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## Ajit Kumar Bhuyan new ASOM president

### Cong to field ex-BJP leader Jayanta Bora from Behali

**GUWAHATI, Oct 24:** Two days after the resignation of state Congress chief Bhupen Kumar Borah as the president of the united opposition forum in Assam over differences in seat sharing for by-polls, the alliance on Thursday named Ajit Kumar Bhuyan as its new head.

The Asom Sonmilito Morcha (ASOM) also resolved to move forward even without the Congress, which had been at the forefront in forming the conglomerate of anti-BJP forces ahead of the late Lok Sabha elections.

ASOM general secretary Lurinjyoti Gogoi, addressing a press conference after an emergent meeting of the alliance here, said, "It has been decided that Rajya Sabha MP and Anchalik Gana Morcha chief Ajit Kumar Bhuyan will be the president of ASOM."

Jones Ingti Kathar and Suprakash Talukdar have been named as working presidents, he



added. "Even without the Congress, ASOM will remain a force and will continue its fight against the BJP and its allied forces. There are many differences among the partners of the alliance, but our united objective is to defeat the communal forces and we remain together on it," Gogoi asserted.

He claimed that the Congress had betrayed the alliance by de-

claring its candidate for the Behali constituency, which it had initially decided to leave for the ASOM ally CPI(M)L Liberation.

"They not only decided to contest from Behali, but also named the candidate without so much as informing the other partners. We have decided that on behalf of ASOM, the CPI(M)L will contest from the seat," Gogoi said.

Asked about ASOM's stand on the other four seats where bypolls are slated, he said it will be decided after further consultation among its member parties.

Another ASOM leader said the resignation of the state Congress chief from the alliance has led to imply the exit of the state's largest opposition party from the forum.

"It is by interpretation. When the party president has resigned, it implies the party has also exited the alliance," the leader added.

Bypolls are scheduled for five assembly constituencies of the state, with the ASOM alliance earlier announcing that the Congress will fight in four seats and ally CPI(M)L Liberation will contest the fifth one.

The AICC, however, announced former senior BJP leader Jayanta Bora as its candidate for Behali late on Wednesday. Bora, who had recently resigned from the saffron party after (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Not acting against Khalistanis akin to encouraging terrorism: Recalled Indian envoy on Trudeau



**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** In a direct attack on Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's support to Khalistani elements, India's recalled envoy Sanjay Verma said not acting against the separatist criminals is akin to encouraging them.

Days after returning to New Delhi after an acrimonious blow-up in relations between the two countries, Verma told PTI Videos that Trudeau

has been emboldening Khalistanis for political gains. Verma was asked if India has shared evidence with Canada that Trudeau and his government have been promoting Khalistani terrorism.

"Encouragement could be both ways, one is actively telling them to do something, and the second is you will keep mum. So, the criminals, terrorists, extremists, if one takes no action against them, that is akin to encouragement," he said.

"So, that encouragement is seen a lot there, either it is for domestic vote-bank or any other political reason. Because of this encouragement, they (Khalistanis) have gotten emboldened and they continuously attack the interests of India, and try to harm us," the diplomat added.

On whether Trudeau's actions against India were driven by his intention to divert attention in the face of his falling popularity ahead of elections in Canada next year, Verma said, "I will not get into the domestic policy of Canada. That's not my job. I shouldn't be doing that. The surveys that I have seen, published in the (Canadian) media, say that the popularity rating of Mr Trudeau is going down."

"It (Trudeau's rating) is much below the main opposition party at the moment and its leader. So, many of the media reports say and it's not my opinion, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### HT BRIEFS

#### Four arrested

**BOKAJAN:** Khatkhati Police in Karbi Anglong arrested four persons carrying heroin on Wednesday night. The police while on a night patrol saw a person in front of the Laharijan Hanuman Temple on National Highway 39. When the police interrogated the person, their suspicions were confirmed. The police, after a thorough search, found 1,550 grams of suspected heroin. The arrested was identified as Hafizuddin, a resident of Natun Basti, Dimapur. Based on the interrogation of the arrested, police arrested three more people, who were identified as Zakir Hussain, a resident of Laharijan; Jamal Ali, a resident of Tila Basti, and Shariful Islam, a resident of Laharijan, Hanuman Mandir.

#### Orunodoi scheme

**GUWAHATI:** In a significant step towards the successful implementation of the state's flagship Orunodoi 3.0 scheme, Assam Education Minister Ranoo Pegu chaired the first meeting of the District Level Monitoring Committee at the Sivasagar District Commissioner's office, a press release said on Thursday. The meeting focused on ensuring that the selection of beneficiaries strictly adhered to government guidelines and eligibility criteria to reach the most deserving sections of society.

#### Ferry revival

**JORHAT:** Assam's Transport Minister, Keshab Mahanta, has called for the immediate resumption of ferry services between Nimatighat in Jorhat district and Kamalabari in Majuli ahead of the Raas Festival. This directive comes in light of the suspension of ferry operations since October 20 due to the receding water levels in the Brahmaputra River. The low water level has led to the formation of new sandbanks, obstructing the waterway to Majuli, an island district that relies heavily on ferry services for connectivity. Minister Mahanta visited Nimati Ghat to assess the situation firsthand.

## Modi, Xi carries 'great significance' to improve bilateral ties: China

**BEIJING, Oct 24:** China on Thursday said the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Russia's Kazan on Wednesday carries a "great significance" as they reached an "important common understanding" to improve the bilateral ties.

"They reached important common understandings on improving and developing China-India relations and set the course to steer bilateral relations back on the path of steady development," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing here.

Replying to a question on how Beijing viewed the outcome of the meeting, Lin said, China stands ready to work with India to view

## BJP promises 1.50 lakh jobs in Jharkhand if voted to power



**JAMSHEDPUR, Oct 24:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday promised that the BJP would create 1.5 lakh jobs if the party is voted to power in Jharkhand polls.

Addressing a public meeting in support of party candidates Meera Munda (Potka constituency) and Purnima Das Sahu (Jamshedpur

East), JD(U) nominee Saryu Roy (Jamshedpur West), and AJSU Party's Ramchandra Sahish (Jugsalai), Sarma accused the Hemant Soren-led coalition government of rampant corruption and exploitation of minerals.

The BJP's state election co-incharge said a CBI probe would be launched regarding the recent leak

## Nine candidates filed nominations for bye-election

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Oct 24:** Nine candidates filed their nominations for the upcoming bye-election on Thursday, said an official statement.

"Total of nine candidates filed their nomination papers for the five Assembly Constituencies to be contested for the ByeElection today," the statement added.

It further said that four candidates have filed nomination for 11 Dholai, One has filed for 31 Sidli, Two have filed for 32 Bongaigaon and Two candidates have filed their nominations for 88 Samaguri Assembly Constituency.

However, no candidate has filed nominations for 77 Behali Assembly Constituency on Thursday. "With these nominations, the total number of nominations filed have reached to 14. The deadline for submission of nominations for the Bye-Election is October 25," the statement concluded.

## Victory of dynastic politics: BJP on Priyanka Gandhi's nomination

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** The BJP launched a scathing attack on the Gandhi family on Thursday, saying Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's nomination for the Wayanad bypoll is a victory of dynastic politics and a defeat of merit.

BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia also alleged discrepancies in the declaration of assets in Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi's poll affidavit.

Addressing a press conference at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters here, he accused the Gandhi family of "insulting" Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, a Dalit, by not allowing him to accompany Priyanka Gandhi to the returning officer's office for filing her nomination.

"It is a victory of the Gandhi family's corruption and dynastic politics and defeat of merit," Bhatia said, slamming the Congress over Priyanka Gandhi's nomination for the Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll in

Kerala. Bhatia claimed that the assets declared by Priyanka Gandhi in her poll affidavit are way below the assets she and her husband Robert Vadra possess.

"The assets of Robert Vadra declared in the poll affidavit are lower than the income-tax department's demand.... The total demand raised by the income-tax department is ₹ 75 crore," he said, alleging that Priyanka Gandhi's poll affidavit is a confession of corruption committed by the Gandhi family and Vadra.

She has also shown the value of her house in Shimla much lower than what it is, Bhatia alleged.

Gandhi on Wednesday filed the nomination for her maiden electoral battle from Wayanad. In her affidavit filed for the bypoll, she has declared assets worth more than ₹ 12 crore, including a ₹ 5.63-crore house in Shimla.

The Congress candidate has also declared that her husband, Vadra, has movable assets worth more than

## Delhi HC stalls relocation of 48-yr old elephant from Assam to Delhi

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** The Delhi High Court on Thursday stalled the relocation of a 48-year-old female elephant from Assam to a temple in the national capital, observing there was no clarity on the need and purpose of moving the animal from its present location.

Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedeala were informed a large number of animals, including horses and camels, were sheltered at the facility owned by a religious trust, and spreading across 1.5 acres in the South Delhi's Sainik Farms area.

Issuing notice to the Maa Baglamukhi Mandir Trust, the bench said, "Since the court has been informed that elephant Ranjitha has not started her travel to Delhi, we direct that she should not be moved from her place of residence. The Union of India shall ensure that the direction is intimated to the relevant authorities and the same is complied with."

## AAP announces candidates for Behali, Samaguri seats

**GUWAHATI, Oct 24:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday announced that it will contest two seats in the November 13 bypolls in Assam, naming its candidates for Behali and Samaguri constituencies.

Bypolls will be held in Dholai (SC), Sidli (ST), and Bongaigaon, besides Behali and Samaguri. The bypolls were necessitated following the election of the sitting MLAs to the Lok Sabha earlier this year. AAP's Northeast coordinator Rajesh Sharma and state president Manoj Dhanowar, addressing a press meet here, said that party candidates for Behali and Samaguri are Ananta Gogoi and Nurul Amin Choudhury respectively.

Both of them will file their nominations on Friday, the last day for doing so, they added. AAP is contesting the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 'Tobacco Free India' initiative garners 65,000 responses

### Majority in survey support smoke-free public places in India

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** Nearly 93 per cent of respondents in a survey have favoured making public spaces completely smoke-free while 97 per cent have pitched for declaring airports completely smoke-free, similar to railway stations.

A recent poll conducted by the citizen-led initiative "Tobacco Free India", which garnered more than 65,000 responses, highlights the growing concern among Indians about the harmful effects of second-hand smoke.

The survey has revealed that an astounding 92.72 per cent of respondents are in favour of making public spaces completely smoke-free.

Conducted in both Hindi and English, the poll included six key questions about smoke-free public



places and the health risks associated with second-hand smoke. Across all questions, the majority supported stricter measures to protect women, children and other vulnerable groups from exposure to toxic tobacco smoke in public areas, such as restaurants, hotels and air-

ports. "While the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003 bans smoking in public places, it still permits designated smoking areas in airports, hotels with 30 or more rooms and restaurants with seating capacities above 30," said Dr Uma Kumar,

## Implementation measures should be aligned with national priorities: India at COP16

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** At the ongoing UN Biodiversity Conference, India has emphasised that implementation measures should be aligned with national priorities, according to a think-tank present at the UN COP16 summit negotiations.

Speaking during the discussions on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Indian delegates underscored that assessments related to socio-economic factors must not be conflated with biosafety measures, according to the Earth Negotiations Bulletin issued by the think-tank International Institute for Sustainable Development.

"India underscored the need to distinguish assessment of socio-economic considerations from biosafety risk assessment," it said.

In addressing socio-economic considerations, the Indian representatives noted the need for a more robust framework that prioritises national interests while fostering ca-



capacity-building initiatives.

"India emphasised that implementation measures should be aligned with national priorities," the bulletin said.

The conference, which started on Wednesday, continued its negotiations with multiple working groups tackling various aspects of biodiversity and its interconnections with climate change, health and sustainable

development. Working Group II wrapped up the first reading of all 26 agenda items, paving the way for detailed deliberations on conference room papers (CRPs).

The emphasis on regional contexts was echoed in discussions on marine, coastal and island biodiversity, where the delegates agreed that further efforts must correspond to individual (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



# Nvidia, Reliance to build AI computing infra in India

MUMBAI, Oct 24: Nvidia Corp has struck a deal with billionaire Mukesh Ambani's conglomerate Reliance Industries to build out an artificial intelligence (AI) computing infrastructure as well as an innovation centre in India, the AI chip giant's CEO Jensen Huang said on Thursday.

A new major data centre by Reliance Industries will use the latest Nvidia's Blackwell AI chips.

The diversified Indian conglomerate will be creating applications as part of the partnership and selling it to consumers, said Huang, who is on a two-day visit to the financial capital.

Nvidia already has a presence in six locations across India. The US firm works with enterprises, cloud providers and startups to build AI infrastructure powered by Nvidia's accelerated computing stack comprising tens of thousands of its most advanced GPUs, high-performance networking, and AI software platforms and tools.

At the Nvidia AI Summit 2024 here, Ambani and Huang had a fireside chat to discuss India's transformative potential in AI and its emerging role as a global leader in this field.

The partnership between Reliance and Nvidia aims to build a robust AI infrastructure in the country, which Ambani believes will not only enhance local capabilities but also position India as a significant player in the global intelligence market.

"India will start with the absolutely best that Nvidia has," Ambani said.

Huang, during a press conference, told reporters here that the partnership also includes creating applications that Reliance could offer to consumers in India.

"We will also have an innovation centre as part of the tie-up," he said.

Without giving details on the partnership, like investments or the infrastructure capacities to be cre-



ated, Huang said the partnership entails a "fairly large scale" deployment of infrastructure for AI computing.

"India is already world class in designing chips, Nvidia's are designed here in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune. A third of Nvidia is Indian, may be more," Huang said. During the fireside chat, Ambani said India is on the brink of a new intelligence age and will surprise the world with its achievements in intelligence technology over the coming years.

New technologies like AI and the aspirations of people are driving the Indian economy, he said.

"We are at the doorsteps of the new intelligence age, and will be one of the biggest intelligence markets. It's not just our aspiration, but also the raw gene power which will help drive intelligence."

"India will not just deliver CEOs to world, but also AI services," Ambani asserted.

Ambani also pitched for using Meta's open source Llama as the base model in India before the country develops its own model.

Announcing that India will start with the "absolutely best" that Nvidia has, Ambani said RIL is setting up a 1GW capacity in Jamnagar which can be expanded further as well.

He noted that apart from the United States and China, India

boasts one of the best digital connectivity infrastructures, with extensive networks of 4G, 5G, and broadband services. He said Reliance Jio is the largest data company globally, pointing out that it delivers data at a low cost of 15 cents per GB, compared to USD 5 per GB in the US.

"Like we did with data, in few years from now we can surprise the world with what Indians can achieve in intelligence," he said.

Meanwhile, the visiting CEO of the world's second most valuable company suggested India -- which has for long been a software services developing powerhouse -- to transform itself into an AI-exporting geography using the same talent that has made it the world's IT back office.

"You have the critical ingredients here in your country to be able to harvest the raw data, transform it into intelligence. You can code it into a model and manufacture your own digital intelligence and export that," Huang told reporters.

Huang, who is widely credited for seeing the future and pivoting his company to take advantage of the AI revolution, stressed on India doing this urgently given the capabilities it has and added that he can't wait to see India manufacture "AI at scale". He seemed to advise Indian companies to prioritise AI over chip manufacturing as well,

which has seen some activity with investments announced lately.

"Before you follow other countries into manufacturing, India should jump into this future AI factory. ...there's a new manufacturing industry, don't wait to jump into this one. Don't enter this 20 years later. Enter this one at ground zero," Huang said. Huang said a third of Nvidia's employee base is in India, which includes engineering teams in Pune, Gurugram and Hyderabad, helping company-wide efforts at chip design, pointing that India is already home to a lot of intellectual capital.

Recalling a meeting with Narendra Modi, Huang said the Indian Prime Minister told him that India shouldn't export data and import intelligence in return which is akin to exporting flour to import bread.

Huang said there is a need for putting up the energy-guzzling data centres not in or near Mumbai -- which is home to over 40 per cent of India's capacity -- but in places where there is excess energy.

The CEO also said that during a visit six years ago, Modi had asked Huang to speak on AI to his cabinet colleagues on AI which was rare for a world leader.

Huang said deepening broadband services can help India up the gaming consumption.

Speaking at the Summit, the Nvidia CEO also said India will see 20 times growth in computing capacities in 2024 and the country will soon be exporting impactful AI solutions.

Huang further emphasised Nvidia's commitment to expanding its ecosystem in India.

"India is very, very dear to the world's computer industry, central to the IT industry, at the centre and core of the IT of just about every single company in the world."

"Nvidia's ecosystem in India is very rich; 2024 will see a 20 times growth in compute capacities in India," he said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1.

## Ajit Kumar Bhuyan new ASOM

being denied ticket, joined the Congress. He switched over to the Congress several hours after being named its official candidate for Behali.

The state Congress chief had on Tuesday night resigned as the president of ASOM expressing "tremendous pressure" after the Congress high command "refused to accept the united opposition partner CPIL(ML) Liberation's nominee. Bypoll will take place on November 13 in Dholai (SC), Sidli (ST), Bongaigaon, Behali and Samaguri assembly constituencies as these seats fell vacant with the representatives of these constituencies winning the recent Lok Sabha elections. The BJP-AGP-UPPL combine had held four of the constituencies that are going for the by-polls, while one was held by the Congress. (PTI)

## Not acting against Khalistanis

that if elections are held today, he may find it very difficult to come back to power," Verma said.

"But these are just surveys, and we know opinion polls hold good at times, while not so good at other times. So, what happens to Canada will be decided by Canadians during the elections, I will not like to go there, not like to comment," he added. Verma said his analysis is that most of the anti-India activities out of Canada are only for domestic political gains. He said there is a specific campaign by Khalistanis to defame India.

"But, I won't blame entire Canada for that. Canadians are good friends, they are objective people, very polite, and very welcoming. So, Canada as a country is a beautiful place to be, but I will not be able to say the same for the Khalistani terrorists and extremists in Canada and their political backers," Verma said.

In an unexpected downturn of relations, Verma was declared a "person of interest" by Canada on October 13 in its investigation into the June 2023 killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen who has been declared a Khalistani terrorist by India. Before Canada could take further action, New Delhi recalled Verma and five other diplomats, who were also similarly named. Verma, an Indian Institute of Technology graduate and a nuclear scientist has previously served as India's ambassador to Japan and Sudan. (PTI)

## Modi, Xi carries 'great

deadly military clash in 2020. Asked about a Chinese official media report stating that "Modi made suggestions on improving and developing the relationship, which Xi agreed to in principle", Lin said, "both sides were of the view that this meeting is constructive and carries great significance".

"They agreed to view and handle China-India relations from a strategic height and long-term perspective, prevent specific disagreements from affecting the overall relationship, and contribute to maintaining regional and global peace and prosperity and to advancing multiplicity in the world," he said.

The two sides agreed to strengthen communication and cooperation, enhancing strategic mutual trust by holding talks between their foreign ministers and officials at various levels to bring the relationship back to steady development at an early date, he added.

The two leaders also have agreed to "make good use of the Special Representatives mechanism on the China-India boundary question, ensure peace and tranquillity in the border areas, find a fair and reasonable settlement, step up communication and cooperation in multilateral fora, and safeguard the common interests of developing countries," the spokesperson said.

The special representatives mechanism, currently headed by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi, played a key role in the past to develop and improve the relations since it was set up in 2003 with 22 meetings to address the boundary question.

The last meeting between Doval and Wang under the mechanism was held in 2019.

Relations between the two countries nosedived after the May 2020 incursion by the Chinese military in eastern Ladakh in which the People Liberation Army (PLA) moved a large number of troops exercising in the vicinity of the LAC, which was followed by the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

On Monday, India and China signed an agreement on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, in a major breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff. On the meeting between the two leaders, foreign secretary Vikram Misra, at a media briefing at Kazan, said that both Modi and Xi stressed that India and China can have a "peaceful, stable and beneficial bilateral relationship" with maturity and wisdom, and by showing mutual respect for each other's sensitivities, interests, concerns and aspirations.

Referring to New Delhi's consistent position on the eastern Ladakh row, Misra said restoration of peace and tranquillity in the border areas will create space for returning towards the path of normalisation of bilateral relations between the two sides. In the coming weeks and months, both the countries are expected to revive the ties with a flurry of high-level visits to improve the relations on all fronts. (PTI)

## BJP promises 1.50 lakh jobs

be created within a year. "We have done this in Haryana, Assam and Madhya Pradesh." He stressed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership ensures that promises are fulfilled. He expressed concern over the changing demographics of Jharkhand due to alleged Bangladeshi infiltration and criticised the Soren government for failing to address this issue.

On Wednesday, he had said that the sub-divisional town of Hussainabad in Palamu district would be made a district if the BJP comes to power, proposing to rename it after Lord Ram or Krishna. Sarma urged the public to oust the corrupt Soren government and vote for the BJP and its allies, JD(U) and AJSU Party, for the state's overall development. (PTI)

## Delhi HC stalls relocation of 48-yr

60 years. Elephants require a huge space, they move a lot. Unnecessarily, why do you want to confine the elephant here at a small place," the bench said. The Assam authorities and the chief wildlife warden, Delhi, had granted permission to move the elephant to the national capital.

The petitioner had expressed urgency in the matter saying once the animal arrived in Delhi it would be a strenuous journey for the animal back to Assam. Bharati Ramachandran, CEO of FIAPO, said the petitioners were grateful to the court for staying the transfer, which was "completely against the well-being" of the elephant. "The idea of bringing a living, breathing elephant from her lush green habitat of Assam to Delhi, to live in a concrete prison, under harsh artificial lights and air-conditioning, is unthinkable. The facility approved by the Delhi forest department to keep the elephant is more like a warehouse where a person would keep a car, not a living being," she added. (PTI)

## AAP announces candidates

bypolls with the slogans of corruption-free government, development and work-oriented politics, the party leaders said, adding they hope for the support of all party workers and the general public in both the constituencies. The ruling BJP-AGP-UPPL alliance had held four of the constituencies that are going for the bypolls, while one was held by Congress. BJP has fielded its candidates in three seats, leaving one each for AGP and UPPL. The Congress has named its nominees for all five seats, leading to its exit from a united opposition forum, Asom Sammilito Moncho (ASOM) over seat-sharing row. The ASOM has announced that it will contest from one seat, in which its member-party CPI(ML) Liberation will field its candidate. Polling will be held on November 13 and votes will be counted on November 23. (PTI)

## Victory of dynastic politics: BJP

has come. Please let the country know about it," he added.

Accusing the Gandhi family of indulging in dynastic politics, the BJP spokesperson added that Priyanka Gandhi has only been promoted in the Congress, despite not delivering on the responsibilities she was given by the party.

"She was made the Congress's in-charge for eastern Uttar Pradesh and the party won just one of the 80 Lok Sabha seats (in the state). But Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was promoted and made the party in-charge for the entire Uttar Pradesh in 2020. The Congress won just two of the 403 Assembly seats in 2022. Yet she was promoted again and given the party's ticket to contest the Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll," he added.

There is no place for merit in the Congress, Bhatia charged. "Priyanka Gandhi is so eligible because she is the sister of a former president of the party, granddaughter of a former president of the party and mother of the future president of the party," the BJP leader said, taking a dig at the Congress, without naming Rahul Gandhi, Indira Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi's son Raihan Vadra. (PTI)

## Majority in survey support

continued presence of smoking areas in airports remains a concern, said international wrestler Sangram Singh. "These designated areas, often placed in prominent and attractive locations, seem to invite people to smoke. The presence of smoking zones in places like airports often sends an inviting message to smoke, undermining public health efforts," emphasised Singh, a "Fit India" brand ambassador.

"The overwhelming support for smoke-free public places demonstrates a growing awareness among Indians about the dangers of second-hand smoke. It is a powerful message that reflects our nation's commitment to protecting public health," Kumar said. Dr Colonel Shekhar Kashyap, a renowned cardiologist, said, "Nicotine is a highly dangerous and addictive substance that poses serious risks to cardiovascular health and overall well-being. Consumed first hand or second hand, nicotine is equally harmful and can lead to a range of debilitating diseases."

Launched on October 2, coinciding with the 15th anniversary of India's smoke-free rules, the poll comes at a pivotal time. The ministry of health and family welfare has proposed amendments to the COTPA to remove smoking zones altogether -- a move strongly supported by the public, as evidenced by the poll results. These efforts align with the ministry's ongoing countrywide Tobacco-Free Youth Campaign 2.0, which aims at protecting young Indians from the hazards of tobacco.

According to the World Health Organization, approximately 13 lakh Indians die each year due to tobacco-related diseases, making it a major public health crisis. The poll also highlighted the particular vulnerability of women and children to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. Many respondents expressed concern about the impact of smoke-free environments on the health and well-being of these vulnerable groups.

Second-hand smoke imposes a significant economic burden on India. A recent study published in the Journal of Nicotine and Tobacco Research revealed that second-hand smoke causes healthcare costs of Rs 567 billion annually, accounting for 8 per cent of total annual healthcare expenditures.

This figure, coupled with the staggering Rs 1,773.4 billion in annual economic losses due to tobacco use, underscores the urgent need for effective tobacco control measures, including comprehensive smoke-free policies.

Beyond cigarette smoking, the use of smokeless tobacco products remains a significant public health challenge in India. These products, which include chewing tobacco, gutkha and pan masala, pose serious health risks and contribute to a range of diseases, including oral cancer, heart diseases and digestive disorders. (PTI)

## Implementation measures should

national circumstances. Amidst these discussions, the conference also grappled with the complexities of resource mobilisation and equitable distribution of financial resources. The delegates focused on increasing funding access for developing countries while ensuring that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) are adequately supported in their biodiversity conservation efforts. (PTI)

## Physics Wallah to launch 77 new tech-enabled offline centres

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 24: Physics Wallah (PW), India's leading multinational edtech company, has announced the launch of over 77 new offline tech-enabled learning centers nationwide in Academic Year 25-26, said an official statement on Thursday.

As per the statement, these new centres will be spread across the states of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, amongst others.

"At PW, we always prioritise the needs and wellbeing of the student. By opening more centres, we want to make sure that students don't have to travel long distances to access quality education, which eases their financial burden," Ankit Gupta, CEO Offline, Physics Wallah (PW) said. The statement further said that in academic year 24-25, over 200,000 students enrolled in PW's Vidyapeeth and Pathshala centres, reflecting the growing trust in PW's mission to democratize education across India.

"PW aims to educate another 250,000 students in the coming academic year and remains dedicated to providing the guidance and resources necessary for every learner to thrive, ensuring that education becomes a tool for empowerment and equal opportunity for all. Presently, there is one student of PW in almost every IIT and AIIMS across the nation," it said.

PW's offline segment is divided into two models -- Vidyapeeth (VP) and Pathshala (PS).

## Airtel network solution eliminates spam calls and SMSes for customers in Assam and NE

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 24: Bharti Airtel's new AI-powered spam detection system has provided much-needed relief to customers in Assam and North East.

In the 29 days since its launch, this pioneering telecom solution has successfully identified 112 million potential spam calls and 10 million spam SMS messages in Assam and North East.

All Airtel mobile customers in Assam and North East now have automatic access to the free solution without needing to request service or download an app.

Commenting on the launch, Rabi Mishra, chief executive officer, Assam and North East, Bharti Airtel, said, "As connectivity increases, customers are encountering a rising tide of scams, fraud, and harmful messages that leave them feeling vulnerable. To address these digital challenges, Airtel is thrilled to unveil a state-of-the-art AI-driven solution designed to proactively detect sus-



pected spam calls and texts. By utilizing advanced technology, Airtel is enhancing security for its 18 million customers in Assam and North East, fostering a safer communication landscape for all."

Developed in-house by Airtel's data scientists, the AI-powered solution uses a proprietary algorithm to identify and classify calls and SMSes as "Suspected Spam". The

network powered by a state-of-the-art AI algorithm analyses various parameters such as the caller or sender's usage patterns, call/SMS frequency and call duration amongst several others, on a real time basis. By cross-referencing this information against known spam patterns, the system flags suspected spam calls and SMSes accurately.



"Uptrend in the market is not compatible with downturn in earnings growth and, therefore, the market is witnessing selling at every rise, turning the near-term market structure into 'sell on rally'," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

Ajit Mishra SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said stock markets remained subdued on the weekly expiry day, ending largely flat amid mixed signals.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.72 per cent and midcap dipped by 0.13 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, BSE FMCG tanked 2.66 per cent. Realty (1.21 per cent), telecommunication (1.02 per cent), IT (0.64 per cent) and industrials (0.62 per cent) also declined.

Healthcare, bankex, power, commodities, energy and utilities were the gainers.

A total of 2,349 stocks declined while 1,584 advanced and 100 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower while Tokyo ended higher.

European markets were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended in negative territory on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 1.99 per cent to USD 76.45 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark declined 138.74 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 80,081.98 on Wednesday. The Nifty went lower by 36.60 points or 0.15 per cent to 24,435.50. (PTI)

A dual-layered protection, the solution has two filters -- one at the network layer and the second at the IT systems layer. Every call and SMS passes through this dual-layered AI shield. In two milliseconds the solution processes 1.5 billion messages and 2.5 billion calls. This is equivalent to processing 1 trillion records on a real time basis using the power of AI.

Additionally, the solution also alerts customers to malicious links received via SMS. For this, Airtel has built a centralized database of blacklisted URLs and every SMS is scanned in real time by a state-of-the-art AI algorithm to caution users from accidentally clicking on suspicious links. The solution can also detect anomalies such as frequent IMEI changes -- a typical indicator of fraudulent behaviour. By layering these protective measures, the company is ensuring its customers receive the maximum level of defence against the evolving landscape of spam and fraud threats.



## NDA leaders join thousands in show of strength for Brahma's by-poll bid UPPL candidate Nirmal Kumar Brahma files nomination

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Oct 24:** Nirmal Kumar Brahma, the candidate of the ruling United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) backed by the NDA alliance, filed his nomination papers for the Sidli LAC bye-election on Thursday before the returning officer cum district commissioner of Chirang district amidst a sea of participants.

The bye-election for Sidli LAC will take place on November 13 along with other four assembly constituencies in the state of Assam.

During the nomination filing, Brahma was accompanied by Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) and UPPL president, Assam BJP president Bhabesh Kalita, Assam cabinet minister Ashok Singhal, MPs Rungwra Narzary, Phani Bhushan Choudhury, Joyanta Basumatary, and senior leaders of NDA alliance partners - UPPL, BJP, and AGP.

A grand rally in connection with the nomination filing was carried out, beginning from Kajalgaon mini stadium to Chirang District Commissioner's Office via 31C national highway.

Tens of thousands of supporters representing NDA alliance partners - UPPL, BJP, and



AGP parties with banners and party flags participated in the grand rally and extended their support to the UPPL candidate backed by the NDA alliance for the Sidli LAC bye-election.

The election rally has been regarded as a tremendous show of support from people across communities for the NDA alliance-backed UPPL candidate, Nirmal Kumar Brahma.

CEM of BTR, Pramod Boro stated that the election rally for the Sidli LAC bye-election has shown grand participation of party supporters under the banner of NDA al-

liance, and accordingly UPPL candidate Nirmal Kumar Brahma's victory is clearly within reach.

He said that people from all sections of society are coming forward to extend support to the UPPL candidate.

He said that the governments of BTR and Assam have been rendering services toward the welfare and development of society since their inception.

"A sea of popular support erupted at the grand nomination filing rally of Nirmal Kumar Brahma, our UPPL+BJP+AGP (NDA) alliance candidate for the Sidli LAC

by-elections. The genuine outpouring of love and affection from the people shows that our alliance is winning a landslide victory in the upcoming by-elections," CEM Boro said.

He extended thanks to all citizens of Sidli LAC for their tremendous support.

State BJP president Bhabesh Kalita stated that the five NDA alliance candidates, including from Sidli LAC, will have the last laugh in the contesting constituencies in the state. He said that the NDA alliance governments in Assam and BTR are committed to working for the all-round development of society.

UPPL candidate backed by the NDA alliance, Brahma expressed his confidence that he will win the bye-election with massive majority support as common masses across communities are coming forward to extend support to the NDA alliance. He said that he will render services for bringing healthy welfare and development to the citizens in days to come.

MP Rungwra Narzary stated that UPPL candidate Nirmal Kumar Brahma's victory is very clear as people across communities have been coming forward to extend support.

## WWF-India Assam organises North East Finale of Wild Wisdom Global Challenge 2024



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 24:** Launched in 2008, the Wild Wisdom Quiz has evolved into a global challenge, inspiring students across over 95 countries to engage deeply with environmental stewardship. The Wild Wisdom Global Challenge (WWGC) is now recognised as the largest wildlife contest globally, fostering curiosity and adventure among young nature enthusiasts.

This year's 17th edition centred on the theme 'The Ultimate Scaly Survivalist', focusing on reptiles. The challenge saw participation from students in grades 6 to 9, encouraging a learning journey through informative resources, interactive webinars, workshops, and competitive quizzes that promote knowledge and team spirit.

In July 2024, 4,000 schools registered for the challenge, with over 400,000 children from 2,200 schools completing the initial classroom and school rounds. The competition proceeds through multiple levels: classroom, school, state, national, and international.

In the North-East region, 403 schools registered, engaging 67,746 students from eight states. After the online rounds, 280 schools qualified for the North East Finale, held at Don Bosco School, Panbazar, Guwahati.

A total of 141 schools with 282 students participated in the finals. Schools from Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur, Sikkim, and various districts of Assam joined the event, supported by various local educational and community organisations.

The competition commenced with traditional lamp lighting by dignitaries, followed by a welcome song and dance performed by Don Bosco School students. Archita Baruah Bhattacharyya, state coordinator, Assam & AP State Office, WWF-India, emphasised that the Wild Wisdom Global Challenge is not merely a competition but a celebration of knowledge and a commitment to preserving our planet. She highlighted the importance of understanding reptiles and the urgent need for their conservation.

She further added, "Through this challenge, students have explored the diversity of reptiles, dispelled myths, and discovered the unique adaptations and behaviours that allow these creatures to thrive. The Wild Wisdom Quiz aims to deepen understanding and appreciation for these remarkable animals and the ecosystems they inhabit."

The chief guest Chandrashekar Azad, deputy commissioner, KVS RO Guwahati, in his speech, appreciated venue school Don Bosco Panbazar and WWF-India for their effort to develop a sense of conservation among the young school children. He also asked the students to work hard to achieve their goal and to act for conservation of the environment. Fr Kishore Moshahary, SDB, vice principal of Don Bosco Guwahati, addressed the participants and appreciated the schools coming from all across north-east for their efforts in environmental conservation.

The North-East State Finale of the Wild Wisdom Global Challenge Quiz was conducted by renowned quiz master Abhra Das. In a closely contested competition for the North East Champion Title of the Wild Wisdom Global Challenge, Manjusri Public School, Sikkim School, represented by Khyozang R Bhutia and Hissay Chenchok Bhutia, both from class 8, emerged as champions. The second position was bagged by Army Public School, Shillong, Sanskriti. The Gurukul School, Guwahati, bagged the third position, followed by Maharishi Vidya Mandir IV, Barsajai, and Maharishi Vidya Mandir III, Lalmati. In the prize distribution ceremony after the competition, the state coordinator of WWF-India AAPSO, Archita Baruah Bhattacharyya, the state secretary, BSG Assam, Arunima Devi, and the district commissioner, Don Bosco District Association, Fr (Dr) Solomon Denis, distributed the certificates and trophies to the winners. The champion team from Manjusri Public School, Sikkim School, will now represent North-East in the national competition to be held in Delhi in the month of November 2024.

## Students learn vermicompost production

**HT Correspondent**

**KHERONI, Oct 24:** The Assam Science Technology and Environment Council, in collaboration with the School Plant Diversity Centre, held a workshop in Hawaitpur, West Karbi Anglong, at Hawaitpur Higher Secondary School. 100 students from 10 schools participated in the workshop and were trained on vermicompost production and its benefit to farmers. They were taught the benefits of vermicompost, an organic fertiliser, as part of the environmental education program. The trainers also provided detailed training to the students on recycling waste materials. The workshop was moderated by Hawaitpur School Plant Diversity Centre coordinator, Pranab Sharma, while District Nodal Agency, Rangkhong Zonal coordinator, Biren Deka, was present.

## Successful IVF treatment brings joy to Thelamara couple

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, Oct 24:** In a historic development for Sonitpur district's medical community, a committed team of doctors in Tezpur has successfully completed IVF treatments, putting a smile on the faces of a couple. With consistent effort and experimentation, social worker and senior gynaecologist in Tezpur Dr Manoj Mirdha and his daughter Dr Shehnaz Parveen have been successful in giving birth to a baby boy to a woman of the Thelamara area in Sonitpur district after six years of their marriage. While revealing the success story with special reference to the modern process, Dr Mirdha said that vitro fertilisation, also called IVF, is a complex series of procedures that can lead to a pregnancy. "It's a treatment for infertility, a condition in which one can't get pregnant after at least a year of trying for most couples. It also can be used to prevent passing on genetic problems to a child."

Dr Mirdha said the couple hailing from Thelamara area in Sonitpur district who couldn't get a good result undergoing treatment under



many doctors for the last many years have been blessed a few days back with a baby boy only because of their team's dedicated experimentation and effort through the IVF procedure.

Dr Manoj Mirdha, claiming this as the first

successful case on the northern belt, said that till date the process has not succeeded in the districts like Nagaon, Morigaon, and Darrang. "But even though I experimented with the problem for a long time, I was unable to succeed. Temperature, a favourable environment, and contemporary systems and technology are necessary for this process. However, 15 women have already become pregnant following the first successful case. Their health is stable right now, and I hope they will be successful in becoming a blessed mother as well," Dr Mirdha said.

Struggling for a baby for the last six years, the couple now smiles with joy with a baby boy in their lap. Mother Nirmala Das and father of the new-born baby Gopal Das, while talking to this correspondent, said that they find no exact words to express their gratitude towards the team of doctors led by Dr Moanoj Mirdha and Dr Shehnaz for blessing them with a baby boy after six long years of their marriage. However, this is undoubtedly good news for the Sonitpur district's health sector.

## BTC CEM takes swift action to combat malaria outbreak

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Oct 24:** BTC CEM Pramod Boro has directed immediate remedial measures to address the alarming rise in malaria cases in Kokrajhar. During a review of the situation at the BTC Legislative Assembly Auditorium, Boro emphasised the necessity of awareness campaigns to educate the public on malaria prevention.

He stressed the importance of informing the community about symptoms, transmission, and preventive practices to curb the spread of the disease. To facilitate a coordinated response, a Joint Action Committee has been established under the chairmanship of the principal secretary of BTC, Akash Deep, with the secretary of Health serving as the member secretary. This committee will include the deputy commissioner of Kokrajhar, representatives from Kokrajhar Medical College, and the Health Department to monitor and implement necessary preventive measures.

In light of the shortage of field staff in affected areas, CEM Boro



instructed the immediate deployment of malaria field staff from unaffected regions. He also called for prompt collaboration with the State Health Department to initiate an entomological survey in Kokrajhar district.

Recent reports indicate a troubling surge in malaria cases, with 922 confirmed infections in Kokrajhar compared to just 256 cases in 2023.

The meeting was attended by BTC EM for Health Arup Kumar Dey, deputy commissioner of Kokrajhar Masanda Magdalim Pertin, the principal of Kokrajhar Medical College, BTC secretary for Health, and senior departmental officials.

Later, at the BTC Secretariat, CEM Pramod Boro also reviewed various flagship health schemes aimed at fostering a healthier Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Presentations included the Aai Onsai Bithangkhi initiative, the Neighbourhood of Care (NoC) program, and the Bodoland Cancer Care Trust, along with discussions on their budgets and timelines. The plans and activities of the Communities Vision Document Committee were also evaluated, along with preparations for a two-day international workshop focused on 'The Process of Reconciliation of BTR: Status and Further Steps Forward-Linking Research and Civil Society Process'.

## 7th Dr Birendra Kr Bhattacharyya Memorial Lecture held at Dibrugarh University

**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, Oct 24:** The Centre for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication (CSJMC), Dibrugarh University, one of the finest media and communication institutions in North-east India organised the 7th Dr Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya Memorial Lecture on Thursday in remembrance of Dr Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, the first Assamese recipient of the Jnanpith Award.

Renowned writer and retired Tezpur University professor, Dr Madan Sarma, delivered the memorial lecture on the theme, 'Societal Echoes in Dr. Bhattacharyya's Editorial and Creative Writings'.

Attendees included Prof Jiten Hazarika, vice chancellor of Dibrugarh University; Prof Jayanta Kumar Bora, department of Assamese; Dr Dipankar Bhattacharyya, son of Dr Bhattacharyya; and Prof PK Gogoi, chairperson of CSJMC.

On the occasion, Prof PK Gogoi, chairperson, CSJMC, Dibrugarh University, said, "Dr Bhattacharyya's contributions to Assamese literature and journalism are unparalleled. His editorials and creative works continue to reflect societal challenges and aspirations. At CSJMC, we are honoured to uphold the spirit of his work through this annual memorial lecture, ensuring that his wisdom guides our future endeavours."

## 500 institutions to join semiconductor workshop at Jagiroad College

**HT Correspondent**

**JAGIROAD, Oct 24:** An international workshop on semiconductors will be held on Friday at Jagiroad College. The workshop will be held under the joint venture of Jagiroad College, North East India, and Entrepreneurial Diaspora (NEISED), National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), Guwahati, and VLSI Society of India on the theme 'Semiconductor Ecosystem: Awareness and Opportunities for North East India'. The event will be attended by many dignitaries from various industries, institutions, and organisations from Pan India and abroad. Dr Bhaben Chandra Neog, while explaining this on Thursday at a press conference, stated that it will be a gala event with a model competition and poster presentation competition from different institutions. He also stated that so far about 500 colleges and universities have registered their participation in the workshop. The press conference was also attended by Sanjeev Hazarika, director, Exiger Technologies India Pvt Ltd, Bangalore; Dr Achyut Bora, head, R&D, Quinno, Berlin, Germany; Dr Saurav Mahanta; Subrata Bora, senior technical officers, NIELIT, Guwahati; and Mriganka Gogoi, assistant professor, Assam Don Bosco University. The workshop will start at 9:00 am on Friday.

## 'Shribhumi' opens in Jorhat to boost farmer enterprise

**HT Correspondent**

**JORHAT, Oct 24:** As a scheme running under the Central Government of India, a center-cum-office of 'North West Jorhat Farmers Producing Company' was inaugurated at West Jorhat (near ISBT) on Wednesday. Named as 'Shribhumi', the company is planning to sell farmers' products, provide marketing, training, and even aims to create skilled farmers.

The center was inaugurated by Nobin Kumar Roy, general manager, NABARD, Assam, where Jay Shibani, district commissioner Jorhat, Dr Sanjay Chetia, director of Research, AAU, Dr Tarun Ch Bora, former vice chancellor, KAV, Debajit Dutta, district agricultural officer, Jorhat, Jyotsna Brijwal, LBM, Jorhat, Dr Sundar Barman, coordinator CBDO, AAU, Jorhat, Mantu Das, DDM, NABARD, Rupam Kakoti, SDAO, Jorhat, and many other dignitaries were present.

It is to be mentioned that

in 2021, the Central Government of India launched a program named 'Farmers Producing Company' where 10,000 units have been targeted to form. Arun Kumar Bora, CEO of Shribhumi, said that the establishment has been working for farmers. They encourage farmers toward organic farming and accept their products for marketing.

"Many of our farmers are frustrated that they don't get proper value for what they produce. Due to lack of knowledge, they cannot even do good marketing. We are accepting farmers' goods for marketing. Last year, we cultivated 'millet' (high-yielding variety of rice) in around 150 Bighas of land. We managed its manufacturing and marketing well," Bora stated.

Apart from this, the company has been producing and marketing mustard oil, tea, honey, snacks, vermicompost, oil, etc., and is planning for many other products, he added. Notably, the scheme of this company is running with the support of NABARD and AAU, Jorhat.

## BJP enrolls 32,000 members in Bithung Rengthama MAC constituency

**HT Correspondent**

**DONGKAMUKAM, Oct 24:** Chief executive member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang, informed that over 32,000 members have enrolled in the BJP in the recent membership drive in Bithung Rengthama Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) constituency, West Karbi Anglong. He said this at a program held at the Artukekang LP School playground, Dongkamukam. He thanked the voters of the constituency for the thumping record. Bithung Rengthama has a total of over 33,000 voters and is the home constituency of the CEM.

In the program on Thursday, the CEM distributed blankets and mosquito nets in memory of his mother, Late Basapi Teronpi (11 death anniversary).

Criticising the Opposition, he said misinformation is spread that the Assistant Revenue Officer's (ARO) Office is shifted to Kampur, the KAAC has lost its powers, and the Sixth Scheduled of the Constitution is bent to accommodate Dispur. Referring to an unnamed person, he said that person has contested 5 elections consecutively, losing them all. MLA Rupsing Teron, executive member of KAAC, Probat Ch Taro, MACs Headings Rongphar, Johnny Timung, and others were present.

## AAMSU stages massive dharna in Hojai

**HT Correspondent**

**HOJAI, Oct 24:** All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) Hojai District Committee staged a massive 'Dharma Program' in front of the Hojai District Commissioner's Office at Sankardevnagar in Hojai on Thursday, where hundreds of AAMSU workers and affected citizens participated.

They shouted various slogans and vehemently denounced the state government. They raised various demands including rehabilitation of displaced persons from Lumding Reserved Forest; relocation of Hojai and Lanka Municipal Board's garbage dumping ground; justice for Rajkanta murder case thereby forming a high-level investigation team to arrest the perpetrators; distribute land pattas to genuine landless Indian citizens in Basundhara 0.3; Take steps to recover money swindled by the BR Ambedkar Volunteer Organisation in Nilbagan Chanapatty; implement special measures to control drugs in Hojai district and establish a government-run de-addiction center; take strict action against land brokers operating in Hojai district's three revenue circle offices.

Talking to this correspondent, Monowar Hussain (Bokul), advisor, AAMSU, Hojai District Committee, along with other members, vowed to continue fighting for minority communities' pressing issues. He said, "We seek public support, cooperation, and solidarity." He further informed that after the conclusion of the dharna, six memoranda, including different demands, were submitted, out of which three memoranda have been forwarded to chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma through DC, Hojai; another three are submitted to district commissioner, Hojai; and one has been submitted to superintendent of police, Hojai.

## Congress candidate Tanjil Hussain files nomination

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Oct 24:** On Thursday, Tanjil Hussain, the Congress candidate for the bye-election to the Samaguri Assembly constituency, submitted his nomination papers. The date of the bye-election is set on November 13.

Prominent Congress leaders, including APCC president Bhupen Bora, AICC general secretary Bikash Upadhyay, Congress MPs Gau-rav Gogoi, Pradyut Bordoloi, and Rakibul Hussain, leader of the Opposition Dehabrata Saikia, and former Congress MP Ripun Bora, were among the senior leaders who accompanied Tanjil Hussain during the submission of his nomination papers.

Earlier, a massive procession was taken out from Kawoimari to the office of Nagaon district commissioner in support of Tanjil Hussain. The procession was attended by several thousand Congress workers and leaders across the state.

Congress leaders claimed that the massive turnout demonstrated the party's popularity in Samaguri and expressed confidence that Tanjil Hussain will win the bye-election with a record margin.

## Jan Suraksha campaign launched in Kokrajhar

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Oct 24:** The Jan Suraksha Campaign, a national initiative launched by the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, government of India, has officially commenced in Kokrajhar district. Running from October 15, 2024, to January 15, 2025, the campaign aims to provide affordable access to social security insurance to people across India. The key programs under this initiative include the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and the Atal Pension Yojana (APY), all of which offer crucial insurance coverage and pension benefits to underserved populations.

This campaign, part of a larger national effort to promote financial inclusion and social security at the grassroots level, will bring essential financial services to rural communities. In Kokrajhar, the campaign will be implemented through camps held at 130 Village Council Development Committees (VCDCs). Each VCDC has been assigned a designated bank branch to coordinate efforts with district, block, and VCDC administrations, as well as government departments. Additionally, neighbouring bank branches, including Indian Post Payment Banks, will actively participate through their representatives to ensure the campaign reaches as many beneficiaries as possible.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*I'd rather be optimistic and wrong than pessimistic and right.*  
-Eilon Musk

## India-China Agreement: A step towards stability

In a significant diplomatic breakthrough, the Indian government announced on October 21 that an agreement has been reached with China on patrolling arrangements along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). This development offers hope for the normalization of relations between the two neighbors, whose ties have been strained since the deadly border clashes in Galwan Valley in 2020. The conflict in 2020 marked a serious low in India-China relations. Both nations, however, acted swiftly to prevent the escalation from leading to a full-scale war. Since then, diplomatic efforts have been persistent, with 31 rounds of talks at both military and diplomatic levels. The Corps Commanders from both sides led the military discussions, while diplomatic talks were held under the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China Border Affairs. The process recently gained momentum due to political intervention. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recognizing the strategic importance of a peaceful relationship, said earlier this year that stable ties with China are critical not just for India and China but for the wider region and the world. Key meetings, such as those between External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, as well as between National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Wang Yi in St. Petersburg, helped solidify the path to reconciliation. As Jaishankar aptly described, the current agreement is the result of "patient and persevering diplomacy."

From an economic perspective, the restoration of ties between the two nations is not only welcome but necessary. China remains India's top source of imports, with \$56.29 billion in inbound shipments during the first half of this fiscal year. In a globalized economy, enhancing economic cooperation with China could be a game-changer for industries such as electric vehicles (EVs), smartphones, solar panels, and pharmaceuticals—sectors identified by the Indian government to transform the country into a manufacturing hub. However, the negative stance towards Chinese investments, such as the rejection of a \$1 billion joint venture proposal from BYD (the world's largest electric vehicle manufacturer), reflects a short-sighted approach. Restoring economic ties with China would allow India to access the latest technologies and strengthen its production capacities. The rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape also calls for a reevaluation of India's foreign policy priorities. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine, Israeli aggression in Gaza, and other global tensions have disrupted supply chains and trade routes, challenging established international alliances. In this context, BRICS+ has emerged as a powerful alternative to Western-dominated groupings. With major regional players like Saudi Arabia and Iran recently joining BRICS+, it is vital for India to maintain strong ties with key members of this bloc, including China. An antagonistic stance would leave India isolated at a time when multilateralism is gaining ground. India's recent alignment with the U.S., through defense agreements and intelligence-sharing on the China border, underscores the complexity of the situation. However, the unreliability of U.S. policy, particularly in the face of potential leadership changes, raises concerns.

India and China share a 3,400-kilometer border, much of which remains disputed. To ensure long-term stability, both nations must build on past agreements, such as the 1993 Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement and the 2013 Border Defence Cooperation Agreement. Simultaneously, India must work to expand economic relations and foster people-to-people exchanges. Prioritizing investment in the manufacturing sector, where Chinese technology can play a transformative role, will be essential in boosting India's growth trajectory. This agreement on patrolling may be just one step, but it is a step in the right direction. If nurtured properly, it could lead to a broader reconciliation, benefiting not just India and China, but the entire region in these turbulent times.

## Palestinian and Israeli communists agree on a free Palestine state



By: Zo HaDerekh

The Communists of Palestine and Israel have agreed that "Only by establishing a sovereign Palestinian state will there be peace and stability in the region. Stop the war in Gaza and Lebanon now!"

That was the essence of a joint statement issued by the Communist Party of Israel (CPI) and the Palestinian People's Party (PPP) after a meeting of the top leaders of the two organizations last week.

The CPI and the PPP met via Zoom, with guests and solidarity activists from around the world participating in the online meeting. Discussions focused on the dangerous escalation in the region, especially Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attacks on Lebanon, and the political situation in Palestine and Israel. Adel Amer, CPI General Secretary, and Bassam A-Salhi, PPP General Secretary, led the delegations from their respective parties.

The session was a follow-up on a high-level tripartite leadership meeting held in the city of Ramallah in July between delegations representing the leadership bodies of the CPI, the PPP, and the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash), the bloc of progressive parties in the Israeli Knesset.

The meeting reviewed the latest political and battlefield developments, considering the ongoing war and genocide to which the Palestinian people are being subjected, especially in the Gaza Strip. It also discussed ways to en-

hance the struggle and joint action of political organizations in both Israel and occupied Palestine.

Attendees surveyed the most prominent dangers facing the Palestinian cause and the current challenges due to the aggression and policies of the fascist Israeli occupation government and its efforts, together with the U.S. administration, to liquidate the Palestinian cause and rights.

Foremost among them are the right to self-determination, the establishment of an independent state, and the right of return in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions.

The meeting stressed the urgent issues and tasks, prioritizing collective efforts and intensifying the joint struggle to stop Israel's aggressive war and the genocide it is committing. Lifting the siege on the Gaza Strip, opening its crossings, and securing the food, health, and housing needs of its people was identified as an immediate necessity.

The return of the displaced, the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Strip, and the curbing of all its crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories rounded out the list.

The PPP and CPI agreed that the Palestinian people's struggle against the occupation is a national liberation issue, and that true peace can only be achieved by ending the occupation and achieving the freedom and independence of the State of Palestine on all the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. (IPA Service)

# Indianising Lady Justice: Symbolism, tradition, and the evolving judicial system

A few months ago, Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud unveiled a statue of Lady Justice in the Supreme Court's Judges' Library, sparking a renewed discourse on the symbolism and evolution of the concept of justice in India. The media, while initially silent on the matter, has recently picked up on this issue, scrutinizing the changes made to the traditional image of Lady Justice. This transformation reflects a larger effort to Indianise the symbolism associated with justice, moving away from the colonial past towards a more localized, contextualized understanding of the judicial process in the country.

The inspiration for the Indianised version of Lady Justice is said to have come from a mural on the wall of the Judges' Gallery in the Supreme Court. The mural depicts Lady Justice dressed as an Indian goddess, notably without a blindfold and holding a book, presumably the Constitution of India, in place of the traditional sword. This shift in iconography is significant as it suggests that, in the Indian context, justice is not blind and does not symbolize punishment, but rather represents the principles enshrined in the Constitution.

### Historical Origins of Lady Justice

The concept of Lady Justice has deep roots in ancient civilizations, long before colonial influences shaped modern legal institutions. The Greeks had Themis, the goddess who represented law, order, and fairness, while the Egyptians worshipped Maat, who embodied truth, balance, and cosmic order. The most direct comparison for the modern depiction of Lady Justice, however, is with the Roman goddess Justitia, who symbolized the moral foundation of the justice system.

The scales she carried represented impartiality, while the sword denoted the power to enforce justice.

Over the centuries, the image of Lady Justice evolved, becoming a universally recognized symbol of legal fairness. Her scales signify the balance of evidence, while the blindfold, which first appeared in the 16th century, traditionally represents the impartiality of the judicial process. The blindfold suggests that justice is administered without prejudice, uninfluenced by wealth, status, or political power.

### Indianising Lady Justice: A Step Away from the Colonial Past?

The modification of Lady Justice's design in the new statue has been interpreted by some as an attempt to break free from colonial symbolism. For many, the traditional attributes of Lady Justice—her sword, scales, and blindfold—are remnants of colonial rule. However, others argue that the changes made to the statue are more nuanced and do not necessarily represent an outright rejection of colonial legacy.

Lady Justice has always been open to interpretation, with different countries adapting her image to reflect their cultural and legal values. In some places, she is depicted stepping on a snake, representing the triumph of justice over corruption. Despite these regional differences, the core symbolism of Lady Justice—impartiality, fairness, and enforcement of justice—has remained consistent across the globe.

In the Indian context, the decision to remove the blindfold and replace the sword with the Constitution has sparked considerable debate. The removal of the blindfold has been seen as symbolic of a legal system that sees and ad-

resses the unique circumstances of each case. It suggests that justice in India is not blind but rather aware of the social and economic realities that litigants face. The book, representing the Constitution, emphasizes the role of law in shaping justice in a democratic society.

### The Role of the Blindfold in Modern Justice

The blindfold has long been a contentious symbol in the depiction of Lady Justice. Originally, it was introduced as a critique of the judicial system, implying that the law could be ignorant or indifferent to the suffering of innocents. Over time, however, the blindfold came to symbolize the objectivity and impartiality of the law, ensuring that justice is administered without bias.

In India, the Supreme Court has, on occasion, reconsidered the relevance of the blindfold in its jurisprudence. In *Zahira Sheikh v. State of Gujarat* (2004), a case that arose from the aftermath of the Godhra riots, the court dealt with a situation where

the victim, Zahira Sheikh, changed her testimony multiple times. The court observed that justice should not be blind in all cases; rather, it must be vigilant and capable of seeing the circumstances before it. In this context, the blindfold should act as a veil that the court can lift when necessary to prevent miscarriages of justice.

The removal of the blindfold from the new statue of Lady Justice in the Supreme Court is seen by some as a continuation of this judicial philosophy. It signifies a new era where the judiciary is not just blind to external influences but is actively engaged in seeing and understanding the realities that affect litigants, en-

suring that justice is truly equitable.

### The Debate Over the Constitution and the Sword

Another major change in the new statue is the replacement of the traditional sword with the Constitution of India. Critics argue that this modification undermines the importance of enforcement in the judicial process. In Indian mythology, deities of justice, such as Shani Dev and Yamaraja, are depicted as carrying weapons to symbolize their authority to punish wrongdoers. The sword in Lady Justice's hand has traditionally represented the power of the court to enforce its decisions, ensuring that justice is not just theoretical but actionable.

Justice Krishna Iyer, in the landmark *All-India Judges' case* (1992), emphasized that law is merely a means to an end, and that end is justice. The sword, therefore, is seen as a necessary tool to ensure that justice is carried out effectively. Without the power to enforce its rulings, critics argue, the judiciary risks becoming a symbolic institution rather than one that can guarantee justice for all.

The Constitution, while undoubtedly the cornerstone of Indian law, does not, on its own, guarantee justice. Law and justice are distinct concepts; while the former provides the framework, the latter is the goal. By replacing the sword with the Constitution, some believe that the statue diminishes the importance of enforcement, which is crucial to the functioning of a just society.

### Breaking Free from Colonialism or Reinventing Symbolism?

There is also debate over whether the new statue signifies a break from the colonial past. Some commentators have suggested that the modifications represent an effort to Indianise the concept of justice, moving away from colonial

symbols towards a more culturally relevant depiction. However, as many legal scholars point out, the concept of Lady Justice predates colonialism by centuries. The Romans, Greeks, and Egyptians all had their own versions of the goddess of justice, long before European colonial powers began shaping legal systems around the world.

The depiction of justice in art has always been fluid, reflecting the values and priorities of the society in which it is displayed. In this sense, the changes to Lady Justice in the Supreme Court can be seen as a natural evolution rather than a radical departure from tradition.

### Justice Beyond Symbolism

Ultimately, while the symbolism of Lady Justice is important, justice itself is not dependent on art or statues. As intellectuals and legal experts have noted, the true essence of justice can be seen not in statues but in the experiences of litigants and the peace and order of society. Justice is a living concept, shaped by the actions of courts, the implementation of laws, and the fairness with which decisions are made.

The new statue of Lady Justice in the Supreme Court is a historic art piece that reflects the evolving nature of India's legal system. Whether it represents a break from the colonial past or merely a reinterpretation of universal symbols, its significance lies not in its form but in the ideals it embodies—fairness, impartiality, and the pursuit of justice for all.

As India continues to grapple with issues of law and justice, the role of the judiciary in upholding these principles will remain crucial. The symbolism of Lady Justice may change over time, but the need for a fair and just legal system will always be paramount. (The writer can be reached at [dipakkurmigpld@gmail.com](mailto:dipakkurmigpld@gmail.com))

# Supreme Court judgment on supply of arms to Israel case is flawed

By: Aman Kumar

In 2019, M.K. Ranjitsinh Jhala, the renowned wildlife conservationist, joined hands with other conservationists to file a writ petition before the Supreme Court of India (SC) against the government of India regarding the protection of the great Indian bustard. They argued that the overhead transmission lines used for the supply of electricity generated through wind and solar energy resulted in the loss of the population of the great Indian bustard in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

The court ruled in favour of the government (and the companies involved in those projects) by clothing its argument in international law obligations of India. Some aspects of the petition continue to be sub judice. Paragraph 58 from that decision deserves more discussion. In that paragraph, the Supreme Court talked about situations where India has committed to something under international law but has not yet made domestic laws in that regard.

It noted that: "India's international obligations and commitments in the present case have not been enacted in domestic law. Regardless, the court must be alive to these obligations while adjudicating writ petitions that seek reliefs that may hinder these obligations from being fulfilled or otherwise interfere with India's international commitments as well as the right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change."

What the court essentially said was that in case of the absence of domestication of India's international law obligations, if a petition requests something that might hinder the performance of such obligations, the court will deny it. This judgment was authored by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dr D.Y. Chandrachud, and was written on behalf of his colleagues on the Bench—Justices J.B. Pardiwalla and Manoj Misra.

It is the same trio of judges that has now rejected another writ petition seeking directions for the Indian government "to cancel any existing licences and halt the grant of new licences or permissions, to various companies in India, for export of arms and other military equipment to Israel, during Israel's war in Gaza".

In this case, the judges took a different route to achieve the end goal—ensuring that the commercial interest of the government and corporations is not hindered, much like the case referred to above. Whether it is a coincidence that these three judges were on the Bench or are they ones dealing with matters of 'international law' at India's Supreme Court is not clear.

The judges' roster does not include 'international law' as a subject matter for the CJI, and the subject matters of the other two judges are not even listed. Curiously, 'international law' is not a subject matter for any of the judges mentioned in the roster.

On August 17, 2024, a group of former civil servants, scholars, activists and experts in fields such as international relations, human rights and policy analysis filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court demanding the cancellation of licences to companies for exporting arms to Israel. Their arguments rested on a perceived violation of India's international law obligation.

The petition was not novel. Similar arguments have already been made, successfully and unsuccessfully, before international courts and domestic courts of other countries.

The crux of all the arguments is this—Israel's actions in Gaza, since October 2023, might amount to a violation of international law, particularly of international humanitarian law, international criminal law and international human rights law.

As such, any country which contributes weapons to Israel might be an accomplice. The petitioner claimed that supplying weapons to Israel amounts to a violation of India's obligations under international law coupled with Articles 14 and 21 read with Article 51(c) of the Constitution of India. The petition of more than 400 pages was dismissed in a four-page judgment, the author of which is not mentioned. The judgment found the petition unmaintainable because of Article 73 of the Constitution.

It notes that "the authority and jurisdiction in relation to the conduct of foreign affairs is vested with the Union government under Article 73 of the Constitution". It further refers to Article 253 to say that only the Parliament has the power to make laws for implementing any treaty. The judgment notes that these two Articles create a 'fundamental objection' to the maintainability of the petition.

This piece argues that the court erred in concluding so. This is because Article 73 is not about 'foreign affairs'. The term does not even appear in the Article. In fact, it is not even a legal term, but rather a term of international relations or diplomacy. Article 73, for the purpose of the judgment and this piece, states that the "Executive" power of the Union shall extend to the "exercise of such rights, authority and jurisdiction as are exercisable by the government of India by virtue of any treaty on the agreement".

While this Article is relevant to the discussion of the incorporation of international law in India's domestic legal framework, it is not clear how it is relevant to the non-maintainability of the present case.

Further, after quoting Article 253, the court again erroneously interprets it by noting that "(t)here is a presumption that international law is a part and parcel of the law of the nations unless the application of a principle of international law is excluded expressly or by necessary implication by the competent legislature". This is erroneous because the said Article does not provide any room for exception. Its wording is clear—any treaty to which India is a party can only be implemented in India once the Parliament has made a law in that regard.

Sadly, post-Independence, the judges of the Supreme Court of India continued following the British way of incorporation of international law, i.e., what is not opposed is accepted. The court is yet to be decolonised in this regard. Many judgments later, its erroneous interpretation has now become the norm, with support from academicians.

After noting Articles 73 and 253 as the "fundamental objections" to the maintainability of the petition, the judgment pivots towards what it calls "the basic issue".

This issue is "whether the court, under Article 32, can issue a writ to the Union government to cancel existing licences and halt the issuance of new licences for the export of arms and military equipment to Israel?" It then lists out three reasons why the answer to the question, to quote from the judgment, "must be in the negative".

These reasons are, firstly, that any grant of relief will be tantamount to adjudicating on Israel's responsibility for its actions in Gaza;

secondly, that any injunctive relief would result in violation of international agreements by the Indian companies; and finally, that action, if any, can be taken by the Union government. Let us unpack the reasons one by one.

The court's argument that for it "to consider the grant of the reliefs as sought, it would inevitably become necessary to enter a finding in regard to the allegations which have been levelled by the petitioners against the State of Israel" is grossly wrong.

If nothing else, the court could have looked at the International Court of Justice (ICJ)'s decision in the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa versus Israel), a copy of which was also included in the petition. In that case, South Africa had requested the ICJ to order Israel, as an interim measure, to fulfil its obligations under the Genocide Convention to "prevent genocide" of Palestinian people in Gaza.

In its decision, the ICJ did not necessarily determine that Israel's acts violated the Genocide Convention, as claimed by South Africa, but still ruled that Israel should prevent the commission of genocide in Gaza. The current case before the Supreme Court was not even about the determination of Israel's actions. Rather, it was about India's actions. And yes, to say that India's actions might amount to abetting international crimes means that international crimes are happening.

But the court could have assumed the likelihood of such crimes or should have referred to the plethora of evidence made available to it by the petitioners where international organisations have alleged that such crimes are being committed by Israel.

Instead, the court skirted its way around the question by deferring to the government, the same government whose actions it was supposed to judge. In Paragraph 9 of the judgment, it notes: "In taking an appropriate decision, the Government bears into account all relevant considerations including the commitments of the nation at the international level." This then raises the following questions: did the government assess Israel's actions? And if after the assessment, the answer was that yes, Israel has violated international law, how did the government circumvent that conclusion while issuing licences?

However, if the answer was no, how does that fit in with the government's stance taken at the United Nations during various resolutions regarding the conflict? The approach taken by the Supreme Court must be considered negative for more than one reason. Firstly, now that the petition has been rejected, we do not know if the government actually did an assessment of Israel's actions. What is more frustrating is that the judgment also does not note the government's stance, it simply assumes that the government must have done an assessment. Secondly, because the judgment keeps us in a position of ignorance—we do not know if the assessment, if any, is accurate. After all, the government has often been found lacking on questions of human rights.

Take the Genocide Convention, for example. India was one of the first countries to move a resolution at the UN for a convention on genocide. This was in 1946, even before the country was an independent nation. On India's recommendation, voiced through

M.C. Chagla, the resolution asked States to enact legislation for the prevention and punishment of genocide.

To date, there is no legislation on the Genocide Convention in India! When Member of Parliament Avinash Pande asked about this situation in the Parliament in 2016, the Union home ministry replied: "By acceding to the (Genocide) Convention in 1959, India has recognised genocide as an international crime."

"The principles embodied in the convention are part of general international law and therefore already part of the common law of India. The provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including the procedural law (Criminal Procedure Code or CrPC) provide effective penalties for persons guilty of crime of genocide."

There is plenty wrong in this statement, which the author has highlighted elsewhere. For now, suffice it to say that not only does the word 'genocide' not figure in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (or the IPC or CrPC), it does not figure in any Union criminal legislation of India. The court's second reason for rejecting the petition was that the relief sought in the petition would result in a violation of international contracts and agreements entered into by Indian companies.

Here the court changed the very nature of the petition which was not about the responsibility of companies but of the State. It is the Union government that is issuing licences to supply weapons to Israel, specifically the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and the Department of Defence Production (DDP), as per the petition.

Hence, as per international law, responsibility, if any, for violation of international law will be on India and not on the individual companies. The reason for this is in the Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts (ARSIWA).

The judgment reflects that the court has completely ceded international law space to the State, or is ignorant of international law. In either case, it shows a lack of appreciation of international legal rules by the court.

The court's own history with corporate-human conflict should have reminded it of its obligations towards the latter. Its controversial treatment of the Bhopal gas tragedy, another corporate-human conflict from 40 years ago, should have served as a guide. Because of the court's misadventures, the victims of that disaster are still looking for fair compensation.

Moreover, the court's rejection of the petition is a lost opportunity. The petition was a perfect opportunity for the court to assess India's role, complicit or otherwise, in the ongoing war. Its decision leaves India susceptible to allegations of abetting genocide and being taken before the ICJ for the same. It is improbable but not impossible. On a similar issue—of supply of weapons to Israel—Nicaragua took Germany to the ICJ earlier this year.

This petition provided the court with the opportunity for a reality check. If the court had assessed the application in depth, it might have come out with a conclusion determining no liability for the government. And if it had decided that by continuing to supply weapons to Israel, India is violating international law that would have helped the government in halting the violation of international law. (IPA Service)



# Berlin's new focus on India

By: Tobias Scholz

Just one week ahead of the annual intergovernmental consultations, the German government published its first strategic document solely focused on its engagement with India. Although not officially labelled a strategy, the paper's cabinet-level involvement and clear prioritisation of policy domains make "Focus on India" a comprehensive manual outlining Germany's planned approach towards India. In laying out Germany's ideas about the imagined future of Indo-German foreign, security, and trade relations, the public document has both a domestic and an external function.

Domestically, the key role of "Focus on India" is to bring all government departments on the same page. Externally, it sends a strong message of assurance to India, signalling the high standing India currently enjoys among political decision-makers in Germany.

**The "new focus": A result of geopolitical threats**

While trade, migration, and technology cooperation have undoubtedly become more significant for German-Indian relations, security concerns have recently introduced a strategic depth into the partnership. For the past few years, both partners have been geopolitically threatened by revisionist powers. The Galwan skirmishes with China in 2020 made India rethink its China policy.

For Germany, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 challenged the "Wandel durch Handel" (change through trade) approach towards Russia. Furthermore, subsequent attempts to condemn Russia's behaviour at the United Nations (UN) illustrated to Germany how strong and long-standing New Delhi's partnership with

Moscow has been in the past. Neighbourhood challenges were central for both Germany and India to find new interest in each other as they sought to identify new partners as well as diversify their external dependencies.

India's behaviour towards Russia posed a dilemma for Germany's foreign policy. On the one hand, the German government realised that India was not a geopolitical ally when it came to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. On the other hand, Germany viewed India as a key strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific and an important representative of the Global South.

In other words, Germany had to consider how to deal with a partner that also partners with its geopolitical rival. India's multi-aligned preferences have, in particular, been at odds with Germany's established strategic practice, which centres on treaty-based alliance cooperation.

The first-ever public strategic document by Germany to describe foreign policy priorities towards India can be read as a recognition of India's relevance in balancing China, as well as the complexities of dealing with a strategically autonomous India.

**Strategic depth through security cooperation**

"Focus on India" fulfils two functions: firstly, it offers a comprehensive inventory of the existing partnership, covering policy domains as diverse as judicial, civil society, and sub-national cooperation. Secondly, and perhaps more relevant for the upcoming government consultations, the Federal Foreign Office-led approach aims to advance new partnership propositions.

Three sets of suggestions stand out: the upscaling of government consultations, the



willingness to become a major security partner, and a more strategic view on climate and energy cooperation.

If the suggestions from the federal government in Berlin are enacted, the bilateral relations could soon become far more comprehensive. A key proposition is introducing the Indo-German dialogue forum to enrich the bi-annual government consultations with more input and feedback.

While the dialogue forum is proposed to become the overarching discussion platform, "Focus on India" emphasises the need to expand on former or existing dialogues across several issues, ranging from cybersecurity to climate policy. What is not mentioned, however, is the required structure to manage the multitude of dialogues.

The most feasible path appears to be that all sectoral dialogue formats are forth on held as sub-tracks of the overarching dialogue forum. At least some coordination between the dialogue forum and the policy tracks will be needed to ensure efficiency and coherence.

The strategic document's most significant policy announcements relate to bilateral security relations. Most far-reaching, the German Federal Government seeks to establish an agreement on reciprocal logistical support between the German and Indian armed forces.

The proposition ties into Germany's interest in strength-

ening India's defensive capacities in the Indo-Pacific and reducing its military dependence on Russia.

Germany's interest to second a Bundeswehr liaison officer to the Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region in New Delhi underlines the growing interest in understanding India's concerns in the Indo-Pacific. These efforts build on Germany's broader Indo-Pacific approach published in 2020 and its commissioning of a frigate into the region in 2021.

The document's commitment to ease arms export control procedures, however, raises more questions than it answers. While the announcement aligns with the prevailing tonality of "Focus on India", the types of arms are not specified, which could fuel domestic debates in Germany about the scope of its new arms export policy to India. A narrower focus on arms cooperation to advance each other's defensive capabilities may be more realistic.

A final novelty of "Focus on India" is the strategic depth which it provides to the partnership by drawing connections between interests in different policy areas. The most remarkable example is the direct linkage of climate cooperation and energy security.

Publicly linking these two goals indicates that the rationale of Germany's development partnership with India could become far more geo-econom-

ically aware. The proposed dialogue platform would be an ideal venue to explore further synergies between policy domains.

**Beyond good vibes**

"Focus on India" combines an interests-based approach with a good amount of pragmatism. In areas where cooperation is already increasing, like in security, climate, and technology policy, the German government makes pertinent new suggestions.

However, in areas where the partnership previously faced challenges, like in multilateral cooperation or the EU-India Free Trade Agreement, the strategic document does not pitch completely new ideas.

Essentially, "Focus on India" addresses the bilateral partnership by reinforcing those policy domains where Germany already sees progress and opportunities. The advantage of such an approach is that the strategic document can certainly prove a useful conversation starter for the seventh governmental consultation this week.

For the strategic partnership to mature more progressively and withstand pressure, however, frank discussions on the areas of discern remain paramount. This includes a clear idea of each other's red lines as well as an understanding of the involved risks for the partnership.

It is therefore important that the suggested Indo-German dialogue forum, if implemented, becomes a multistakeholder platform in which candid conversations about progress as much as challenges are invited to take place. Equally important, Germany's approach can benefit from and learn from the experiences of EU-India relations, which remain pivotal in shaping trade relations between the two powers. (Courtesy: ORF)

# India-China disengagement: New Delhi's patient diplomacy seems to have worked

By: Manoj Joshi

Wednesday's meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping at the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Russia is their first formal one since Chennai in October 2019.

According to reports, Modi told Xi in his opening remarks that "maintaining peace and stability on the border should remain our priority. Mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual sensitivity should remain the basis of our relations."

In response, the Chinese President said that the two sides needed to have "more communication and cooperation, handle our differences and disagreements, and [to] facilitate each other's pursuit of development aspirations."

Much has happened since the heady days of the Chennai meeting, primarily the clash in Galwan in eastern Ladakh on 15 June 2020 that took the lives of 20 Indian soldiers and reportedly twice that of the Chinese.

This was the result of a sudden set of blockades established by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to prevent Indian forces from patrolling six areas on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, which they had been doing as per agreement. Simultaneously, some 50,000 PLA troops were brought near the LAC without the prior notification required by the said agreement.

India was taken aback. But it responded quickly by deploying its forces opposite to the Chinese blockades and sending in additional troops to match the buildup. After that, apart from the successful military manoeuvre of occupying the Kailash Heights near Spangur Tso, New Delhi has relied on patient diplomacy to persuade the Chinese to turn the clock back and restore the status quo in the area.

Its efforts now seem to have been rewarded.

Since 2020, the two countries' foreign ministers and national security advisers met several times, and there were 17 official-level Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) meetings, 21 rounds of talks at the higher military commanders' level, and scores of conversations between local border commanders.

On Monday, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said at a news briefing that India and China had arrived at an agreement on "patrolling arrangements" with respect to their military standoff.

"Over the last several weeks, Indian and Chinese diplomatic negotiators have been in close contact with each other in a variety of forums, and as a result of these discussions, agreement has been arrived at on patrolling arrangements along the line of actual control in the India-China border areas, leading to disengagement and a resolution of the issues that has arisen in these areas in 2020."

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri

The two sides would now take the "next steps" on this. So far, there is no clarity on the nature of the agreement. It's not clear whether the agreement represents a status quo ante as of April 2020 and whether the "buffer" or "no-patrol" zones created in four of the six areas through negotiations between 2020-2022 would be dismantled and normal patrolling there resumed. 2023 was a wasted year given how little was achieved. But a flurry of diplomacy and high-level meetings in July-September this year has led to this breakthrough.

Since 2020, India has set the benchmark, requiring the disengagement of armed forces at the blockade points and the de-induction of the additional forces both sides had brought into the region. But the language being used now is different, and the agreement is about "patrolling".

As if to underscore this, Foreign Secretary Misri repeated this line twice in his press briefing. "An agreement has been reached on patrolling arrangements along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China border areas."

So, the agreement is about "pa-

trolling" and not "disengagement" or "de-escalation", which may follow.

Media reports suggest that the agreement is likely to be applied not just in eastern Ladakh but across the entire Line of Actual Control. Chinese blockades exist in two key areas — the Depsang Bulge in the northern part of the LAC and the Charding-Ninglung Nala near Demchok. On the other hand, India has blocked Chinese patrols in the east, especially in Tangtse, northeast of Tawang.

There is a hint, too, that the agreement may incorporate other measures to promote stability, such as coordinated patrolling, and to ensure that Indian and Chinese patrols do not run into each other while patrolling disputed areas, thereby avoiding face-offs and confrontations.

There was little clarification from the Chinese on the announcement of the deal on Tuesday. Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jan said in response to a question, "Over a recent period of time, China and India have kept close communication through diplomatic and military channels on issues relating to the China-India border. The two sides have reached resolutions on relevant matters, which China views favourably. Going forward, China will work with India to implement these resolutions."

On Monday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar too commented on the issue to say that with the agreement, "the disengagement process with China has been completed." He added that there were areas where the Chinese had blocked us, "so we had blocked them... We have reached an agreement and understanding which will now allow the patrolling... Depsang, that is not the only place, there are other places also."

Another important voice that weighed in on this on Tuesday was Army Chief General Uday Deshpande, who said that the bottom line of the agreement was the importance of restoring "trust" between the two armies. He asserted that it was important to go back to the status quo of April 2020.

"Thereafter, we will be looking at disengagement, de-escalation and normal management of the Line of Actual Control." He indicated that this would be done in several phases and over a period of time.

Till 2020, India and China maintained peace along the LAC, basing themselves on a series of agreements. In September 1993, they signed the first major agreement on "The Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas." Three years later, in 1996, they signed an agreement on "Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China border areas."

In 2005, they signed a protocol on the "Modalities for the Implementation of Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas." Finally, in 2013, there was another military agreement between the two nations on "Border Defence Cooperation Agreement."

These agreements were quite unique and largely kept the peace along a border disputed in its entirety. It was because of these that the clash at Galwan in June 2020 was not with guns and grenades but with sticks and stones. Both sides had adhered to the prohibition of the use of guns and explosives on the LAC as part of the 1996 agreement.

But it was this very agreement that the Chinese violated when they failed to notify India about their troop movements close to the border in March-April 2020.

The cautious language and the measured steps that the two sides are now taking could mean that an entirely new set of confidence-building measures are in the works to ensure peace even as both armies patrol the LAC. This could include new buffer or no-patrol zones in certain areas, as well as surveillance measures to ensure there is no violation of the agreements. (Courtesy: The Quint)

# Sightless no more: In decolonised garb, India's new Lady Justice is a contradictory symbol

By: Karanveer Singh

The unveiling at the Supreme Court on October 15 of a modified statue of Lady Justice, stripped of her blindfold and sword, represents a concerning departure from the universal principles of justice under the guise of decolonisation.

The symbolism of Lady Justice is not a colonial imposition. Rather, it is a representation of judicial principles that have resonated across civilisations. Her origins can be traced back to the ancient Egyptian goddess Maat and the Greek goddess Themis. The Romans later depicted her as Justitia, incorporating elements that would evolve into the familiar figure recognisable today.

The removal of the blindfold, in particular, raises serious concerns about the message this conveys about judicial impartiality. The blindfold was never meant to suggest that justice is blind in the sense of being unaware or ignorant. Rather, it symbolises the fundamental principle that justice must be administered without regard to the social status, wealth, or political influence of those seeking it.

To say justice is blind, means it sees all individuals as equal before the law — a principle enshrined in Article 14 of India's Constitution.

Instead, does it now suggest that courts should now take into account who stands before them? That the administration of justice should be influenced by considerations beyond the facts and the law? This symbolic change could be interpreted as a tacit acknowledgment that the justice system may treat individuals differently based on their identity or status.

The replacement of the sword with the Constitution, while seemingly progressive, also raises philosophical concerns. The sword in Lady Justice's hand never represented punitive justice alone; it symbolised the authority and power of the law to enforce its decisions.

Without this symbol of enforcement, what remains is a justice system that may pronounce judgments but lacks the symbolic representation of its power to ensure compliance. The Constitution, while undoubtedly the supreme law of our land, is a document of prin-

ciples and rights — it does not, in itself, represent an enforcement mechanism.

This modification appears to conflate anti-colonialism with the rejection of universal principles. Ironically, the principles represented by the traditional Lady Justice — equality before the law, impartial judgement and the power to enforce justice — were often invoked by independence movements against colonial powers. These principles are not colonial impositions but universal aspirations that have been embraced by societies seeking to establish just and equitable legal systems.

The argument that this change reflects a "new India" is particularly problematic. What exactly is being suggested about this new vision of justice? That it will be administered with eyes wide open to the party that stands before the court? That enforcement of judgements is secondary to constitutional principles? These implications run counter to the progressive justice system India should be striving to build.

The modification of Lady Justice also raises questions about the approach to decolonisation. True decolonisation involves critically examining and rejecting harmful colonial impositions while retaining and reinforcing universal principles that promote justice and equality. By rejecting the blindfold and sword simply because they are associated with a colonial-era representation, we risk throwing out fundamental principles of justice in our haste to assert independence.

As we move forward, it is crucial to remember that symbols matter. They shape public perception and understanding of our institutions. The traditional Lady Justice, with her blindfold and sword, represented not colonial oppression but the highest aspirations of any justice system — equal treatment under law, impartial judgement and the power to enforce justice. In modifying these symbols, we may inadvertently be signalling a retreat from these essential principles.

The focus should be on ensuring that the justice system truly embodies the principles Lady Justice represents — principles that are not colonial relics but universal aspirations that are as relevant today as they were millennia ago. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

# Global Hunger Index: Misleading metrics

By: Santhosh Mathew

The recent Global Hunger Index (GHI) report, which places India at a dismal 105th position out of 127 countries, has raised eyebrows and sparked considerable debate. While hunger and malnutrition remain pressing global issues, the methodology and conclusions of the GHI, co-authored by two non-governmental organisations—Irish-based Concern Worldwide and German Welthungerhilfe—have drawn criticism, particularly from the Indian government and sections of society.

There is a growing concern that such reports may not just reflect statistics but also carry political and geopolitical undertones aimed at tarnishing India's image on the world stage. The GHI is based on four key indicators: the prevalence of undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality. The scores from these factors are compiled to place countries on a scale from zero (no hunger) to 100 (extreme hunger), with countries scoring closer to zero seen as having little or no hunger issues. India's score of 27.3 puts it in the "serious" hunger category, alongside 42 other countries. Critics of the GHI have raised several concerns about the methodology used in calculating India's score.

Firstly, the reliance on child mortality and child stunting indicators as primary components of the hunger index is problematic. India is a country with a large population, and while child malnutrition is a valid concern, this issue is not unique to India but rather shared by other developing countries. By focusing heavily on this aspect, the report seems to disproportionately penalise India.

Additionally, the GHI report uses outdated data from global sources such as the World Health Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). India, like many countries, has been undergoing significant improvements in food security through government initiatives such as the National Food Security Act, the Mid-day Meal Scheme, and public

lic distribution system reforms.

However, these efforts do not seem to be adequately represented in the data used for the GHI. Many believe that the Global Hunger Index is not just about numbers but also about shaping narratives.

By positioning India in such a negative light, the report seems to overshadow the country's genuine achievements. India's economy is among the fastest-growing in the world, and its agricultural output has been consistently high. The country's food production is more than sufficient to meet the needs of its population. India has become a net exporter of food grains and has successfully launched programs to improve access to food for its vast population. Given this backdrop, how can India be ranked lower than countries facing severe internal strife, economic collapse and war, such as Afghanistan or even smaller nations like Bangladesh and Nepal?

It's essential to question the intentions behind these rankings. Are they an honest reflection of hunger, or do they serve other interests? Reports like the Global Hunger Index can have far-reaching consequences, not just for the countries they assess but also for global perceptions.

The fact that the organisations behind the GHI—Concern Worldwide (Irish) and Welthungerhilfe (German)—hail from Western countries has not gone unnoticed. It raises the question of whether the index is truly impartial or if it subtly reflects geopolitical biases. India has made significant strides in addressing hunger and malnutrition, but it seems that these efforts are often ignored or underplayed by such indices.

For instance, the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, which provided free food grains to over 80 crore people during the COVID-19 pandemic, is one of the world's largest food security initiatives. The fact that India could provide this level of support during a global crisis contradicts the narrative of widespread hunger and undernourishment. To deny that hunger exists in India would

be dishonest, but the situation is far more complex than a single ranking can capture. Hunger is not a static issue; it is deeply intertwined with poverty, access to education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

The Indian government has been tackling these root causes of hunger through a multi-pronged approach that includes social welfare schemes, employment generation programmes like MGNREGA, and nutrition programs targeted at women and children.

Programmes such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) aim to provide supplementary nutrition to millions of pregnant and lactating women, along with children under six years of age. Meanwhile, the Mid-day Meal Scheme, which serves nutritious meals to school children, has had a significant impact on reducing malnutrition.

Despite these efforts, it is undeniable that India still faces challenges. The legacy of poverty, the vast size and population of the country, and regional disparities make it difficult to eliminate hunger overnight. The concerns raised by the Indian government about the Global Hunger Index are not without merit.

The index, while claiming to provide an objective measure of hunger, fails to capture the ground realities of individual nations. India, being the second-most populous country in the world, is bound to face issues that smaller nations with more homogeneous populations do not.

By painting India as a country where hunger is rampant, the GHI risks creating a false narrative that undermines the substantial progress made by the country. It also risks discouraging the efforts of those working tirelessly on the ground to ensure that no one goes to bed hungry.

What is needed is not biased rankings or politically motivated reports but genuine collaboration between nations to tackle the global hunger crisis. As we reflect on the GHI, one thing is clear: statistics alone do not tell the whole story. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)



The summit was attended by 36 countries, highlighting the failure of US-led efforts to isolate Russia over its actions in Ukraine

## Putin presides over BRICS summit seeking to expand Russia's clout

**KAZAN, Oct 24:** Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday presided over a closing session of a summit of the BRICS bloc of developing economies, hailing its role as a counterbalance to the West.

The three-day summit in the city of Kazan covered the deepening of financial cooperation, including the development of alternatives to Western-dominated payment systems, as well as settling regional conflicts and moving to expand the BRICS group of countries.

The alliance that initially included Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa has expanded to embrace Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Malaysia have formally applied to become members, and several other countries have expressed interest in joining.

Speaking during Thursday's session, which included countries that consider joining the grouping, Putin said they all "share similar aspirations and values and a vision of new democratic global order."

The summit was attended by 36



countries, highlighting the failure of US-led efforts to isolate Russia over its actions in Ukraine. The Kremlin touted the summit as "the largest foreign policy event ever held" by Russia.

Russia has specifically pushed for the creation of a new payment system that would offer an alternative to the global bank messaging network SWIFT and allow Moscow to dodge Western sanctions and trade with partners.

In a joint declaration issued Wednesday, the summit participants voiced concern about "the disruptive effect of unlawful uni-

lateral coercive measures, including illegal sanctions" and reiterated their commitment to enhancing financial cooperation within BRICS.

They noted the benefits of "faster, low-cost, more efficient, transparent, safe and inclusive cross-border payment instruments built upon the principle of minimising trade barriers and non-discriminatory access."

China's President Xi Jinping has emphasised the bloc's role in ensuring global security. Xi noted that China and Brazil have put forward a peace plan for Ukraine and

sought to rally broader international support for it. Ukraine has rejected the proposal.

Putin and Xi had announced a "no-limits" partnership weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. They already met twice earlier this year, in Beijing in May and at a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Kazakhstan in July. Russia's cooperation with India has also flourished as New Delhi sees Moscow as a time-tested partner since Cold War times despite Russia's close ties with India's main rival, China.

While Western allies want India to be more active in persuading Moscow to end the fighting in Ukraine, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has avoided condemning Russia while emphasising a peaceful settlement.

Putin, who held a series of bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the summit, was set to meet Thursday with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who is making his first visit to Russia in more than two years. Guterres's trip to Kazan has drawn an angry reaction from Kyiv. (AP)

## Turkiye strikes Kurdish militant targets in Syria and Iraq for second day

**ANKARA, Oct 24:** Türkiye struck suspected Kurdish militant targets in Syria and Iraq for a second day on Thursday following an attack on the premises of a key defense company which killed at least five people, the state-run news agency reported.

The National Intelligence Organization targeted numerous "strategic locations" used by the Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK, or by Syrian Kurdish militia that are affiliated with the militants, the Anadolu Agency reported. The targets included military, intelligence, energy and infrastructure facilities and ammunition depots, the report said. A security official said armed drones were used in Thursday's strikes. On Wednesday, Türkiye's air force carried out airstrikes against similar targets in northern Syria and northern Iraq, hours after government officials blamed the deadly attack at the headquarters of the aerospace and defense company TUSAS, on the PKK.

Defence Minister Yasar Guler said Thursday that 47 alleged PKK targets were destroyed in Wednesday's airstrikes — 29 in Iraq and 18 in Syria.

"Our noble nation should rest assured that we will continue with increasing determination our struggle to eliminate the evil forces that threaten the security and peace of

our country and people, until the last terrorist disappears from this geography," Guler said.

The assailants — a man and a woman — arrived at the TUSAS premises in the outskirts of Ankara in a taxi they commandeered after killing its driver, reports said. Armed with assault rifles, they set off explosives and opened fire, killing four people at TUSAS, including a security personnel and a mechanical engineer.

Security teams were dispatched as soon as the attack started at around 3:30 pm, the interior minister said. The two assailants were also killed and more than 20 people were injured in the attack. There was no immediate statement from the PKK on the attack or the Turkish airstrikes. In Syria, the main U.S.-backed force said Turkish strikes in the north of the country killed 12 civilians and wounded 25.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said Turkish warplanes and drones struck bakeries, power stations, oil facilities and local police checkpoints.

TUSAS designs, manufactures and assembles civilian and military aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles and other defense industry and space systems. Its defense systems have been credited as key to Türkiye gaining an upper hand in its fight against Kurdish militants.

The attack occurred a day after the leader of Türkiye's far-right nationalist party that's allied with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan raised the possibility that the PKK's imprisoned leader could be granted parole if he renounces violence and disbands his organization.

Abdullah Ocalan, who was captured in 1999, is serving a life sentence on a prison island off Istanbul. In a related development, his nephew Omer Ocalan announced on the social platform X that on Wednesday family members were allowed to visit him for the first time since March 2020.

Omer Ocalan, a lawmaker from Türkiye's pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party, also conveyed a message from Abdullah Ocalan, saying he was being kept in isolation and offering to work to end the conflict "if the conditions are right."

"I have the theoretical and practical power to (transform) this process from one grounded in conflict and violence to one that is grounded on law and politics," Omer Ocalan quoted his uncle as saying. The PKK has been fighting for autonomy in southeast Türkiye in a conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people since the 1980s. It is considered a terrorist group by Türkiye and its Western allies. (AP)

## Trash carried by North Korean balloon again falls on presidential compound in Seoul

**SEOUL, Oct 24:** Trash carried by a North Korean balloon fell on the presidential compound in central Seoul on Thursday in a second case raising concerns about the vulnerability of key South Korean sites during potential North Korean aggression.

The incident comes after the rival Koreas ramped up threats and rhetoric against each other over North Korea's claims that South Korea flew drones over its capital Pyongyang to scatter propaganda leaflets this month.

No dangerous items were found in the rubbish that was dropped on the ground when one of the North Korean balloons burst over the South Korean presidential compound on Thursday morning, South Korea's presidential security service said in a statement.

North Korea has sent thousands of balloons carrying bags of rubbish like plastic and paper waste into South Korea since late May in a resumption of a Cold War-style psychological campaign. The trash that fell on the South Korean presidential compound in July contained no hazardous materials as well.

It wasn't immediately known whether South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol was at the compound during the latest incident. Later Thursday, he met visiting Polish President Andrzej Duda at his office.

South Korean media reported that North Korean leaflets criticising Yoon and his wife Kim Keon Hee were found on Thursday in Seoul's Yongsan district, where Yoon's presidential office is located. Media published photos of some leaflets that described Kim as a latter-day Marie Antoinette, the queen who was beheaded in 1793 during the French Revolution.

The reports said it was the first time that North Korean propaganda leaflets have been found in South Korea since the North began its balloon campaign five months ago.

The South Korean presidential security service didn't immediately confirm the report. Experts say North Korea likely lacks sophisticated technology to drop balloons on specific targets.

"Whether the balloons have GPS or not, it's all about launching them in large numbers and hitting the right altitude based on wind direction and speed, so that they can ride those winds to travel," Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute, said.

"While some media are saying the accuracy of the balloons has improved, that improved accuracy isn't because they equipped them with some sort of guidance system, but rather because it's the season when winds blow southward," Lee said.

North Korea has earlier accused South Korea of infiltrating drones to drop propaganda leaflets over Pyongyang three times this month and threatened military responses if it happened again. South Korea has refused to confirm whether it sent drones but warned that North Korea would face the end of its regime if the safety of South Korean citizens is threatened.

North Korea said its balloon activities were a tit-for-tat action against South Korean activists launching anti-Pyongyang leaflets via their own balloons.

South Korea responded by restarting propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts at border areas, prompting North Korea to turn on their own frontline loudspeakers.

The Koreas' Cold War-style campaigns come as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has increased the pace of his weapons tests and expanded military cooperation with Russia. US and South Korean officials said Wednesday that 3,000 North Korean troops have been deployed to Russia and are training at several locations. South Korean officials say North Korea eventually aims to send a total of 10,000 troops to Russia to support its war efforts in Ukraine.

South Korea is concerned that Russia may reward North Korea by giving it sophisticated technologies that could improve the North's nuclear and missile programs that target South Korea and the United States. (AP)

## Palestinian officials say Israeli strike on school-turned-shelter in Gaza has killed 16

**DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), Oct 24:** An Israeli strike on a school where displaced people were sheltering in the central Gaza Strip killed at least 16 people on Thursday, Palestinian medical officials said.

Another 32 people were wounded in the strike in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp, according to the Awda Hospital, which received the casualties.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli mili-

tary. Israel has carried out several strikes on schools-turned-shelters in recent months, saying it precisely targets Hamas militants hiding out among civilians. The strikes often kill women and children.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting another 250.

Around 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, a third of

whom are believed to be dead.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were combatants but says women and children make up more than half the fatalities. The Israeli military says it has killed over 17,000 fighters, without providing evidence.

The war has displaced around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, often multiple times. Hundreds of

thousands of people are crammed into tent camps along the coast after entire neighbourhoods in many areas were pounded to rubble.

Months of cease-fire negotiations brokered by the United States, Egypt and Qatar sputtered to a halt over the summer. The war has meanwhile expanded to Lebanon, where Israel launched a ground invasion more than three weeks ago after trading fire with the Hezbollah militant group for much of the past year. (AP)

## Macron says France will provide 100 million-euro aid package to support Lebanon

**PARIS, Oct 24:** France pledged to provide a 100-million euro (USD 108-million) package to support Lebanon at an international conference on Thursday, as President Emmanuel Macron said "massive aid" is needed to support the country where war between Hezbollah militants and Israel has displaced a million people, killed over 2,500 and deepened an economic crisis.

"In the immediate term, massive aid is needed for the Lebanese population, both for the hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the war and for the communities hosting them," Macron said in his opening speech at the conference.

French organisers hope participants' financial pledges of humanitarian aid will meet the USD 426 million the United Nations says is urgently needed.

Italy this week announced new aid of 10 million euros (USD 10.8 million) and Germany on Wednesday pledged an additional 60 million euros (USD 64.7 million) for people in Lebanon.

Macron condemned Israel for continuing its military operations in Lebanon, "in the South, in Beirut, elsewhere, and that the number of civilian victims continues to rise," and reiterated his call for a ceasefire.

Paris also seeks to help restore Lebanon's sovereignty and strengthen its institutions. The country, where Hezbollah effectively operates as a state within a state, has been without a president for two years while political factions fail



agree on a new one.

But the international conference comes as critics say French President Emmanuel Macron's diplomatic approach in the Middle East has been blurred by his apparent evolving approach and sometimes chaotic communication. Still, France's historic links with Lebanon, a former colony, and its influential diplomacy give Paris momentum to coordinate "a proper response to the massive challenge that the war in Lebanon now poses," said Middle East expert Rym Montaz, editor in chief of Carnegie Europe's blog Strategic Europe.

The French "are trying to make sure that international donors get to hear firsthand from the actors on the ground in Lebanon who can best describe the most immediate needs caused by the Israeli aggression that has forcibly displaced 20% of the Lebanese population over the course of two weeks," she said.

Israel in the past month has launched a major aerial bombardment and ground

invasion of Lebanon as it targets Hezbollah, with strikes hitting the capital, Beirut, and elsewhere.

The International Organization for Migration has said about 800,000 people are displaced, with many now in overcrowded shelters, while others have fled across the border into Syria. The cash-strapped Lebanese government is ill-prepared to deal with the crisis or the increased demands on its health system. A number of hospitals have been evacuated because of nearby airstrikes and fears that they might be targeted.

In recent weeks, Macron appeared to toughen his stance against Israel while repeatedly calling for a cease-fire in both Lebanon and Gaza, condemning the "unbearable human toll." He reiterated his call on Monday while speaking by phone with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his office said.

There have been recent tensions between the French and Israeli leaders, especially after Macron called for a halt to arms exports for use in Gaza.

Macron has also strongly condemned the "deliberate" targeting by Israel of UN peacekeepers in southern Lebanon, which Israel has denied.

Thursday's conference involves ministers and officials from over 70 countries and international organisations, including the European Union and regional partners, Macron's office said. Acting Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, who met with Macron on Wednesday, will attend. (AP)

## 2 arrested in Sri Lanka for allegedly planning terror attack on Israelis

**COLOMBO, Oct 24:** Two persons have been arrested in Sri Lanka on suspicion of planning a terror attack on Israeli nationals in the country after India provided intelligence on the possible threat, police said on Thursday.

Security was beefed up in the eastern coast surfing resort of Arugam Bay following information about a possible attack in the area.

Two persons have been arrested by the Terrorism Investigation Division of the police.

Both arrests have come as a result of Indian intelligence information sharing over the security alert in Arugam Bay, police said.

One of the suspects had arrived in the country from Iraq, it said. The police said it had received information on October 7 on a possible attack and the security was strengthened in the areas two weeks ago, the police said. The Indian alert had said the attack could take place between 19 and 23 October.

On Wednesday, the US embassy and the British High Commission in Colombo issued statements warning their citizens that they had received credible information targeting Arugam Bay and tourists are strongly urged to avoid the area until further notice. (PTI)

The Information Ministry announced it had banned 400 books that clashed with Islamic and Afghan values

## Afghan province bans all media from showing images of living things to comply with Taliban laws

**ISLAMABAD, Oct 24:** An Afghan province has banned all media from showing images of living things to ensure compliance with the Taliban's morality laws.

Thursday's decision was announced by Information Ministry officials in Helmand, the latest province to crack down on broadcasting and photography of humans and animals.

In August, the country's Vice and Virtue Ministry published laws regulating aspects of everyday life like public transportation, shaving, the media and celebrations reflecting authorities' interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia.

Article 17 bans the publi-



cation of images of living beings.

Helmand officials said the filming and photography of living things would stop immediately. They gave no further information about enforcement or exceptions.

Last week, Taliban run-media stopped showing images of living things in the provinces of Takhar, Maidan

Wardak and Kandahar in observance of the laws.

Some private channels are reported to have also stopped running pictures and videos or living things to ensure compliance.

No other Muslim-majority country imposes similar restrictions, including Iran and Saudi Arabia. During their previous rule in the late

1990s, the Taliban banned most television, radio and newspapers altogether.

Also Thursday, the Information Ministry announced it had banned 400 books that clashed with Islamic and Afghan values.

The outlawed books have been collected from stores and publishing houses and replaced by religious texts, including the Qur'an.

A spokesman for the ministry, Khubaib Ghofran, wrote on X: "Any book written according to the nefarious plans of enemies in order to destroy the thought, faith, unity and culture of this nation will be collected by the Ministry of Information and Culture." (AP)

## Ex-Pak PM Imran Khan's wife released on bail in Toshkhana corruption case

**ISLAMABAD, Oct 24:** Bushra Bibi, the wife of Pakistan's jailed former premier Imran Khan, was on Thursday released on bail nearly nine months after her arrest in the Toshkhana corruption case.

The release came a day after the Islamabad High Court judge, Justice Mian Muhammad Aurangzeb, accepted the bail plea of the 50-year-old former first lady against a surety bond of Rs 1 million.

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party confirmed Bushra's release in a WhatsApp message.

"Bushra Bibi, the former First Lady, has been released from the prison," it said, adding that she was first arrested on January 31. Bushra was arrested after a court convicted and sentenced the couple to 14 years in jail in a corruption case.

The Toshkhana case involves allegations of corruption against Khan and his wife for receiving profit from the sale of gifts received from foreign dig-

nities.

Earlier, Justice Aurangzeb, hearing the bail plea, had questioned the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) investigative officer about the necessity of further interrogation of the former first lady.

The officer confirmed that no additional investigation was required.

Bushra is Khan's third wife and a spiritual healer. Meanwhile, the indictment proceedings against Khan and Bushra, scheduled on Wednesday were postponed due to security concerns as the hearing set to take place at Rawalpindi's high-security Adiala Jail was moved to Islamabad's Judicial Complex.

However, security concerns continued to prevent the proceedings, and the court rescheduled the indictment for October 26.

Bushra's release comes as a relief to the PTI as well as Khan, who has been insisting that his wife had nothing to do with the case. (PTI)



## Arms, ammunition recovered in Manipur

IMPHAL, Oct 24: Security forces have recovered arms and ammunition during separate search operations in Manipur's Kakching and Thoubal districts, the police said on Thursday.

The seized arms included hand grenades, rifles and handguns.

The security forces found one INSAS rifle without a magazine, one 9mm pistol, three hand grenades, three carbine magazines, four 9mm ammunition and others from Wabagai buffalo farm areas in Kakching, the police said in a statement.

In another operation at Kwarok Maring in Thoubal district, a country-made 9mm pistol, one SBBL gun, two hand grenades, one INSAS Magazine, three 12-bore cartridges, and a radio set, it said.

The northeastern state has been in the grip of ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki communities since May last year. (PTI)

## Arunachal announces 3 pc hike in DA for regular employees

ITANAGAR, Oct 24: The Arunachal Pradesh government has announced a 3 per cent increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) for its regular employees and pensioners, respectively, with effect from July 1.

There are 68,818 regular employees in the northeastern state. With the revision, the DA and DR will rise from 50 per cent to 53 per cent, providing enhanced financial support.

Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein announced the hike on Wednesday.

Mein, who also holds the finance, planning and investment portfolios, in a statement said that the decision to enhance the DA and DR aligns with the Centre's policy and aims to benefit state government employees, all India service officers serving in the state, central government employees on deputation in the state, as well as pensioners and their families.

Additionally, the House Rent Allowance (HRA) has been increased to 30 per cent, 20 and 10 per cent, for various categories of towns.

The total financial implication of the decision is estimated at ₹ 63.92 crore from July 2024 to March 2025. (PTI)

## LOST

I've lost all educational documents as well as testimonials including admit card, registration, mark sheets, pass certificates of HSLC/1997, HS/1999 and Degree/2002. If anyone trace or find it, kindly contact me.

**Mudit Kumar Borah**  
S/O Li Sunil Kumar Borah,  
Amulapatty, Nagaon (Assam)

## AFFIDAVIT

I, Smit Bipanju Bora, have corrected my name from Bipanju Bora Deka to Bipanju Bora through Morigaon District Commissioner on 21st October, 2024. In the pension book of my deceased husband Puheshwar Deka vide P. P. O. N o. A D P / PPO/GPO/2012/008223 wherein my name is recorded as Bipanju Bora Deka as wife instead of Bipanju Bora. Bipanju Bora and Bipanju Bora Deka is the same and one person.

# Focus on safeguarding life, property and ecosystem

## Comprehensive plan underway to mitigate glacial lake outbursts in Sikkim: CM Tamang

GANGTOK, Oct 24: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Thursday said the state government is coming up with a comprehensive plan to mitigate risks associated with Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF).

"Under the proposed GLOF mitigation measures, we will take steps to safeguard human life and property, as well as protect the ecosystem from future threats posed by such natural disasters," he said in a social media post following a meeting with officials from the department of science and technology. Given the state's vulnerability to natural hazards, it is crucial to establish a mechanism for preventive actions, he emphasised.

"We will adopt diverse technologies, including remote sensing for early warning systems, and with the active participation of local communities, we will confront these challenges effectively," the CM added.

CM Tamang directed the Science and Technology Department to maintain focus on delivering exceptional results in preventing GLOF incidents.

He also mentioned plans to visit affected areas towards the end of the year to gain a comprehensive on-the-ground perspective.



The Chief Minister expressed gratitude to the Centre for providing budget allocations to implement GLOF prevention measures.

On October 3-4, 2023, Sikkim experienced a

glacial lake outburst that triggered a surge in the Teesta River, resulting in the death of over 44 people and significant damage to road and communication infrastructure. (PTI)

## Arunachal CEO urges political parties to help publish error-free electoral roll



ITANAGAR, Oct 24: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Pawan Kumar Sain on Thursday urged political parties to actively take part in bringing out an error-free electoral roll.

Addressing a meeting with representatives of political parties, Sain emphasised that they should activate their district units and ensure appointments of booth-level agents (BLAs) at all polling stations to assist the booth-level officers (BLOs) in obtaining an error-free electoral roll in the state.

The annual summary revision of

photo electoral rolls is on in all the 60 assembly constituencies of the state, an official statement said.

The CEO highlighted that during the revision period of claims and objections, a BLA can submit a maximum of 10 forms in a day and not more than 30 forms during the entire period of filing of claims and objections.

"The BLA must furnish a declaration citing he is satisfied with the correctness of submitted claims and objections," Sain added.

Deputy Chief Electoral Officer Shania Kayem Mize in her address

explained the details of the special summary revision and said that the integrated draft electoral roll would be published on October 29 and the copies would be shared with the political parties.

"The final electoral roll would be published on January 6 next year and the same will be made available on the CEO's official website," she added.

Altogether 2,233 polling stations, manned by BLOs at polling station level will witness the execution of revision activities.

Arunachal Pradesh has a total of 8,90,762 electors, including 4,53,374 females and three third-gender voters in the draft electoral roll.

"The electoral population ratio in the state is 558, while the overall gender ratio is 1,037 with 100 per cent EPIC coverage," the statement said.

The meeting was attended by representatives of BJP, Congress, People's Party of Arunachal (PPA) and Aam Aadmi Party, the statement added. (PTI)

## New plant species 'Begonia Neisti' discovered in Arunachal

Botanists highlight biodiversity of Dibang Valley, stress need for conservation

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 24: A new species of flowering plant, Begonia neisti, was discovered in the remote Dibang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh, said an official statement on Thursday.

The discovery was made by Dr Nazir Ahmad Bhat, Assistant Professor at the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM), in collaboration with Bipankar Hajong, PhD Scholar at CSIR-North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR-NEIST), and Dr Pankaj Bharali, senior scientist at CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat. The newly discovered Begonia neisti is noted for its distinctive variegated leaves, marked by white-silver spots and dark brownish-red patches near vein junctions.

"The large leaves and striking white stripe on the stems and petioles distinguish it from other species in the Begonia genus," the statement quoted Dr Bhat as saying. The species thrives in the moist, hilly slopes between Hunli and Anini in Arunachal Pradesh, where it flowers from November to January.

The discovery was confirmed through advanced molecular phylogenetic analysis, specifically using the ITS2 genetic marker, which revealed close evolutionary ties with other Begonia species from the Indian subcontinent. The findings were recently published in the Nordic Journal of Botany, detailing the plant's unique morphology, genetics, and ecological importance.



Despite the excitement surrounding its discovery, Begonia neisti has been classified as Data Deficient (DD) under IUCN Red List criteria. The expansion of roads in its native habitat poses a threat to the plant's survival, sparking calls for conservation efforts.

"The discovery underscores the rich biodiversity of Arunachal Pradesh and the urgent need for ongoing botanical exploration and preservation in the region," noted the researchers.

As development pressures increase in the region, conservationists are urging authorities to monitor the species closely and implement measures to protect its habitat. The discovery of Begonia neisti further highlights the global significance of the Eastern Himalayas as a biodiversity hotspot.

## Sikkim CM announces changes to simplify official functions

GANGTOK, Oct 24: Sikkim Chief Minister's Office issued a circular mandating shorter government functions, limiting refreshments and replacing sofas with cushioned chairs for seating, officials said on Thursday. Chief Minister PS Tamang announced these changes at a function held on Wednesday. During the function, he emphasised the importance of respecting time, saying government programmes should commence as scheduled, even if chief guests have not yet arrived.

He also mentioned that offering snacks during programmes should be discontinued, as it is unnecessary and does not contribute to the objectives of the events.

Tamang noted that a single chair would suffice for special guests, eliminating the need for organisers to transport heavy sofas for events. He observed that organisers, particularly in rural areas, often face difficulties transporting sofas and other items for even small official functions.

"All these unwanted formalities should be done away with. People have been adhering to unnecessary practices that do not contribute to the success of a programme," the Chief Minister said. (PTI)

## Giriraj Singh to inaugurate NIFT Meghalaya, review development plans

SHILLONG, Oct 24: Union Minister of Textiles Giriraj Singh has announced that he will be making his official two-day visit to Meghalaya on October 25 and 26.

On October 25, the Union Minister is slated to inaugurate the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) permanent campus at Umsawl and attend the convocation ceremony of NIFT.

Meghalaya Chief Minister, Conrad K Sangma, and Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles, Pabitra Margherita will also attend the inaugural programme.

Later in the day, the Union Minister will visit Ri Bhoi district and review the Aspirational District Programme and the implementation of various central government schemes to discuss developmental initiatives during his meeting with the district administration officials. On October 26, the Minister will visit the Eri Silk Village in Umden to interact with local weavers, artisans, and tourism stakeholders.

Additionally, he will further visit beneficiaries in key locations of the region, including Umkon-1 Anganwadi Centre (AWC) and Margdar Primary Health Centre (PHC).

The visit of the Union Minister underscores the priority given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi government with a focus on infrastructure, connectivity, healthcare, education, startups, entrepreneurship, and tourism development aligning with the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Viksit Purvottar'. (NNN)

## SMS and web-based IT project launched for Nagaland employees

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Oct 24: The SMS and web-based IT project launched on Thursday for the benefit of state government employees of Nagaland.

The office of the principal accountant general (accounts and entitlement) Kohima on Thursday said the project was launched in pursuance to the initiative of the office of the comptroller and auditor general of India. The project encapsulates entitlement functions like pension, GPF and GE.

The SMS and web-based IT project aims to bring transparency at every stage of pension, GPF and leave/leave encashment finalisation by providing SMS to their registered mobile numbers.

For pension, the retiring officials will be intimated during receipt, clarification required, if any, and finalisation of pension case. The SMS will provide website link and temporary user ID and password (which has to be changed after logging in) to

download the digitally signed personal copy of pension authorities. To avail this facility pensioners have to furnish mobile numbers along with their pension documents.

The GPF subscribers will be intimated for receipt and finalisation of their respective GPF final payment case. The SMS will provide website link and temporary user ID and password (which has to be changed after logging in) to download their respective pay slip/LAR/LARR/LER once the same is authorised and uploaded on the website.

To avail this facility, the gazetted officers have to furnish mobile numbers mentioning name, designation and department.

No. AYUSH/E-551499/9

## EDUCATIONAL NOTICE (Counseling of BAMS & BHMS Course)

This is for information of all concerned that counseling for admission into BAMS BHMS Course scheduled to be held on 25/10/2024 and 26/10/2024 which was issued vide notice no AYUSH/E-551499/3 dated 19.10.2024 and AYSHU.551467/3 dated 19.10.2024 and published in different newspapers on 20.10.2024 has been cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

New date of counseling for BAMS & BHMS Course will be intimated shortly in newspapers. Candidates are requested to visit the official website of Directorate of Ayush, Assam (<https://ayush.assam.gov.in/>) regularly.

Sd/-  
Director of Ayush, Assam  
Dispur, Guwahati-6

Janasanyog /D/7818/24/25-Oct-24

## APPLICATION FOR EMPANELMENT OF HONORARY VISITING CONSULTANT (HVS)

EOI No. H/41/HVS/TSK/2024-2025 Date: 22-10-2024

Chief Medical Superintendent, N.F. Railway, Tinsukia invites applications for empanelment of One Honorary Visiting Consultants (HVS) of Ophthalmology at Divisional Railway Hospital, Dibrugarh.

**Terms & Conditions:-** 1. **Educational Qualifications & experience:** (a) For Super-Specialty: Minimum qualification will be post Doctoral qualification, DM/MCH or equivalent. (b) For Specialty: Post-graduate degree from recognized University. Minimum 3 (Three) years experience in the professional work related to concerned Specialty after obtaining P.G. degree. (c) Where suitable candidates with PG degree are not available PG Diploma holders with 5 years experience in the professional work related to concerned specialty after obtaining P.G. diploma.

2. **Age Profile:** During first time engagement, the preferred age in between 30 Years to 64 years. Upper age limit of continued engagement is 65 Years.

3. **Current rate of honorarium to be paid:**

Hours	Specialist	Super Specialist
2 hours a day for 6 days/week	₹52,000/- PM	₹64,000/- PM
2 hours a day for 4 days/week	₹32,000/- PM	₹40,000/- PM
2 hours a day for 2 days/week	₹16,000/- PM	₹20,000/- PM

4. **Tenure of working:** Each time the offer is given for a year only. After expiry of one year, extension can be given on an yearly basis subject to age limit.

5. Details terms & conditions as per Railway Board's L/No. 2014/H-1/12/8/HVS/Policy dated 19/05/2018 can also be obtained from Railway website.

6. Short listed Doctors will be intimated in course of time after approval from Competent Authority.

7. The application in plain paper along with address, contact number, passport size photograph & attested copies of documents (MBBS Certificate, Post graduate degree certificate, Post doctoral degree certificate (where applicable), Registration Certificate, additional qualification & experience, PAN card, E-mail ID and Phone number) may be submitted at the address below.

8. Address for correspondence - Chief Medical Superintendent, N.F. Railway, Tinsukia.

9. Last date of receipt of application 01.00 PM of 05-11-2024.

10. Visit us at: <http://www.nfr.indianrailway.gov.in>

Chief Medical Superintendent, Tinsukia  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

## E-AUCTION FOR CATERING STALLS ASSETS OVER LUMDING DIVISION

E-Auction for 29 Nos. Catering Stalls Assets over Lumding Division for a period of 05 (five) years. Details are as under. **Auction Catalogue No.:** CATER-LMG-04-24; **Auction Start Date & Time (All Lots):** 10:00 hrs. on 08-11-2024; **Auction Close Date & Time:** 15:10 hrs. on 08-11-2024; **Rate Unit:** Annual Licensing Fee; **Trips/Days:** 1826.

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Stations
AA/1	Catg-LMG-JID-GMU-7-22-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Jagiroad
AA/2	Catg-LMG-LKA-GMU-3-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Lanka
AA/3	Catg-LMG-DMR-GMU-19-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Dharmanagar
AA/4	Catg-LMG-NHLG-GMU-12-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	New Haflong
AA/5	Catg-LMG-DSR-GMU-122-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Dhansiri
AA/6	Catg-LMG-CPK-GMU-5-22-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Chaparmukh
AA/7	Catg-LMG-KWM-GMU-21-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Kampur
AA/8	Catg-LMG-JID-GMU-9-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	Jagiroad
AA/9	Catg-LMG-NHLG-GMU-10-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	New Haflong
AA/10	Catg-LMG-NHLG-GMU-11-23-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	New Haflong
AB/1	Catg-LMG-DMR-SMU-93-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Dharmanagar
AB/2	Catg-LMG-HKD-SMU-90-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Hailakandi
AB/3	Catg-LMG-NHLG-SMU-82-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	New Haflong
AB/4	Catg-LMG-LKA-SMU-59-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Lanka
AB/5	Catg-LMG-KWM-SMU-62-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Kampur
AB/6	Catg-LMG-GHY-SMU-126-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Guwahati
AB/7	Catg-LMG-GHY-SMU-127-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Guwahati
AB/8	Catg-LMG-LMG-SMU-41-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Lumding
AB/9	Catg-LMG-SZR-SMU-42-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Sarupathar
AB/10	Catg-LMG-LKA-SMU-55-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Lanka
AB/11	Catg-LMG-DMR-SMU-95-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Dharmanagar
AB/12	Catg-LMG-HKD-SMU-91-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Hailakandi
AB/13	Catg-LMG-JID-SMU-78-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Jagiroad
AB/14	Catg-LMG-LKA-SMU-60-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Lanka
AB/15	Catg-LMG-AGTL-SMU-40-23-2 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Agartala
AB/16	Catg-LMG-KUGT-SMU-97-24-2 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Kumarghat
AB/17	Catg-LMG-GHY-SMU-124-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Guwahati
AB/18	Catg-LMG-LMG-SMU-35-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Lumding
AB/19	Catg-LMG-JID-SMU-75-23-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Jagiroad

Prospective bidders are requested to visit E-Auction leasing module of IREPS website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Lumding  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
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# Congress not to field its candidates in UP Assembly bypolls

## 'Will support INDIA bloc nominees'

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** The Congress on Thursday announced it would not field candidates in the nine Assembly bypolls in Uttar Pradesh and would support the INDIA bloc nominees, asserting that the prevailing political situation demands prioritising efforts to protect the Constitution over party interests.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here along with the Congress' Uttar Pradesh chief Ajay Rai, AICC general secretary in-charge of the state Avinash Pande said party workers and leaders would unconditionally work to ensure the victory of Samajwadi Party candidates or that of other INDIA bloc parties.

"The manner in which political and social tensions are rising in UP and in the country and keeping in mind the objectives with which the INDIA bloc was created, on that basis, the question is not about strengthening organisation or forwarding party interests but to save the Constitution and to strengthen mutual harmony," Pande said. Keeping this in mind, on the suggestions of UP Congress leaders, the party has decided not to field



its candidates but strongly work for the victory of the INDIA bloc nominees, he said.

"We have to ensure the defeat of the BJP nominees so that it has a positive impact on the Assembly polls in 2027," Pande asserted.

Pande said recently, under the aegis of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee, 'Samvidhan Bachao Sankalp Sammelan' were organised in all the 10 Assembly constituencies where bypolls are due.

"If the BJP is not stopped today, then the Constitution, brotherhood

and mutual harmony will weaken in the times to come," he alleged. He asserted that it was not about seats but victory on these seats.

Pande said the decision was arrived at after consultations involving Rai, Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhana Misra, AICC general secretary organisation K C Venugopal, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, alongwith the SP leadership.

The Congress' assertion came a day after SP chief Akhilesh Yadav

said all the INDIA bloc candidates would contest the bypolls on the party's 'cycle' election symbol.

Pande, however, clarified that the candidate and symbol both would be of the SP or any other INDIA bloc ally, and not of the Congress.

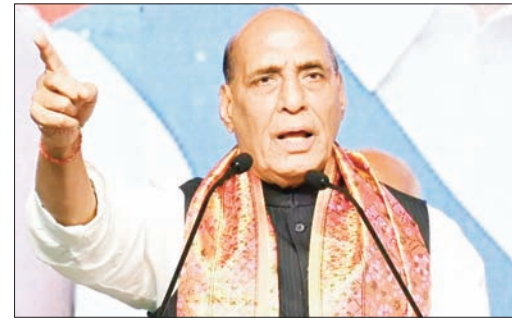
Yadav had earlier said the alliance's decision was not informed by any seat-sharing maths but a pursuit of victory.

"The Congress and the Samajwadi Party are united and stand shoulder to shoulder for a big victory. The INDIA bloc is going to write a new chapter of victory in this by-election," Yadav said in a post on X on Wednesday.

Yadav on Thursday shared on X a picture with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and emphasised their shared commitment to protect the Constitution, reservation and social harmony.

The nine assembly seats going to polls are Katehari, Karhal, Mirapur, Ghaziabad, Majhawan, Sisamau, Khair, Phulpur and Kundark. The bypolls are scheduled to be held on November 13 and the results will be announced on November 23. (PTI)

# Broad consensus achieved on restoring ground situation along LAC: Rajnath Singh



**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** A broad consensus has been achieved by India and China on restoring the "ground situation" along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) pursuant to talks, including for patrolling and grazing cattle in the traditional areas, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday.

Speaking at the Chanakya Defence Dialogue 2024, Singh described the agreement reached between the two countries as a "significant development" that underscores the importance of defence dialogue on the global stage.

"India and China have been involved in talks both at military and diplomatic levels to resolve differences in certain areas along the LAC. Pursuant to the talks, a broad consensus has been achieved to restore the ground situation based on the principle of equal and mutual security," Singh said.

"The consensus achieved includes patrolling and grazing (cattle) in the traditional areas. This is the power of engaging in continuous dialogue because sooner or later, solutions will emerge," the defence minister added.

In a major breakthrough in ending the over four-year-long military standoff, India on Monday announced that it has reached an agreement with China on patrolling along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

It is understood that the agreement will facilitate patrolling in Depsang and Demchok areas as there were

major unresolved issues in these two places.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping endorsed the India-China agreement on patrolling and disengagement along the LAC in eastern Ladakh on the margins of the BRICS Summit in Russia.

They also issued directions to revive various bilateral dialogue mechanisms, signalling attempts to normalise ties that were hit by a military clash at Galwan in eastern Ladakh in 2020.

Speaking at the event, Singh also said security is a broad and multifaceted concept that encompasses many other factors, including internal stability, economic resilience, and the protection of critical infrastructure, all of which are essential to a nation's overall security framework.

"Security is often associated with border protection. When we think of security, images of soldiers stationed on the borders, aircraft patrolling the skies, and naval ships guarding the seas typically come to mind. However, as you all know, security extends far beyond border defence," Singh said.

The defence minister also said that indigenous manufacturing of arms and defence equipment strengthens the security infrastructure as well as the economy of the country.

Had defence been recognised as an integral component of development and studied more comprehensively in the past, India might have achieved self-reliance in the defence sector much earlier, Singh said, adding that self-reliance in defence is a prominent national goal, but does not imply working in isolation from the global community.

"When India speaks of self-reliance, it is important to clarify that it does not imply working in isolation from the global community. Instead, as we pursue our goal of self-reliance, we remain dedicated to fostering an equitable and inclusive world order," he said.

India is committed to collaborating closely with all the nations to promote a fair and just international system, the defence minister said. (PTI)

# Kumaraswamy's son Nikhil named NDA candidate for Channapatna Assembly bypoll

**BENGALURU, Oct 24:** JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy was on Thursday announced as the NDA candidate for the November 13 Assembly bypolls from Channapatna, a seat vacated by his father and Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy after being elected to Lok Sabha.

The 36-year-old is pitted against five time MLA from the segment and former Minister C P Yogeeshwara of the Congress, who joined the party after quitting BJP on Wednesday.

Nikhil's mother Anitha Kumaraswamy, a former MLA, had unsuccessfully contested from the seat in 2013, and faced defeat against Yogeeshwara, a political heavyweight in the constituency.

With Yogeeshwara joining Congress to contest the Channapatna bypoll, pressure was mounting on Kumaraswamy from party workers and leaders to field Nikhil. Kumaraswamy had held marathon meetings with party workers and leaders, especially those from Channapatna, over the last couple of days, before deciding on Nikhil's name.

A meeting was held with alliance partner BJP, at veteran leader B S Yediyurappa's residence on Thursday, before Nikhil's name was formally announced.

"We announce Nikhil Kumaraswamy as NDA candidate for Channapatna bypolls...hundred percent he will win. Together we will tour Channapatna and he (Nikhil) will win with a big margin," Yediyurappa told reporters, flanked by Kumaraswamy, Nikhil and other BJP-JD(S) leaders.

It is said that Kumaraswamy was under a dilemma, as Nikhil was not keen on contesting but buckled under pressure from party workers. Nikhil had said he was in favour of the party fielding a local JD(S) worker or a leader as candidate.

This is the third electoral battle for the actor-turned politician grandson of JD(S) patriarch and former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda.

He had unsuccessfully contested the 2023 Assembly from the neighbouring Ramanagara, which had propelled Deve Gowda to the post of chief minister, and the seat that was also represented by both his parents. He earlier had a disastrous electoral debut when he had lost to BJP-backed independent candidate Sumalatha Ambareesh in the Mandya Lok Sabha constituency in the 2019 polls. (PTI)

# Use 'clock' symbol in Maharashtra assembly elections with disclaimer: SC to Ajit Pawar

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** The Supreme Court on Thursday directed Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar to use the "clock" symbol in its publicity material in the upcoming Maharashtra assembly elections with a disclaimer that the matter was sub-judice before it.

Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta and Ujjal Bhuyan passed the order on a plea filed by the rival Sharad Pawar-led NCP faction as it issued a notice to the Ajit Pawar-led faction.

The top court on March 19 and April 4 had directed the Ajit Pawar-led faction to issue a public notice in the newspapers in English, Hindi and Marathi editions notifying that the allocation of "clock" symbol was sub-judice. The apex court had further said the Ajit faction was permitted to use the symbol subject to the case's final outcome.

During the proceedings on Thursday, the bench took note of

the submissions of senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who appeared for the Sharad Pawar faction. Singhvi submitted the opponent group should be restrained from using the "clock" symbol as it didn't use the disclaimer in their campaign materials and "misled" voters.

"They have been blatantly not using the disclaimer. They want to piggyback on me. Nobody should enjoy the goodwill of the symbol which is sub-judice," submitted Singhvi.

The top court directed Ajit Pawar to file a fresh undertaking over its March 19 and April 4 directions to issue a public notice -- "NCP's 'clock' symbol is sub-judice" -- was being meticulously complied with even during the process of the state assembly elections.

"File a fresh undertaking as well that you have not violated our directions in the past and till the end of elections. If there is any violation,

we will take note of it. We expect both sides to comply with our directions. Please don't create an embarrassing situation," the bench said.

Singhvi said the Ajit Pawar group should be allocated a new symbol for the assembly elections.

Senior advocate Balbir Singh, appearing for Ajit Pawar, opposed Singhvi's submissions and said all pamphlets and campaign materials contained the disclaimers as directed by the apex court.

"They are showing false documents. We have given disclaimers in our publicity material. They came up with the same allegations during the Lok Sabha polls which was rejected. I am willing to file all documents and pamphlets," Singh said. The matter has been posted for hearing on November 6.

Sharad Pawar moved the apex court against a February 6 order of the Election Commission of India (ECI) recognising Ajit Pawar-led group as the real NCP. (PTI)

# Farmers to block roads at few places in Punjab tomorrow

**CHANDIGARH, Oct 24:** Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) leader Sarwan Singh Pandher on Thursday said farmers will resort to a road blockade at a few places in Punjab for an indefinite period from October 26 to protest against the "tardy" paddy procurement and other issues.

Pandher said the "chakka jam" for an indefinite period will be held at one place each in Sangrur and Moga districts and at Phagwara and Batala.

He told reporters here that the farmers will protest against the "tardy" paddy procurement and lifting, the DAP fertiliser supplies not being adequate, besides over the stubble-burning issue.

He said "red entries" have been made in the farm records of farmers burning stubble and cases slapped on them.

"These four points will be blocked for an indefinite period. We can block entire Punjab, but we still want to give time to the government.... Otherwise we will be forced to fight a do-or-die battle," the farmer leader said.

Pandher, who was talking to reporters here, during which some leaders of the

Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) were also present, blamed the Punjab government as well as the BJP-led Centre for the farmers' plight.

Paddy lifting from "mandis" (wholesale markets) in Punjab is hit after the state rice millers refused to mill the paddy till their demands were met.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann spoke to Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday, urging him to address the issues of the state's rice millers.

While the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab has blamed the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre for not evacuating the food-grain stock in the state to create sufficient space for storing fresh crop, the opposition Congress and Akali Dal have slammed the Mann government for the slow paddy procurement and lifting.

Hitting out at the AAP, Pandher said neither Arvind Kejriwal nor any of his leaders are speaking out over the farmers' plight.

"When Kejriwal was arrested (earlier this year), all the Punjab AAP MLAs went to Delhi to express solidarity. Can't they march now for the sake of farmers?" he asked. (PTI)

# Omar Abdullah meets PM Modi in Delhi

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday during his first visit to the national capital after assuming office last week, officials said.

In a remarkable victory in the recent assembly polls in the union territory, the first in 10 years, Abdullah's National Conference won 42 of the 90 assembly seats. In its first cabinet meeting, the new government passed a resolution urging the central government to restore the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir.

This restoration, according to the officials, is seen as a crucial step towards initiating a healing process, reinstating constitutional rights and safeguarding the



unique identity of the region's residents.

The chief minister has been authorised by the cabinet to engage with the prime minister and the central government to advocate for the reinstatement of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood.

This resolution was also approved by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor

Manoj Sinha.

Abdullah's meeting with Modi comes four days after terrorists of banned Lashkar-e-Taiba gunned down seven people -- a local doctor and six non-local labourers -- in Ganderbal district's Gagangir.

Earlier in the day, Abdullah met Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari at his office.

During the meeting, Abdullah apprised Gadkari about the road connectivity projects in Jammu and Kashmir, the officials said.

The chief minister presented Gadkari with a traditional Kashmiri shawl.

Abdullah had met Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday and the meeting lasted nearly 30 minutes. (PTI)

# All in the family: Parties give chance to kin of leaders in Maharashtra polls

**MUMBAI, Oct 24:** While political parties often accuse rivals of dynastic politics, during elections, they do not shy away from fielding relatives of their established leaders -- as the lists of candidates for the next month's Maharashtra assembly polls show.

Most of the prominent political parties in the state have so far declared at least the first list of their candidates for the November 20 elections to 288 assembly seats.

From the ruling side, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party have declared the first list of candidates, while from the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) has come out with the first list so far.

Their lists show that a significant number of contenders are closely related to the current ministers, legislators or MPs, including their sons or daughters, wives and brothers or sisters.

Sreejaya Chavan, the daughter of former chief minister and Congress turncoat Ashok Chavan who joined the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, is among the kin of a political heavyweight picked by the saffron party for the November 20 contest.

She will contest from the family's traditional constituency of Bhokar in Nanded district.

Vinod Shelar, the brother of Mumbai BJP chief Ashish Shelar, has been fielded by the party from the Malad West constituency, while Ashish himself has been re-nominated from the Bandra West seat in Mumbai. The BJP has replaced its sitting MLA Babanrao Pachpute from the Shrigonda assembly constituency (in Ahilyanagar district) with his wife, Pratibha Pachpute, due to his health issues.

The saffron party has dropped the name of Ganpat Gaikwad, its MLA from Kalyan East constituency in Thane district, and instead nominated his wife, Sulabha, to contest from the same constituency. Gaikwad is currently in jail for opening fire on a Shiv Sena

worker inside a police station a few months ago.

Former Union minister and Lok Sabha member Narayan Rane's son, Nitesh, currently represents the Kankavli assembly segment. His elder brother, Nilesh, a former Lok Sabha member, has now joined the ruling Shiv Sena and is set to contest from the Kudal constituency, which falls under the family's home district of Sindhudurg.

In Chinchwad constituency in Pune district, the BJP replaced sitting MLA Ashwini Jagtap, the wife of late party leader Laxman Jagtap, but gave ticket to his brother Shankar Jagtap. This is his first election.

Shinde-led Sena has nominated Kiran Samant, the brother of state minister Uday Samant, from the Rajapur seat in Ratnagiri district.

The family members of Shiv Sena leaders Sandipan Bhumare and Ravindra Waikar, who became members of the Lok Sabha after this year's general elections, have also been given a chance by the party from the respective constituencies that the two former MLAs represented.

While Bhumare's son Vilas will contest from the Paithan in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar district, Waikar's wife Manisha will test electoral waters from the Jogeshwari East assembly seat.

The ruling NCP already nominated Pankaj Bhujbal as the party MLC earlier this month. He is the son of senior party leader Chhagan Bhujbal, who is contesting from the Yeola assembly segment in Nashik district.

But since Bhujbal's nephew Sameer is keen on contesting the election, he will fight as an independent candidate against Sena's incumbent MLA Suhas Kande from Nandgaon constituency in Nashik.

Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena (UBT) has renominated sitting MLA Aaditya Thackeray from the Worli seat in Mumbai, while his cousin Varun Sardesai will contest his maiden election from Bandra East. (PTI)

# SEBI Chief Buch skips PAC meeting, BJP moves speaker over chair Venugopal's conduct

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch skipped a Parliament's Public Accounts Committee meeting on Thursday, prompting panel head K C Venugopal to postpone the sitting, with NDA members accusing him of taking unilateral decisions and lodging a protest with the Lok Sabha speaker.

Venugopal told reporters that the committee received a communication from Buch at 9.30 am that she and her team will not be able to appear before the panel due to "exigencies".

He indicated his disapproval of her decision noting that Buch had confirmed her presence after her earlier request for an exemption was denied.

"Considering a woman's request, we thought it better to postpone today's meeting for another day," Venugopal said as he along with other Opposition members left the venue minutes after the meeting began amid sharp exchanges between the ruling alliance and INDIA bloc MPs.

An opposition member alleged that Buch informing the committee about her decision with less than two hours to go for the meeting to



begin virtually amounts to contempt of the parliamentary panel.

BJP members accused Venugopal, a senior Congress leader, of not letting them put across their views. They later charged him with acting in a "suo motu" manner, suggesting that his decision to summon Buch and even some other regulatory bodies established by the acts of Parliament was his own and guided by partisan politics.

PAC member and BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters that there are many standing commit-

tees that review the performance of various bodies e.g. the panel on finance scrutinises the work of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the Reserve Bank of India.

The Communication and Information Technology panel scrutinises the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, he added.

"Your (Venugopal) own words are 'suo motu'. How did you decide? The PAC's job is to consider CAG reports. We have this information from reliable sources that the CAG has made no mention of

SEBI. This entire conduct is unpatriotic. The conduct of chairperson in the way he adjourned, did not allow us to speak. And (he) walked out (which) shows he has extraneous political considerations," Prasad said.

The former law minister said ruling National Democratic Alliance was in a majority at Thursday's meeting.

"Our main objection was how did he (Venugopal) make suo motu selection of subjects without consulting other members. Nobody had an inkling of the list that was prepared," said Prasad, flanked by other NDA members of the panel.

He also objected to the PAC secretariat officials leaving the venue after Venugopal adjourned the meeting when many other members remained inside.

The NDA members met Speaker Om Birla later to register their protest against Venugopal.

The committee's decision to include in its agenda the performance review of regulatory bodies established by legislations had invited no protest, but Venugopal's move to call Buch raised hackles of the BJP members as she has been at the centre of a political row

ignited by US firm Hindenburg's allegations against her.

Hindenburg's accusation of conflict of interest against Buch over the SEBI's probe into the short-seller's allegations against the Adani Group was seized upon by the Congress to seek her ouster and to attack the government, giving political dimensions to the panel's missive to her to appear before it.

PAC member and BJP MP Nishikant Dubey wrote to Speaker Om Birla last month against Venugopal, accusing the senior Congress leader of raking up "non-existent" issues to defame the central government and allegedly destabilise the country's financial structure and economy.

Accusing Venugopal of "unconstitutional and disdainful" conduct, Dubey claimed the committee's chairperson actions are guided by political motivations after the Congress was "compelled" by voters to sit in the opposition benches following the Lok Sabha polls.

Claiming that unverified allegations by a foreign company like Hindenburg against Buch were part of such a campaign, he alleged that the "India Chapter" of this toolkit has become active. (PTI)



*Have to remove the negative part of the technology and keep the positive part: Court*

# Delhi HC asks Centre to file report on issue of deepfakes

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the Centre to file a status report on the measures the Central government has taken to counter the increasing menace of the deepfake technology.

Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela further asked for the report to highlight measures taken at the government level and whether there would be a high-powered committee to suggest solutions.

The court while hearing two petitions against the non-regulation of deepfake technology called it a "very serious issue" which required to be dealt with by the authorities on a "priority" basis.

"What are you doing? Everyday deepfakes are on the increase... I am glad that industry people have started taking some initiatives and are spreading awareness about it among consumers," said the bench.

Deepfake technology allows creation of realistic videos, audio recordings and images that could be manipulated to mislead the viewers by superimposing the likeness of one person onto another, altering their words and actions, thereby presenting a false narrative or spreading misinformation. The court observed that the artificial intelligence (AI) could not be prohibited as people needed it.

"We have to remove the negative part of the technology and keep the positive part," it added.

The high court further underlined the rising number of hoax bomb threats on flights,



enquiring if the government had set up an expert committee and, if yes, who were its members.

"We want clean answers. It has to be a serious committee," the bench said.

The additional solicitor general representing the Centre said the union ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) was looking into the issue.

The counsel appearing for one of the petitioners submitted that several countries had enacted a legislation on the issue and India was far behind.

Most deepfakes, he said, were related to women, including nudity, and the authori-

ties were unable to resolve the issue.

The government was stated to have issued general advisories to the intermediaries which were of no use.

The court granted three weeks to the Centre to file the status report and posted the hearing on November 21.

The high court had previously noted that the antidote to AI was technology.

In its response over websites granting access to deepfakes and blocking such platforms, the MeitY had said it was not empowered to monitor any online content on the internet on a suo motu basis.

"Any content/URL/websites on the inter-

net can only be blocked as per the established legal procedure," it had said.

Journalist Rajat Sharma has filed one of the pleas and sought directions to block public access to applications and software enabling the creation of such content. He said deepfake technology posed a significant threat to various aspects of society, including disinformation campaigns, and undermined the integrity of public discourse and the democratic process.

The other petition has been filed by advocate Chaitanya Rohilla, against deepfakes and the unregulated use of artificial intelligence.

The ministry, said in its reply, that it had taken various steps to address proliferation of harmful applications (AI-enabled and deepfake) and illegal content.

In order to ensure an open, safe, trusted and accountable digital ecosystem, the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023 has been notified, it said.

Sharma's PIL said the Centre had made a statement of its intent to formulate regulation for dealing with deepfakes and synthetic content in November 2023, but it was yet to see the light of the day.

The PIL, therefore, sought a direction to the Centre to identify and block public access to the applications, software, platforms and websites enabling the creation of deepfakes.

The plea sought the government to issue a directive to all social media intermediaries to initiate immediate removal of deepfakes on a complaint. (PTI)

## Rain lashes parts of Bengal as severe cyclone 'Dana' moves closer to coast

**KOLKATA, Oct 24:** Several districts of West Bengal received moderate to heavy rain on Thursday morning, as severe cyclonic storm 'Dana' inched closer to the state's coast and that of neighbouring Odisha, the IMD said.

The cyclonic storm is likely to make landfall between Bhitarika National Park and Dhamra Port in Odisha early Friday with wind speeds of up to 120 kilometres per hour (kmph), it said.

The weather system lay 280 km southeast of Paradip (Odisha) and 370 km south-southeast of Sagar Island (West Bengal) at 2.30 am, the IMD said in a bulletin.

The cyclonic storm is set to bring heavy rainfall in several south Bengal districts, including Kolkata.

Advising fishermen not to venture into the sea, the Met Department said gale wind with speeds reaching 90-100 kmph gusting to 110 kmph is prevailing over north-west Bay of Bengal.

It warned that the wind speed over the area is likely to increase gradually to 100-110 kmph gusting to 120 kmph till Friday morning, and decrease thereafter.

The coastal districts of Bengal are experiencing moderate to heavy rain and gusty winds since the early hours of Thursday, while Kolkata woke up to an overcast sky and intermittent showers.

The bulletin warned of heavy to very heavy rainfall with extremely heavy downpour in isolated places

in the south Bengal districts of North and South 24 Parganas, Purba and Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram, Kolkata, Howrah and Hooghly districts on Thursday and Friday.

Public transportation to and from Kolkata's suburbs may get affected from the evening, as Eastern and South Eastern railways cancelled a large number of trains on Thursday and Friday, in view of the cyclone.

More than 170 express and passenger trains running through South Eastern Railway (SER) jurisdiction have been cancelled, an official said.

The trains cancelled were scheduled to depart from their originating stations between October 23 and October 27, he said.

The Kolkata-headquartered SER zone is spread across West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand.

Besides, the Eastern Railway (ER) will not operate any EMU local train from Sealdah station on its south and Hasnabad sections from 8 pm on Thursday till 10 am on Friday, the official said.

The ER also cancelled 68 suburban trains on the Howrah division on Friday morning, he said.

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) said it is on high alert and has mobilised vessels and aircraft to respond swiftly to any contingency over the Bay of Bengal.

Meanwhile, the NDRF said it has deployed several teams across south Bengal to tackle any emergency situation. (PTI)

## Grenade goes off in Baramulla court evidence room



**SRINAGAR, Oct 24:** A policeman was injured in an explosion in the evidence room of a court in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district, officials said on Thursday.

"A grenade (collected as evidence in a case) exploded inside the 'malkhana (evidence room)' of a court in Baramulla town on Thursday," a police official said.

One policeman was injured in the explosion and he was taken to a hospital, he said. Further details are awaited. (PTI)

## More than 70 flights receive bomb threats on Thursday

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** More than 70 flights of various Indian airlines received bomb threats on Thursday, according to sources.

The sources said around 20 flights each of Air India, Vistara, and IndiGo have got the threats while Akasa Air has got the threats for about 14 flights. In 11 days, nearly 250 flights operated by the Indian carriers have received the bomb threats.

An Akasa Air spokesperson said some of its flights operating on October 24 have received security alerts.

"The Akasa Air Emergency Response teams are monitoring the situation and are in touch with the security and regulatory authorities.

We are following all safety and security procedures in coordination with local authorities," the spokesperson said in a statement.

Earlier this week, Civil Aviation Minister K R a m m o h a n Naidu said the

government plans to take legislative actions to deal with instances of bomb threats to airlines, including placing perpetrators of such threats in the no-fly list. (PTI)

## Delhi Police busts fake visa syndicate, nabs key accused from Gujarat

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** The Delhi Police on Thursday said it busted a fake visa syndicate and nabbed a 35-year-old man from Surat in Gujarat.

The accused, who was brought to Delhi and arrested, has been identified as Prateek Shah, they said.

"Earlier this month, our team arrested five gang members -- Gaurav (28), Nitin Sharma (33), Sarabjeet Kaur (29), Gagandeep Kaur (32) and Reena Kaushal (42). During investigations, we learnt about Prateek Shah," Deputy Commissioner of Police (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani said.

On September 28, Kuldeep (21) arrived at Delhi's Indra Gandhi International Airport. During scrutiny of his travel documents, it was found that a fake Canadian visitor visa was affixed to his passport. An FIR was registered and investigation taken up in the matter, she said.

Kuldeep disclosed that he met an agent, who identified himself as Sandeep, through a common friend. Sandeep assured him passage to

Canada in exchange for Rs 18 lakh.

He also promised to arrange a job for Kuldeep in Canada.

Kuldeep gave the agent Rs 5 lakh in cash as advance and it was decided that the remainder would be paid after he reached Canada, Rangnani said.

The police said Sandeep arranged tickets and a visitor visa for Canada for Kuldeep.

Sandeep, who was apprehended from Kaithal in Haryana late in September, told the police that he ran a "syndicate" with his associates. The team later nabbed Gaurav, Nitin Sharma, Sarabjeet Kaur, Gagandeep Kaur and Reena Kaushal, who were found actively involved in this case, Rangnani said.

During their interrogation, the police learnt that Sarabjeet Kaur and Gagandeep Kaur used to post video advertisements on their social media accounts in which they guaranteed Canadian visas, even in refusal cases.

Interrogations revealed that the fake Canadian

visa for Kuldeep was prepared by an agent -- Prateek Shah -- an expert in design who prepared fake visa stickers for multiple countries from a factory in Surat.

"A team was formed and Shah was apprehended from Gujarat. During the police raid on his hideout, Shah was found hurriedly packing his equipment. He was preparing to relocate his factory, having received word about the arrest of his associates and realising that the police could arrive at his location," said Rangnani.

The police seized 14 fake visa stickers in the name of different people, nine rubber stamps of different countries, 16 dyes of countries such as Canada, Serbia, Azerbaijan, Macedonia and Bosnia, among others, 80 blank PR card chips, one large printer, a plastic sealing machine, gumming sheets containing holograms of Serbia, Bosnia, Azerbaijan, the UK, and Macedonia, two laptops, five basic mobile phones, 18 original passports and various stationery items. (PTI)

## Terrorists target non-local labourer in Tral

**SRINAGAR, Oct 24:** Terrorists shot at and injured a labourer from Uttar Pradesh in the Tral area of Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir Thursday morning, officials said.

Shubam Kumar, a resident of Bijnore, received a gunshot injury in the arm when the terrorists fired at him at Batagund village, the officials said.

They said Kumar has been rushed to a hospital for treatment.

This is a third attack on non-local labourers in Kashmir in the past one week.

Six non-local labourers and a local doctor were killed in a terror attack on a construction site in Ganderbal district on Sunday, while a labourer from Bihar was shot dead by terrorists in Shopian district on October 18. (PTI)

## CM Atishi kicks off Delhi State School Games

**NEW DELHI, Oct 24:** Chief Minister Atishi on Thursday inaugurated the Delhi State School games at the Chhatrasal Stadium, with a message of hope and encouragement for young athletes.

Addressing the event, Atishi expressed his belief that the participating students have the potential to compete in the Asian Games and Olympics.

"What we see here as a 10-15 minute game is backed by years of hard work that may not be immediately visible," she stated.

Atishi further said, "The children performing here may go on to compete at the national or international level. While other children were relaxing and enjoying themselves, our athletes were exercising and preparing, which is a significant achievement for us."

She mentioned that the Delhi government has tried to support students who aspire to move forward in sports.

"Sports coaching and equipment can be expensive, and children studying in government schools often come from simple families. That's why the state government has been running the Play and Progress scheme

for several years, providing ₹ 3-4 lakh for training and coaching for children up to 17 years old," she said.

She mentioned that from 2018 to 2022, over 1,500 athletes received support through the Play and Progress scheme, and we hope to support many more athletes through this initiative in the future.

Atishi said, "To support talented sportspersons, the government has launched the Mission Excellence initiative, where athletes can receive support of up to Rs 16 lakh for diet, coaching, and equipment. In the last four years, 400 such athletes have received ₹ 25 crore."

"Over 3,500 government, government-aided, and privately recognised schools from 29 zones across 15 districts participated in zonal sports competitions, including under-14, under-17, and 34 sports," said an official statement.

According to the statement, the winner of zonal sports competitions will compete in the Delhi State School Games, and sports activities for para-athlete students will be organised in 13 different sports during the Delhi State School Games. (PTI)

## Chhattisgarh govt launches 'Sugam App' for online property registration and curbing frauds

**RAIPUR, Oct 24:** The Chhattisgarh government's newly launched app for online registration of property has been getting a good response with more than 1,200 registrations being done through the platform since its inception earlier this week, an official said on Thursday.

The application, called 'Sugam (convenient) App', was launched on October 21 with an aim to make the property registration process more transparent and user-friendly, the public relations department official said.

Since its launch, the app has gained popularity, facilitating

over 1,200 property registrations across the state and marking a significant shift towards online registration, he said.

"The government is committed towards more and more technological applications and procedural improvements in the registry work for citizen empowerment. The Sugam app is an important step towards preventing property related fraud," state's Finance Minister O P Choudhary said in a statement. Complaints pertaining to property registration often surfaced wherein people would become victims of fraud in many ways. (PTI)

## Severe cyclone Dana moves closer to Odisha coast, evacuation efforts expedited

**IMD issues a 'red warning' (take action) for heavy to very heavy rainfall in seven districts**

**BHUBANESWAR, Oct 24:** Severe cyclonic storm Dana lay within 200 km of the Odisha coast on Thursday afternoon, as several parts of the state experienced heavy rain and squally winds, with the sea condition remaining rough, the IMD said.

The state government also expedited evacuation efforts in the coastal districts, as Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi held a review meeting and directed officials to ensure "zero casualty" due to the natural calamity.

The cyclone is likely to make landfall between Bhitarika National Park and Dhamra Port in Odisha early Friday with wind speeds of up to 120 kilometres per hour (kmph), the Met Department said.

The weather system over the Bay of Bengal moved north-northwestwards with a speed of 12 kmph during past the six hours, and lay centred about 210 km southeast of Paradip (Odisha), 240 km south-southeast of Dhamra (Odisha) and 310 km south of Sagar Island (West Bengal), the IMD said its latest bulletin.

"It is very likely to move north-northwestwards and cross north Odisha and



West Bengal coasts between Puri and Sagar Island close to Bhitarika National Park and Dhamra during midnight of 24th to morning of 25th October as a severe cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 100-110 kmph gusting to 120 kmph," it said.

Reports about uprooting of trees have been received from some areas of Balasore, Bhadrak, Bhitarika and Puri, leading to blocked roads, officials said.

Majhi said about three lakh people have been shifted to various cyclone shelters and the operation is continuing.

A total of 7,285 cyclone centres have so far been set up, and 91 medical teams deployed.

The authorities have also engaged 19 teams of the NDRF, 51 teams of the


ODRAF and fire services personnel in shifting people and clearing blocked roads, the officials said.

The highest rainfall of 62 mm was recorded at Paradip, while Rajnagar in Kendrapara district received 24 mm rain, in the last four hours, the Met office said.

Moderate to intense rain and thunderstorms with wind speeds of 30-40 kmph are likely to lash some parts of Bhadrak, Balasore, Jajpur, Cuttack, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapada and Puri districts during the day, it said.

Director of the Regional Meteorological Centre, Bhubaneswar, Manorama Mohanty said: "The severe cyclonic storm is likely to re-curve slightly towards west and west-southwards after landfall, triggering rain in southern Odisha around October 26. However, the landfall and wind speed predictions remain unchanged."

Meanwhile, the IMD issued a "red warning" (take action) for heavy to very heavy rainfall in seven districts -- Mayurbhanj, Cuttack, Jajpur, Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur -- on Thursday. (PTI)

EXAM SPECIAL TRAIN FOR ADRE EXAM SCHEDULED ON 27TH OCTOBER 2024					
It has been decided to run following Exam special trains to clear extra rush of examinees for ADRE exam scheduled on 27th October in Assam. The details of the special are given below.					
Train No. 05101 From Karimganj Jn. on 27-10-2024			Train No. 05102 From Silchar on 27-10-2024		
ARR.	DEP.	STATION	ARR.	DEP.	
---	04:00	Karimganj Jn.	23:40	---	
04:30	04:32	Bhanga	22:50	22:52	
04:49	04:55	Badarpur Jn.	22:25	22:30	
05:46	05:48	Salchakra	21:30	21:33	
06:40	---	Silchar	---	21:00	
Other Stoppages : New Karimganj, Chargola, Rupasibari, Panchgram, Katakhal Jn. & Arunachal.					
Composition : Driving power car-02, Trailer car-06= 08 Coaches					
Train No. 05119 From Mariani Jn. on 26-10-2024			Train No. 05120 From Narangi on 27-10-2024		
ARR.	DEP.	STATION	ARR.	DEP.	
---	15:35	Mariani Jn.	04:00	---	
16:25	16:30	Jorhat Town	03:07	03:12	
18:55	19:00	Furkating Jn.	00:53	00:58	
19:52	19:57	Sarupathar	23:40	23:45	
20:58	21:03	Dimapur	22:30	22:35	
23:00	23:05	Lumding Jn.	20:38	20:43	
00:36	00:41	Hojai	18:51	18:56	
02:07	02:12	Chaparmukh Jn	17:45	17:50	
03:31	03:33	Tetelia	16:17	16:19	
05:00	---	Narangi	---	15:30	
Other Stoppages : Cinnamara, Bhalukmara, Moabund, Barua Bamungao, Rangaliting, Badulipar, Khumtai, Numaligarh, Golaghat, Jamuguri, Bhilgaon, Barpathar, Naojan, Chongajan, Bokajan, Khotkhoti, Rangapahar, Dhansiri, Daldali, Diphu, Nailalung, Langchoilet, Barlongfer, Patharkhola, Lamsakhang, Habaipuri, Lanka, Dhalpukhuri, Jugijan, Jamunamukh, Kamrup, Laopani, Thekeraguri, Dharamtul, Sonuabary, Aujari, Jagiroad, Barahu, Kamrup Khetri, Digaru, Panbari, Thakurkuchi & Panikhati.					
Composition : Driving power car-02, Trailer car-06= 08 Coaches					
General Manager (Operations), Maligaon					
 <b>NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY</b>					
Train No. 05139 From Haibargaon on 26-10-2024			Train No. 05140 From Guwahati on 27-10-2024		
ARR.	DEP.	STATION	ARR.	DEP.	
---	14:00	Haibargaon	20:00	---	
14:58	15:03	Chaparmukh Jn.	18:22	18:27	
15:56	16:01	Jagiroad	17:20	17:22	
16:36	16:38	Digaru	16:27	16:29	
18:15	---	Guwahati	---	15:00	
Other Stoppages : Senchoa Jn., Bebeja, Phulaguri, Raha, Thekeraguri, Dharamtul, Sonuabary, Aujari, Barahu, Kamrup Khetri, Tetelia, Panbari, Thakurkuchi, Panikhati & Narangi.					
Composition : General Second Class-08, GSLR-02= 10 Coaches					
Train No. 05456 From Alipurduar Jn. on 26-10-2024			Train No. 05457 From Kamakhya on 27-10-2024		
ARR.	DEP.	STATION	ARR.	DEP.	
---	17:00	Alipurduar Jn.	03:30	---	
19:15	19:40	Dhubri	00:25	00:50	
21:34	21:36	Sapatgram	22:00	22:02	
22:15	22:17	Fakiragram Jn	21:50	21:52	
22:35	22:40	Kokrajhar	21:30	21:35	
23:56	00:01	New Bongaigaon	20:30	20:35	
01:07	01:12	Goalpara	19:05	19:10	
02:35	02:37	Boko	17:23	17:25	
04:30	---	Kamakhya	---	15:30	
Other Stoppages : New Coochbehar, Bidyadabri, Agomoni, Gaupur, Golakganj, Moterjhar, Basbari, Monglajhora, Tipkai, Salakati, Basugaon, Dantali, Majgaon Assam, Abhayapuri Assam, Jogighopa, Pancharatna, Krishnai, Dudhnoi, Amjonga, Rangjuli, Dhuipahara, Singra, Bamuniaga, Chaygaon, Mirza & Azara.					
Composition : AC first Class-01, AC 2 tier-01, AC 3 tier -03, Sleeper Class-08, LWLRM-01, LWS-2, LSLRD-01 = 17 Coaches					
Train No. 05679 From Jamira on 27-10-2024			Train No. 05680 From Silchar on 27-10-2024		
ARR.	DEP.	STATION	ARR.	DEP.	
---	04:00	Jamira	19:00	---	
05:03	05:05	Hailakandi	17:40	17:42	
07:10	---	Silchar	---	15:30	
Other Stoppages : Monipur Bagan, Katlichera, Mohammad Pur, Lalabazar, Monachera, Algapur, Katakhal Jn, Salchakra, Arunachal					
Composition : AC 2 tier-02, AC 3 tier -07, Sleeper Class-09, Second Class Day Coach-02, GSLR-01, GSLRD-01= 22 Coaches					



# DILWALE DULHANIA LE JAYENGE will continue to break its own record every year: Kajol

**MUMBAI, Oct 24:** "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge" is a phenomenon in Indian cinema and its success belongs to fans who have made it the longest running film in the world through their love, says lead star Kajol. A romantic blockbuster, the 1995 film continues to enjoy its screening at Mumbai's Maratha Mandir theatre even after all these years. The movie, starring Kajol as Simran and Shah Rukh Khan as Raj, turned 29 on October 20.

Reminiscing about the film, Kajol said the film feels real and relatable even today.

"It's the longest running film in the world right now. And it will continue to break its own record every year. But I think the part about DDLJ and 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' and all these films is that when you watch them they are real even today..."

"You like and love these characters. I really liked this story. I was fully into this film. I enjoyed the film. I loved the music, everything about it. It's an experience. DDLJ is a phenomenon and I feel that though we had definitely made the film, we didn't know that this was going to happen with the film. And we didn't make it with this aim," Kajol told PTI.

Directed by Aditya Chopra and produced by Yash Chopra, "DDLJ" tells the story of Raj and Simran, two young Indians raised abroad who fall in love during a European vacation, but must navigate traditional Indian values to be together. With its blend of love story, humour, and emotional depth, the film redefined the idea of Bollywood romance. It catapulted Kajol and Shah Rukh Khan to leading star status in the Hindi film industry.

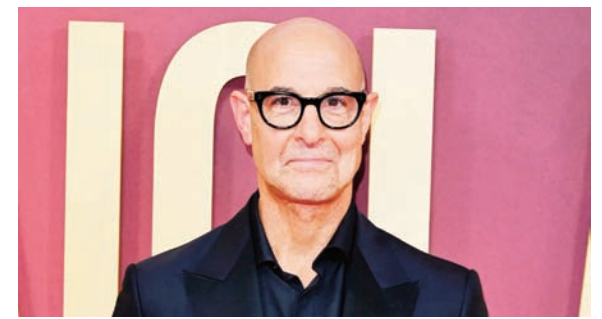
Fans have kept the movie relevant, Kajol said.

"All these years, they have been watching it and have made traditions in their families also. I met a guy who told me that, 'I took my girlfriend to the film 27 times. And then I proposed to her.' I said, 'See, you bored her with the film and that's why she said 'yes.' But he went and watched the movie with her again and eventually they had kids. And they've gone and taken their kids to watch this film as well. 'So I would love to take the credit for that, but it's really not mine or the team's,' she said.

Kajol will be next seen in "Do Patti", which is set to premiere on Netflix on October 25. Co-starring Kriti Sanon, who has also produced the movie through her banner Blue Butterfly Films, the movie is directed by Shashanka Chaturvedi and written by Kanika Dhillon. (PTI)



## I couldn't get a job after 'The Devil Wears Prada': Stanley Tucci



**LOS ANGELES, Oct 24:** Actor Stanley Tucci says he struggled to book jobs after starring in 2006's "The Devil Wears Prada" and took up whatever offers came his way. The actor played Nigel in the hit movie, also starring Anne Hathaway, Meryl Streep and Emily Blunt. Directed by David Frankel, the film was a box office success and also earned two Oscars.

"My career has always gone through these fluctuations, and sometimes it's just the business..."

"After 'The Devil Wears Prada', I couldn't get a job, and I didn't quite understand that, but that's just the way it was. So I went and did stuff that I didn't necessarily want to do, but I did it," he told The Vanity Fair magazine. Tucci, also known for films such as "The Lovely Bones", which earned him a best supporting actor Oscar nomination, and "Julie & Julia" and the "Hunger Games" franchise, also reflected upon resuming work after completing treatment for oral cancer.

"Having been sick six years ago, that threw a wrench into the works for a while, and then you slowly get back. But I had to start doing things."

The 63-year-old was diagnosed with a tumour at the base of his tongue back in 2017. He revealed his battle with the disease in 2021 after his treatment was "successful" and said the disease is unlikely to return.

"I needed to work because I needed money. I probably started working too soon. I didn't really have the energy to do it after the treatments, but you had to do it, and eventually you climb back up again," he added.

A sequel to "The Devil Wears Prada" was recently announced, but Tucci is yet to confirm if he'll reprise his role in the new film. (PTI)

## ROBERT PATTINSON TO PRODUCE 'PRIMETIME', LANCE OPPENHEIM TO DIRECT FILM

**LOS ANGELES, Oct 24:** "The Batman" star Robert Pattinson is set to produce "Primetime", a film set against the backdrop of TV journalism.

The movie, which hails from studio A24, will be directed by Lance Oppenheim of TV series "Ren Faire" fame. It is his first scripted feature film, penned by Ajon Singh.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, "Primetime" is said to follow the story of a journalist who takes on the underbelly of crime and changes television forever.

Insiders say the film draws inspiration from "To Catch a Predator", the 2000s reality show hosted by Chris Hansen.

Oppenheim is also attached to executive produce the film along with Singh.

Pattinson will produce "Primetime" via his Icki Eneo Arlo banner along with Brighton McCloskey, Range's Brian Kavanaugh Jones and Fred Berger. Square Peg's Lars Knudsen, Ari Aster and Tyler Campellone will also back the movie.

Pattinson served as an executive producer on the 2010 drama feature "Remember Me", which also starred him in the lead.

The actor will next be seen in "Mickey 17", a sci-fi black comedy directed by Bong Joon-ho. (PTI)



## Not interested in doing work on OTT, want to make theatrical movies: Dhulia

**MUMBAI, Oct 24:** Filmmaker Tigmanushu Dhulia says he is keen to make theatrical movies as the streaming platforms didn't turn out to be the creative space he had imagined them to be. Dhulia, known for films such as "Paan Singh Tomar" and "Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster", worked on OTT shows like "Criminal Justice", "The Great Indian Murder", and "Garmin", and even acted in shows such as "Tandav", "Rangbaaz", and "Kaalkoot". "People on OTT don't have a sense of content. What should be there, shouldn't be there, rather make a film with a producer. I'm not interested in doing work on OTT, even if I do it, then it means it is because ghar mein paisa nahi hai (because I need to run my kitchen). I had worked on OTT and I saw how it works, so I would not like to explore that. I'll try for the theatrical release of my films," the filmmaker told PTI. Dhulia's short film, "The Promise", made for the Royal Stag Barrel Select Large Short Films, screened at the ongoing Mumbai Academy of Moving Image's (MAMI) Mumbai Film Festival.

"The Promise" stars Jim Sarbh and Priyamani.

The filmmaker said when the team at the company asked him to do a short film, he was curious to explore the medium. "Short films are not formula-driven, you get to try something new regarding the story, so it was exciting to do," he said. As a director, Dhulia is awaiting the release of "Ghamasaan", a cop-dacoit thriller. It stars Pratik Gandhi as an honest cop and Arshad Warsi in the role of a dacoit. The movie was recently screened at the MAMI festival. (PTI)



## I had no idea I'll be working 50 years later, hoping I'll continue: Shabana Azmi



**MUMBAI, Oct 24:** Her first film opened the 'parallel' way for cinema that was both critically accepted and financially viable. Fifty years after "Ankur" and a career that successfully walked the twin paths, much like her debut movie, Shabana Azmi says the best is still to come.

The 74-year-old, famed for films as diverse as the intense "Paar" and the zany "Rocky and Rani Kii Prem Kahani", intends to move ahead with her "boots on". "When I started 50 years ago, I had no idea that 50 years later, I'll still be working, so it feels really good. I'm hoping that I'll continue working because acting is what I enjoy the most," Azmi told PTI in an interview. With an oeuvre spanning many classics and over 150 films, Azmi said she is only getting started.

"I always say that my career is about being at the right place at the right time. I've been very fortunate."

Azmi is the only actor to win the National Film Award for best actress five times – for "Ankur", "Arth", "Bhavna", "Khandhar", "Paar" and "Godmother". The actor, who has fronted the parallel cinema movement in India, has also

been the mainstay in many a commercial film. Right from "Amar Akbar Anthony", "Ek Hi Raasta" and "Parvarish" in the 1970s to "Rocky and Rani..." in 2023. She has also worked in several international projects, including the Steven Spielberg-produced series "Halo". Shekhar Kapur's "What's Love Gotta Do With It", Roberto Benigni starrer "Son of the Pink Panther" and Merchant Ivory's "In Custody".

"How many people get that? The last two-three years have been very satisfying... But I'm interested in working with younger directors, and also interested in working in mainstream cinema provided it is (with) a person with teeth," she said.

Azmi started a Hindi theatre group with fellow student Farooque Shaikh while still at college at St Xavier's in Mumbai. In 1971, she enrolled at Pune's Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), hoping it would lead to work with Ebrahim Alkazi at the National School of Drama in Delhi.

Before joining FTII, she had seen Jaya Bhaduri's diploma film "Suman" and remembers being mesmerised by it. "I had not seen that kind of acting in

Hindi cinema at all," said Azmi, who still does theatre.

She won the gold medal for best acting student and received her first acting offer, "Parinay", just four days later. And then she made her acting debut with "Ankur".

Has she ever thought of writing a script? "It is so easy being an actor. When I think of directing a film, so many people have asked me, (but) I find it so intimidating to work on a script and bring everybody on the same level... But I do look forward to working with Zoya and Farhan both," she said, referring to her stepchildren.

While it is important to have women directors, Azmi said it is also important that their lens is feminine.

"Because far too long, it has been the male gaze and we need to have a women's gaze. It is not necessary to have feminist gaze but a feminine gaze because I think men and women are different in how they view the world. It is not necessary that if you are a woman, you make only feminist films, you can make a thriller, comedy, a romance, but it should be through a woman's lens."

Azmi is also credited for paving the way for women actors to get roles of substance through her career in parallel cinema of the '70s and '80s.

The actor said she grew up thinking gender equality was a norm because of her parents, theatre artist and actor Shaikat Azmi and Urdu poet Kaifi Azmi. Both were leading names in the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) and the Progressive Writers Association (IWA).

"I took gender equality as a given. Only when I turned 19, did I realise that it was an exception rather than the rule and that took me by surprise," she said.

This perhaps reflected in her choices as well.

"That was the time when 'Ankur' became a beacon of light for parallel cinema and because it did so well commercially, it opened up a spate of completely different parts for women. That's why I say, 'I was at the right place at the right time'. So, it was left to art cinema to give agency and substantial parts to women because in mainstream cinema it was usually just the song and dance routine." (PTI)



# Raphinha steals the show with a hat trick in Barcelona's statement win over Bayern



**BARCELONA, Oct 24:** Barcelona's game against Bayern Munich was billed as a duel between Harry Kane and Robert Lewandowski. Then Raphinha stole the show and left to a standing ovation.

Kane and Lewandowski both scored, but the Brazilian winger's hat trick for Barcelona outshone

both of the strikers in Barcelona's 4-1 statement win in the Champions League on Wednesday.

"I have a fantastic team, and the players are unbelievable. But I've never had a player like Raphinha, because he's incredibly dynamic both with and without the ball," Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said. "Every single

team needs him, but we have him." Raphinha joined a select group of players who've scored hat tricks against Bayern in the Champions League — only Cristiano Ronaldo, Sergio Agüero and Roy Makaay had done it before. "He always gives 100% in good and bad times. He's working just as hard and giving every-

thing for all his teammates. I'm so happy for him tonight," defender Jules Koundé said of Raphinha.

Each of his three goals stood out in its own way. First, Raphinha darted in behind Bayern's defense to score in the very first minute, then he shot the ball between defender Dayot Upame-

cano's legs to score his second just before halftime.

The third goal saw Raphinha display his technique to control Lamine Yamal's cross-field pass on his chest and exploit the gap between two defenders before completing the hat trick.

Barcelona's fans were again on their feet to applaud when Raphinha, who had also captained the team because of Marc-André ter Stegen's injury, was substituted in the 75th, leaving him a little fresher for Saturday's "Clasico" against Real Madrid.

Raphinha's demolition job on the Bayern defense also means plaudits for Flick, who was the comprehensive winner against his old team, Bayern, with whom Flick beat Barcelona 8-2 in 2020.

The loss throws Bayern's season under new coach Vincent Kompany into turmoil.

Bayern began its Champions League campaign with a record-breaking 9-2 demolition of Croatia's Dinamo Zagreb but is now 23rd in the Champions League standings, one place below Zagreb, after back-to-back losses to Aston Villa and Barcelona.

Across all competitions, Bayern has won just one of its last five games.

The ease with which Raphinha was able to exploit gaps in the back line could reopen questions about whether Bayern, which has now conceded seven goals in its last three games, remains fragile in defense. (AP)

## Arsenal has discipline issue, could cost the team Premier League title

**LONDON, Oct 24:** Mikel Arteta felt he had no choice. The Arsenal manager saw his right-back Ben White receive a yellow card in the first half of the Champions League game against Shakhtar Donetsk on Tuesday and quickly came to a decision.

White needed to be removed at half-time. "We have played enough with 10 men in the recent period," Arteta said with a smirk. It is becoming abundantly clear: Arsenal has a discipline problem — and it might yet cost Arteta's team a shot at the English Premier League title. Arsenal has had three players sent off in the opening eight rounds of a league campaign that is seeing yellow cards being dished out at an unprecedented rate.

It continues something of a running theme under Arteta. Since he arrived as its manager in late 2019, Arsenal has collected 18 red cards in the Premier League — five more than the next team.

Tellingly for Arteta, the only games where Arsenal dropped points this season — the 1-1 home draw with Brighton, the 2-2 away draw at Manchester City and the 2-0 loss at Bournemouth on Saturday — came when the team had a player dismissed.

"We cannot continue to play with 10 men, especially at this level. You see how we struggled," Arteta said this week. "We need to eradicate it, it's clear. Why, the reason, how — it doesn't matter. We have to focus that it has to happen."

It particularly has to happen on Sunday, when Liverpool visits Emirates Stadium in the headline match of the league's ninth round. Liverpool is in first place, one point ahead of second-placed City and four clear of third-placed Arsenal.

A win would put Liverpool

seven points clear of Arsenal already — hardly an insurmountable deficit at this stage but one that would leave Arteta's players with little wiggle room.

Perhaps more importantly, it would likely leave Arsenal six points behind defending champion City, which is expected to swat aside winless Southampton on Saturday.

Arsenal's disciplinary issues come at the start of a season that has seen an average of 5.1 yellow cards awarded per game so far, according to league statistics supplier Opta.

That is far more than any previous Premier League, says Opta, which points out that last season's 4.2 yellows per game was a new record — surpassing 3.7 per game in the 1998-99 season. Two of Arsenal's dismissals — Declan Rice against Brighton and Leandro Trossard against City — saw the players in question each collect two yellow cards, the second for time-wasting by kicking the ball away.

William Saliba was handed a straight red against Bournemouth for bringing down Evanilson near the halfway line and denying what was adjudged to be a goal-scoring opportunity.

Saliba, perhaps Arteta's most important defender, will miss the Liverpool match as a result, at a time when Arsenal is already without captain Martin Odegaard (ankle) and might also be missing star winger Bukayo Saka (hamstring) and summer signing Riccardo Calafiori, who came off against Shakhtar with a twisted knee.

Liverpool will arrive on the back of 11 wins from its first 12 games in all competitions under new manager Arne Slot. That run contains six straight-away victories, a club record for the start of a single campaign. (AP)

# Clicking under Flick, Barcelona visits Real Madrid in first clasico for Mbappé

**BARCELONA, SPAIN, Oct 24:** When Real Madrid added Kylian Mbappé, Barcelona looked doomed to becoming a regular runner-up to its fierce rival.

Then Hansi Flick arrived with fresh ideas, Lamine Yamal blossomed into a star, his teammates stepped up their game, and Saturday's clasico promises to be a highly entertaining and close-fought match. It will be the first clasico for Mbappé and Flick. Barcelona leads La Liga by three points from second-placed Madrid. Real Madrid became the envy of

soccer when Mbappé walked away from Paris Saint-Germain and joined Madrid as a free agent last summer.

He has teamed up with the already brilliant Vinícius Júnior to form the most lethal one-two punch in soccer, especially when either has any room to dribble at defenses caught off guard.

They have scored eight goals across all competitions, while Vinícius also has seven assists. Vinícius arrives in particularly great form after his hat trick fueled a 5-2 comeback from two goals down

against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on Tuesday.

But with Rodrygo doubtful and Endrick unused by coach Carlo Ancelotti in recent games, Barcelona collectively may be able to counter Madrid's firepower up front.

Robert Lewandowski is playing at his best since arriving in Barcelona. Under Flick, his former coach at Bayern Munich, the 36-year-old Poland striker has scored 15 times, including a league-leading 12.

Flick has plenty of options. Pedri delivers the final pass, Dani Olmo gives it scor-

ing, and Flick has plucked a fine holding midfielder in Marc Casadó from the La Masia training academy.

Barcelona can also call on Netherlands mainstay Frenkie de Jong, Olympic gold medalist Fermín López, Pablo Torre, and Gavi Pérez, who recently returned from a serious leg injury.

Madrid will have to manage without serial winner Dani Carvajal after his season-ending leg injury. Lucas Vázquez will likely take his place at right back and have to tangle with Yamal. (AP)

## Marcus Thuram is transforming from an assist man to a leading goal-scorer at Inter

**ROME, Oct 24:** Last season, Marcus Thuram was Serie A's top assist man. This season, he's in the running for the top goal-scorer honour.

It's been quite a transformation for the France international during his second year in the Italian league.

Thuram's impact in front of the goal has been felt beyond Italy, too.

In the Champions League on Wednesday, he came off the bench to score the late winner in Inter's 1-0 victory at Young Boys. It was Thuram's eighth goal in 10 matches across all competitions and his first in Europe this season to go with his seven in eight Serie A appearances. In Serie A, only Atalanta's Mateo Retegui has scored more — with eight.

"Goals are always important, even more so if they help the team to win," Thuram said.

Only a couple of months into an extremely long club season that will conclude with the Club World Cup in June-July for Inter, Thuram is already more than halfway to his scoring mark of last season — which he finished with 15 goals and 14 assists across all competitions.

Thuram led Serie A with 13 assists last season but has yet to set up a goal this season — partly because strike partner Lautaro Martínez has had a slow start after leading Argentina to the Copa America trophy a couple of months after he and Thuram powered Inter to the Serie A title. His new goal-scoring form could also be a boost for France, with which Thuram has only two goals in 27 appearances.

Family derby for Marcus,

Khephren and Lilian ThuramUp next, though, it's "Italy's derby" where Inter hosts rival Juventus on Sunday in a match that is also a family derby for the Thurams. Younger brother Khephren is in his first season at Juventus, where dad Lilian once starred as a defender.

Both brothers are expected to start at the San Siro.

"My dad will support the Bianconeri," Marcus said. "Anyhow, it will still be wonderful for us all, and I won't be angry with him."

Inter has won five straight gamesAfter a slower-than-expected start to its title defense, Inter has rediscovered its form with five straight wins across all competitions following a derby loss to AC Milan a month ago that served as a wake-up call.

"You don't get five victories if the team isn't in good shape," coach Simone Inzaghi said. "We're working hard. In the Champions League we have seven points after three matches and we haven't conceded a goal." Juventus, meanwhile, is still struggling to find consistency under new coach Thiago Motta. The Bianconeri lost at Stuttgart 1-0 in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Balotelli could be close to Serie A returnStruggling Genoa is considering signing Mario Balotelli, who is out of contract since leaving Turkish club Adana Demirsport after last season. The 34-year-old Balotelli hasn't played in Serie A for more than four years — since he was with hometown club Brescia in 2019-20. He last played in Italy for Monza in Serie B in 2020-21. (AP)

# France interior minister urges stopping soccer matches when homophobic chants start

**PARIS, Oct 24:** France's interior minister says he wants soccer matches to be brought to a halt when homophobic chants are belted out by fans in stadiums.

Speaking to France Inter Radio on Thursday, Bruno Retailleau added they have identified two individuals who were suspected of starting the homophobic chants among Paris Saint-Germain fans during a home game against Strasbourg last week.

"They should be severely punished," Retailleau said. "It's become unbearable. We can no

longer put up with homophobic chanting. I won't stand for it any longer."

Homophobic chants, often heard at Ligue 1 matches, have been tolerated for a long time by club officials, and soccer authorities have struggled to find appropriate ways of tackling the issue. Following a match at the Parc des Princes five years ago between PSG and Marseille during which home fans used homophobic insults, the league launched an action plan allowing spectators to report sexist, homophobic or racist incidents they witness. The abuse has not

stopped, though.

PSG is playing bitter rival Marseille on Sunday and the latest offensive slurs were made about Marseille and its midfielder Adrien Rabiot. He is a former PSG player who appeared more than 200 times for the club from 2012-19, and his move to Marseille is seen as a betrayal.

PSG has condemned the latest abuse, reaffirming in a statement "its commitment against all forms of discrimination including homophobia."

French clubs have been sanctioned with fines, and the

league's disciplinary commission also ordered the closure of stands for similar cases in recent years. Also, French law provides for up to one year imprisonment and a 45,000 euros (\$47,600) fine when anti-gay insults are made in public.

Last season, some PSG players received a one-match suspended sentence by the league disciplinary committee for offensive chants aimed at Marseille after a home league match.

Ousmane Dembélé, Achraf Hakimi, Randal Kolo Muani and Layvin Kurzawa were

filmed using insults while celebrating at the end of a 4-0 win against Marseille. The four players issued apologies.

That match was also marred by homophobic chanting by sections of PSG fans targeting Marseille players. As a result, the league ordered the closure of the Auteuil stand behind one of the goals for two matches, including one that was suspended.

PSG fans are banned from attending Sunday's game in Marseille at Stade Velodrome for security reasons, with a history of clashes between rival fans. (AP)

# Bayern coach Kompany vows 'no excuses' after Champions League loss at Barcelona

**DUESSELDORF, GERMANY, Oct 24:** Vincent Kompany is facing his biggest challenge yet in his short stint as Bayern Munich coach. He says it's time to learn.

Kompany's Bayern was comprehensively outplayed in the 4-1 loss to Barcelona on Wednesday as Raphinha picked holes in the backline to score a hat trick. Kompany tried to respond with a quadruple substitution in the second half, but it had little impact.

Kompany told broadcaster DAZN that there could be "no excuses" and emphasized unity at a club which was notorious for its locker-room drama under his predecessors. "We will of course stick together and learn from this game," he said.

It was part of a broader slump by German clubs in the Champions League this week. Borussia Dortmund gave up a 2-0 lead in its 5-2 loss at Real Madrid, while Leipzig's loss to Liverpool left it with no points so far. Bayer Leverkusen seemed to have one eye on its Bundesliga

title defense after making eight changes in a 1-1 draw at Brest, while Stuttgart was the only team with much to celebrate after beating Juventus.

For Bayern, at least, the signs had been there earlier. Even after the high point of a 9-2 demolition of Dinamo Zagreb last month, Harry Kane warned Bayern had a tendency to lose focus and "against the top opposition we could get punished for that."

So it proved. "We had a spell in the first half when we looked really dangerous, but Barcelona played well, and we didn't exploit the time when we were better. Then we got punished in transitions," Kane said this week.

"We have to go away and learn from this. There was a moment for us when we looked dangerous, but perhaps we got a bit carried away trying to play the final ball too quickly."

Bayern remains top of the Bundesliga but has one win from its last five games in all competitions — though that was



by an impressive 4-0 over Stuttgart last week. Kompany's team will be expected to win on Sunday against Bochum, which is without a win and has two coaches sharing the top job after

Peter Zeidler was fired last week.

Still, Bochum's loud, compact, old-fashioned stadium can be a tricky place to visit, as Bayern found out in a 3-2 loss there

in February.

Dortmund coach Nuri Sahin's approach is under scrutiny, too.

The loss at Real Madrid on Tuesday — after leading 2-0 — not only raised questions about Sahin's tactical approach, but also continued a worrying trend away from home.

Consecutive away losses to Madrid, Union Berlin and Stuttgart have seen Dortmund concede a total of 12 goals, even as Dortmund kept up a perfect record of five wins from five at home under Sahin. Saturday's trip to Augsburg in the Bundesliga is a chance for a valuable away win.

One tactical switch brought particular criticism. When Sahin took off attacking midfielder Jamie Gittens, scorer of Dortmund's second goal, for defender Waldemar Anton in the 55th minute, Dortmund was leading Madrid 2-0. Seven minutes after that, it was 2-2.

"If you lose and concede five goals," Sahin said, "you can obviously say that the change of system was incorrect." (AP)



## India suffer early blow after Sundar stifles New Zealand in second Test



**PUNE, Oct 24:** All-rounder Washington Sundar justified his selection with a career-best 7/59 to help India bowl out New Zealand for 259, but the hosts lost skipper Rohit Sharma early in their first innings when stumps were drawn on day of the second Test, here on Thursday.

India crawled to 16 for one in 11 overs with Yashasvi Jaiswal (6 not out) and Shubman Gill (10 not out) at the crease, trailing by another 243 runs in the first innings.

Tim Southee cleaned up Rohit for a nine-ball duck, forcing the hosts to be extra cautious with the debacle of first innings in the Bengaluru Test still fresh in the mind.

Rohit, who was cleaned up for the third time in the series and for the second time by Southee, was squared up as he looked to defend in the line of the delivery but the ball moved away to beat his outside edge and crash into the off-stump.

Southee thus became the first among fast bowlers to take a wicket in this Test after a dominating show by the Indian spin duo of Sundar and R Ashwin (3/64), who did not

allow New Zealand to break free.

The 25-year-old Sundar, playing his first Test for India since March, 2021, ran through New Zealand after Ashwin claimed the first three wickets in the innings to move past his Australian peer Nathan Lyon in the list of highest wicket-takers in Tests.

Ashwin began by trapping New Zealand captain Tom Latham (15) in front of the wickets and getting Will Young (18) caught behind in the first session, while Sundar took the centrestage towards the end of the second.

While he was measly to begin with as New Zealand batters looked to consolidate, Sundar reaped rich dividends for his perseverance.

He swung the momentum in India's favour with two late wickets in the second session, including the in-form Rachin Ravindra, as New Zealand stumbled to 201/5 at tea.

Ravindra's dismissal close to the tea break proved instrumental as New Zealand could never recover from the blow and folded in the final session without much resistance. The young batter looked

primed for another big knock but Sundar's brilliance stopped him in his tracks.

Of his seven dismissals in an outstanding spell on a day one wicket, Sundar showed mastery in hitting the off-stump to snare five of his victims bowled, one pinned in front of the wickets while the other caught by fellow tweaker Ashwin.

Among those who were cleaned up by the Indian spinner were Ravindra, Tom Blundell (3), Mitchell Santner (33), Tim Southee (5) and Ajaz Patel (4).

The highlight, however, was the manner in which he cleaned up the in-form Ravindra, who looked good after his efforts of 134 and 39 not out in New Zealand's eight-wicket win in the opening Test.

Sundar pitched the ball just perfectly to have it spinning away from Ravindra's bat and crash into the off-stump, beating the in-form batter fair and square who had otherwise struck a perfect balance in attack and defence. At the top, Conway managed 76 from 141 balls with 11 fours but he was among Ashwin's three wickets at the top.

The Kiwis' opener used his reverse sweeps against the spinners and drives down the wicket against the Indian pacers to good effect to accumulate his runs, but he had only himself to blame for missing out on scoring a century again.

On an innocuous delivery outside off, Conway went for a stroke but got an edge to be caught behind off Ashwin.

New Zealand's woes compounded when off-colour batters in skipper Latham and Mitchell continued to struggle for runs despite spending considerable time in the middle. (PTI)

## Kensing Rongpi selected chief referee for 6th Assam Masters games Badminton competition



**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Oct 24:** To supervise the 6th Assam Masters games Badminton competition organised by Assam Masters Games Association (AMGA) to be held from October 26 to 27 here at Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) indoor stadium, KASA badminton secretary, Kensing Rongpi has been selected as the chief referee for the whole competition. Joysing Tokbi, general secretary, Karbi Anglong Masters Games Association will be director for the competition.

The AMGA has also selected umpires to judge the competition and they are Mridul Rongpi, Stephenson Tisso, Somaz Enghi, Harbamon Phangcho, Junaram Ronghang, Amrit Rongpi, Sikari Bey, Khogen Terang, Kedalo Rengma and Bidy Terang.

KAMGA general secretary, Tokbi informed that the KAMGA is prepared and ready to host the 6th Assam Masters games on badminton, here. Players from all over Assam will come to take part in the event.

Tokbi also informed that in the 6th Assam State Master Games held at Titabor on October 21, Mongalsing Hanse from Karbi Anglong received silver medal in swimming.

## All Assam Karate Championship: Guwahati leads medal tally at end of Day 2

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Oct 24:** The final results of day 1 and 2 of the ongoing All Assam Karate Championship held here at Sarsing Teron Multi Purpose Sports Complex of Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) are out. The competition is organised jointly by All Assam Karate Association (AKA) and Karbi Anglong Karate-do Association (KAKA).

At the end of day 2, Guwahati is leading the medal tally with 5 gold, 3 silver and 8 bronze medals followed by Dibrugarh with 1 gold, 1 silver and 2 bronze medals and Kamrup with 1 silver and 3 bronze medals. Darrang secured 2 gold and 1 silver medals. The host district Karbi Anglong could manage to collect only 2 gold medals.

Rangia has collected 1 silver and 2 bronze medals, Lakhimpur got 1 gold and 1 bronze, Sivasagar with 2 silver medals, Tinsukia with 1 gold medal, Jorhat with 1 bronze medal, Charaideo with 1 bronze medal, Dibrugarh University Sports Board with 1 bronze, AKA with 1 silver and one bronze and Sonitpur with 1 silver.

**Results**

**In Senior 18+ Mens Kumite (50 kg):** gold by Abinash Das of Bongaigaon, silver Harshit Ali of Sonitpur and Rahul Rai of Dibrugarh University Sports Board and Soheb Ali of Guwahati bag bronze medal respectively.

**In Senior 18+ Mens Kumite (55 kg):** Barun Kamal Dingia of Dibrugarh bagged gold medal, Bolendra Daw of AKA silver and Pabitra Changmai of Charaideo and Santanu Bharali of Dibrugarh bagged bronzes respectively.

**In Senior 18+ Mens Kumite (60 kg):** Geet Gunan Das and Arup Das of Guwahati bagged gold and silver medals respectively and Biki Deka of Rangia and Simmoy Das of Kamrup bagged bronze.

**In Senior 18+ Mens Kumite (67 kg):** Tirthankar Baishya and Sailen Sarma of Guwahati bagged gold and silver respectively and Birinchi Gogoi of Lakhimpur and Bhaskar Jyoti Saud of Kamrup bagged bronze.

**In Senior 18+ Mens Kumite (75 kg):** Bhriku Saharia of Darrang got gold, while Dhrubo Basumatary of Goalpara secured silver and Chinmoy Dekka and Akash Ali of Guwahati bronze.

**In senior 18+ Mens Kumite (84 kg):** Saurav Kumar Gogoi and Deepjyoti Deka of Guwahati bagged gold and silver respectively, while Mona Ram Basumatary of Goalpara and Mridu Probal Gogoi of Dibrugarh



bagged bronze respectively.

**In another final match of Senior 18+ Mens Kumite (84 kg):** Biplap Debnath of Lakhimpur bagged gold, Imdad Ahmed of Rangia silver and Sunny Sharma and Hrishikesh Kalita of Guwahati bagged bronze.

**In senior 18+ women Kumite (45 kg):** Serlika Beypri of Karbi Anglong got gold while Pompy Khatun got silver and Jilmit Goswami and Pompy Khatun bagged bronze. Khatun, Goswami and Khatun are from Guwahati.

**In senior 18+ women Kumite (50 kg):** Himamoni Teronpi of Karbi Anglong got gold, Gitumoni Nath of Darrang secured silver while Banashree Das of Kamrup and Pori Borah of Jorhat bronze.

**In senior 18+ women Kumite (55 kg):** Mousumi Nath of Darrang got gold, Tribeni Bharali of Sivasagar silver and Kriti Sinha of Guwahati and Dismita Kachari of Goalpara bronze.

**In senior 18+ women Kumite (61 kg):** Chandini Jain of Guwahati secured gold, Celina Khashyap of Kamrup secured silver and bronze, Sima Kalita of Kamrup and Ananya Rajkhowa of AKA.

**In senior 18+ women Kumite (86 kg):** Sushmita Moran of Tinsukia got gold, Soyanka Phukan of Sivasagar received silver and Queen Begum of Rangia with bronze.

Day 3 events 9, 10 and 11 years both boys and girls Kata competition.

Meanwhile, selection for school games for Karate competition between age category 14 years to 18 years have been conducted. Each winner from each age category will get the chance to participate in the school games.

## South Africa wins first Test in Asia in a decade after beating Bangladesh

**MIRPUR (BANGLADESH), Oct 24:** Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada's 6-39 helped South Africa finish off Bangladesh by seven wickets on Thursday and win their first cricket Test in Asia in 10 years.

Bangladesh was all out for 307 in its second innings in the morning, with

Rabada grabbing his six-for, and left South Africa needing 106 for victory.

It completed the inevitable by reaching 106-3 in 22 overs just before lunch on day four.

Bangladesh was always chasing after being dismissed for 106 in the first in-

nings. South Africa replied with 308 propped up by Kyle Verreynne's 114, which earned him player of the match.

"It's a really good performance. Incredibly tough for the team to put four days of good cricket together," South Africa stand-in captain Aiden Markram said.

"Bowlers were great there and then the batters helped us get a great lead. When you get a lead like that, it's tough for opposition to come back."

South Africa's last win in Asia was in 2014 against Sri Lanka in Galle.

Resuming the day at 283-7 and 81 runs

ahead, Bangladesh failed to make any impact as Rabada and Wiaan Mulder sliced through the hosts with the second new ball.

"Rabada is a special bowler for us," Markram said. "For Kyle to step in and play that sort of innings (114), that's really

special. (The) emphasis is on whoever's playing should make it count."

Rabada struck in the first over of the day, trapping Nayeem Hasan leg before for his overnight 16 to complete his 15th five-wicket haul in test cricket. Rabada finished the match with nine wickets. (AP)




# মুকলি হ'ল মিছন বসুন্ধৰা ৩.০

## মোৰ মাটি, মোৰ অধিকাৰ

**সেৱা: মিছন বসুন্ধৰা ২.০ৰ অধীনৰ অধিক স্পৰ্শীকৰণৰ বাবে সৃষ্টিত ৰখা আৱেদনসমূহৰ পুনৰ বিবেচনা**



**বিশেষত্বসমূহ**

নিৰ্ধাৰিত কিছুমান কাৰণৰ বাহিৰে আন কাৰণত মিছন বসুন্ধৰা ২.০ৰ অধীনত নাকচ হোৱা আৱেদনৰ পুনৰ বিবেচনাৰ বাবে অনুৰোধৰ সুবিধা

ইয়াৰ অধীনত আৱেদনকাৰীয়ে অতিৰিক্ত নথি দাখিল কৰিব পাৰিব, পূৰ্বে ভুলকৈ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত কৰা দাগ নম্বৰ শুদ্ধ কৰিব পাৰিব আৰু বাদ পৰি যোৱা আৱেদনকাৰী সংযোগ কৰিব পাৰিব

পুনৰ বিবেচনাৰ বাবে আৱেদনৰ সময়ত অনুসূচিত জাতি/ অনুসূচিত জনজাতি/ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠী/ পূৰ্বৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠী/ আদিবাসী/ গোষ্ঠী সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত তিনিটা প্ৰজন্মৰ বাসিন্দাৰ নীতিৰ শিথিলকৰণ

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কিদৰে সুবিধা লাভ কৰিব

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প'ৰ্টেলৰ জৰিয়তে লগ ইন কৰি পূৰ্বৰ আৱেদন নম্বৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত কৰি আপুনি প্ৰয়োজনীয় শুধৰণিৰ পাছত পুনৰ বিবেচনাৰ বাবে আৱেদন কৰিব পাৰে অথবা নিকটৱৰ্তী ৰাজহুৱা সুবিধা কেন্দ্ৰলৈ গৈ আৱেদন কৰিব পাৰে

**আৱেদনৰ অন্তিম তাৰিখ**

৩১ ডিচেম্বৰ, ২০২৪

বি.দ্র: উপ-নিৰ্বাচনৰ বাবে চলি থকা এমচিচিৰ পৰিপ্ৰেক্ষিতত এই সেৱাসমূহ নগাঁও, বঙাইগাঁও, বিশ্বনাথ আৰু কাছাৰ জিলাত প্ৰযোজ্য নহয়

ৰাজহ আৰু দুৰ্যোগ ব্যৱস্থাপনা বিভাগ, অসম চৰকাৰ

তথ্য আৰু জনসংযোগ সঞ্চালকালয়, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত

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Janasanyog /D/7821/24/25-Oct-24