fire that could bring them home. Hamas released over 100 hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners during a weekend cease-fire in November.

Dozens of people attended a somber gathering in Tel Aviv in solidarity with the family of Kfir Bibas, the youngest Israeli hostage, marking his first birthday. The red-haired infant and his 4-year-old brother Ariel were taken hostage along with their mother, Shiri, and their father, Yarden. All four remain in captivity.

Commentators have begun to question whether Netanyahu's objectives are realistic, given the slow pace of the offensive and growing international criticism, including genocide accusations at the United Nations world court, which Israel vehemently denies.

Netanyahu's opponents accuse him of delaying any discussion of postwar scenarios to avoid looming investigations of governmental failures, keep his coalition intact and put off elections. Polls show that the popularity of Netanyahu, who is on trial for corruption charges, has plummeted during the war. The agreement was the first to be brokered between the warring sides since November. The deal includes large shipments of medicine, food and humanitarian aid for Palestinian civilians as well.

Qatar confirmed late Wednesday that the medicine had entered Gaza, but it was not yet clear if it had been distributed to the hostages, who are being held in secret locations, including underground bunkers. (AP)

# After Taiwan's election, its new envoy to the US offers assurances to Washington and Beijing

**WASHINGTON, Jan 19:** Taiwan's top diplomat in Washington has a message for both the island's Chinese adversaries and its American friends: Don't worry that Taiwan's new president-elect will worsen relations with Beijing and possibly draw the U.S. into a conflict.

President-elect Lai Ching-te plans to keep the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, Alexander Tah-Ray Yui told The Associated Press on Thursday in his first interview with an international news organization since he arrived in the U.S. in December.

The Chinese government has called Lai a troublemaker who will push Taiwan toward independence. But Yui said Lai is willing to engage with Beijing, even as the island seeks to strengthen its unofficial ties with Washington for stability in the region.

"We want the status quo. We want the way it is — neither unification, neither independence. The way it is is the way we want to live right now," said Yui, Taiwan's de-facto ambassador to the U.S., noting the stance is largely supported at home and will guide the new administration.

Yui spoke to the AP five days after Lai won the presidential election with more than 40% of the vote in a three-way race. Lai will succeed Tsai Ing-wen when he is inaugurated in May. His victory, which gives the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party an unprecedented third presidential term, was not welcomed by Beijing, which claims Taiwan as its own, to be taken by force if necessary. Military action in the Taiwan Strait could draw in the United States, which has a security pact with Taiwan to deter any armed invasion from the mainland.

Beijing refused to have any dialogue with Tsai because her party rejects China's claim of sovereignty over the island, and before the election had suggested to voters that they could be choosing between war and peace. It remains unclear if Beijing will be willing to engage with Lai, who in the past described himself as



a "pragmatic worker of Taiwan's independence." Two days after Lai was elected, China wooed away Nauru, a small Pacific island nation, which has left Taiwan with only 12 countries around the world that recognize its statehood. However, China has not launched massive military exercises around the island, as it has in past times of increased tensions.

Yui said Lai intends to follow the same line as his predecessor "but also to offer an olive branch to mainland China by saying that he's also willing to engage with mainland China."

At the same time, Taiwan will work with the U.S. to boost its defense and deepen economic and cultural ties, Yui said, calling relations with Washington "one of the most important aspects in our foreign affairs."

The United States does not have a formal relationship with Taiwan, but it has stepped up its support in the past several years, angering China, which has urged the U.S. to "exercise extreme prudence in handling Taiwan-related issues." President Xi Jinping told President Joe Biden that Taiwan is the most sensitive issue in U.S.-China relations.

Shortly after Taiwan's election, Biden told reporters that his administration does not support Taiwan's independence. Scott Kennedy, senior adviser and trustee chair in Chinese business and economics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank, said he expected tensions to remain largely the same under Lai.

"Beijing will continue to develop

its military capabilities and push the boundaries of military threats and economic coercion," he said. "The U.S. will continue to assist Taiwan with its defensive preparedness and push Taiwan to move more assertively on the various elements needed for effective self-defense."

But Kennedy said Beijing may also open up some channels for the two sides to convey messages and reduce misunderstanding. Yui said it is incumbent upon both Beijing and Taipei to keep the Taiwan Strait peaceful.

"I have to stress, we're not the aggressors. We're not the ones, you know, making waves in the Taiwan Strait, making things nervous and tense," he said, alluding to Beijing's increased military activities near the island in the past several years.

Yui said Taiwan is determined to safeguard its homeland, noting that the island is increasing its defense budget and has extended the mandatory military service from four months to one year.

He said Beijing's luring away of Nauru was an attempt to punish the Taiwanese people for choosing the leader they wanted and will only backfire.

"They were just trying to find an appropriate time and excuse to slowly pluck all of our allies," Yui said. But, as a technological powerhouse and a democracy, Taiwan has "become a common word in the international community" and countries around the world have become more willing to engage with it, he said. (AP)

# Pak's caretaker PM forms committee to ensure 'smooth conduct' of Feb 8 polls

**ISLAMABAD, Jan 19:** Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar has constituted a seven-member committee mandated with ensuring the smooth conduct of the February 8 general elections already impaired by allegations of "pre-poll rigging," according to a media report.

According to a notification issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Thursday, interim Minister for Communications, Railways, and Maritime Affairs Shahid Ashraf Tarar has been named as the head of the committee, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The other members include the interior secretary, four provincial chief secretaries as well as any other co-opted individual desired by the committee.

As per the PMO notification, the committee will have the mandate to oversee the security arrangements for polls; review and resolve matters regarding administrative arrangements and coordination for the smooth conduct of elections; issue directions for urgent requirements of additional security where law and order situation requires, and implement directions of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding smooth and orderly conduct of polls. The notification added the National Crisis Management Cell of the Ministry of Interior will serve as the committee secretariat.

Kakar, who is required to ensure transparency and fairness in the upcoming elections, is being consistently accused of working in favour of pro-military political parties.

The elections are already marred by allegations of pre-poll rigging, with former prime minister Imran Khan jailed and barred from running. Khan, 71, has been languishing in jail in connection with multiple cases. His party has been denied the cricket bat symbol that had become synonymous with the former international cricketer. (PTI)

# NKorea says it tested underwater nuclear attack drone in response to rivals' naval drills

**SEOUL, Jan 19:** North Korea said on Friday it had tested a purported underwater nuclear attack drone in response to a combined naval exercise between South Korea and the United States and Japan this week, as it continues to blame its rivals for raising tensions in the region.

The alleged drone test came days after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un declared he would scrap his country's long-standing goal of a peaceful unification with South Korea and that his country would rewrite its constitution to define South Korea as its most hostile foreign adversary.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years with Kim accelerating weapons demonstrations and threatening nuclear conflict and the US and its Asian allies responding by strengthening their combined military exercises.

North Korea's alleged nuclear attack drone, which the North first tested last year, is among a broad range of weapon systems demonstrated in recent years as Kim expands his arsenal

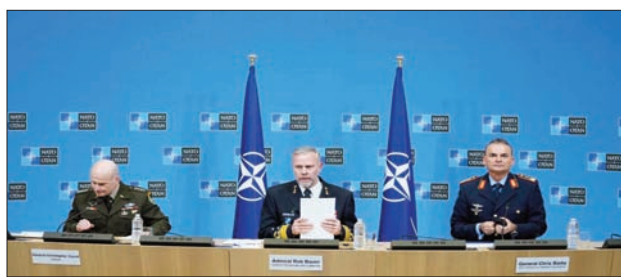
of nuclear-capable weapons. South Korea's military has insisted the North has exaggerated the capabilities of the drone, which is supposedly designed to carry out strikes on enemy vessels and ports.

The North's military said it conducted the test in the country's eastern waters in response to the US, South Korean, and Japanese naval drills, which wrapped up its three-day run on Wednesday in waters south of Jeju island.

"Our army's underwater nuke-based countering posture is being further rounded off and its various maritime and underwater responsive actions will continue to deter the hostile military maneuvers of the navies of the US and its allies," the North's Defence Ministry said in a statement.

"We strongly denounce the US and its followers for their reckless acts of seriously threatening the security of the DPRK from the outset of the year and sternly warn them of the catastrophic consequences to be entailed by them." (AP)

# NATO holds its biggest exercises in decades next week, involving around 90,000 personnel



**BRUSSELS, Jan 19:** NATO will launch its biggest military exercises in decades next week with around 90,000 personnel set to take part in months of drills aimed at showing the alliance can defend all of its territory up to its border with Russia, top officers said on Thursday.

The exercises come as Russia's war on Ukraine bogs down. NATO as an organization is not directly involved in the conflict, except to supply Kyiv with non-lethal support, although many member countries send weapons and ammunition individually or in groups, and provide military training. In the months before President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops into Ukraine in February 2022, NATO began beefing up secu-

rity on its eastern flank with Russia and Ukraine. It's the alliance's biggest buildup since the Cold War. The war games are meant to deter Russia from targeting a member country.

The exercises — dubbed Steadfast Defender 24 — "will show that NATO can conduct and sustain complex multi-domain operations over several months, across thousands of kilometers (miles), from the High North to Central and Eastern Europe, and in any condition," the 31-nation organization said.

Troops will be moving to and through Europe until the end of May in what NATO describes as "a simulated emerging conflict scenario with a near-peer adversary." Under NATO's new defense plans, its chief adversaries are Russia

and terrorist organizations.

"The alliance will demonstrate its ability to reinforce the Euro-Atlantic area via transatlantic movement of forces from North America," NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, U.S. General Christopher Cavoli, told reporters.

Cavoli said it will demonstrate "our unity, our strength, and our determination to protect each other."

The chair of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer, said that it's "a record number of troops that we can bring to bear and have an exercise within that size, across the alliance, across the ocean from the U.S. to Europe."

Bauer described it as "a big change" compared to troop numbers exercising just a year ago. Sweden, which is expected to join NATO this year, will also take part.

# 10 dead after a landslide buries a house in the southern Philippines

**DAVAO, Jan 19:** A landslide set off by days of heavy rain buried a house where people were holding Christian prayers in the southern Philippines, killing at least 10 people, including five children, officials said on Friday.

Two people were injured, and at least one more villager remained unaccounted for following the landslide in a remote mountain village in the gold-mining town of Monkayo in Davao de Oro province, Ednar Dayanghirang, the regional chief of the government's Office of Civil Defence, said.

Three more bodies were found on Friday, after the search was paused mid-afternoon Thursday due to the risk of another landslide. "They were praying in the house when the landslide hit," Dayanghirang told The Associated Press by telephone Thursday night. "It's sad but it's the reality on the ground."

People living near the village were ordered to evacuate due to fears of more land- and mud-slides due to intermittent downpours. Monkayo Mayor Manuel Zamora said. Days of heavy rains also flooded low-lying villages and displaced more than 36,000 people in Davao de Oro and three other provinces, the Office of Civil Defence said. The weather began to clear on Friday in some areas.

The rains were sparked by what local forecasters call a shear line, a point where warm and cold air meet. At least 20 storms and typhoons lash the Philippine archipelago each year, especially during the rainy season that starts in June. (AP)

# Gangs in Haiti have attacked a community for 4 days and residents fear the violence could spread

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, Jan 19:** Gang members have raided a key community in Haiti's capital that is home to numerous police officers and has been under siege for four days in an ongoing attack, with residents fearful of the violence spreading throughout Port-au-Prince.

The pop of automatic weapons echoed throughout Solino on Thursday as thick columns of black smoke rose above the once peaceful neighborhood where frantic residents kept calling radio stations asking for help.

"If police don't come, we are dying today!" said one unidentified caller. Lita Saintil, a 52-year-old street vendor, told The Associated Press that she fled Solino on Thursday with her teenage nephew after being trapped in her house for hours by incessant gunfire.

The homes around hers were torched by gangs, and she recalled seeing at least six bodies as she fled. "It's very scary now," she said. "I don't know where I'm going."

Another resident, Nenel Volme, told the AP that he was chatting with a friend near his house on Sunday when gunfire erupted and a bullet struck a bone in his right hand. "I don't have the means to go

to the hospital," he said as he lifted his injured hand, which was wrapped in gauze. It wasn't immediately clear who organized and was participating in the attack on Solino. The community, which is home to thousands of people, was once infested by gangs before a U.N. peacekeeping mission drove them out in the mid-2000s.

The attack could mark a turning point for gangs, which are now estimated to control up to 80% of Port-au-Prince and have been suspected of killing nearly 4,000 people and kidnapping another 3,000 last year, overwhelming police in the country of nearly 12 million people. If Solino falls, gangs would have easy access to neighborhoods such as Canape Vert that have so far remained peaceful and largely safe.

"Life in Port-au-Prince has become extremely crazy," Saintil said. "I never thought Port-au-Prince would turn out the way it is now." On Thursday evening, Haiti's National Police released a statement saying officers were deployed to Solino "with the aim of tracking down and arresting armed individuals seeking to sow panic among the civilian population." Police also released a nearly three-



minute video showing in part officers on a rooftop in Solino exchanging fire with unidentified gunmen who did not appear on screen.

Nearly communities spooked by the ongoing violence in Solino began erecting barricades on Thursday using rocks, trucks, tires and even banana trees to prevent gangs from entering. One man near a barricade in Canape Vert said that he had been following the protests organized earlier this week by supporters of former rebel leader Guy Philippe, who has pledged a revolution to drive out gangs.

"It's more misery," the man, who declined to identify himself, said of Haiti's ongoing crisis. "We are suffering. The country is gangsterized." Amid concerns that the violence in Solino could spill over into other neighborhoods, parents rushed to schools across Port-au-Prince to pick up their children.

"I don't know if we're going to be able to make it back home," said one mother who declined to provide her name out of fear. "There is no public transportation, and tires are burning everywhere. We don't know what we're going to do."

Haiti is awaiting the deployment of a foreign armed force led by Kenya to help quell gang violence that was approved by the U.N. Security Council in October. A judge in Kenya is expected to issue a ruling on Jan 26 regarding an order currently blocking the deployment. (AP)

# 9/11 victim's remains identified nearly 23 years later as Long Island man



**NEW YORK, Jan 19:** The remains of a Long Island man killed at the World Trade Center on 9/11 have been identified more than two decades after the 2001 attacks, the New York City medical examiner's office announced on Thursday.

John Ballantine Niven, 44, of Oyster Bay, was an executive at Aon Risk Services, an insurance firm on the 105th floor of tower two of the trade center complex, according to obituaries at the time. He left a wife and a son who was 18 months old at the time. Niven is the 1,650th victim identified from

the deadliest act of terrorism on American soil, when hijackers crashed airplanes into the Twin Towers, killing 2,753 people.

"While the pain from the enormous losses on September 11th never leaves us, the possibility of new identifications can offer solace to the families of victims," New York City Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement. "I'm grateful for the ongoing work from the Office of Chief Medical Examiner that honors the memory of John Ballantine Niven and all those we lost."

The medical examiner's office has been using advanced DNA analysis to identify victim remains in recent years. Ahead of the anniversary of the attacks last September, the office said it had identified remains of a man and a woman, though their names were not made public at the request of their families.

"We will forever remember our

heroes who perished on 9/11 and we appreciate the continuous efforts of forensic experts to help identify victims," Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino said in a separate statement. "We're hopeful that this amazing advance in technology helps bring peace to Mr. Niven's family and allows him to eternally rest in peace."

Roughly 40 percent of victims of the World Trade Center attack have yet to have their remains identified, as few full bodies were recovered when the giant towers collapsed. But as DNA testing has evolved, so has the costly, painstaking effort to connect more than 21,900 bits of remains to individual victims. In some cases, scientists have gone back to the same bone fragment 10 or more times, hoping new technology will provide answers. The 9/11 attacks killed nearly 3,000 people in New York, at the Pentagon and near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. (AP)



# Tripura CM demands AIIMS-like institution in state during NEC meet

**NITI Aayog team visited northeastern state, exhorted state government to set up a medical college on public private partnership (PPP) model**



**AGARTALA, Jan 19:** Tripura chief minister Manik Saha on Friday requested the Centre to upgrade the Tripura Medical College (TMC), a society-run in-

stitute into an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)-like healthcare facility.

"Addressed the 71st Plenary of @NEC\_GoI at Shillong. I

thanked Hon'ble PM Shri @narendramodi Ji & Hon'ble HM Shri @AmitShah Ji for their special attention to development of Tripura," he wrote on X.

"In my speech, I requested for increase in allocation of NEC funds, upgrading TMC into AIIMS like institute, setting up Medical College in Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) area, increase in natural gas allocation for industrial purpose, early operationalisation of Agartala-Cox Bazar International flight, easing ceiling on borrowing under Externally Aided Projects and easing barriers for trade with Bangladesh, etc.," he wrote.

Recently, a NITI Aayog team visited the northeastern state and exhorted the state government to set up a medical college on a public private partnership (PPP) model in Dhalai district's Am-

bassa, which falls in the tribal council.

"The introduction of international flight services between Agartala and Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar is at an advanced stage. Once customs and immigration issues are cleared at MBB airport here, international operations from Agartala airport can begin", an official of Airports Authority of India (AAI) said.

"Because of trade barriers, businessmen from Tripura cannot export as many as 40 items including rubber-based products and finished tea to Bangladesh hurting bilateral trade. We have already brought the matter to the notice of the chief minister to remove the trade barriers put by Dhaka. It is good that the CM raised the issue before Union home minister Amit Shah", said Sujit Roy, secretary of Tripura Merchants' Association's secretary. (PTI)

## ANSAM asks Manipur govt to declare results of college teachers' recruitment

**SENAPATI, JAN 19:** The All Naga Students' Association Manipur (ANSAM), while appreciating the Manipur state government for launching the 'College Fagathansi Mission' on January 6 this year, has urged the latter to declare the results of the recruitment process for 190 assistant professors (145+45 ST Special Drive) at the earliest.

The Naga student body said it is dedicated to overseeing and regulating quality education and students' welfare throughout the state of Manipur.

"In alignment with the belief that education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man, the association strives to translate this noble idea into reality.

Our commitment extends beyond a specific community, emphasising inclusive welfare across the state," the ANSAM said in a statement on Friday.

As such, the ANSAM expressed its genuine gratitude to the state government for launching the 'College Fagathansi Mission'.

According to the Naga student body, this initiative aims at improving the higher education sector in Manipur, aligning with the objectives outlined in the National Education Policy 2020.

The endeavour is expected to address various shortcomings in college infrastructure, particularly in the hill districts, it added.

However, the ANSAM said it is disheartening that the comprehensive well-being of colleges, including faculty shortages, remains unattended.

In this context, the ANSAM expressed regret and dissatisfaction regarding the undeclared results of the recruitment process for 190 Assistant Professors (145+45 ST Special Drive), concluded in 2021 vis-à-vis acute shortage of teaching faculties specially in the hill colleges. (NNN)

Despite the assurance given through the memorandum of agreement signed on October 26 last year between the ANSAM and the authorities concerned, the chief secretary and the education commissioner, the declaration of results on or before November 2 last year has not been fulfilled.

"Thereafter, several rounds of verbal assurances had been given but no concrete action has been taken up till date. The current government exhibits a concerning disregard for the importance of time, leading to unnecessary delays," it said.

Promises and assurances seem to be taken lightly, with issues persisting by citing false narratives rather than coming up with effective resolution, the Naga student body said.

Additionally, this prolonged and "deliberate" delay raises concerns, and attributing it to technical issues is no longer considered justifiable, it also said.

"The observed lackadaisical approach in the educational sector, as evident in this delayed announcement of the recruitment results for 190 Assistant Professors, is regrettable," the ANSAM added. "It is crucial to recognise that the government functions as a continuous entity and should remain impartial, regardless of legislative interests. Nonetheless, the existing polarization within the government has tangible repercussions on our society's overall progress and prosperity. Numerous recruitments are currently in progress, as indicated by the most recent government notification."

"This situation is disheartening for individuals who took part in recruitment exams, but are still awaiting their results. The delay in announcing results is causing uncertainty and concerns amongst the candidates which tantamount depriving of the fundamental rights," the student body said. (NNN)

## Science centre, digital planetarium to come up in Arunachal's Dirang

**ITANAGAR, Jan 19:** The National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) on Friday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Arunachal Pradesh government for setting up a science centre and digital planetarium at Dirang in West Kameng district.

The centre and the planetarium will be set up by NCSM at an estimated cost of ₹ 26.70 crore and ₹15.60 crore, respectively, under the Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science (SPoCS) of the Union culture ministry, an official communiqué said.

The Arunachal Pradesh State Council for Science and Technology (APSCST), under the state department of science and technology, inked the pact with the NCSM in New Delhi. The science centre and the digital planetarium would be of category II.

"This will be the third science centre in Arunachal Pradesh after

Itanagar and Namsai. While the centre in Itanagar is already functional, a MoU was signed for setting up a centre and planetarium at Namsai on December 18 last year. The people of the eastern and western parts of the state will benefit from these centres and planetaria," state science and technology secretary R Rony said after the pact.

NCSM deputy director general Samarendra Kumar said it has so far developed 23 science centres and handed them over to different state and UT governments.

"With development of the northeastern part of the country a priority of the government, the NCSM will be glad to set up science centres and planetaria in this part of the country. The centres not only act as tourist destinations, but also help develop scientific temperament in society," NCSM director general AD Choudhury said. (PTI)

## Arunachal Cong urges people to join Rahul Gandhi's Yatra

**ITANAGAR, Jan 19:** Arunachal Pradesh Congress president Nabam Tuki on Friday appealed to the people of the state to join the 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' led by Congress MP Rahul Gandhi. The Yatra will reach Arunachal Pradesh on Saturday afternoon, from Lakhimpur in neighbouring Assam.

"Become a 'Nyay Yodha' and carry the message of love and harmony and awaken the nation's conscience to crippling inequality, brutal social polarisation and violent authoritarianism. Let's walk together to fight hatred and fear!" said Tuki, a former chief minister.

He alleged that the last 10 years of "grave injustice" by the BJP government has severely hurt people, democracy and the Constitution.

"Unprecedented unemployment has shattered the dreams and future of our youth," he said claiming that poor and middle-class people lost their savings due to the price rise.

"Income inequality is at its peak," Tuki alleged in a statement.

While the SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities and poor people have been deceived, autonomous institutions have been subjugated, the Congress leader claimed. (PTI)

Central agencies such as ED, CBI, and the Income Tax department are being used against the opposition, Tuki alleged.

Gandhi along with party leaders and workers will arrive at Doimukh in Papum Pare district of the Northeastern state from Lakhimpur at around 2 PM on Saturday and will interact with public at the SDO ground.

From Doimukh, Gandhi would reach Naharlagun by bus and interact with street vendors at Six KM, sources said.

The Congress leader would then move towards Nyokum Lapang from where he would embark on a foot march to the Malo Tarin government higher secondary school ground to address a public rally.

Gandhi would also address a press conference at Itanagar on the same day.

Gandhi will leave the state capital on Sunday morning through Hollongi.

The 6,713-km-long march, led by the Congress MP, commenced from Manipur on January 14 and will culminate on March 20 in Mumbai.

The yatra is planned to cover 110 districts in 15 states of the country. (PTI)

## Tripura has failed to tackle crime, says AICC general secy

**AGARTALA, Jan 19:** All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary, Girish Chodankar on Friday claimed that the BJP government in Tripura was struggling to rein in criminals and drug mafia.

Chodankar said the rising crime rate in the state is a symptom of a larger problem, with excessive drug abuse destroying future generations.

"The BJP government has failed to tackle murders, rapes, crimes against women, and drug abuse since 2018. Only small-time drug peddlers are caught, while the cartel heads remain untouched by the law enforcement agencies," he said during a press conference at Congress Bhavan (headquarters) here.

"Tripura is heading towards a dangerous situation due to growing drug abuse, but the government chooses to remain a mere spectator. Police should arrest the heads of drug cartels instead of focusing on petty peddlers," he said.

Chodankar, who arrived here on

Thursday, held a series of meetings with senior party leaders to discuss preparations for the Lok Sabha polls.

He said the Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) is in touch with the screening committee to shortlist candidates for the elections.

"I attended a meeting with TPCC extended body, senior leaders and office bearers to ensure that the party is ready for the Lok Sabha elections. I also had a separate meeting with the Congress Legislative Party to gauge the organization's sentiments ahead of the elections," he said.

Chodankar said Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra has received an overwhelming response from the people of Manipur, Nagaland, and Assam.

"An atmosphere has been created in the country where people are eagerly coming to meet Rahul Gandhi during his Yatra. We believe it will have a positive impact in the future," he added. (PTI)

## UNC urges Union home minister to reinstate FMR

**SENAPATI, Jan 19:** The United Naga Council (UNC) has urged Union home minister, Amit Shah to re-instate the Free Movement Regime (FMR) at Tusom-Somrah Sector along the Indo Myanmar border in Ukhrul district of Manipur and other impacted Naga areas vis-à-vis halting the approved proposal for construction of Indo-Myanmar border fencing/wall along the borders in Naga areas.

In a memorandum submitted to the Union home minister on Friday through the Senapati district deputy commissioner, the UNC said the Indo-Myanmar borders were delimited and demarcated by two bilateral Agreement between India and Myanmar on March 10, 1967, by dividing many ethnic tribal communities along the artificial/imaginary line drawn without the informed consent of the villagers and thus relegated to the status of ethnic minorities on both sides of the borders.

To address their concerns and enable close interaction amongst these ethnic minorities, India and Myanmar Government established the Free Movement Regime which had been in place since 1970s, with periodic revision, the last being in January 2018 as part of the Narendra Modi Government's Act East Policy to safeguard the traditional rights of the largely tribal communities residing along the borders keeping in mind the traditional social relations. It also aimed to facilitate trade relations between the kindred tribes on both sides that permit those residing along the border to travel 16 km on either side of the unfenced boundary without visa restrictions for 72 hours with valid permits issued by the designated authorities on either



sides, the UNC memorandum pointed out.

The Naga body also said the scrapping of FMR in recent times at Tusom-Somrah sectors along the Indo-Myanmar border in Ukhrul district (Naga ancestral domains) and other Naga districts stretching from the north of Moreh town to Nagaland state has severed social and cultural ties during this festive season. There have been incidents of emergency health issues, educational tour, seasonal livelihood activities, marriages, funerals, cultivation and economic activities, it added.

The UNC further said the Tangkhul Naga, Anal Naga, Moyon Naga and Lamkang Naga who are scattered in few districts of Manipur state have a sizeable Naga population in Myanmar's Sagaing region.

"However, historical border delineations influenced more by political considerations than ethnic bonding during the British colonial era

resulted in the dispersion of Naga people across the international boundaries," the Naga body stated.

The UNC then said Nagas are not convinced that ending Free Movement Regime will serve any purpose due to the fact that there is neither a case of smuggling of arms and drugs nor influx of illegal immigrants in Naga areas on both sides.

The memorandum of the UNC to the Union home minister also said the approved Indo Myanmar border fencing supposedly framed to be constructed in 'Naga dominated areas' measuring about 80 km stretch in Tengenoupal and Chandel districts is an apparent violation of international environmental laws such as convention on migratory species, which requires migratory routes to be protected. These border fences not only affect people, but can also have unintended but important consequences for wild life, inter alia by curtailing migrations and other movements by fragmenting populations and by causing direct mortality to large carnivores and herbivores, the UNC further said.

According to the UNC, the "top-sided narrative" of the Union government and the Manipur government for ending the FMR and the approved proposals for construction of Indo-Myanmar border fencing/wall along the border in "Naga dominated areas" has displeased many frontier communities. While attempting to address the influx of illegal immigrants through the porous borders, state and union Government many find other mechanism to curb the menace instead of scrapping FMR and construction of wall and fencing, the UNC stated. (NNN)

## UNC urges Centre, Manipur govt to take measures to stop violence in state

**IMPHAL, Jan 19:** As the killings continue in the state of Manipur, the United Naga Council (UNC) Peace Committee has once again urged both the state government of Manipur and the central government to be serious in their measures to stop the violence immediately.

The UNC Peace Committee said killings have saddened everyone and it feels that there is a strong need for the central government and the Manipur state government to be serious in their measures.

The Naga body peace committee also said, "We are greatly saddened by the killings".

In a statement issued on Friday, the UNC Peace Committee reiterated its earlier statement that it has been at a loss and short of words to make any comment on the ongoing violence between the Meitei community and the Kuki-Zo community.

The UNC Peace Committee, however, strongly believes that there should be a solution to any problem.

The UNC Peace Committee further said that seriousness of the central government and the



state government on the prevailing situation in Manipur is the need of the hour.

It can be mentioned here that the Peace Committee has been working hard to stop the violence between the Meitei community and the Kuki-Zo community.

In this regard, the Naga peace committee had fervently appealed to both the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities to be brave enough to be magnanimous and unilaterally declare 'ceasefire'.

The Naga peace committee had also stated some two months ago that such unilateral declaration for 'ceasefire' is actually an act of bravery and magnanimity, and not otherwise. (NNN)

## Arunachal minister calls for collective efforts to preserve hornbills

**Efforts towards conservation of flora, fauna at Seijosa being showcased at ongoing Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival**



**ITANAGAR, Jan 19:** Arunachal Pradesh tourism minister Nakap Nalo called for concerted efforts from all sections of the society to protect hornbills, the state bird.

Inaugurating the ninth Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival at Seijosa on Thursday, he noted the cultural significance of the great hornbill and advocated for a collective effort to safeguard these critically endangered birds.

The festival, which would continue till Saturday, was showcasing the dedicated efforts towards the conservation of nature and wildlife at Seijosa.

The minister hailed the

event as 'one-of-a-kind' in the state, lauding the role played by the state forest department and local communities in providing sanctuary to the endangered hornbills.

Highlighting the decline in hornbill numbers and their fragmented distribution, Nalo said that while the state government takes initiatives to provide a secure habitat, the responsibility lies with the common people to contribute to their protection.

On local MLA Biyuram Wahge's proposal to declare Seijosa a heritage village, he said he would raise it with the government.

Nyishi Elite Society (NES)

president Tana Showren spoke about the deep-rooted connection between conservation and tribal traditions, and advocated for a balanced approach, combining indigenous and scientific methods in conservation practices.

"Hornbills soar as ambassadors of the skies, reminding us that nature's beauty is a fragile gift. We must safeguard it with reverence and respect," he said.

Several events were being held as a part of the festival, including bird-watching, cultural programmes, literary competitions, short film screenings and mountain terrain biking. (PTI)

## Govt focusing on skill development to make youths ready for employment

**AGARTALA, Jan 19:** Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Friday said the government has been focusing on skill development of youths to make them ready for jobs and they should grab the opportunity.

Before 2014 of the 42 crore workers of the country, 31 crore used to go for work without skills and education, but now the scenario has drastically changed following the launch of the Skill India in 2015, Chandrasekhar said.

The minister of state for skill development and entrepreneurship was speaking at a 'Kushal Bharat Viksit Bharat' programme at Town Hall here.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has changed the 65-years of disadvantage of our young workforce by skilling



and upskilling them," he said.

Chandrasekhar said the country was among the fifth fragile economies in the world before 2014 and now it is among the top five economies.

"It is the new India. The youths will get a lot of opportunities if they have skill and education. We are focusing on skill development of the youth of the country to make the young generation job-ready," the minister

said. He also highlighted the government's venture with Deloitte, a leading management consulting firm, where around 100 youths have completed a skill development programme.

"At least 50 youths who have completed their skill development programme imparted by Deloitte will get jobs next month in the company. It shows the youth of Tripura are equal to the best when it comes to talent," Chandrasekhar said.

Union minister of state for social justice and social empowerment Pratima Bhoomik said a target has been fixed to impart skills to 48,000 youths under Kushal Bharat Viksit Bharat during the next three years in the northeastern state. (PTI)



# One nation, one election against basic structure; high-powered panel should be dissolved: Mallikarjun Kharge

**NEW DELHI, Jan 19:** The Congress on Friday strongly opposed the “undemocratic” idea of holding simultaneous elections in the country and said it goes against the guarantees of federalism and the basic structure of the Constitution.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge also demanded that the idea be abandoned and the high-powered committee formed to study it be dissolved.

In a letter to the secretary of the committee on one nation, one election, he requested former president Ram Nath Kovind, who heads the panel, “not to allow his persona and the office of the former president of India to be abused by the Union government to subvert the constitution and parliamentary democracy in this country”.

“The Indian National Congress is strongly opposed to the very idea of ‘One Nation, One Election’. For the sake of maintaining a thriving and a robust democracy, it is imperative that the entire idea must be abandoned and the high-powered committee dissolved,” Kharge said in his letter to Niten Chandra, the secretary of the committee.



Chandra's letter on October 18 whereby he had invited suggestions for consideration of the committee.

He said the committee seems to have “already made up its mind and seeking a consultation seems to be an eye wash”.

“The government, parliament and ECI should work together to ensure people's mandate is respected rather than divert people's attention by talking about undemocratic ideas like simultaneous elections,” Kharge said.

He said the composition of the committee is “biased” as it was formed without giving substantial representation to the Opposition parties that head various state governments that would be affected by the recommendations of this committee.

“When the committee is headed by no less than the former President of India, it is distressing when even common voters feel the consultations of the committee are likely to be a pretence since minds have already been made up. Firm views in support of the proposal have already been expressed in public and a dispassionate analysis of pros and cons is not being attempted in a serious and systematic manner,” the Congress chief said in his response.

He said that in the last 10 years the only instances where the chief ministers have lost the confidence of the house have been when one particular party has abused the government machinery at its disposal and subverted the anti-defection law to “steal” people's mandate.

“There is no place for the concept of simultaneous elections in a country that has adopted a Parliamentary system of government. Such forms of simultaneous elections that are being floated by the government go against the guarantees of federalism contained in the Constitution,” Kharge asserted.

He said the government and this committee should have been honest

in stating at the outset that what they are attempting goes against the basic structure of the Constitution and will require substantial changes to the basic structure to implement.

“The holding of simultaneous elections would require the dissolution of several legislative assemblies which are still halfway (or less) through their terms. This would be a betrayal of the electorate in those states,” the Congress chief claimed.

He said the chief minister or the prime minister holds office for as long as he or she enjoys the confidence of the house and if a chief minister loses confidence of the house and no other party is able to form a government.

But the Niti Aayog report says the state should be put under President's Rule till fresh elections can be synchronized, according to Kharge. “This would be a travesty of democracy”.

Kharge said he was amused to hear the argument that holding simultaneous elections will result in financial savings. “The argument that cost of conducting elections are extremely high seems base-

less.” He said the expenses on polls are less than 0.02 per cent of the total Union budget for the preceding five years. Noting that expenses for assembly elections may also be similar percentage of their state budgets, he said, “We feel the people will be willing to consider this small amount as the cost of free and fair elections to uphold democracy.” He said expenditure on 2014 elections was Rs 3,870 crores which the committee claims is high.

“If the committee, the government and ECI are serious about the expenditure made on elections, it would be more appropriate if they could make the funding process more transparent, especially in the matter of electoral bonds. This would truly empower the voter and increase voter awareness,” he said.

He also said that the committee is relying on the Niti Aayog report, which is neither a constitutional nor a statutory body and the high level committee should not have referred to it. “This reinforces our concern that the committee seems to have already made up its mind and seeking a consultation seems to be an eye wash” (PTI)

## AAP holding talks on Lok Sabha seat from Goa with INDIA bloc partners: Kejriwal



**PANAJI, Jan 19:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday indicated that it was keen on contesting the upcoming Lok Sabha elections from Goa, with its national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal saying his party was holding talks on a seat in the coastal state with INDIA bloc constituents.

Goa has two Lok Sabha constituencies - North Goa and South Goa. However, Kejriwal did not specify which of the two seats the AAP was eyeing to contest.

“AAP is discussing a Goa seat as a part of the INDIA alliance. We will come back to you once something is decided. Whatever discussion that takes place, do vote for INDIA alliance candidate in the Lok Sabha elections,” Kejriwal said while addressing a public meeting in Benaulim assembly segment in South Goa.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Maan, Rajya Sabha member Sandeep Pathak, AAP's Goa unit chief Amit Palekar, MLA Venzy Viegas were also present on the occasion. Kejriwal further said that AAP has been doing “kam ki rajneeti” (politics of work).

“No one did politics of work in the past because their intention was only to make money for themselves,” he said. Adding that the Delhi government successfully runs 550 mohalla clinics.

“These clinics have become a facility of neighbourhood clinic for the people to treat their basic ailments like cold, fever, etc. These are air-conditioned clinics and you get a good facility there,” the Delhi CM said. Kejriwal also expressed surprise over Benaulim MLA Viegas starting three mohalla clinics in his constituency despite the AAP being in the opposition.

“We can understand that we could do it in Delhi and Punjab as we are in power there. But in Goa, despite being in opposition, Venzy opened these clinics. I enquired with him and he told me that these clinics work on donation basis,” the AAP leader said.

It is the duty of the state government to provide basic health facilities, he said. (PTI)

## UDF rejects joint strike call against central govt; CPI(M) hits back

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Jan 19:** The Congress-led UDF in Kerala has rejected the ruling LDF's call for a joint strike against the central government in New Delhi next month, citing disagreement with the CPI(M)-led government's narrative that attributes the state's financial challenges solely to neglect by the union government.

Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly V D Satheesan said on Friday that during an online meeting convened by chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan recently, opposition leaders pointed out issues with the state government as also being behind the state's financial woes.

In a letter to the chief minister, Satheesan said that issues, including mismanagement in tax administration in Kerala, were brought to the state government's notice by the opposition through two whitepapers, but that they were not taken at face value by the ruling LDF. While thanking the CM for inviting the opposition for the discussion, Satheesan expressed suspicion about the political interests of the CPI(M)-led government in extending such an invitation.

The letter came days after chief minister Vijayan held discussions with Satheesan and deputy leader of the State As-

sembly P K Kunhalikutty on the alleged negligence of the central government towards the state on various matters.

The CPI(M) criticised the UDF decision, stating that the BJP-led central government was neglecting the needs of Kerala, and the explanation given by the opposition for abstaining from a joint fight is against the interest of the people of the state. CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan also claimed that there was disagreement within the UDF over its leadership's decision to skip the joint protest being organised in New Delhi on February 8. Talking to the media, he said that the chief minister and the cabinet ministers will participate in the agitation to be held by the LDF in Delhi. “MLAs and MPs belonging to the LDF will participate in the agitation. The chief minister has written to all non-BJP chief ministers about the agitation,” Govindan said.

Earlier this week, LDF convenor E P Jayarajan had said that the protest is scheduled for 11 am at Jantar Mantar in Delhi on February 8. The LDF government has planned various programmes to spread the message of the protest to the people, including house visits across Kerala on a booth basis from 4 pm to 6 pm on the day of the protest. (PTI)

## Flight operations to remain suspended for over 2 hours daily at Delhi airport till Jan 26

**NEW DELHI, Jan 19:** There will be no flight arrivals or departures at the Delhi airport from 10.20 am to 12.45 pm every day till January 26 in connection with the Republic Day preparations and celebrations, according to an official.

The NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) issued by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has been revised to introduce the new restrictions. Earlier, the curbs were in place only for non-scheduled flights with certain exceptions. From January 19 to 26, no flights would be arriving or departing from the Delhi airport between 10.20 am to 12.45 pm, the official said on Friday.

Generally, a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) is a notice with information that is essential to personnel involved in flight operations.

Airspace curbs in the national capital will be in place from Friday (January 19) till Monday (January 29) in connection with the Republic Day preparations and celebrations. Landing or take-off of non-scheduled flights of scheduled airlines, and chartered flights will not be permitted from 10 am to 1.15 pm during the January 19-25 period. These restrictions will be in force from 6 am to 9 pm during the period from January 26 to 29, as per the NOTAM issued earlier this week.

There will be no impact of NOTAM on IAF, BSF, Army aviation helicopter operations as well as state-owned aircraft/helicopters that are flying with the Governor/Chief Minister of a state. (PTI)

## Mahua Moitra vacates govt bungalow over a month after expulsion from Lok Sabha

**NEW DELHI, Jan 19:** Expelled Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra on Friday vacated her government bungalow here, a day after the Delhi High Court dismissed her plea for a stay on eviction proceedings.

The former TMC MP's counsel Shadan Farasat said that house number 9B on Telegraph Lane was vacated by 10 am this morning before the authorities arrived. “No eviction took place,” the counsel told reporters. The Directorate of Estates (DoE), which comes under the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, in the morning sent a team to get the bungalow vacated and the area around it was barricaded. Earlier this week,

the DoE issued an eviction notice to Moitra. “The possession of the bungalow has officially been handed over to the Directorate of Estates. We are assessing if there is any damage to the property,” an official said.

On Thursday, Moitra failed to get any relief from the Delhi High Court which refused to stay the DoE notice and asked her to vacate the government bungalow.

Justice Girish Kathpalia said no specific rule has been brought before the court which dealt with the eviction of MPs from government accommodation after they cease to be lawmakers. The TMC leader, who was expelled

from the Lok Sabha on December 8 last year, was earlier asked to vacate the house by January 7 after her allotment was cancelled. On January 8, the DoE issued a notice seeking her reply within three days as to why she had not vacated her government accommodation. Another notice was also issued to her on January 12.

On January 4, the Delhi High Court asked the TMC leader to approach the DoE with a request to allow her to continue to occupy the government accommodation allotted to her. Moitra was held guilty of “unethical conduct” and expelled from Lok Sabha on December 8 last year for allegedly accepting gifts from businessman Darshan Hiranandani and sharing her user ID and password of the Parliament website with him. (PTI)

## Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim gets 50-day parole

**CHANDIGARH, Jan 19:** Dera Sacha Sauda chief and rape convict Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has been granted 50-day parole, official sources said on Friday.

The parole comes two months after the Sirsa-headquartered sect chief had walked out of the Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak district on November 21 last year after he was granted a 21-day furlough -- his third temporary release from jail in 2023.

During his temporary release period, Singh will go to the Dera Sacha Sauda Ashram in Barnawa in Uttar Pradesh's Bagpat.

Singh is serving a 20-year jail term for raping two of his disciples. The Dera chief had walked out of the Sunaria jail on a 30-day parole on July 30, 2023, while he was granted a 40-day parole in January last year as well.

In October 2022 too, he was granted a 40-day parole. Before that, he had come out of prison on a month-long parole in June 2022. Besides, he was granted a three-week furlough on February 7, 2022.

In 2021, the Dera chief, along with four others, was also convicted for hatching a conspiracy to kill Ranjit Singh, a Dera manager.

The Dera chief and three others were convicted in 2019 for the murder of a journalist more than 16 years ago. (PTI)

## First look of Ram Lalla's idol inside Ayodhya temple revealed

**AYODHYA (UP), Jan 19:** The first image of the Ram Lalla idol became public on Friday, three days before the ‘pran pratishtha’ ceremony here on January 22.

The statue carved in black stone has its eyes covered with a yellow cloth and is adorned with a garland of roses, Sharad Sharma, an office-bearer of the Vishva Hindu Parishad told PTI.

In the picture released by VHP, Ram Lalla is in a standing posture.

On Thursday afternoon, the new idol of Lord Ram was placed in the sanctum sanctorum of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple, ahead of the consecration ceremony.

The 51-inch idol of Lord Ram as a child, sculpted by Mysuru-based sculptor Arun Yogiraj, was brought to the temple on Wednesday night. This was done amid chanting of prayers, according to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust.

Dixit said the ‘pradhan sankalp’ was performed by Anil Mishra, a member of the trust.

“The idea behind the ‘pradhan sankalp’ is that the ‘pratishtha’ of Lord Ram is being done for the



welfare of all, for the welfare of the nation, for the welfare of humanity and also for those who contributed to this work (related to the temple). “Apart from this, other rituals were also performed. ‘Vastras’ were also given to Brahmins and work has been assigned to everyone,” he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the January 22 consecration ceremony at the Ram temple, which is expected to be opened to the public the next day.

Temple trust general secretary Champat Rai had told reporters here on Monday that the consecration ceremony will begin at 12:20 pm and is expected to be completed by 1 pm on January 22.

Rituals leading to the consecration ceremony have already begun at the

planned for crowded locations such as the Saket Petrol Pump, Kanak Bhawan and Hanuman Garhi.

Each unit will be equipped with necessary medical supplies, including medicines, a nebulizer, oxygen facilities and the capability to conduct blood sugar tests. Additionally, the Health Department is establishing two hospitals with capacities of 10 and 20 beds respectively, where doctors will be available to attend patients.

Besides, arrangements for 40 ambulances are also being made, which will be stationed at various important locations in Ayodhya.

The Health Department has reserved 190 beds for emergency situations in the district's medical college, Shri Ram Chikitsalaya Ayodhya, District Hospital Ayodhya, Mahila District Hospital and Kumarganj Hospital.

During the consecration ceremony, if anyone faces a medical emergency, they will be initially taken to the two hospitals set up in the event area for treatment. If their condition does not improve, they will be referred to the Shri Ram Hospital. (PTI)

জাননী		
অসম সংখ্যালঘু উন্নয়ন ব'ৰ্ডৰ তৰফৰ পৰা ২০২৩-২৪ বিত্তীয় বৰ্ষৰ বাবে নিম্ন উল্লেখিত সামগ্ৰী বিতৰণৰ বাবে আৰ্হ-সাহায্যৰে অসমৰ শ্ৰমীয়া বাসিন্দাৰ অধিসূচীত ধৰ্মীয় সংখ্যালঘু (মুছলিম, খ্ৰীষ্টান, শিখ, বৌদ্ধ, জৈন আৰু পাৰ্চী) সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ বাবে (I) e-Rickshaw মুঠ খৰচৰ ৮০% চৰকাৰী অনুদান আৰু ২০% হিচাপিকাৰীয়ে বহন কৰিব লাগিব আৰু (II) Sewing Machine, (III) Fashion Design Machine (IV) Automatic Paper Plate Making Machine ইত্যাদি সামগ্ৰী সম্পূৰ্ণ বিনামূলীয়াকৈ বিতৰণৰ বাবে আবেদন বিচনা হৈছে। আবেদনকাৰী সকলৰ বহুবেচৰীয়া আয় তিনি লাখ (৩.০০ লাখ) টকাতকৈ অধিক হ'ব নোৱাৰিব। আবেদনকাৰী সকলে অনলাইনযোগে প্ৰ-পত্ৰ পূৰণ কৰিব লাগিব আৰু আবেদনৰ লগতে যাবতীয় নথি-পত্ৰ আপলোড কৰিব লাগিব। ইয়াৰ উপৰিও এই নথি-পত্ৰ সমূহৰ ফটোকপি মূল কপি বাছনি প্ৰক্ৰিয়াৰ সময়ত লৈ আহিব লাগিব। বাছনিকৃত আবেদনকাৰী সকলক অসম সংখ্যালঘু উন্নয়ন ব'ৰ্ডৰ তৰফৰ পৰা জনোৱা হ'ব। ইচ্ছুক আবেদনকাৰী সকল তথ্য আত্ম-সহায়ক পোষ্ট সমূহক পূৰ্ণ নিৰ্ধাৰিত সময় ১৭/০১/২০২৪ তাৰিখৰ পৰা অথবা ২৪/০১/২০২৪ তাৰিখলৈ সমন্বীয়া বঢ়াই (extend) দিয়া হ'ল আৰু আবেদন সমূহ <a href="https://amdb.assam.gov.in">https://amdb.assam.gov.in</a> (Assam Minorities Development Board) ৱেবচাইটত অনলাইন যোগে ২৪/০১/২০২৪ তাৰিখৰ ভিতৰত দাখিল কৰিবলৈ আহ্বান জনোৱা হ'ল। অসম্পূৰ্ণ আবেদন প্ৰ-পত্ৰ গ্ৰহণযোগ্য নহ'ব। অসম সংখ্যালঘু উন্নয়ন ব'ৰ্ডৰ বাছনি কমিটিৰ সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত হ'ব।		
ক্রমিক নং	আবেদনকাৰীৰ নাম	অৰ্থতা
১	e-Rickshaw	১) আবেদনকাৰী ধৰ্মীয় সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ হ'ব লাগিব। ২) আবেদনকাৰী কমেও পঞ্চম শ্ৰেণী উন্নীত হ'ব লাগিব। ৩) আবেদনকাৰীৰ বয়স ১৮ বছৰৰ পৰা ৫০ বছৰ বয়সৰ ভিতৰত হ'ব লাগিব। ৪) আবেদনকাৰীৰ ঘৰৰ ঠিকনাৰ প্ৰমাণ পত্ৰ পাৰ্চী পঞ্জীয়ত, পৌৰ-নিগম বা টাউন কমিটিৰ কৰ্তৃপক্ষৰ পৰা ল'ব লাগিব। ৫) আবেদনকাৰীৰ জেটাৰ কাৰ্ড ও পৰিচয় পত্ৰ দিব লাগিব। ৬) বহুবেচৰীয়া আয়ৰ প্ৰমাণ পত্ৰ সংগ্ৰহ কৰ্তৃপক্ষৰ পৰা সংগ্ৰহ কৰিব লাগিব।
২	Sewing Machine	Note:- Sewing Machine ৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত আবেদনকাৰী সকল মহিলা হ'ব লাগিব।
৩	Fashion Design Machine	১) আবেদনকাৰী আত্মসহায়ক পোষ্টটো পঞ্জীয়ন হ'ব লাগিব আৰু ইয়াৰ প্ৰমাণ পত্ৰ সংগ্ৰহ কৰ্তৃপক্ষৰ পৰা সংগ্ৰহ কৰি আপলোড কৰিব লাগিব। ২) আবেদনকাৰী আত্মসহায়ক পোষ্টটোত কমেও ১০ জন সদস্য থাকিব লাগিব। ৩) আবেদনকাৰী আত্মসহায়ক পোষ্ট নামত বেংক একাউন্ট (active) থাকিব লাগিব। ৪) আবেদনকাৰী আত্মসহায়ক পোষ্ট সদস্যৰ ঠিকনা ও পৰিচয় পত্ৰ দিব লাগিব। ৫) আবেদনকাৰী আত্মসহায়ক পোষ্ট সদস্য সকল ধৰ্মীয় সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ হ'ব লাগিব।
৪	Automatic Paper Plate Making Machine	

বিঃদ্রঃ  
১) The above schemes will be implemented by Assam Minorities Development Board subject to receipt of FOC from the Govt.  
২) All the documents as mentioned above should be received from Competent authority and must be uploaded.  
৩) For any official clarification: Cell No. 7635998002 (M)

স্বাক্ষৰ/-  
সঞ্চালক,  
অসম সংখ্যালঘু উন্নয়ন ব'ৰ্ড  
ৰাধা গোবিন্দ বৰুৱা পথ, গণেশগুৰি, গুৱাহাটী-৬

জাননী				
অসম সংখ্যালঘু উন্নয়ন ব'ৰ্ডৰ তৰফৰ পৰা ২০২৩-২৪ বিত্তীয় বৰ্ষৰ বাবে নিম্ন উল্লেখিত পাঠ্যক্ৰমৰ আৰ্হ-সাহায্যৰে (পাঠ্যক্ৰমৰ মুঠ খৰচৰ ৮০% চৰকাৰী অনুদান আৰু ২০% হিচাপিকাৰীয়ে বহন কৰিব লাগিব) অসমৰ শ্ৰমীয়া বাসিন্দাৰ অধিসূচীত ধৰ্মীয় সংখ্যালঘু (মুছলিম, খ্ৰীষ্টান, শিখ, বৌদ্ধ, জৈন আৰু পাৰ্চী) ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰীৰ বাবে পাঠ্যক্ৰমৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰা হৈছে। ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰীৰ অভিভাৱকৰ বহুবেচৰীয়া আয় তিনি লাখ (৩.০০ লাখ) টকাতকৈ অধিক হ'ব নোৱাৰিব। বাছনি মেধাভিত্তিক কৰা হ'ব আৰু কিছু আসন বিভিন্ন শ্ৰেণীৰ বাবে সংৰক্ষিত থাকিব। ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰীয়ে অনলাইনযোগে প্ৰ-পত্ৰ পূৰণ কৰা আবেদনৰ প্ৰতিলিপিৰ লগত যাবতীয় নথি-পত্ৰ আপলোড কৰিব লাগিব। ইয়াৰ উপৰিও এই নথি-পত্ৰ সমূহৰ ফটোকপিসহ মূল কপি কাউন্সিলিৰ সময়ত লৈ আহিব লাগিব। পূৰ্ণ নিৰ্ধাৰিত সময় ১৭/০১/২০২৪ তাৰিখৰ পৰা অথবা ২৪/০১/২০২৪ তাৰিখলৈ সমন্বীয়া বঢ়াই (extend) দিয়া হ'ল আৰু আবেদন সমূহ <a href="https://amdb.assam.gov.in">https://amdb.assam.gov.in</a> (Assam Minorities Development Board) ৱেবচাইটত অনলাইন যোগে ২৪/০১/২০২৪ তাৰিখৰ ভিতৰত দাখিল কৰিবলৈ আহ্বান জনোৱা হ'ল। অসম্পূৰ্ণ আবেদন প্ৰ-পত্ৰ গ্ৰহণযোগ্য নহ'ব। অসম সংখ্যালঘু উন্নয়ন ব'ৰ্ডৰ বাছনি কমিটিৰ সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত হ'ব।				
ক্রমিক নং	পাঠ্যক্ৰমৰ নাম	শিক্ষাগত অৰ্থতা	পাঠ্যক্ৰমৰ সমন্বীয়া	বয়স
১.	ই.উ.পি.এচ.চি. পাঠ্যক্ৰমৰ প্ৰৱেশ পৰীক্ষাৰ বাবে প্ৰশিক্ষণ (Coaching for Entrance Exam for UPSC)	ই.উ.পি.এচ.চি. ৰ বাবে মাত্ৰক (১০+২+৩) যিকোনো শাখাত উন্নীত হ'ব লাগিব।	১২ মাহ	২১-২৭ বছৰ

বিঃদ্রঃ  
১) ই.উ.পি.এচ.চি. পাঠ্যক্ৰমৰ প্ৰৱেশ পৰীক্ষাৰ বাবে প্ৰশিক্ষণ পাঠ্যক্ৰমৰ মুঠ খৰচৰ ৮০% চৰকাৰী অনুদান আৰু ২০% হিচাপিকাৰীয়ে বহন কৰিব লাগিব।  
২) The above scheme will be implemented subject to receipt of FOC from the Govt.  
৩) Annual Income Certificate should be received from competent authority and must be uploaded.  
৪) For any official clarification: Cell No. 7635998002 (M)

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# My govt inspired by Lord Ram; Modi guarantee is to position India among top 3 economies: PM Modi

**SOLAPUR, Jan 19:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said his government is inspired by Lord Ram's principles of governance with honesty and urged people to light Ram Jyoti on January 22, stressing that it will be an inspiration to remove poverty from their lives. The PM said putting India on the list of top three global economies is a 'Modi guarantee' and he will fulfil it with people's blessing in his third term.

"Modi's guarantee means 'guarantee puri hone ki guarantee'. Lord Ram taught us to honour commitments made and we are fulfilling all goals we set for the welfare of the poor and their empowerment," he said.

The PM was addressing a gathering in Maharashtra's Solapur after laying the foundation stone of 8 AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) projects worth around Rs 2,000 crore in the state.

With a few months to go before the Lok Sabha polls, this was the PM's second visit to the state in one week.

"Putting India on the list of top three global economies is a Modi guarantee and I will achieve the goal with your blessings in my third term," he said.

PM Modi also dedicated more



than 90,000 houses completed under PMAY-Urban in Maharashtra, which sends 48 MPs to the Lok Sabha.

The Prime Minister dedicated 15,000 houses of Raynagar Housing Society in Solapur, whose beneficiaries comprise thousands of handloom workers, vendors, power loom workers, rag pickers, beedi workers and drivers.

He also kickstarted the distribution of 1st and 2nd instalments to 10,000 beneficiaries of PM-SVANIDHI in Maharashtra during the programme.

In a choked voice, the prime minister said he wished he had had the opportunity to stay in such houses when he was young.

"Happiness comes when people's dreams come true. Their blessings are my biggest investment," he said. Urging people, who got the houses, to light Ram Jyoti on January 22, when the consecration of the Ayodhya Ram temple will be held, Modi said it will be an inspiration to eradicate poverty from their lives.

"Lord Ram did the work that made his people happy. My government is dedicated to the welfare and empowerment of the poor. We launched schemes to mitigate their hardships," he said, adding that the role of middlemen has been completely eradicated in his government's welfare schemes.

Modi said homes and toilets

have been constructed in ten years as the lack of these amenities was insulting to the poor, especially women.

"We have constructed more than 10 crore toilets which is Modi's 'izzat ki guarantee' for women and provided more than four crore pucca houses so far," he said.

Welfare of the poor and dignity of labour has been his government's focus, the PM said.

Making India 'Atmanirbhar' (self-reliant) is crucial for turning it into 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India), he said, appealing to people to dream big. "Your dream is my pledge and this is Modi's guarantee," he said. Modi said 'Garibi Hatao' was just a slogan earlier because schemes did not reach beneficiaries. Recalling the slogan 'aadhi roti khayenge...' from the past, the PM said that under 'Modi guarantee, you will eat full roti'.

Modi said the "niyat" (intent), niti (policy) and nishtha (commitment) of the previous government were not clear, but the niyat of his government is "clear", while niti is meant to empower people and nishtha is towards the nation.

In the last 10 years, Modi said, the government has deposited ₹ 30 lakh crore into bank accounts of beneficiaries of various schemes via direct transfer. (PTI)

## UP jails to live telecast 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony; prisoners prepare items for Ram temple event

**LUCKNOW, Jan 19:** Ram temple fever has gripped not just the outside world but also the prisoners of Uttar Pradesh where the inmates are eagerly awaiting the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony in Ayodhya on January 22 as it will be shown to them live inside their barracks.

The inmates are busy preparing various items which are being sent for the ceremony. 'Katha' (recitals) and 'bhajans' have also been organised for the jail inmates on the occasion, jail officials said.

Asked about the arrangements to telecast the ceremony inside the jails, Uttar Pradesh Prison Minister Dharmveer Prajapati told PTI, "We are making arrangements inside the prisons to show the ceremony live to the inmates."

"Not everyone inside the jail is a hardcore criminal. The prisoners are very much keen to watch the ceremony live," he added.

Additional Director General (ADG), Prison, SN Sabat, said, "We already have the required infrastructure such as LED TVs in the barracks. It will also be a spiritual experience for them which might help them shun crime when they are out of the jail."

He said the jail inmates are



preparing several items which will be sent as offerings for the Ram temple consecration.

Carpets with Ram temple designs and hanging carpets from the Bhadohi jail have already been sent to Ayodhya on Thursday. The inmates were provided all the necessary materials by the district administration, the ADG said.

In the Raebareilly jail, 11,000 diyas have been made by the prisoners. The diyas will be lit in the jail and other government offices of the district on the day of consecration ceremony in Ayodhya, he said.

Similarly, 1,000 LED bulbs have

been made in Noida jail. The prisoners of district jail Mainpuri have made Ram temple and 'Ram darbar' in Tarkashi art.

Inmates of Saharanpur jail have made wooden models of the Ram temple, while those in Fatehpur have made bags with Lord Ram's name and temple printed on them. The inmates of Pilibhit and Azamgarh have also made diyas, the officer added.

A three-day 'Sriram Katha' was organised at the Chitrakoot jail on Wednesday in which the prisoners were encouraged to engage themselves in noble work. The prisoners took the pledge to quit crime after being released from the jail, Chitrakoot jail officials said.

Inmates of Ayodhya jail are organising a 'katha'. Both the listeners and those narrating 'katha' are prisoners. They were provided harmonium and musical instruments to conduct the session.

The officials said the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony is serving as a dual opportunity for the prisoners. On one hand they are engaged in spirituality and on the other, they are also getting a chance to showcase their skills by making offerings for Lord Ram. (PTI)

## 75th Republic Day parade to be women-centric

**NEW DELHI, Jan 19:** The 75th Republic Day celebrations at the majestic Kartavya Path on January 26 will largely be "women-centric" with the central theme of India's democracy and its resolve to become a developed nation. In a first, the parade will be heralded by 100 women artists with Indian musical instruments, Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane said on Friday.

The parade will also witness an all-women tri-services contingent marching down the ceremonial boulevard for the first time, and the central armed police forces contingents will also consist of women personnel, he said.

"The best representation of women will be seen in this year's Republic Day parade," the defence secretary told reporters.

A 95-member marching team and 33-member band contingent from France will also take part in the parade. Along with the aircraft of the Indian Air Force, one Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) aircraft and two Rafale fighter jets of the French Air Force will participate in the fly-past, Aramane said.

French President Emmanuel Macron will be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations.

"With the themes of 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Bharat -- Loktantra ki Matruka', the 75th Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path on January 26 will be women-centric," he said.

Aramane said women marching contingents will form the major chunk of the parade, with most of the tableaux of states and Union Territories (UTs) and Central ministries showcasing the country's rich cultural diversity, unity and progress.

The themes have been selected in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's views that 'India is truly a mother of democracy', he said.

In another unique initiative, the Ministry of Culture will be showcasing 'Anant Sutra -- The Endless Thread' textile installation at Kartavya Path.

It will be installed behind the spectators seated in the enclosures. Anant Sutra is a visually-stunning tribute to the saree, India's timeless gift to the world of fashion.

This unique installation will showcase nearly 1,900 sarees and drapes from every corner of the country, mounted at a height with wooden frames, Aramane said.

It will have QR codes which can be scanned to know the details about weaving and embroidery arts used in it. Around 13,000 "special guests" have also been invited to witness the parade this year.

The defence secretary said the objective is to provide an opportunity to the people from all walks of life to take part in the national festival, in line with the government's vision of 'Jan Bhagidari'.

These 'special guests' will include best performers in various fields and those who made best use of various schemes of the government such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, PM Ujjwala Yojana, PM Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi), PM Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, PM Fasal Bima Yojana and PM Vishwakarma Yojana among others.

Women space scientists of ISRO, yoga teachers (Ayushman Bharat), winners of international sports events and paralympic medalists will also attend the parade as special guests.

Aramane said that given their tough livelihood, special emphasis was laid to include people from 'vibrant villages' in the border areas in the list of special guests.

A total 16 tableaux from states and Union Territories and from central ministries and departments will roll down the Kartavya Path during the parade.

The states and Union Territories are: Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Ladakh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana.

Like each year, the tableaux have been selected by an expert committee comprising eminent persons in the fields of art, culture, painting, sculpture, music, architecture, choreography, he said.

Aramane said to address the concerns of some states and Union Territories over the non-inclusion of their tableaux, the defence ministry has devised a unique three-year roll-over plan.

The plan ensures equitable participation of the states and the Union Territories on a rotational basis over a period of three years.

The total seating capacity at the celebrations will be 77,000 out of which 42,000 seats are being reserved for the general public.

The parade will start at 1030 hours and run for a duration of approximately 90 minutes.

The defence secretary said the 'Beating Retreat' ceremony at Vijay Chowk on January 29 will witness all Indian tunes to mark the culmination of 75th Republic Day celebrations. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## 10 years under Modi govt have

crore from 2022-23 to 2025-26 for the Northeast and there is an increase of about 162 per cent in the budget for the region.

Shah said the 10 per cent Gross Budgetary Support scheme has greatly benefited the development of the region. An allocation of ₹ 1,500 crore has been made in PM-DevINE (Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North Eastern Region) for 2022-23 and ₹ 6,600 crore for 2025-26.

An inter-ministerial task force has been formed for agriculture, eight ropeways have been taken up under the National Ropeway Development Programme, and the budget of the DoNER Ministry has increased by 153 per cent, he said.

Under the National Edible Oil Mission, ₹ 234 crore have been allocated in the Northeast alone to give priority to palm oil. Along with this, 32 projects worth ₹ 1,713 crore have been approved under the Special Infrastructure Development Plan of Northeast, the home minister said.

Among the achievements of North Eastern Development Finance Corporation, schemes worth ₹ 5,490 crore have been approved from January 2023 to December 2023 and under the SAMBHAV scheme, work is being done to provide basic facilities to 75 Gram panchayats and councils of 42 districts of the eight states in the region.

The home minister said that in the last 10 years, the Modi government has invested ₹ 81,000 crore in the railways; ₹ 48,000 crore in road connectivity and 5,196 km road length have been constructed in the Northeast under the Bharat Mala project.

Under the UDAN scheme, eight new airports have been constructed and 71 new air routes started in these 10 years, he said.

He said that under the leadership of PM Modi, the role and scope of the North Eastern Council (NEC) has increased under the Act East Policy.

He said everyone will have to give thrust to create a flood-free and drug-free Northeast and work for strengthening water management by using the expertise of the North Eastern Space Applications Centre.

Referring to the three recently enacted criminal justice laws, Shah said these have been brought to take the country's criminal-justice system into the 21st century.

Within three years of the issuance of the notifications, the country's criminal justice system will become the most modern and scientific in the whole world, he said. (PTI)

## Himanta urges Centre for New

aggrieved communities, peace has returned to Assam after many decades, recording zero casualties amongst security personnel and civilians last year.

"The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) is currently in force in only four districts, the Centre would explore the possibility of repealing it entirely from the state. Resolution of border disputes between Assam and its neighbours are going ahead in the right direction," he avowed.

He further added that there has been marked improvement in the crime scenario in the state, especially with regard to "crime against women" where a significant reduction in cases has been observed.

Later, the chief minister also spoke about the various infrastructure development projects, particularly on the road infrastructure front, currently under various stages of development in the state.

"The state government has also put special emphasis on the development of school infrastructure in the State, he stated, adding that a huge chunk of monetary resources allotted under North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS) and PM-DevINE scheme are being spent on improvement of secondary school infrastructure," he added.

Sarma also informed about the measures being undertaken by Assam to attain self-sufficiency (atmanirbharta) in many fronts such as fish, egg and milk production.

Union minister of home affairs who is also the president of NESAC, DoNER minister G Kishan Reddy, NESAC vice-president and ISRO chairman S Somnath were present on the occasion.

## Golden Jubilee celebration of KYF

for celebration of KYF, the KCS president, Chandrasing Kro informed me that the two hens sacrificed indicate bad signs. From there I have doubts that something untoward may happen. On January 16 evening during a live concert by Nazareth rock band there was heavy downpour. The next day, the Indian President was supposed to come. The weather was gloomy. However, the helicopter of the Indian President tried to land at 11:30 am, but it couldn't do so. Later, it tried at 12:30 PM and at 1:30 PM. Finally, the landing was cancelled at 1:30 pm. Some political leaders are making political issue out of it," the CEM said.

Regarding financial support, Ronghang highlighted the allocation of funds, including ₹ 1 crore from the KAAC under the State Owned Priority Development (SOPD) and an annual commitment of ₹ 3 crore from the chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, through the Art and Culture Department.

He further mentioned the ₹ 1 crore contributions from government employees' one day's basic pay, making a total of ₹ 5 crore available for KYF organisation.

The CEM expressed gratitude for the participation of Ambassadors from nine countries in the golden jubilee celebration and hinted at plans to invite more Ambassadors from other countries in future festivals to elevate KYF to a global level.

As part of the golden jubilee celebration, a unique event attempting to set a world record with 1500 participants walking on bamboo stilts will take place on January 21 at Bakulia bypass.

The closing ceremony also witnessed the release of books published by KCS, namely 'KYF - Phurkimo Ak-itap' edited by Saising Rongpi, 'Lokimo' (the mouthpiece of KCS) edited by KCS general secretary, Bidyasing Rongpi, and 'Barika' edited by Jorsing Bey.

The ceremony, chaired by KCS President Kro and various dignitaries addressed the gathering, including MP Horensing Bey, MLAs Bidyasing Englang and Dorsing Ronghang, and KCS founding president Lunse Timung.

## India sets up alliance for Global

Godrej, Serum Institute of India, Novartis, IMD Laussane, and over 10,000 partners from industry through CII.

Supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the alliance will be housed and anchored by the CII Centre for Women Leadership.

The World Economic Forum has come on board as a 'Network Partner' and Invest India as an 'Institutional Partner'.

CII director general Chandrajit Banerjee said the launch of the alliance in Davos is a purposeful initiative with the participation of key stakeholders.

"It represents a very proud moment for India and India Inc. and comes with a sense of great responsibility. The Confederation of Indian Industry is committed to bringing in Industry from India and across the globe to work towards Gender Equity and Women Leadership," he said.

CII President R Dinesh said the leadership of India for women empowerment during its Presidency of G20 was well recognised and the launch of the 'Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality' at Davos is yet another opportunity for us to converge stakeholders to make the world a better place for women.

"We in corporate India are excited to partner with governments and companies across the globe to promote Gender Equality and strengthen Women's Leadership," he added. (PTI)

## 'We miss them': Muslim neighbours yearn for return of Kashmiri Pandits

**SRINAGAR, Jan 19:** A garden looks beautiful with colourful flowers. Would it look as nice if we plant only white flowers?" A frail-looking old man poses the question as he goes for Friday prayers at a mosque in Srinagar's Habba Kadal locality.

For Mohammad Yousuf Khan, Kashmiri Pandits are the flowers that brought colour and life to the garden he calls home: Habba Kadal in Shahar e Khaas.

Khan and other residents of Habba Kadal believe the idea of Kashmiriyat is incomplete without the neighbours they lost three decades ago but still long for. "We used to eat from one plate. We will be more than happy if they return. We miss them," says Shafeeqa, a resident.

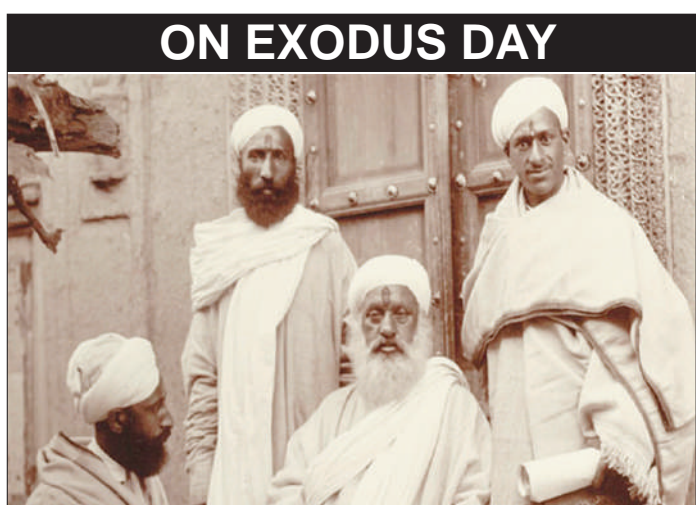
Habba Kadal is where Khan grew up and still lives there in his mid-sixties. The locality was an example in communal harmony and brotherhood for decades. It was a place where Bhajans and hymns in temples and sermons and Azaans in Masjids would rent the air.

However, in early nineties, the soothing music of devotional songs was replaced by gunshots as terror activities picked up.

January 19 marks the day of the exodus of the Kashmiri Pandit community from the region, driven out of their homeland following the outbreak of terrorism in the Valley.

"We used to live together, eat together. In fact, we still are living here with our Pandit brothers. There's no difference. We are living happily. On one side of this lane, there's a temple and on the other side, there's a mosque. We are all humans. Anyone who hurts a person hurts the entire humanity," says Khan.

Recalling the proverbial good old times, he says that the KPs and



Muslims shared a strong bond of love and respect for each other.

"In earlier times, we would be carefree. We used to visit temples on festivals. They used to come to greet us. We really miss them," he adds.

The exodus day is a significant day that commemorates the forced displacement of the Kashmiri Pandit community from the Kashmir Valley. It serves as a reminder of the hardships and challenges faced by the community during that time.

Among a handful of KPs living in Srinagar is Sunil who stayed back on the reassurance of his Muslim neighbours. He refuses to give in to terror threats.

"I have been living here since my birth. We did not leave our motherland or migrate outside. I lived here, studied here, got married and have kids now," says Sunil, with a smile on his face.

However, the glow from his face gradually disappears when he recalls the times of mass exodus to the plains of Jammu and other parts of the country.

"God's best gift to mankind is life and if you feel there's a threat,

you try to run for your life. Those who were affected, they did the same. But we stayed back," says Sunil.

"We had the support of our local Muslim brothers. Even today, we celebrate festivals, weddings together. Recently, we had a wedding outside Kashmir which was attended by our Muslim neighbours as well. We are for them in our tough times and they are for us," he says.

Sunil is optimistic that with the changing situation in the Valley, the time is not far when the displaced members of his community will return and live happily with their Muslim brethren.

"We miss those who left us here. We feel alone because we don't have any relatives here. Our community got scattered throughout the world. A day will come when these empty houses will be full of life again. Our Kashmiri Pandits will return and life will be normal again," he adds.

The loss and longing of the KP community members also bothers the members of the majority community. The Muslims in Habba Kadal locality yearn to see their



# HANSAL MEHTA'S 'GANDHI' SERIES BEGINS PRODUCTION



**MUMBAI, Jan 19:** Filmmaker Hansal Mehta's much-anticipated series "Gandhi" has commenced production, the makers said on Friday.

Backed by Applause Entertainment, the series is based on historian and author Ramachandra Guha's two books — "Gandhi before India" and "Gandhi: The Years that Changed the World".

"Capturing history in the making! #Gandhi filming now," the studio posted on Instagram alongside photos from the show's sets.

In a press note, Applause said the epic series, which will capture the life and times of Gandhi, is an international production and will be shot at various Indian and foreign locations.

The series will star Pratik Gandhi as Mahatma Gandhi. It marks the director-actor duo's third collaboration after "Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story" and "Baai".

Siddhartha Basu is attached as historical consultant, factual advisor and creative consultant on the project.

Mehta's most recent series were Netflix's "Scoop" and SonyLIV's "Scam 2003", a follow-up to his critically-acclaimed show "Scam 1992".

His upcoming project is "The Buckingham Murders", starring Kareena Kapoor Khan in the lead role. (PTI)

## Major Lazer Soundsystem, Adam Beyer, King and others: Vh1 Supersonic 2024 unveils line-up

**MUMBAI, Jan 19:** The 2024 edition of the Vh1 Supersonic music festival will feature performances by the likes of Major Lazer Soundsystem, Adam Beyer, King and Yotto, the organisers announced on Friday. The multi-genre music and lifestyle festival will be held at Pune's Mahalakshmi Lawns from February 16 to 18, a press release stated.

The line-up includes Denis Horvat, Hamdi, Patrice Baume, The Midnight, Arjun Vagale, Browncoat, Kohra, Taba Chake and The Yellow Diary.

Also performing at the festival will be 10,000 Lions, Bass Maya, Chromaderma, D2, Dr. Sel, Earl Gateshead, Ital Soup, Major C, NZ Selector, Rasta Yuga, Rudy

Roots and Sanyas-I.

"We're back, as promised and this time we're bringing Major Lazer, Adam Beyer, King, Yotto and a massive array of festival favourite artists from across the world. We're opening our gates on the 16th of Feb to welcome back friends and fans for our 9th edition in 2024... And it's going to be a massively memorable weekend. See you on the dance floor," festival curator Nikhil Chinapa said. Major Lazer Soundsystem, the Jamaican-American electronic dance music and DJ trio comprising record producer Diplo, DJs Walshy Fire and Ape Drums, said they are excited to perform at the festival. "India is a special place to us, so we are thrilled to

be back at Vh1 Supersonic this year with some amazing sets planned. With each tour that we do in India, it's always exciting to connect with more and more people and watch our fan base grow," they said. Singer-rapper King, known for chart-busters "Tu Aake Dekhle" and "Maan Meri Jaan", said he is thrilled to perform at the festival for the first time. "Performing at Vh1 Supersonic for the first time is a milestone moment for me. The festival has been an iconic one in the Indian music festival circuit, and I can't wait to finally be a part of it and share this unforgettable moment with my fans. I can't wait to create some special memories with everyone out there," he said. (PTI)

## Ajay Devgn's film with Vikas Bahl is titled 'Shaitaan', set for March release

**MUMBAI, Jan 19:** Actor Ajay Devgn and filmmaker Vikas Bahl's upcoming movie has been titled "Shaitaan" and will be released in theatres on March 8, the makers announced on Friday. The supernatural thriller, which will also feature R Madhavan and Jyothika in pivotal roles, is described as a gripping tale that will take viewers into a "sinister journey with elements of Indian black magic." "#Shaitaan is coming for you.

Taking over cinemas on 8th March 2024," Devgn posted on Instagram along with the film's official poster. "Shaitaan" is produced by Devgn, Kumar Mangat Pathak and Abhishek Pathak under the banner Ajay Devgn Film and Panorama Studios, respectively. It is also produced by Jio Studios. The movie marks the first collaboration between the 54-year-old star and Bahl, known for films such as "Queen", "Super 30" and "Goodbye". Devgn was most recently seen in "Bhola", the Hindi remake of Tamil hit "Kaithi". (PTI)



## 'Jai Sri Ram': Nayanthara apologises for 'Annapoorani' controversy

**NEW DELHI, Jan 19:** Actor Nayanthara has offered sincere and heartfelt apology over her latest Tamil film "Annapoorani", a week after the makers were accused of hurting religious sentiments and the movie was pulled from streaming service Netflix.

In an Instagram post on Thursday night, the "Jawan" star said the film was made to "uplift and inspire, not to cause distress".

"Jai Shri Ram. I am writing this note with a heavy heart and a genuine desire to address the recent turn of events concerning our film, 'Annapoorani'. Crafting 'Annapoorani' was not just a cinematic endeavour but a heartfelt

pursuit of inspiring resilience and instilling the spirit of never giving up.

"It aimed to mirror life's journey, where we learn that obstacles can be overcome with sheer willpower... In our sincere attempt to share a positive message, we may have inadvertently caused hurt," Nayanthara wrote.

"Annapoorani" featured the 39-year-old actor star as a young woman who aims to become the best chef in the country but in order to realise her dream, she has to cook non-vegetarian food.

Directed by Nileshe Krishnaa, the movie was released in theatres in December last year, before it

started streaming on Netflix four weeks later. Last week, the movie kicked up a row after two complaints were filed against Nayanthara and the makers over allegations that certain scenes in the film hurt the religious sentiments of Hindus.

The complaints alleged that the film makes controversial remarks about Lord Ram and also promotes 'love jihad'. Amid the controversy, the film was removed from Netflix by the makers.

In her post, Nayanthara said the team wanted to share a positive message and never expected that the movie, which was showcased in theatres, would be removed

from a streaming platform.

"My team and I never intended to hurt anyone's sentiments and we understand the gravity of this issue. Being someone who wholly believes in God and frequently visits temples across the country, it is the last thing I would intentionally do.

"To those whose feelings we've touched, I extend my sincere & heartfelt apologies. The intention behind 'Annapoorani' was to uplift and inspire, not to cause distress. Over the last two decades, my journey in the film industry has been guided with a singular intention - To spread positivity & foster learning from one another,"

## WANT TO COLLABORATE WITH PEOPLE WHO VALUE ME: VIVEK OBEROI



**MUMBAI, Jan 19:** Sometimes it is frustrating to wait for good projects but Vivek Oberoi says he is confident about his craft and wants to collaborate only with people who value his contribution.

The actor, known for movies such as "Company", "Saathiya", "Yuva", "Omkaara", "Shootout at Lokhandwala", "Krish 3" and OTT series "Inside Edge", will next be seen in Rohit Shetty's streaming debut, "The Indian Police Force". Oberoi said since he is not dependent on acting to pay his bills, he wants to do projects that challenge him.

"It's frustrating to wait, and it's like, 'Somebody get me something exciting to do'... I don't think you get work by networking, lobbying, and going to parties. That's not the way I want to work. I want work like how Rohit called me, valued me and said, 'Give it your best'. That respect is essential for me. I'm not somebody who katora leke jayega aur bolega kaam dedo, mere paas kaam nahi hai' (I am not someone who will go begging for work)," Oberoi told PTI in an interview.

The actor said he has made "some wrong and good choices" along the way in his journey as a performer, but going forward, he wants to be "authentic" in what he does. "If I don't have work, I'll sit at home, I'll do something creative. It is not out of ego, it is out of respect for my art. If somebody needs me, they will reach out. I've good relations with many people, they are always a phone call away, and when they call me, 'I say, okay' (if I like it)," he said.

The 47-year-old actor plays the role of a cop named Vikram Bakshi in Shetty's series that also features Sidharth Malhotra and Shilpa Shetty. He describes his character as an aggressive, passionate and caring man.

Billed as an ode to the police force, the Prime Video series has started streaming on Prime Video.

Oberoi said Shetty wrote the role keeping him in mind, which motivated him to give his best. "It's the most beautiful form of praise an actor can receive," Oberoi said, adding, it also challenged him. "I was like, 'I better perform on every single scene.'"

He said he thoroughly enjoyed working

with Shetty, who he said is very "focused".

"He doesn't dwell, on sets he is quick, if he gets what he wants, he moves to the next. He is very focused. On the second or third day, there was an important scene, which required performance, I did it and asked if he needed one more take, but he didn't, rather he praised me. I felt so appreciated and loved. In the end he said, 'Aapka ration card bann gaya. This means you are part of Rohit Shetty Picturez.'"

Oberoi also praised directors like Rakesh Roshan and Shaad Ali for writing characters keeping him in mind whether it was the antagonist's role in "Krish 3" or the lover boy in "Saathiya". "Saathiya" was contrary to my previous film, 'Company'. It was a different character and Shaad kept telling me, 'I see you in it'. I was like, 'Let me see the original film (Tamil film 'Alaipayuthay'), let me see how I fit into this, and if I can play the character'. It's a difficult character because you have to be as natural as you can. It wasn't easy," he said.

"When I did 'Krish 3', it was a similar situation, Duggu (Hrithik) said his dad (Rakesh Roshan) wants to meet me. When I met Rakesh uncle, he put a script in front of me, and said, 'As a hero, I don't know if you will play this role because it is out-an-out villain but I've written this character of Kaal, thinking of you'. I read the script and said, 'What a great character, and when will I get a chance to play a super villain? I'm doing it,' he recalled. Oberoi said he also had to say no to great movies like Rajkumar Hirani's

"Munabhai MBBS", Saif Ali Khan-starrer "Hum Tum", "Bunty or Babli", featuring Abhishek Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan-fronted "Om Shanti Om", for various reasons.

"With Raju Hirani it was not a rejection on the level of script but it was because of dates. With regards to 'Hum Tum', I had said yes to the film but I couldn't do it because I had met with an accident. So, I had to exit out of that project ('Hum Tum'). With 'Om Shanti Om', I had a choice to do Arjun Rampal's role or Maya Dolas's role in 'Shootout at Lokhandwala', so I picked Maya Dolas."

"Indian Police Force" is currently streaming on Prime Video. (PTI)





## THE INDIAN SIDE SUFFERED A 0-3 DRUBBING VS UZBEKISTAN

# If you allow time and space to a side like Uzbekistan, they will kill you: Stimac



**DOHA, Jan 19:** India coach Igor Stimac said his team offered Uzbekistan too much space and time during the 0-3 drubbing in the AFC Asian Cup here and admitted drastic improvement is required to match the standards of the continent's elites.

Unlike their outing against Australia, when they managed to

hold the title contenders and World Cup regulars goal-less for the first 50 minutes, the Indian defence was split wide open in the early part of the game by Uzbekistan.

Defensive lapses hurt the 102-ranked team the most, as it conceded two goals within first 17 minutes.

"They were far more clinical than us. They didn't give away anything. And whatever problems we had, came from ourselves. We allowed them to take those chances. That's the difference," Stimac said after the match. India simply failed to withstand the early Uzbek onslaught though Stimac preferred

to go easy on his wards, who will face Syria on January 23 in their last group match.

"Overall, the boys have been fantastic. They have trained well and maintained discipline. But at this level, there's never a convenient time to concede goals. If you allow time and space to a side like Uzbekistan, they will kill

you," said Stimac.

"We need to work on ourselves, close these gaps in our game, and look forward to winning the crucial matches that lie ahead of us."

Nearly 40,000 fans had turned up at the Ahmed bin Ali Stadium in Doha on Thursday, most of them Indians.

"We are very sad about disappointing the fans, but that's what we have to live with at the moment. I want to tell them that I'm sorry that it couldn't happen in this match, but please keep supporting these guys. They will bring lots of happiness later this year," he said.

For skipper Sunil Chhetri and his colleagues, matches like these are a reminder that they need to learn a lot more.

"We've improved a lot in the last five years, but there's a lot to learn, especially when you play teams like these. It's not easy when you face teams like Uzbekistan and Australia," said the India captain.

Chhetri admitted that the defensive errors cost them dearly.

"The good thing is that the boys gave us whatever we had. We made some mistakes in the first half that cost us dearly. We now need to go back and watch the replays and figure out the areas where we need to improve," said Chhetri. (PTI)

## NZ beat Italy 3-1 to finish 5<sup>th</sup> in FIH Women's Olympic Qualifiers



**RANCHI, Jan 19:** A dominant New Zealand scored three goals in the first three quarters to get past Italy 3-1 and finish fifth in the FIH Women's Olympic Qualifier here on Friday.

Rose Tynan (7th minute) skipper Olivia Merry (10th) and Hannah Cotter (31st) were the scorers for the 'Black Sticks Women' in the fifth-sixth place classification match.

Italy's lone goal came from the stick of Ivanna Pessina in the 21st minute from a penalty corner.

As expected, the Black Sticks started the match on an offensive note, putting pressure on the Italian defence from the word go.

New Zealand secured their first penalty corner in the third minute, only to be denied by a goalline save from the Italian defence.

New Zealand kept up the pressure and earned a penalty corner four minutes later and Rose Tynan scored from rebound to hand side the lead.

Three minutes later, Olivia Merry scored from a field effort to double New Zealand's lead.

The Italians came out with

purpose in the second quarter and made some brilliant moves, securing their second penalty corner in the 21st minute and Ivanna Pessina found the net with her low grounded flick to reduce the margin to 1-2.

Just at the stroke of half-time, the Italian goalkeeper Lucia Ines Caruso came out with a fine save to deny Samantha Child.

New Zealand adopted high-press hockey after the change of ends and their efforts bore fruit as they restored their two-goal lead, a minute into the third quarter through Hannah Cotter, who scored from close range.

Italy did not bow out without a fight and secured their penalty corner in the 34th minute but wasted the opportunity.

In the 39th minute, New Zealand goalkeeper Brooke Roberts produced twin saves to deny the Italians.

Eight minutes from the final hooter, Italy earned another set piece but the result was the same. Just at the stroke of the final hooter, Italy got another penalty corner but failed to break New Zealand's resolute defence. (PTI)

## Chile beat Czech Republic 1-0 to finish seventh in FIH Women's Olympic Qualifier

**RANCHI, Jan 19:** Chile rode on Fernanda Villigran's penalty strike in the second quarter to beat Czech Republic, the lowest ranked side in the tournament, 1-0 to finish seventh in the FIH Women's Olympic Qualifier here on Friday.

Even though they failed to qualify for the Paris Olympics, it should be a morale-boosting win for the Chileans, ranked 22nd in the world, over world No. 31 Czech Republic.

Villigran scored the lone goal in the 27th minute during the seventh-eighth place classification match. It was Chile's only second over Czech Republic in the history of the game. The Chileans had also defeated Czech 6-0 in the pool stages here.

Chile were by far the better side on display as they dominated the match from start to end.

Chile kept up the pressure on the Czech defence from the onset and made innumerable circle entries but goals eluded them in the first quarter. Chile secured two penalty corners in the first quarter as against Czech's one but both the sides failed to break the deadlock.

It was a midfield battle in the second quarter but Chile managed to earn a penalty stroke just three minutes from half-time for a foul inside the circle and Villigran stepped up to convert the chance, handing her side the lead.

After the change of ends, Chile continued their attacking game and in the process bagged four penalty corners but failed to convert any of them. (PTI)

## Gukesh outwits Ian Nepomniachtchi; Pragnanandhaa holds leader Giri

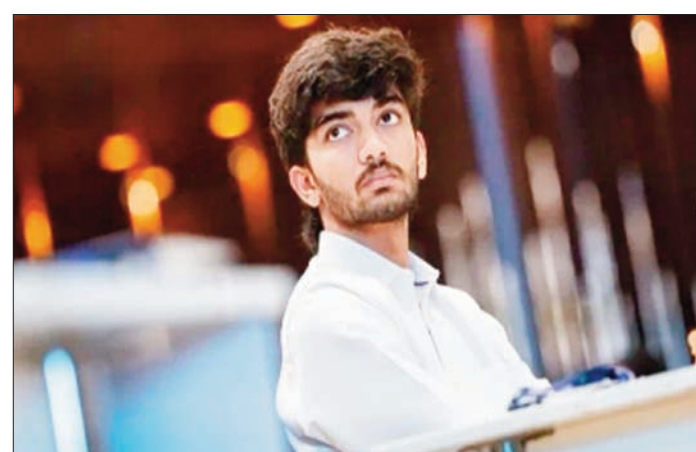
**WIJK AAN ZEE (THE NETHERLANDS), Jan 19:** Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh produced a fine effort to outwit World Championship challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia in the fifth round of the Tata Steel Masters chess tournament here on Friday.

With his second victory in the tournament, Gukesh now has 2.5 points from five rounds after he made an indifferent start to the event, losing two matches in the first four rounds.

Grandmaster R Pragnanandhaa held tournament leader and defending champion Anish Giri of Holland to a draw on the day.

GM Vidit Gujrathi played out his fifth draw on the trot, signing a peace pact with local hopeful Max Warderman.

With eight rounds still remaining in one of the strongest traditional events, Giri maintained his sole lead on four points out of a possible five.



Pragnanandhaa, Firouza Alireza of France and Nodirbek Abdusattarov of Uzbekistan share the second spot on four points while Gujrathi and Gukesh are next in standings on 2.5, sharing it with three others.

In one of the biggest upsets of the event so far, Women's world champion Ju Wnejun of China de-

feated Alireza in a finely crafted game.

Earlier, Gukesh was a class act in a Queen's gambit declined with white pieces against Nepomniachtchi. The Indian won a pawn in the ensuing middle game but Nepomniachtchi had his share of counter play till he fell for a tactical shot that cost him another

pawn.

Soon it was a Queen and minor piece endgame on the board and Gukesh wrapped it up quickly.

Pragnanandhaa did not have to exert much against Giri with white pieces.

Playing a lesser-known opening setup the Indian found Giri adequately prepared and the pieces got traded in a heap in the ensuing middle game.

The players arrived at a Knight and pawns endgame wherein the draw was the only possible result.

In the challengers' section being held simultaneously, Grandmaster Leon Luke Mendonca defeated compatriot D Harika with black pieces to jump to three points from his five games.

Divya Deshmukh, the third Indian in the fray, went down to Yilmaz Mustafa of Turkey.

Erwin L'Ami of Holland leads the table in the section with 4 points, a half point clear of Anton Korobov of Ukraine. (PTI)

## Baisoya, Aman Raj and Gangjee make cut for final round of Asian Tour Q-School

**HUA HIN (THAILAND), Jan 19:** Indian golfer Honey Baisoya was well-placed to clinch one of the 35 Asian Tour cards available this week despite a late double bogey in the fourth and penultimate round of the Asian Tour's Qualifying School here.

Baisoya, who carded a 2-under 70 at the Lakeview Resort and Golf Club, is placed tied 8th with an overall total of 10-under 276 with one more round to go.

Two other Indians -- Aman Raj

(69) at T-35th and Rahil Gangjee (71) at T-57th -- also made the second cut, which came after the fourth round. The first cut was after two rounds.

The fifth and final round will be played at the Springfield Royal Country Club. Among other Indians, Khalin Joshi (72) at T-73 missed the second cut by one shot and Kartik Sharma (69) and Sapta Talwar (71) missed it by two. The top-35 after the final round will earn their cards for the 2024

Asian Tour season.

Others missing out were Sunhit Bishnoi, Yashas Chandra, Arjun Prasad, Gaurav Singh, Pukhray Singh Gill and Manu Gandas.

Sachin Baisoya, Harshjeet Singh Sethi, Akshay Sharma and Divyanshu Bajaj had missed the first cut. Justin Quiban of the Philippines shot one of the lowest rounds of the week, a fourth-round seven-under-par 64, to take a single shot lead heading into tomorrow's final round.

## AIFF league committee suggests promotion-relegation system in IWL

**NEW DELHI, Jan 19:** The league committee of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) has recommended a promotion and relegation based system for the Indian Women's League, which was introduced in 2016.

The IWL has seen four teams winning the competition in its six seasons with the reigning champion Gokulam Kerala emerging victorious thrice.

"In a major move, the committee recommended introducing the system of promotion-relegation of teams involving IWL and IWL 2, effective from the 2024-25 season," said AIFF in a release.

In all, seven teams compete in the event and the champions get a chance to compete in the AFC Asian Women's Club Championship, the top tier club competition for women in the region.

"The committee reviewed the nominations filed by the various

state associations for IWL 2 and recommended steps to finalise it. After long deliberations, the committee recommended setting February 5, 2024, as the last date of nomination for the IWL 2 teams," it added. Additionally, the committee, during a meeting on Thursday, also examined the proposed calendar for the AIFF Club competitions starting from the 2024-25 season.

Besides, approval was also granted to the regulations for the ongoing I-League 2 season.

The virtual meeting was led by Lalnginglova Hmar, M Satyanarayan (acting secretary), Santanu Pujari (deputy chairperson), besides committee members Arif Ali, Caitanno Jose Fernandes, Anirban Dutta and Amit Chaudhuri. The committee members also expressed their deep condolences for the demise of Real Kashmir FC owner Sandeep Chattoo last month. (PTI)



## Uncertain future awaits coach Schopman after India's failure to qualify for Olympics

**RANCHI, Jan 19:** Indian women's hockey team coach Janneke Schopman's future was thrown into uncertainty after the side's failure to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics here on Friday. The Indian team's Olympic qualification dream came crashing down with a 0-1 loss to Japan in the third-place match of FIH Qualifiers. Kana Urata's sixth minute penalty corner strike turned out to be the winner for Japan. "I think we were mentally ready after yesterday's loss against Germany. We didn't start well defensively and that sometimes can happen. Again, as a team we fought back, we dominated the entire game after the opening goal,"

Schopman said after the match.

"We needed to score goals but we didn't. If I would know the answer why we didn't, then I won't be standing here. I would have given them the answer during the game," she said.

The top three sides from this tournament qualified for the Olympics. By finishing third, Japan sealed their place and will join Germany and USA in Paris.

Asked about her future with the Indian team, Schopman said: "That I don't know." The Dutch coach's contract was till Paris Olympics and it remains to be seen whether Hockey India extends her stint after the disappointing result.



Schopman was Sjoerd Marijne's assistant at the Tokyo Olympics, where the Indian women finished a creditable fourth. Schopman said contrary to the final result, India were by far the dominant side against Japan. The Indians wasted chances galore, including nine penalty corners. The coach praised the fighting spirit of her side. "They were trying, they were fighting. We were dominant against Japan in the last three games we played against them. This time, we didn't score and in the past games, we scored."

"Japan goalkeeper made two mistakes yesterday. Germany got 15 penalty corners but didn't score. Their penalty corner defence is

good. We didn't execute perfectly." Schopman was also critical of a few umpiring decisions on Friday.

"The umpires were also giving a little bit mixed signals. We were pushed off the ball. They got penalty corners outside the circle and the same stuff happened with us in the third quarter, and we didn't get it. The girls are trying, but it's life," she said.

She said the failure to qualify for the quadrennial extravaganza will hurt them for a long time.

"Now it's so fresh after the game. This tournament has been a roller-coaster. This is our fifth match in seven days. But I think we showed up and tried. This is going to hurt

for a long time.

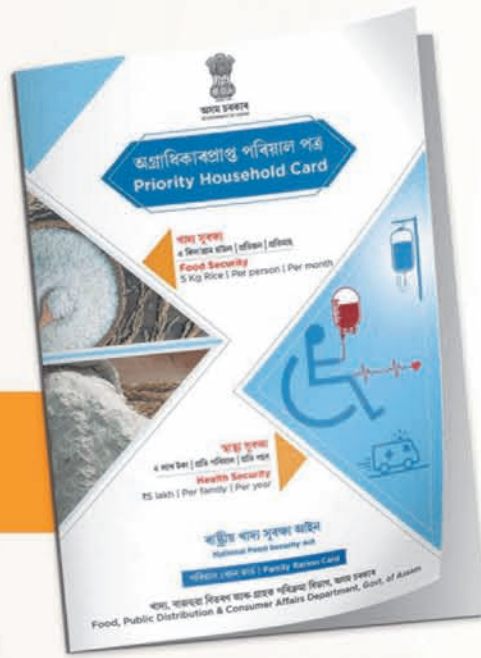
"We have to watch the Olympics on the TV. We know we wanted to be there and, to be completely honest, we have the quality to be there. We should have been there, but we are not, so that hurts," Schopman said. India captain Savita said the failure to take their chances cost them a place in the Games.

"We got many, many chances and penalty corners, but we failed. We didn't give up, we kept on trying. It really hurts. We now can't compensate that," a teary-eyed Savita said.

"I have nothing to say, I am short of words. We deserved to go to the Olympics but... Japan also deserved and they are going. (PTI)



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Government of Assam  
Department of Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs

## As per decision of Assam Cabinet Ensuring food security - yet another promise fulfilled by Government of Assam

**16 - 25 January 2024**

### Distribution of new Ration Cards

In every new Legislative Assembly Constituency



Chief Guest

**Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma**  
Chief Minister, Assam

#### Benefits of Ration Card

Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) ration card holders receive 35 kg of free rice per month and each member of Priority Household (PHH) receives 5 kg of free rice per month. All new Ration Card holders will get this benefit from January 2024.

Every ration card holder will get free medical services up to ₹5 lakh per annum through Ayushman Card under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and Ayushman Assam Mukhya Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

Ration card holders who currently do not have LPG connections will get free LPG connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). Under the Ujjwala scheme, beneficiaries initially receive gas stove, pipe, regulator and cylinder with gas weighing 14.20 kg or two cylinders with gas weighing 5 kg free of charge. On refilling the next time, the beneficiary can avail ₹300 off from the total cost of LPG as cash back.

- 📍 No. 47 Mazbat 📅 21-01-2024 ⌚ 11 AM
- 📍 No. 97 Nazira 📅 24-01-2024 ⌚ 11 AM
- 📍 No. 100 Jorhat 📅 23-01-2024 ⌚ 11 AM
- 📍 No. 104 Dergaon 📅 23-01-2024 ⌚ 3 PM

#### Schedule for distribution of ration cards in new Legislative Assembly constituencies

Number and Name of new LAC	New Ration Cards as on 16-12-2023	New beneficiaries as on 16-12-2023	Minister or other official to be present	Date	Time	Number and Name of new LAC	New Ration Cards as on 16-12-2023	New beneficiaries as on 16-12-2023	Minister or other official to be present	Date	Time
No. 6 Golakganj	7,575	29,394	Shri Sanjoy Kishan, Minister	24-01-2024	12 PM	No. 71 Behali (SC)	5,597	23,298	Shri Pijush Hazarika, Minister	23-01-2024	3 PM
No. 7 Gauripur	9,568	40,558		24-01-2024	10 AM	No. 72 Gohpur	8,671	33,326		23-01-2024	12 AM
No. 8 Dhubri	10,955	52,429		23-01-2024	12 PM	No. 73 Bihpuria	4,912	22,426	Shri Atul Bora, Minister	25-01-2024	1 PM
No. 9 Birsing Jarua	15,866	71,372		23-01-2024	10 AM	No. 74 Ranganadi	7,070	22,444		25-01-2024	11 AM
No. 11 Mankachar	11,702	80,842	Shri Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Minister	24-01-2024	11 AM	No. 75 Nowboicha (SC)	10,475	37,782		24-01-2024	1 PM
No. 12 Jaleswar	7,041	16,531		25-01-2024	3 PM	No. 76 Lakhimpur	10,517	50,945		24-01-2024	11 AM
No. 13 Goalpara West (ST)	4,948	11,656	Shri Ashok Singhal, Minister	25-01-2024	1 PM	No. 82 Doom Dooma	5,641	26,760	Shri Bimal Borah, Minister	24-01-2024	11 AM
No. 14 Goalpara East	19,258	50,710		25-01-2024	11 AM	No. 83 Margherita	6,923	28,665		23-01-2024	11 AM
No. 19 Sidli Chirang (ST)	9,574	48,657	Smti Nandita Gorlosa, Minister	21-01-2024	10 AM	No. 84 Digboi	4,088	18,228		23-01-2024	3 PM
No. 21 Bhowanipur-Sorbhog	13,233	45,626		21-01-2024	2 PM	No. 90 Duliajan	5,612	21,351		23-01-2024	11 AM
No. 22 Mandia	10,979	32,594	Shri Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Minister	21-01-2024	3 PM	No. 91 Tinkhong	6,888	30,053	Shri Bimal Borah, Minister	21-01-2024	2 PM
No. 23 Chenga	6,530	20,810		21-01-2024	10 AM	No. 92 Naharkatia	5,951	24,703	Shri Jogen Mohan, Minister	23-01-2024	02 PM
No. 27 Chamaria	11,736	45,895	Shri Jayanta Mallabaruah, Minister	21-01-2024	10 AM	No. 95 Demow	10,493	47,335	Shri Jogen Mohan, Minister	24-01-2024	11 AM
No. 28 Boko Chaygaon (ST)	12,090	46,819		23-01-2024	3 PM	No. 97 Nazira	7,150	34,584	Chief Minister, Assam & Dr Ranaj Pegu, Minister	24-01-2024	11 AM
No. 29 Palasbari	11,536	46,362		23-01-2024	11 AM	No. 100 Jorhat	6,328	23,103	Chief Minister, Assam & Smti Ajanta Neog, Minister	23-01-2024	11 AM
No. 31 Rangia	8,912	36,058		24-01-2024	3 PM	No. 101 Mariani	7,545	25,161	Dr Ranaj Pegu, Minister	23-01-2024	11 AM
No. 32 Kamalpur	10,818	38,859	Shri Jayanta Mallabaruah, Minister	21-01-2024	3 PM	No. 104 Dergaon	3,984	8,993	Chief Minister, Assam & Smti Ajanta Neog, Minister	23-01-2024	3 PM
No. 34 Dimoria (SC)	6,883	23,220		25-01-2024	2 PM	No. 108 Bokajan (ST)	9,247	39,123	Shri Tuliram Ronghang, CEM, KAAC	23-01-2024	11 AM
No. 35 New Guwahati	6,814	20,196	Smti Ajanta Neog, Minister	25-01-2024	11 AM	No. 109 Howraghat (ST)	5,605	22,637		21-01-2024	11 AM
No. 36 Guwahati Central	7,521	23,150		25-01-2024	11 AM	No. 111 Rongkhang (ST)	4,159	19,448		25-01-2024	11 AM
No. 38 Barkhetri	9,657	37,119	Shri Chandra Mohan Patowary, Minister	24-01-2024	11 AM	No. 112 Amri (ST)	6,893	26,898		24-01-2024	11 AM
No. 43 Tamulpur (ST)	10,116	46,883	Shri Jayanta Mallabaruah, Minister	21-01-2024	1 PM	No. 113 Haflong (ST)	6,887	27,722	CEM, NCHAC	24-01-2024	11 AM
No. 44 Goreswar	4,016	22,280		23-01-2024	10 AM	No. 114 Lakhimpur	11,153	45,851	Shri Jayanta Mallabaruah, Minister	23-01-2024	11 AM
No. 47 Mazbat	12,362	37,737	Shri U.G. Brahma, Minister	23-01-2024	11 AM	No. 117 Borkhola	8,208	29,219	Shri Jayanta Mallabaruah, Minister	24-01-2024	11 AM
No. 49 Sipajhar	11,600	31,822	Chief Minister, Assam & Shri Pramod Boro, CEM, BTR	21-01-2024	11 AM	No. 118 Silchar	8,822	29,300	Dr Numal Momin, Deputy Speaker, ALA	23-01-2024	11 AM
No. 53 Laharighat	14,079	35,227	Smti Nandita Gorlosa, Minister	23-01-2024	2 PM	No. 121 Hailakandi	8,163	45,012	Shri Jayanta Mallabaruah, Minister	23-01-2024	3 PM
No. 54 Morigaon	10,420	31,211		23-01-2024	11 AM	No. 122 Algapur Katlicherra	8,702	45,458	Dr Numal Momin, Deputy Speaker, ALA	25-01-2024	11 AM
No. 59 Barhampur	5,604	35,186	Shri Pijush Hazarika, Minister	21-01-2024	11 AM	No. 123 Karimganj North	6,522	33,826	Shri Parimal Suklabaidya, Minister	23-01-2024	11 AM
No. 60 Nagaon-Batadraba	5,704	28,522		23-01-2024	1 PM	No. 124 Karimganj South	5,767	36,150		24-01-2024	11 AM
No. 67 Tezpur	6,740	29,668	Shri Keshab Mahanta, Minister	25-01-2024	11 AM	No. 125 Patharkandi	6,263	36,970	Dr Numal Momin, Deputy Speaker, ALA	24-01-2024	11 AM
No. 69 Naduar	3,037	14,830		24-01-2024	2 PM	No. 126 R K Nagar	6,202	36,993	Shri Parimal Suklabaidya, Minister	24-01-2024	3 PM
No. 70 Biswanath	10,663	38,937		24-01-2026	11 AM						



All new Ration Card holders can avail their free rice from  
**16th January'24 to 31st January'24**



Households covered  
**66,38,399**



Beneficiaries covered  
**2,31,88,213**



New beneficiaries  
**42,85,745**



New ration cards  
**10,73,489**