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## 36 killed as bus falls into gorge in Uttarakhand

**MARCHULA, Nov 4:** A packed beyond-capacity bus carrying passengers returning to work after Diwali fell into a deep gorge in Uttarakhand's Almora district on Monday, killing at least 36 of the about 60 people on board.

Twenty-four people were injured, four of them critically, when the 43-seater bus, operated by the private Garhwal Motor Owner Association, was on its way from Pauri in Garhwal region to Ramnagar in Kumaon about 250 km away.

The accident took place around 8 am, almost the flag end of the overnight journey, said district magistrate Alok Kumar Pandey.

The bus plunged into a 200-metre gorge in Almora's Marchula area 35 km before its destination Ramnagar, he said.

Visuals from the area pointed to



the magnitude of the accident, the vehicle was reduced to a mangled mess as it rolled down the forested, rocky slope and stopped just short of a stream. Rescuers could be seen working to pull out the passengers.

Of the 36 killed, 10 are women. A magisterial probe has been or-

dered and the assistant regional transport officers of Pauri and Almora were suspended.

"The news of the death of many people, including women and children, in a road accident in Almora, Uttarakhand is heart-rending. I express my deepest condolences to

the bereaved families and pray for the speedy recovery of those injured," President Droupadi Murmu said in a post on X.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge were among those who expressed their grief at the loss of lives in the accident and prayed for the quick recovery of the injured.

The Prime Minister announced an ex-gratia payment of ₹ 2 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased and an assistance of ₹ 50,000 for the injured. He said the local administration is making every possible effort for relief and rescue.

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami announced a compensation of ₹ 4 lakh for the next of kin and financial assistance of ₹ 1 lakh for the injured. The injured were taken to the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam by-poll: Cong accused of using children during campaign

## BJP moves EC against Rakibul-Tanzil duo

**NAGAON, Nov 4:** The ruling BJP has filed a complaint with the Election Commission of India (ECI) against Congress MP Rakibul Hussain and his son Tanzil, who is contesting the upcoming assembly bypoll from Samaguri constituency in Assam, for allegedly using children during election campaigning.

In the complaint filed with the ECI, the BJP alleged that children were being used in campaigning activities in support of Hussain's son Tanzil, who is trying his electoral luck for the first time.

"The involvement of children in political rallies is a clear violation of the Model Code of Conduct as it exploits their innocence and undermines the integrity of the elec-



toral process. This practice raises ethical concerns and should not be tolerated," the complaint said.

The BJP claimed to have submitted video evidence along with the complaint to the ECI and demanded immediate action.

Bypoll will take place in Dholai (SC), Sidli (ST), Bongaigaon, Behali and Samaguri assembly constituencies as these seats fell

vacant with the representatives of them winning the recent Lok Sabha elections.

The Congress named Tanzil Hussain as the party's candidate for the Samaguri seat against Dipu Ranjan Sarma of the BJP.

The BJP candidate, a first-timer, is a state general secretary and a former president of the party's state youth wing.

Congress MP Rakibul Hussain, who won the Dhubri Lok Sabha seat this year by a record margin of over 10.12 lakh votes, was an MLA from Samaguri for five consecutive terms.

The polling for byelections will take place on November 13 and the votes will be counted on November 23. (PTI)

### HT BRIEFS

#### Body found

**KHERONI:** The dead body of a man identified as Vinod Chouhan was found on the railway track in Lamsakhang, West Karbi Anglong near the Lamsakhang Railway Station. The body was identified by family members. The victim's father alleged that three youths had beaten his son to death last night. The next day they threw the body on the train track near Lamsakhang railway station. A passing train ran over the dead body and cut it into pieces. The police recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem. A case no. 55/2024 U/S 103/3 (5) has been registered and launched an investigation. The police have already arrested the accused Manoj Chouhan, Chotelal Chouhan and Harinder Chouhan on the complaint of the deceased's father Yogendra Chouhan.

#### Casual leave

**DIPHU:** Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) announces casual leave for government employees on account of the Matri Pitri Vandana Scheme. KAAC in alignment with the notification issued by the government of Assam, general administrative department (vide No. eCF No. 169397/6, dated February 17, 2024), has granted casual leave to all government employees under the administrative control of KAAC. The leave is provided under the Matri Pitri Vandana Scheme and can be availed on the 6th and 8th of November 2024. Also, this leave can be used in conjunction with the 7th of November (for Chhat Puj), the 9th of November (being the second Saturday), and the 10th of November (being a Sunday) to facilitate the observance of Matri Pitri Vandana.

#### One arrested

**GUWAHATI:** One person was arrested with drugs worth ₹ 7 crore in Assam's Cachar district, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. The contraband, seized on Sunday, comprised heroin and Yaba tablets, he said. "Acting on credible intelligence, @cacharpolice conducted a special operation today at Lailapur, leading to the seizing of a vehicle and the apprehension of an individual," Sarma said in a post on X.

## EC must act against Sarma's 'communal rhetoric': Ramesh

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Monday hit out at the Election Commission for the "tone and tenor" of its recent letter to his party while also urging the poll body to act against "communal and incendiary rhetoric" allegedly used by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during poll campaigns.

In an interview with PTI, the Congress general secretary in charge of communications also urged the Election Commission (EC) to take action against Odisha governor Raghuraj Das for campaigning in Janshedpur.

His remarks came days after the Congress slammed the EC after it rejected the party's allegations over irregularities in the Haryana assembly polls.

The opposition party had said if the poll panel's goal was to "strip itself of the last vestiges of neutrality", then it was doing a "remarkable job" at creating that impression.

In its letter to the EC signed by nine senior leaders, including Ramesh, the Congress had said, "We have carefully



studied your response to our complaints. Not surprisingly, the ECI has given a clean chit to itself. We would normally have let it be at that. However, the tone and tenor of the ECI's response, the language used, and the allegations made against the INC compel us to submit the counter-response."

In the Congress' letter to the EC, Ramesh said, "I don't want to say anything more than what we have already said. In fact, we met the EC in Haryana in 20 assembly constituencies on which we had specific complaints. We met the EC on October 9 and they gave a response on October 29 and we would have

(left the matter at that)," Ramesh said.

"We have exercised our democratic right, the EC heard us, they heard us patiently and they have responded but it is the manner in which they responded, the language that they used, the charges that they have hurled at us, giving a sense that they did us a favour by meeting a Congress delegation," he told PTI.

The EC is a constitutional body and its job is to meet political parties, Ramesh said.

"Its job is to listen, that is what we took objection to, we took objection to the tone and tenor of the language, we took objection to the patronising and condescending manner in which the Election Commission was calling into question the democratic right of a political party to be heard and to represent," the Congress leader said.

"We have to have our say, ultimately the EC will have its way and if you are still unhappy, we can go to court. So that is a separate issue," he added. Ramesh said the EC could not say that it had done a political party (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

## Assam govt enhancing waterways with new upgrades

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** The Assam government is modernising the state's waterways by enhancing safety, infrastructure, and connectivity, according to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) on Monday.

These initiatives are being implemented by the Assam Inland Water Transport Development Society (AIWTDS).

"The Assam Inland Water Transport Development Society (AIWTDS) is modernising Assam's waterways by enhancing safety, infrastructure, and connectivity. Key advancements include the establishment of new regulatory bodies, night navigation, and the upgrading of the fleet with 20 steel catamarans," the CMO wrote on X. The Jibondinga Scheme has also been introduced to equip boat operators with marine engines and safety gear.

"As per the directives of HCM Dr. @himantabiswa, @CSAssam, Dr Ravi Kota recently held a meeting with AIWTDS to review the progress of these initiatives," the CMO stated. The CMO provided details indicating that AIWTDS aims to enhance passenger ferry services and infrastructure while strengthening the state's inland water transport framework.



Key project components include the establishment of the Assam Inland Water Transport Regulatory Authority and the Assam Inland Waterways Company Ltd.

"Night navigation has been initiated, benefiting over 8.5 lakh passengers," the CMO reported. To modernise infrastructure, a total of 20 advanced steel catamarans have been added to the fleet, which also includes three search and rescue vessels, three tugboats, and three survey boats. Additionally, 840 marine engines and life-saving gear have been provided to country boat operators under the Jibondinga scheme. "A fixed terminal has (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Congress will snatch reservation from tribals: Modi in Jharkhand

**RANCHI, Nov 4:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday accused the Congress of making attempts to snatch reservations meant for tribals and hand them over to its "vote bank".

Addressing an election rally in Chaibasa in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district, the PM said he worships those who have been rejected by the others.

"Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar has ensured the provision of reservation to protect tribal rights but Nehru-ji had opposed it. The Gandhi family opposed reservation till they were in control of power post-Nehru. Now once again they have openly announced that they will scrap reservations for tribals. They will snatch tribal reservations and hand it over to their vote bank," he said.

"They (Congress) have devised one more strategy. They are declaring schools, colleges and universities as minority institutions.



By this, the reservation of tribals, Dalits, and backward castes is being stopped. Beware of this conspiracy by Congress," he added.

Modi alleged that the JMM-led ruling coalition in the state has put tribal "identity, dignity and existence" at stake by "facilitating" Bangladeshi infiltrators to make fake documents.

"Infiltrators are snatching your daughters, grabbing land and devouring your (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Vote for secular candidate: Ajmal

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** Badruddin Ajmal, the chief of All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) urged the voters on Monday to vote for the secular candidate in the upcoming byelection in the state.

AIUDF refrained from fielding candidates for the bypolls in the five constituencies in the state.

Ajmal told reporters here, "We are not contesting the byelections and our party will concentrate on the panchayat polls which is due for a long time in Assam. In this scenario, I appeal to voters of five assembly constituencies where bypolls will take place to cast their vote in favour of a secular candidate." The AIUDF leader also mentioned that he did not field any candidate in the Samaguri assembly seat to help (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Ekta Mall to be completed in 2025, says Himanta Biswa

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** The state government's flagship project to build a unit mall (Ekta Mall) in Guwahati will be completed by next year, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Monday.

This project was undertaken by the government a year ago.

Sarma said, "The #EktaMall in Guwahati is taking shape and is expected to be completed by 2025. This ₹278cr project spread over 38,713 sq mts will house products from all districts of Assam and all States of the country. Once ready, it will stand as a hallmark of national integration."

The Assam government decided to build the Unity Mall with the goals of promoting national unification, carrying forward the "Make in India" philosophy, and promoting



"One District One Product."

The decision was taken during the state cabinet meeting that was presided over by the chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, last year.

The Unity Mall, which will have 35 showrooms for all states and

union territories and 35 showrooms for all 35 districts of Assam, will be built close to the Assam Trade Promotion Organization Complex, Betkuchi, according to Assam tourism minister Jayanta Malabarua, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## IAF's MiG-29 jet crashes near Agra; Court of Inquiry ordered



**AGRA/NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** A MiG-29 fighter jet of the Indian Air Force crashed in a field near Uttar Pradesh's Agra on Monday during a routine training sortie after it encountered a "system malfunction", officials said.

The pilot manoeuvred the aircraft to ensure no damage to life or property on the ground before ejecting safely, the IAF said, adding that a Court of Inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the crash.

Visuals emerged on social media

platforms showing the fuselage of the crashed jet engulfed in flames billowing a thick cloud of smoke.

A large number of curious on-lookers gathered near the crash site in the field. "A MiG-29 aircraft of the IAF crashed near Agra during a routine training sortie today, after encountering a system malfunction. The pilot manoeuvred the aircraft to ensure no damage to life or property on the ground, before ejecting safely. An enquiry has been ordered by the IAF, to ascertain the cause of the accident," the IAF posted on X.

A MiG-29 fighter aircraft of the IAF had crashed in Rajasthan's Barmer on September 2 due to a "critical" technical snag. The pilot had ejected safely and no loss of life was reported. (PTI)

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** A joint exercise by the militaries of India and Vietnam aimed at enhancing capabilities for deployment of engineering and medical teams to undertake tasks as part of a UN contingent in peacekeeping operations got underway in Haryana on Monday.

The fifth edition of 'VINBAX 2024', which will conclude on November 23 at Ambala and Chandimandir, marks a significant increase in scope with bi-service level participation for the first time by personnel of the army and the air force from both countries, the defence ministry said.

The exercise is a sequel to the bilateral exercise in Vietnam in 2023 and a major milestone in strengthening the bilateral relations between India and Vietnam.

"The aim of 'VINBAX 2024' is



to enhance joint military capability of both sides in employment and deployment of Engineer Company and Medical Teams to undertake engineering tasks as part of a United Nations contingent in peacekeeping operations under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter," the de-

fence ministry said in a statement.

The Indian Army contingent comprising 47 personnel is being represented by a regiment of the Corps of Engineers along with personnel from other arms and services. The Vietnamese contingent comprising of similar strength will

be represented by the troops of the Vietnam People's Army, it said.

The conduct of 'VINBAX 2024' as a field training exercise will strengthen mutual confidence, and interoperability and enable sharing of best practices between the Indian Army and Vietnam People's Army, the statement said.

A 48-hour validation exercise with humanitarian assistance and disaster relief demonstration and equipment display is also part of the schedule to assess the standards achieved by both contingents while executing technical military operations under similar scenarios in UN missions.

"The joint exercise will also provide an opportunity to the troops of both the contingents to learn about the social and cultural heritage of each other," the ministry said. (PTI)



# India's manufacturing sector regains growth momentum in October: PMI

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** India's manufacturing sector growth recovered from September's eight-month low to 57.5 in October fuelled by faster increases in total new orders and international sales, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from September's eight-month low of 56.5 to 57.5 in October, indicating a substantial and accelerated improvement in operating conditions.

In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India's headline manufacturing PMI picked up substantially in October as the economy's operating conditions continue to broadly improve. Rapidly expanding new orders and international sales reflect strong demand growth in India's manufacturing sector," Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said.

The upturn in performance was boosted by stronger demand for In-



dian goods. Moreover, the introduction of new products and successful marketing initiatives helped enhance sales performance.

New export orders also exhibited stronger growth, following the weakest uptick in a year-and-a-half during September. Panel members reported gains in new contracts from Asia, Europe, Latin America

and the US.

On the prices front, the October data signalled stronger inflationary pressures across India's manufacturing sector. Goods producers were also more willing to take on additional staff, which coupled with rising material costs, added to business expenses. Both input prices and selling charges in-

creased at stronger rates.

"Input and output prices are both increasing as a result of persistent inflationary pressures in materials, labour and transportation costs," Bhandari added.

On the employment front, not only did manufacturers hire extra staff at the start of the third fiscal quarter, but also to a greater degree than in September. Around one in ten panellists reported an increase in employment, while 1 per cent shed jobs.

Going ahead, Indian manufacturers became more optimistic regarding future output volumes.

"To start the third fiscal quarter, business confidence is also very high due to expectations of continued strong consumer demand, new product releases and sales pending approval," Bhandari said.

The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers. (PTI)

## PMI commits to eradicate illicit tobacco trade in India

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** Reinforcing its commitment towards illicit tobacco trade prevention, Philip Morris International's (PMI) India affiliate, IPM India emphasized the need for government-to-government collaboration and sharing intelligence on transnational networks to stop illicit tobacco trade, at a recently concluded industry event.

India has witnessed a significant rise in illicit tobacco trade in recent years which is anticipated to grow significantly. The Tobacco Institute of India (TII) highlights that the illegal cigarette trade, which includes internationally smuggled and locally manufactured tax-evaded cigarettes, now accounts for nearly one-fourth of the cigarette industry in India. With an estimated 120 million smokers in India, India is the fourth largest and fastest growing illegal cigarette capital in the world with smuggled cigarettes accounting for a quarter of the domestic cigarette industry.

According to TII illegal cigarette trade comprised of internationally smuggled and locally manufactured tax-evaded cigarettes. Threat to India's interest through illicit cigarette market is USD 2.7 billion causing tax loss of USD 1.6 billion and a job loss of

12000+ in 2019-2020. The value of seizures of illegal cigarettes is USD 11.2 million in 2021-2022. The lack of proper enforcement at export and import, and no effective customs recordal systems in place in countries such as Malaysia, Cambodia, and Indonesia act as an enabler to the counterfeit trade in India.

On the need for collaborated effort to tackle illegal tobacco trade in India, Navaneel Kar, managing director, IPM India said, "Smuggling routes for counterfeit and contraband products exist worldwide, making this issue not merely a domestic but a transnational problem that demands a transnational solution. As per intelligence reports, India is recognized as an origin, transshipment, and destination country for the flow of illegal cigarettes. International collaboration is essential to combat illicit tobacco trade, alongside stringent regulation & enforcement. As part of our continued commitment to safeguard India's economic interest & protect consumers, PMI has devised a strategy focusing on five critical areas including research & intelligence, protecting supply chain, partnerships, cooperation with law enforcement and raising awareness. Promoting harmonization of existing gold standard reg-

ulations around ASEAN, supported by implementing rules, including the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction and the related penalties is crucial to countering illicit trade."

Expressing concern over the rise of illicit tobacco trade, at a recently concluded industry event, Anushree Lakshminarayana, director external affairs, IPM India said, "Eliminating the illicit tobacco trade has been a long-standing priority for us. We focus our efforts on securing our supply chain and protecting our products. And we do it by leveraging technology and innovation for the better: from multiple applications of authentication and security technologies to track and trace our products across the supply chain, to the use of machine learning to identify and prevent illegal online sales, technology is helping us detect and address illicit trade. However, no one can fight illicit trade on their own. Public-private partnerships based on an inclusive, common-sense approach by governments, the private sector, and civil society are vital to helping combat the practice. We are grateful to the Indian government and Indian law enforcement for prioritizing strict action on strict action on illicit tobacco trade."

## Govt invites applications for RBI Deputy Guv

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** The Finance Ministry has invited applications for the post of RBI Deputy Governor in the place of Michael Debabrata Patra, whose extended term is coming to an end on January 14, 2025.

This position of RBI Deputy Governor is for economists. The selected candidate would look after the Monetary Policy Department and would also be a member of the rate setting panel -- Monetary Policy Committee. As per the eligibility criteria mentioned in the public announcement, applicants should have at least 25 years of work experience in Public Administration including experience at the level of Secretary

or equivalent in the Government of India; or have at least 25 years of work experience in an Indian or International Public Financial Institution.

Besides, it said, the candidates should not be more than 60 years of age as on January 15, 2025.

The appointment is for a period of three years, and the individual is qualified for reappointment. The position will have a monthly salary of ₹ 2.25 lakh (Level-17).

The last date for submission of applications to the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, is November 30, 2024. (PTI)

## Airtel tops in 5G network service provider in Assam: Report

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** Bharti Airtel has solidified its standing as the premier 5G network provider in Assam according to Opensignal's recent Mobile Network Experience Report for October 2024. The telecom giant swept all five key network quality categories including 5G Video Experience, 5G Live Video Experience, 5G Games Experience, 5G Download Speed and 5G Upload Speed, cementing its position as the top choice for 5G services in the region and delivering an unmatched performance to its customers, a PR stated.

## Maruti Suzuki India starts bookings for 4th Generation Dzire

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL), India's leading passenger vehicle manufacturer, on Monday commenced bookings for the 4th Generation Dzire. Commenting on the announcement, Partho Banerjee, senior executive officer, marketing & sales, Maruti Suzuki India Limited said, "The Dzire's extraordinary journey since 2008 has made it India's favourite sedan, winning the trust of over 27 Lakh customers. With the All-New Dzire, we have crafted something that's not just the best in its segment but goes beyond conventional expectations. Its modern design philosophy, superior comfort and cutting-edge technology represent the perfect synthesis of what customers love about Dzire and what they aspire for in a modern sedan. By combining advanced powertrain options with thoughtfully curated features, the All-New Dzire is poised to deliver an exceptional experience."

## Global solar investment to touch USD 500 bn this year: Pralhad Joshi

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Monday asserted that global solar investments will touch USD 500 billion this year from the USD 393 billion level in 2023 and said it is the most affordable energy source in many regions, surpassing coal and gas.

These investments are not only adding new capacity but also driving down the cost of energy from solar worldwide, Joshi, the minister of new and renewable energy, said addressing the inaugural session of 7th General Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

Joshi, who is also President of ISA, said, "This rapid growth is fuelled by record-breaking investments. Global solar investments have grown from USD 144 billion in 2018 to USD 393 billion in 2023 and are expected to reach USD 500 billion by the end of 2024."

Today, he stated, solar power has become the most affordable source of electricity in many regions, surpassing coal and gas.

He also informed that ISA is guided by the "Towards 1000" strategy which aims to mobilise USD 1,000 billion of investments in solar energy solutions by 2030.

"This is our strategy: to deliver energy access to 1,000 million people; installation of 1,000 GW of solar energy capacity; and mitigate emissions to the tune of 1,000 MT of carbon dioxide every year," he added. He stated that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India has set ambitious



renewable energy targets, and achieved remarkable milestones.

Last month, he informed, India reached an impressive 90 GW of installed solar capacity, moving steadily forward towards its broader goal of 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030.

India is also setting its sights on new horizons, with a target to produce 5 million metric tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030, supported by 125 GW of renewable energy capacity, he added.

"We have approved 50 solar parks with a total capacity of nearly 37.5 GW and identified potential offshore wind energy sites to reach our 30 GW goal by 2030," he said.

India's Union Budget for 2024-25 reflects this commitment, with a 110 per cent increase in funding for solar power projects and targeted support for initiatives like

the PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, he stated.

This, along with exemptions on critical mineral imports, underscores our resolve to lead in solar innovation, he stressed.

India has one of the best schemes globally for solar rooftop installation. The country will empower communities to generate their own renewable energy, he opined. As a coalition of 120 member and signatory countries, ISA has been at the forefront of mobilising resources and facilitating the deployment of solar projects worldwide, particularly in least-developed countries and small island developing states, he noted.

Further, he said ISA has completed 21 out of 27 demonstration projects, showcasing India's collective ability to make significant strides in solar energy deployment and support sustainable develop-

## Sensex plunges 942 pts to settle at nearly 3-month low; RIL, HDFC Bank biggest drag

**MUMBAI, Nov 4:** Benchmark Sensex tanked nearly 942 points to settle at a three-month low while Nifty crashed below 24,000 on Monday dragged down by heavy selling in Reliance Industries and banking shares and persistent FII outflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 941.88 points or 1.18 per cent to settle at 78,782.24, the lowest closing level since August 6. During the day, it slumped 1,491.52 points or 1.87 per cent to 78,232.60.

The NSE Nifty tanked 309 points or 1.27 per cent to close at 23,995.35 with 42 of its constituents ending lower and eight higher. The index tanked 488 points to hit 23,800 level during the day but recovered some of the losses later.

Uncertainty ahead of US presidential elections on November 5 and expectations of a fresh stimulus package by China to prop up growth triggered selling in Indian stocks, analysts said. Relentless selling by foreign investors also dampened the sentiments in the equity market.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Adani Ports, Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma, Bajaj Finserv, NTPC, Tata Motors, Axis Bank and Titan were among the major laggards.

Mahindra & Mahindra, Tech Mahindra, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies, Infosys and In-

dustry Bank were the gainers.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 211.93 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

"As expected, India is underperforming its global peers due to excess valuation. The ongoing sell-off has deepened by weak Q2 earnings, dampening investor sentiment. Continued volatility is anticipated in the short-term, as attention shifts to the closely contested US presidential election.

"Additionally, key economic events, such as the US Fed and BoE policy decisions, will be critical in shaping market movements," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. The BSE smallcap gauge fell by 1.65 per cent and midcap index tanked 1.31 per cent.

All sectoral indices ended in the red. Realty slumped 3 per cent, oil & gas tumbled 2.54 per cent, while energy (2.51 per cent), telecommunication (2.11 per cent), power (2.06 per cent), industrials (1.72 per cent), and commodities (1.69 per cent) also declined.

A total of 2,717 stocks dropped while 1,351 advanced and 131 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"Markets began the week on a negative note. Persistent foreign fund outflows, coupled with caution surrounding the upcoming US elections, weighed on sentiment," Ajit Mishra SVP, Research, Reli-

gare Broking Ltd, said.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 211.93 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

Foreign investors pulled out a massive ₹ 94,000 crore (around USD 11.2 billion) from the Indian stock market in October, making it the worst-ever month in terms of outflows, triggered by the elevated valuation of domestic equities and attractive valuations of Chinese stocks.

A committee of China's National People's Congress is meeting this week triggering speculation that the government may endorse major spending initiatives to boost the economy.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher. European markets were trading mostly higher. The US markets ended in positive territory on Friday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 2.57 per cent to USD 74.98 a barrel.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE conducted a one-hour special 'Muhurat Trading' session on the occasion of Diwali on November 1, marking the start of the new Samvat 2081.

The BSE benchmark climbed 335.06 points or 0.42 per cent to settle at 79,724.12 in the special Muhurat trading session on Friday. The Nifty advanced 99 points or 0.41 per cent to 24,304.35. (PTI)

*Contd. from Page 1.*

## 36 killed as bus

nearest hospital in Ramnagar. Of the four critically injured, three were airlifted to AIIMS, Rishikesh, and one to the Sushila Tiwari Hospital in Haldwani, Almora District Disaster Management Officer Vineet Pal said.

According to Pal, around 60 people were on board the 43-seater bus when the accident took place. The overloading of the vehicle could have led to the tragedy, he added. At the hospital in Ramnagar, doctors, nurses and medical staff stepped into high gear to treat the injured, many of them bleeding and in visible agony.

Only one of the three admitted to the trauma centre at AIIMS, Rishikesh, was in a position to speak and give his name. "He introduced himself as Ashok Kumar. The rest have been registered as unidentified," the institute's PRO Sandeep Kumar said. A doctor from AIIMS, Rishikesh, has gone to the spot in an air ambulance to see if more help is needed, he said. As fears mounted that the death toll could go up, state health minister Dhan Singh Rawat also went to AIIMS to enquire about the condition of the injured. Police and personnel of the National and State Disaster Response Forces rushed to the spot to launch a search and rescue operation. "The Garhwal Motor Owners Association bus was carrying people returning to work after spending the long weekend at home," an official said. The chief minister said any negligence that led to the bus accident will be dealt with sternly.

"Related departments have been given orders to suspend officials involved. People who are affected are being helped. I am supervising the incident personally," Dhani said. (PTI)

## Assam govt enhancing

been constructed in Guwahati, with modular terminals established at North Guwahati, Umananda, Neamati, and Aphalamukh," the CMO concluded.

## EC must act against

a favour by meeting it and that by raising questions "you are spreading unrest and anarchy". These are extraordinary statements to be made and put on record in writing to any political party, he said. "This is not the way the EC should be replying," he added.

Ramesh is still hopeful that the EC is a constitutional body and should move on complaints. "It should move against the communal and incendiary rhetoric that is being used by the Assam chief minister and the Union home minister. The governor of Odisha is sitting in Jamshepur and campaigning, my colleague Ajoy Kumar has complained. Strictures should be passed on the governor for campaigning," the Congress general secretary said. The Congress' letter to the EC last week said that if the Commission granted a recognised national party a hearing or examined issues raised by it in good faith, it was not an "exception" or "indulgence" but the performance of a duty which it was required to do. "If the Commission is refusing to grant us a hearing or refusing to engage on certain complaints (which it has done in the past), then the law allows recourse to the higher courts' extraordinary jurisdiction to compel the EC to discharge this function (as happened in 2019)," the letter had said.

The Congress leaders who had petitioned the EC alleging irregularities in the Haryana polls said every reply from the EC now seemed to be laced with ad-hominem attacks on either individual leaders or the party itself.

The leaders had said the Congress' communications confined themselves to issues and were written with a regard for the high office of the chief election commissioner and his brother commissioners.

"However, the ECI's reply are written in a tone that is condescending. If the current ECI's goal is to strip itself of the last vestiges of neutrality, then it is doing a remarkable job at creating that impression," the party had said in its letter to the EC.

"Judges who write decisions do not attack or demonise the party raising the issues. However, if the ECI persists then we shall have no choice but to seek legal recourse to expunge such remarks (a remedy with which the ECI is familiar since it unsuccessfully sought to do the same with a high court's unflattering but accurate observations after Covid)," said the letter signed by Ramesh, KC Venugopal, Ashok Gehlot, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Ajay Maken, Abhishek Singhvi, Uday Bhan, Partap Singh Bajwa and Pawan Khara. In a strongly-worded letter to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, the poll panel said such "frivolous and unfounded" doubts had the potential of creating "turbulence" when crucial steps like polling and counting were in live play, a time of peak anxiety for both the public and the political parties.

The BJP retained power in Haryana, winning 48 of the 90 seats in the October 5 assembly elections. The Congress bagged 37 seats, the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) two and Independents three. (PTI)

## Ekta Mall to be

said. To create a platform for selling GI products of the state and North Eastern region, and to promote the brand Assam through "Made in Assam" products, the Unity Mall will provide marketing support to "One District One Product" as well as traditional industries and artisans of 35 districts of the state.

## Congress will snatch

bread," he said, claiming that efforts were being made to change Jharkhand's demography. The PM said that if the BJP is voted to power in the state, it will bring stringent legislation to return land grabbed by infiltrators. Panchayats would be strengthened through the implementation of the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, he said. Modi also attacked the Congress-led opposition for "humiliating" BJP candidate Sita Soren in Jharkhand and a woman leader in Maharashtra, saying "insulting women is their habit".

He was referring to Congress minister Irfan Ansari's derogatory remarks against Sita Soren, the sister-in-law of chief minister Hemant Soren who joined the BJP recently. Modi also targeted the chief minister for remaining silent on the issue. "Opposition used foul language against a woman leader in Maharashtra. Mothers and daughters are in shock, people will teach them a lesson," he said, referring to Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Arvind Sawant's remark about Shiv Sena candidate Shaina NC. He accused the Congress of committing "barbaric crimes" on tribals in Jharkhand and said the RJD was always opposed to the creation of the state with its leaders stating it would only happen on their dead bodies.

"Now JMM is sitting on their lap," the PM said. "The Kolhan region is now ready to uproot the tyrant JMM-led coalition from Jharkhand as it revolted against the mighty British empire," he added.

The Kolhan region comprises three districts -- East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum and Seraikela-Kharsawan that together have 14 seats, out of which nine are reserved for tribals. (PTI)

## Vote for secular

"nephew" Tanzil Hussain. Notably, Tanjil Hussain is the son of Congress MP and former minister Rakibul Hussain. Ajmal was defeated by Rakibul Hussain by more than 10 lakh votes in AIUDF bastion Dhubri—a seat he represented in the lower house of the parliament for 15 years.

The AIUDF leadership earlier announced that they would field a candidate in the Samaguri assembly seat; however, later they changed their decision and the party had announced that they decided to stay out of the by-elections. Ajmal said, "If we field candidates in any of the five seats which are going into bypolls, the BJP will get an advantage. We do not want to give the ruling party an edge in this election. AIUDF's motive is to put a brake on BJP's winning spree and that is why we have decided not to contest polls." Hussain was an MLA in the Samaguri assembly constituency for a long time and the Congress party fielded him in the Dhubri Lok Sabha seat to take on Ajmal. Following his election to the Lok Sabha, his assembly seat in Samaguri fell vacant and the bypoll became imminent there.

Ajmal said, "I might have differences with Rakibul Hussain in Dhubri but I have no animosity with his son. I wish him good luck and I desire that he must be chosen as an MLA from Samaguri in the bypolls. He has come to my house for the blessing." On the other hand, BJP has been eyeing to oust Congress from Samaguri this time. The ruling party has thrown its top leaders into the campaign for the bye-elections.



## Bye-elections heat up as political parties ramp up campaigning in Sidli LAC

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Nov 4:** The electioneering campaign of various political parties for the upcoming bye-elections for five assembly constituencies in the state of Assam, including Sidli LAC, scheduled for November 13, is seen as busy and has gained momentum to woo the common masses across the respective constituency.

In Sidli LAC, three candidates are in the fray to contest the bye-elections representing different political parties, including Nirmal Kumar Brahma of UPPL, backed by the NDA alliance, Sanjib Wary of Congress, and Suddha Kumar Basumatary of BPF party, respectively.

On Monday, Rajya Sabha MP and UPPL working president Rungwra Narzary, Lok Sabha MP Joyanta Basumatary, and several senior party leaders of UPPL and NDA alliance leaders campaigned at different places in the Sidli LAC in support of NDA alliance-backed candidate Nirmal Kumar Brahma.

MP Narzary stated that the UPPL candidate backed by the NDA alliance, Nirmal Kumar Brahma, is receiving majority support cutting across communities in



the upcoming bye-elections in Sidli LAC, as the government of BTR and the government of Assam are jointly working dedicatedly towards the welfare and uplift of the common masses since their inception. He said that the people have expressed their faith in the UPPL and NDA alliance government in the region and are subsequently coming forward to extend support to the UPPL candidate in the bye-elections. He mentioned that all contesting candidates in five LAC bye-elections are getting the last laugh in the bye-elections.

Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of the Bodoland Territorial Region, addressed several

election campaigning meetings in Behali LAC in support of NDA alliance candidate Diganta Ghatoar. He was accompanied by state cabinet minister Pijush Hazarika, state BJP president Bhabesh Kalita, and MP Ranjit Dutta.

CEM Boro addressed three electioneering campaign programs, including Disri village Bathou Mandir, Swahid Dharani Rijal Rangamancha in Gelapukhuri GP, and Laodoloni village Bathou Mandir, amidst witnessing a huge wave of support cutting across communities. He stated that all contesting candidates of the NDA alliance are winning the bye-elections, including in the Behali LAC.

He said that the NDA alliance government of Assam and the government of the Bodoland Territorial Region are committed to working for the all-round development of the citizens. "It was a pleasure to address the electioneering public meeting at Behali LAC in Biswanath district, where I saw a huge wave of support from all sections of society for our National Democratic Alliance. Our alliance has the blessings of the people, and we will win all five bye-election seats with an overwhelming margin," Boro said.

In Sidli LAC, UPPL candidate backed by the NDA alliance, Nirmal Kumar Brahma, has expressed his confidence that he will win the bye-elections by a large margin of votes in the bye-election scheduled for November 13. He stated that he would render services for the welfare and development of the common masses if elected as the legislator from Sidli constituency. Notably, Brahma was a former MCLA of the Government of BTR and is an eminent social activist by profession.

Meanwhile, the electioneering campaigns of Congress and BPF parties are ongoing along Sidli LAC for the scheduled bye-election on November 13.

## Cachar admin prepares plan for smooth bye-election in Dholai constituency

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** In a decisive move to ensure a seamless and efficient electoral process, the district election officer, Cachar, has announced comprehensive plans for the smooth conduct of the upcoming bye-election for the LA-11 Dholai (S/C) constituency, scheduled for 2024. The Office of the District Election Officer in Cachar, Silchar, has detailed a meticulous schedule for the distribution and collection of polling materials, along with a structured briefing session for the officers and staff involved in this critical exercise.

The Election Office has designated the Interstate Truck Terminus (ISTT) in Ramnagar, Silchar, as the central venue for the distribution and receiving counters. Polling materials are set to be distributed on November 12, 2024, with all personnel required to report at 7:00 am sharp to facilitate timely and organised deployment. The collection of polled materials, including Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), is scheduled for November 13, 2024, with reporting set for 3:30 pm.

A vital briefing session for all



officers and deployed grade III and IV staff will take place on November 8, 2024, starting at 2:00 pm at the Conference Hall of the Cachar Zila Parishad, Silchar. This session aims to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and processes to ensure all electoral staff are well-prepared.

To further support the smooth movement of personnel, shuttle bus services will operate from the Dak Bungalow and DC's Office Campus in Silchar. These will start early in the morning on November 12, the day of distribution, from 5:00 am, and again on the collection day at 2:00 pm.

In addition, all officers and staff have been directed to complete a photo session at the Pass & Photography Cell, located at Unnayan Bhawan in Silchar, to collect the necessary passes well ahead of election day. This step is expected to streamline the identification process and facilitate efficient coordination throughout the electoral process.

With the dedicated support of trained officers and staff, the District Election Office in Cachar is setting a high standard for electoral management, ensuring that the 2024 Dholai bye-election is conducted with utmost integrity and efficiency.

## Prime Minister's Internship Scheme launched in Karbi Anglong

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Nov 4:** A meeting was convened on Monday at the District Commissioner's Conference Hall in Karbi Anglong to discuss the launch of the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme (PMIS) for the fiscal year 2024-25. The meeting, chaired by Nirola Phangchopi, ACS district commissioner, was attended by the additional deputy commissioner (ADC), Magistrate, and heads of key departments, including District Industries and Commerce, the Employment Exchange Office, Education, and principals from ITI and Polytechnic institutions. A District Committee was established to oversee and ensure the effective implementation of PMIS at the district level.

The ADC outlined the details of the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme, a pilot project by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). Over 12 months, 1.25 lakh internship opportunities will be created across India's top 500 companies.

The scheme was announced in the 2024-25 Budget and targets one crore internships over five years, intending to bridge academia and industry and significantly boost youth employability. Up to 12,000 applicants are proposed to be selected from Assam.

The district administration, along with the District Committee, has arranged counseling sessions for ITI and Polytechnic graduates aged 21-24, as well as final-year students in these institutions. The principals of ITI and Polytechnic institutes have been directed to organise these sessions.

Aligned with inclusivity goals, PMIS will ensure representation for diverse communities, including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Persons with Disabilities. Interns will receive a monthly stipend of ₹ 5,000 through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), along with insurance and training support from the government and partner companies, providing robust support to all participants.

## NFR introduces QR code ticketing to ease festive rush



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Oct 4:** To support the vision of "Digital India" and enable cashless transactions, North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) has equipped 588 booking counters with QR code machines across its five divisions: Katihar, Rangiya, Alipurduar, Lumding, and Tinsukia. This initiative ensures that passengers at nearly all major stations within the NFR network can benefit from seamless digital payments, making ticketing more convenient and efficient. The counters have been strategically distributed, with 167 in Katihar, 96 in Alipurduar, 87 in Rangiya, 175 in Lum-

ding, and 63 in Tinsukia.

With the ongoing festive season, NFR has launched several special trains to manage the passenger rush and demand. The availability of QR code machines at booking counters is especially beneficial for festival travelers, allowing them to avoid lengthy queues for cash transactions and opt for faster digital payment methods. This setup not only enhances passenger convenience but also aligns with safety protocols by minimising cash handling, ensuring a smoother journey for all.

The QR code-based ticketing system allows passengers to book

tickets through various digital platforms and scan the QR code at the station to obtain their tickets without the need for physical interaction. This move is expected to reduce queues at ticket counters, minimise cash usage, and ensure a faster, more secure ticket-purchasing process. The introduction of QR code machines for cashless ticketing marks another milestone for NFR in its efforts to modernise passenger services with enhanced amenities. Adopting innovative technologies in ticketing systems will make travel easier and safer for train passengers.

Earlier, NFR had implemented mobile app-based ticketing systems through the Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) app, allowing passengers to book unreserved tickets from the comfort of their homes using smartphones.

The 'Digital India' initiative aims to promote three C's: contactless ticketing, cashless transactions, and customer convenience and experience. NFR urges all rail users to avail themselves of cashless ticketing facilities at booking counters and be active participants in this digital initiative of Indian Railways.

## Man arrested for alleged attempted rape of minor

**HT Correspondent**

**KHERONI, Nov 4:** A man identified as Ramdayal Chauhan has been arrested in connection with the attempted rape and molestation of a minor girl in Jenkha, Kheroni Police Station in West Karbi Anglong district.

The accused, Ramdayal Chauhan, a resident of Bagarighat in the Jenkha area, has been arrested and sent to judicial custody.

The victim, while narrating the incident to reporters, identified the accused and said that the man groped her chest and touched her genitals.

The victim's family has filed an FIR with Kheroni Police Station, and case no 57/2024, U/S 64/62, BNS, R/W, 8 of the POCSO Act has been registered, and further investigation is ongoing.

## Hojai to host National Lok Adalat on Dec 14

**HT Correspondent**

**HOJAI, Nov 4:** As directed by the Assam State Legal Services Authority (ASLSA), the District Legal Services Authority, Hojai, is set to organise the National Lok Adalat at Sankardev Nagar in Hojai district on December 14, 2024, a press release stated here. According to the release, MACT, matrimonial, cheque bounce cases under the NI Act, MV cases, money recovery suits, labor disputes, PUS matters, criminal compoundable cases, and other civil cases will be addressed in the National Lok Adalat.

The release further mentioned that, as per instructions from the Assam State Legal Services Authority, Guwahati, pre-Lok Adalat sittings or pre-counseling sessions (either through video or teleconferencing or in-person with social distancing) may be conducted before the date of the National Lok Adalat, allowing parties one or more opportunities for negotiation/dialogue with opposing parties.

## Protest in Jagiroad

**HT Correspondent**

**JAGIROAD, Nov 4:** The All Tiwa Students Union (ATSU), along with several other ethnic organisations, held a protest rally on the four-lane highway at Jagiroad on Monday. The rally demanded the exclusion of Jagiroad Town Committee, the inclusion of the Tiwas in the 6th Schedule of the Constitution, eviction of illegal encroachers from tribal belts and blocks, and the removal of APDCL's smart meters. The Morigaon district administration, led by Jagiroad district commissioner Biman Das, Mayong revenue circle officer Priyanka Gogoi, along with police and paramilitary forces, cordoned off the area and prevented the rally from proceeding further.

## Wine bar owner, two others accused of assaulting elderly woman in Nagaon

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Nov 4:** The district unit of the Anusuchita Jati Sangrami Yuva Parishad, on Monday, expressed concern over the heinous attack on an elderly woman from Dimaruguri Amtol Path and her minor granddaughter by the proprietor of a wine bar located in Dimaruguri Amtol and two others on Friday evening. The district unit of the organisation, seeking the intervention of the superintendent of police, Nagaon, for the immediate arrest of the culprits within the next 24 hours, submitted a memorandum to the superintendent of police, Nagaon.

In the memorandum, signed by Sanjib Das and Bishnu Hazarika, the state president and vice-president of the organisation, respectively, as well as Deep Jyoti Das, the district president, it was stated that Surajit Dey, the proprietor of the wine bar, along with two women, Mousumi Mahanta and Deepanjali Das, allegedly assaulted the elderly woman and her minor granddaughter. Additionally, the organisation alleged that the accused threatened the elderly woman and her granddaughter to vacate their home, where they have lived for several months, so that the accused could occupy the land and the house.

The organisation further alleged in the memorandum that the elderly woman was admitted to a hospital after being seriously injured in the attack, and an FIR was lodged at the Itachali Town Police Outpost. However, the Itachali Town police allegedly paid little attention to her complaint, allowing the culprits to escape legal action, the organisation asserted. In a warning to the police administration, the organisation informed local media that if the police fail to arrest the three accused within the next 24 hours, they will gherao the Itachali Town Police Outpost on Tuesday afternoon and call for a 'Nagaon bandh' on November 6.

It is pertinent to mention that on Friday evening, the elderly woman and her minor granddaughter were allegedly assaulted in front of the wine bar located in Dimaruguri Amtol while they were out shopping at the local Dimaruguri market. Upon being informed, local police from the Itachali Outpost rushed to the scene and brought the situation under control but did not arrest anyone.

## Assam Rifles hosts Vigilance Awareness Week at Lokra

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 4:** Assam Rifles organised a series of events for Vigilance Awareness Week from October 28 to November 3, aimed at promoting integrity and anti-corruption measures at Lokra, stated a press release. The week-long event comprised various activities, including a pledge-taking ceremony where personnel took an oath to uphold honesty and integrity in all their actions. An essay-writing competition was also conducted, encouraging participants to express their views on the importance of vigilance and transparency, with an aim to enhance awareness about various vigilance policies in vogue. A quiz competition tested the participants' knowledge on various topics related to vigilance, ethics, and corruption prevention. The observance of National Vigilance Week witnessed the participation of 178 people, including students and locals, who displayed enthusiasm and commitment towards promoting a culture of integrity.

## Flute maestro Ronu Majumdar enchants students at MDKG College in Dibrugarh

**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, Nov 4:** Flute maestro Pandit Ronu Majumdar enthralled students and the audience with his mesmerising flute performance at MDKG College in Dibrugarh on Monday evening.

Rupak Bhattacharjee on the tabla accompanied Pandit Ronu Majumdar, enhancing the performance and captivating the audience.

Earlier on Monday, Pandit Majumdar performed at DPS, Dibrugarh, around 10 am. He played various ragas before the students at MDKG College. Later, he interacted with the students, clearing their doubts about Indian classical music.

The SPICMACAY Dibrugarh chapter organised the program, where Pandit Ronu Majumdar will perform at several schools and Dibrugarh University.

Pandit Ranendra Majumdar, popularly known as Pandit Ronu Majumdar, is a celebrated Indian classical flutist. He began playing the flute under the guidance of his father, Dr Bhanu Majumdar, followed by the late Pt Lakshman Prasad Jaipurwale, and finally the revered Pt Vijay Raghav Rao. He later received advanced training from his grand guru, Pt Ravi Shankar.

Majumdar's music is rooted in the Maihar gharana, which includes eminent musicians like Pt Ravi Shankar and Ustad Ali



Akbar Khan. Pt. Ronu Majumdar received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2014 for his contribution to Hindustani instrumental music - flute.

A trendsetter, he has played a key role in popularising the flute worldwide.

Among the numerous awards he has received are the All India Radio Award in 1981, the Aditya Vikram Birla Award in 1999, the National Kumar Gandharva Award in 2006, the Pandit Jasraj Gaurav

Puraskar in 2008, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from Navbharat Times, presented by Maharashtra's chief minister, Devendra Fadnavis.

He has collaborated with musical legends, including Gulzar Sahab, RD Burman, Vishal Bhardwaj, Baaba Maal, Asha Bhosle, and Khayyam.

Pandit Majumdar worked on Pt Ravi Shankar Ji's album 'Chants of India' and is renowned both in India and internationally,

with many global music releases and Hollywood successes such as 'Primary Colors'. He has also recorded albums like 'Passages' with Philip Glass and collaborated with international icons like Ry Cooder, George Harrison, Michael Stipe, and Jon Hassell.

Pandit Ronu Majumdar's musical oeuvre is diverse, spanning various regions and genres. He has mastered not only Indian classical music but also fusion and Hindi cinema music.

On the other hand, Rupak Bhattacharjee is a top-grade artist at All India Radio and Doordarshan and is recognised as one of the leading Indian classical percussionists of today.

He was introduced to the tabla at age four by his father, Arun Bhattacharjee, and began his training under Mrinal Kanti Bakshi in the Farrukhabad style. For the past 24 years, he has been under the tutelage of the living legend of tabla, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee.

"Our main aim is to promote Indian classical music, and through SPICMACAY, we are achieving this goal. It is an opportunity for the people of Dibrugarh and students to interact with the exponents of Indian classical music," said Dr Rajee Konwar, chairperson of SPICMACAY, Dibrugarh chapter.

## Haflong hosts Bhasha Gaurav Utsav

**HT Correspondent**

**HAFLONG, Nov 4:** Bhasha Gaurav Utsav took center stage at the District Library Auditorium, celebrating the recent recognition of Assamese as a classical language. The event was attended by esteemed guests, including literary awardee Anupama Naiding and various Sahitya Sabha members from the Dima Hasao district. It honoured Assam's rich linguistic diversity and cultural heritage, marking a significant milestone in preserving and promoting local languages.

The celebration is a week-long program that started on Sunday, and will continue until November 9, 2024.

State minister of Power, Nandita Gorlosa, praised the various Sahitya Sabha organisations for their commendable efforts in promoting and uplifting the local language. The Dimas language will be introduced in primary schools alongside other languages. The minister also requested the district commissioner to make necessary arrangements for deciphering the script inscribed on local relics.

The district commissioner emphasised that a local language embodies the identity of its community and urged everyone to recognise its importance.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

The breaking of a wave cannot explain the whole sea  
- Vladimir Nabokov

## Land issue in Jharkhand polls

Once again, with elections to the Jharkhand assembly knocking at the door, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has fired his salvo of lies, with the promise to introduce a uniform civil code (UCC) for the state while exempting tribal communities from its implementation, once it comes to power. Having mastered the art of speaking untruths in the party interests, Shah used illegal Bangladeshi immigration as the whipping chip to arouse communal feeling and polarise the Hindu voters before the two-phase assembly polls on November 13 and November 20 this year.

On Sunday in Ranchi, he reiterated his old gimmick and falsehood of migrants, especially the Bangladeshi migrants, of grabbing tribal land "by marrying tribal girls through false pretensions".

The tactics of wooing the tribals by invoking the sensitive land issue in Jharkhand have mischievous intentions. It is a known fact that RSS Parivar and the saffron ecosystem have been experts in the game of subverting the facts. It was on February 19, 2019, precisely during the Modi rule, more than 5 lakh tribals of Jharkhand staged a protest against the acquisition of their ancestral property, along with water, forest, and land in Ranchi.

Because the government had neglected their demands, they have now decided to campaign on the streets. The Supreme Court on February 13 had ordered state governments to evict an estimated one million members of Adivasi and other forest communities.

Adivasis have to sacrifice themselves for the prosperity of the country. Will Shah clarify what rehabilitation arrangement the Modi government had arranged for these hapless tribals? Obviously, they had no alternative but to move out of state to some other destination.

Shah has been confusing the people. It is widely known that land alienation, loss of access and control over forests, enforced displacement due to development projects and lack of proper rehabilitation, and indebtedness have been some of the key reasons for the marginalisation of Adivasis leading to the decline of tribal population, but Amit Shah simply for giving a shape to his Hindutva politics has been blaming the migrants.

The tribals have demanded that the government should seek permission from the villagers before land acquisition in any way; a tribal body should be created that enforces tribal rights; CNT Act (Chotanagpur Tenancy Act) and SPT Act (Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act) should be strictly implemented; Collective land should be freed from the hold of Bhumis and Land Acquisition Act, 2013 should be enforced immediately. But the Modi government is not at all interested as it hampers the interest of the big businesses.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting Jharkhand soon and according to sources, will like Shah, harp and highlight the migration issue. He will address around 12 meetings. In the next two weeks. This underlines the importance of Jharkhand for his political survival.

In Jharkhand, polling will be held on November 13 and 20 for an 81-member assembly, but Modi will continue to hold meetings till November 18. Meanwhile, Hemant Soren is planning to repeal the anti-Jharkhand domicile policy of the previous government and issue of enacting "Operation Suraksha", a mechanism to end human trafficking in Jharkhand by 2027, a big issue.

# Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's melodies of human compassion

The bard of the Brahmaputra, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, widely known as Bhupen dada, stood as the towering cultural icon of Assam. A multifaceted talent, he transcended the realms of singing to become a lyricist, composer, musical director, poet, filmmaker, and writer all in one. His songs, often self-written and composed, echoed with a highly emotive and melodious voice, impeccable diction, and poetic brilliance. Driven by a deep-rooted humanism, Hazarika's compositions covered diverse themes, with many advocating for universal brotherhood beyond national and cultural boundaries. His music resonated with love, optimism, and a profound humanistic message, fostering unity and brotherhood across ethnic, community, and linguistic diversities.

A true humanist at heart, he used his songs to champion the cause of the downtrodden, oppressed, and deprived, expressing spontaneous human love. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's popularity extended far beyond Assam, encompassing the entire nation, as he sang not only in Assamese but also in various Indian languages, including Hindi and Bengali. His profound sense of societal belongingness earned him the title of "janatar xilpi" or the artist of the masses.

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, a true humanist at heart, weaves the soft sentiments of his compassionate soul into his songs. His musical creations resonate with the shared emotions of the masses, evoking a sense of camaraderie. Through his lyrical expressions, he advocates for the downtrodden, oppressed, and the less fortunate in society, imploring the world to extend humane sentiments towards them. The majority of his songs are spontaneous reflections of genuine human love. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika stands unparalleled in portraying the fair and representative depiction of human suffering, poverty, and trauma. His profound love for people and society, rooted in his ideas, creative thoughts, and the value he places on life, finds eloquent expression in his music, elevating him to the status of the greatest cultural icon of India. With heartfelt emotions, he imparts life's messages to the world, aligning himself closely with the common masses and their struggles, forging a deep connection with the people. Bhupen Hazarika's broader humanistic approach was shaped and

influenced by various notable personalities at different stages of his life. In his childhood, he came into contact with legendary icons of Assamese art, music, and literature, namely Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and Bishnu Rabha. These influential figures planted seeds of nationalism and class consciousness in him.

Jyoti Prasad imparted aesthetic philosophy, which later became the stepping stone for Hazarika's poetic creations. Under the guidance of the communist Bishnu Rabha, Hazarika adopted a revolutionary and humanistic approach, intensifying his love for ordinary people and earning him the title of janatar xilpi (artist of the masses).

In the USA (Columbia University), Bhupen Hazarika developed intimate contact with the African-American revolutionary singer Paul Robson, giving his humanism a new dimension. Glimpses of Robson are evident in Hazarika, both in his positivist humanistic approach and his works. Bhupen Hazarika expressed, "he was a social singer with the power to change... I too wanted to be a singer with the power to change society." Paul Robson's "Ol' man river" resonates in Hazarika's immortal composition "Bistimo parore," with its Bangla and Hindi versions enjoying immense popularity alongside the Assamese rendition.

The Assamese nationalism witnessed his broader humanistic approach during the tumultuous periods of Assam in the sixties and the eighties, marked by ethnic conflicts between Assamese and Bengalis reaching their peak. Bhupen Hazarika played a pivotal role in these challenging times. He composed songs such as "Morome bhaxar akhar naikia" (language of love doesn't have an alphabet). Additionally, he established a peace-seeking cultural troop and visited violence-affected areas, personally meeting the people affected by the strife. The Bhupendriam kaleidoscope weaves together countless hues and shades of humanity. Bhupen Hazarika, a true humanist, dedicated his efforts to the pursuit and fight for a society free from prejudices and discrimination. Addressing issues such as casteism, the rich-poor divide, and the struggles of those facing economic depravity, Hazarika's concerns formed a diverse tapestry with a common motive - to empower common people to resist the hardships of life.

Through his compositions, Hazarika shed light on aspects of everyday human life that demanded the attention and concern of society.

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's songs serve as powerful sermons on brotherhood and human bonding, carrying profound messages of protest, compassion, and peace. To him, music embodies the spirit of the people, acting as the common thread that connects individuals. Throughout his life, he lent his voice to the voiceless, using his melodies to empower millions to speak out against discrimination and inequality. Many of his timeless compositions resonate with a vocal stance against the hardships faced by the common masses and the destitute. In this paper, selected songs of Dr. Hazarika are taken up for discussion.

### Bhupen Hazarika's songs of human interest

Manuhe manuhar babe/Jadihe a k a n o nebhabe/Akani xahubhuhure/Bhabiba koneno kowa, samaniya?

(If a man doesn't think of man with little sympathy..... tell me o friend who will...?)

The song is considered the most poignant one, encapsulating the liberal ideals of humanity that Bhupen Hazarika sought to impart. It unequivocally emphasizes the necessity for fellow-feelings and bonds between people in a humanistic manner. Throughout his life, Bhupen Hazarika endeavored to promote unity and brotherhood among people, transcending barriers of ethnicity, community, language, and more. This particular song stands as a testament to those cherished ideals, providing solace to our stressed and bereaved souls through its exquisite blend of love, optimism, and humanism.

In the same song,

Manuh jodihe nohoy maanuh.../Daanob kahanui nohoy maanuh.../Jodi daanob kahaniba hoyei maanuh.../Laaj paabo kunenu kawa?... Xamaniya.

He asks if we human fail to act as a human being... a demon can never be a human being, if a demon acts as a human being, we will be ashamed.

In another song,

Xitore xemeka rati/Xemeka xitore rati/Bastra bihin kono khetiyakar.../Bhagi pora pojatir tuh jui ekurat, umi umi joli thoka,/Raktim jen eti uttap hou...

On a withered winter night, may I become the warm red glow emanating from the slowly burning ember in the tattered hut of a clothless farmer. Bhupen Hazarika's words resonate with and inspire the working masses and oppressed classes whom he sought to embrace. He passionately lamented the plight of the oppressed, vehemently opposing all forms of hierarchy and domination.

Through his songs, he became a strong advocate for the poor and marginalized sections of society, challenging those in positions of power to bring about change. In the poignant line, "Bastra bihin kono khetiyakar.../Bhagi pora pojatir tuh jui ekurat, umi umi joli thoka, Raktim jen eti uttap hou..." (may I be in a cloth-less peasant's broken hut, with the slowly burning ember from the hay, the red glowing warmth), he vividly depicts the struggles of the working masses. Dr. Hazarika's relentless pursuit

was for brotherhood and emotional integration among the

global human family. The essence of universalism finds its most poignant expression in his song "Moi Eti Jajabor" (I am a vagabond).

Moi luitor pora mississippi hoi/volgar rup salu/ottavar pora austria hoi/peris haboti lolu/moi illor pora puroni rohon/chicagole koriyalu/moi Galibor sher dushanber/minarot huna palu/Mark Twainor homadhit bohi/Gorky kotha kolu/bare bare dekhui bator manuhu/apun hoise bor/heyve moi jajabor/heyve moi jajabor

(He travelled and traversed from the Luhit (the river Brahmaputra) via Mississippi to Volga, from Ottawa via Austria to embrace Paris, from Illora to Chicago, heard Galib's Shayaris in the Minar of Dushanbe, spoke of Gorky sitting at Mark Twain's tomb and embraced the strangers as his own.) In this song, he identified himself with the common masses of the world. He is a vagabond and wonders with only one intention in mind, i.e. unification of human mind. He is without home & family but, embraces the whole world as his own family. Bhupen Hazarika lamented the plight of the poor and their sufferings and was against all forms of hierarchy and exploitation. So, in the same song - *Moi Dekhisu Onek Gogonsumbi Ottalikar Hari, Tar Sa Tei Dekhisu*

Kotona Grihohin Noronari...

(I've seen many skyscrapers, but also seen countless homeless by the side of those skyscrapers.)

In another song,

Aami ekekhon naore jatri/Xahayatri ekekhon naore jatri..... (We are in the same boat brother; if you tip one end you will rock the other.....)

He cultivated a warm and universal glow of humanity, with his sense of humanism extending beyond the confines of his political boundaries. Despite recognizing the common thread of humanity, he retained his original roots, enriching them in the process.

Bhupen Hazarika's love extended to people, with their habitat, life, culture, and social security prominently shaping his philosophy of life. He forged a deep connection with the common masses and their struggles, drawing himself much closer to the people. Through his songs, he resonated with their feelings, sentiments, pains, sufferings, hopes, and aspirations, standing steadfastly by them. At times, his songs took on a bitter tone, serving as a poignant expression of protest and compassion.

In another song,

Prothom nohoi/Dwitiyo nohoi/ Tritiyo shrenir yatri ami/Jivan relor dabai ami/Prothom nohoi/ Dwitiyo nohoi/Tritiyo shrenir yatri ami

(Neither first, nor second.....are we the passengers of the third class.)

In celebrating the resilience of the working masses, Bhupen Hazarika identified himself as a fellow traveler journeying towards the same destination. This song encapsulates an optimistic expression of Bhupen Hazarika's human philosophy.

Bhupen Hazarika actively seeks, strives, and fights for the establishment of a society devoid of prejudices and discriminations. Delving into issues such as casteism, the rich-poor divide, and the challenges faced by those experiencing economic hardship, Hazarika's concerns form a diverse spectrum united by a common motive - to empower ordinary individuals to resist the hardships of life. As a humanist, Bhupen Hazarika utilizes his compositions to shed light on aspects of common human existence that demand the collective concern of society. (The writer can be reached at [dipakkurmigpltd@gmail.com](mailto:dipakkurmigpltd@gmail.com))

## Dr. Bhupen Hazarika: Songs that shaped generations

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuvan

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, an iconic figure in Indian music and culture, left an indelible mark not only on Assamese society but also on the national consciousness. His works transcended the boundaries of music, weaving together strands of social commentary, cultural pride, and universal themes of human struggle. Hazarika's songs, infused with deep empathy and insight, became powerful vehicles for advocating social justice, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering a sense of community among diverse populations.

Born in 1926 in Sadiya, Assam, Hazarika's upbringing in a region rich with cultural traditions greatly influenced his artistic sensibility. The son of a school headmaster, he was exposed to literature and music from an early age, developing a love for the folk traditions of his homeland. His early encounters with the Brahmaputra River, the landscapes of Assam, and the oral traditions of its people shaped his worldview and later served as critical sources of inspiration for his music. This connection to the land and its people became central to his identity as an artist and as an advocate for social change.

Hazarika's academic journey took him to the United States, where he studied at Columbia University. It was here that he encountered the works of great activists and artists who emphasized the power of art as a tool for social change. Influenced by the African American civil rights movement and figures like Paul Robson, Hazarika began to understand the broader implications of his art. This exposure helped him cultivate a vision that intertwined artistic expression with activism, urging him to use his music as a voice for the marginalized and oppressed.

Upon returning to India, Hazarika immersed himself in Assamese folk traditions and began composing songs that resonated deeply with the experiences of ordinary people. He became a cultural bridge, infusing local themes with global relevance. One of his most celebrated songs, *Bistimo Parore*, reflects this ethos. An adaptation of Robson's "Ol' Man River," it transforms the Brahmaputra River into a symbol of endurance and resilience, embodying the struggles of Assam's people.

The song speaks to the timelessness of human suffering and the hope that sustains individuals

and communities, making it an anthem for those facing adversity. Hazarika's ability to encapsulate complex emotions and social realities in simple yet profound lyrics allowed his music to resonate across generations, affirming his role as a bard for the people.

Hazarika's lyrical mastery was matched by his commitment to social justice. His songs often tackled pressing social issues such as poverty, caste discrimination, and gender inequality. In *Moi Eti Jajabor* ("I Am a Nomad"), he articulates the plight of marginalized communities, particularly women, highlighting their struggles and resilience. This song, like many others, served as a platform for Hazarika to voice the concerns of those often left unheard. By intertwining personal narratives with broader social critiques, he illuminated the lived experiences of the disenfranchised, offering them a sense of agency and recognition.

Furthermore, Hazarika's work extended beyond music into cinema, where he explored similar themes of social justice and cultural identity. As a filmmaker, he directed and produced several movies that captured the essence of Assamese culture while addressing contemporary social issues. His films, such as *Shakuntala* and *Loti Ghoti*, portrayed the struggles of the common man and critiqued societal norms. Through storytelling, Hazarika reinforced his belief in the transformative power of art, using film as a medium to inspire audiences to reflect on their own realities and advocate for change.

The collaboration with the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) marked a significant chapter in Hazarika's career. The IPTA was a collective of artists dedicated to using performance arts to raise awareness about social and political issues. Hazarika's association with this group further solidified his belief that art should serve a purpose beyond entertainment.

The IPTA's commitment to advocating for labor rights, equality, and justice resonated with Hazarika's own convictions, prompting him to engage actively with the socio-political landscape of his time. This collaboration not only enriched his artistic practice but also expanded his understanding of the role of the artist as a catalyst for social change. Hazarika's commitment to social justice eventually led him into politics. Although his political career was brief, it reflected his desire to enact change at a structural level. He served as the chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, promoting the arts while advocating for cultural preser-

vation and the rights of artists. Despite the challenges of navigating the political landscape, Hazarika remained steadfast in his belief that artists had a role to play in shaping society. His engagement with politics, although fraught with complexities, illustrated his unwavering commitment to the causes he championed throughout his life.

In analyzing Hazarika's legacy, it becomes clear that his contributions to music, film, and social advocacy are inseparable. His songs continue to resonate with audiences, offering a lens through which to understand the socio-cultural fabric of Assam and India at large. Hazarika's ability to fuse regional themes with universal messages allows his work to transcend geographical and cultural boundaries, making it relevant to diverse audiences across generations. His songs are not mere expressions of artistic talent; they are poignant commentaries on the human condition, reflecting the struggles, aspirations, and resilience of people everywhere.

Hazarika's impact on Assamese culture is profound. He played a pivotal role in preserving and promoting Assamese folk music, introducing it to wider audiences and ensuring its survival in a rapidly changing world. His efforts to revive traditional music forms and integrate them into contemporary compositions helped foster a sense of pride in Assamese identity.

In a country as diverse as India, Hazarika's work serves as a reminder of the importance of cultural heritage and the need to celebrate the richness of local traditions. Moreover, Hazarika's emphasis on empathy and compassion continues to inspire artists and activists alike. His music serves as a call to action, urging listeners to engage with the world around them and advocate for social change. In an era marked by divisions and inequalities, Hazarika's legacy challenges us to look beyond ourselves, to listen to the voices of those who are marginalized, and to stand in solidarity with those who suffer. His work encourages us to envision a more just and equitable world and reminds us of the power of art to effect change.

Hazarika's songs also resonate with themes of nature, spirituality, and existential reflection. His deep connection to the Brahmaputra River and the landscapes of Assam infused his music with a sense of place, grounding his narratives in the natural world. Songs like *Ganga Amar Ma* express reverence for the rivers as life-giving forces, connecting the physical and spiritual realms. This ecological consciousness underscores Hazarika's holistic understanding of human existence, emphasizing the interdependence of people and the environment.

In contemporary society, Hazarika's music continues to inspire new generations of artists. His influence can be seen in the work of musicians who draw from his legacy to explore themes of identity, social justice, and cultural pride. Hazarika's ability to connect personal stories to broader social narratives serves as a model for emerging artists seek-

ing to engage with pressing issues. His songs, infused with a spirit of activism, remind us of the transformative power of creativity in addressing the challenges faced by society.

The enduring relevance of Hazarika's work is evident in how his songs are woven into the fabric of Assamese life. His melodies accompany celebrations, commemorations, and moments of reflection, serving as a soundtrack for the collective memory of a people. His music remains a source of comfort and inspiration, offering solace in times of difficulty and reminding individuals of their shared humanity.

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's life and work exemplify the intersection of art and activism, illustrating how creativity can be harnessed to effect social change. His songs, films, and political engagements reflect a profound commitment to the ideals of justice, empathy, and cultural preservation. As we continue to grapple with the complexities of contemporary society, Hazarika's legacy serves as a guiding light, urging us to embrace our shared humanity and work toward a more just and compassionate world.

### POST BAG

## Protecting trees and Bharlu River during overbridge construction

Sir/Ma'am

Through the columns of your esteemed newspaper, I wish to draw the attention of concerned authorities and the public to a pressing environmental issue concerning the planned railway overbridge project between railway gate number 9 and Bharalumukh in Guwahati.

On October 31, 2024, local residents and I conducted a survey along the proposed site. We observed that 74 trees are marked for removal along the project route.

While four are located on the sidewalk, most of these trees, many mature and vital to the ecosystem, stand on the banks of the Bharlu River. These trees play an essential role in providing habitat, reducing pollution, and stabilizing the river-

banks. The current design of the overbridge poses significant environmental risks.

Construction activities could narrow the mouth of the Bharlu River, disrupting its tributary flow and compromising the stability of its banks.

Additionally, the felling of mature trees may lead to increased soil erosion, loss of green cover, and degradation of the area's natural beauty.

In light of these concerns, I urge the authorities to consider the following recommendations:

**1. Preservation of Trees:** Prioritize construction techniques that avoid felling trees, particularly those along the riverbank, to preserve the area's ecological balance.

**2. Protection of the Bharlu River:** Enforce strict guidelines to ensure con-

struction, including any electrical installations, does not impact the flow, stability, or health of the Bharlu River.

**3. Environmental Oversight:** Establish a monitoring committee to supervise the project, ensuring adherence to eco-friendly practices that protect the river and surrounding greenery.

While the overbridge is a valuable infrastructure project, it is crucial to balance development with environmental preservation. By implementing these measures, we can ensure this project benefits our city without compromising its natural assets. We request the relevant authorities to act promptly and incorporate these recommendations.

Mowsam Hazarika  
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## How did Surat become the setting for an 18<sup>th</sup>-century French story?



By: Krupa Shah

In a coffee-house in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Surat, a group of men from various faiths and ethnicities are arguing about God. Each claims the superiority of his faith over the others – until finally, a “Chinaman” relates a tale that shows how God is universal, if varying perceived based on each man’s faith and place in the world.

This is, briefly, the story of Le Café de Surate (The Coffee-House of Surat), an 18<sup>th</sup>-century tale by French writer Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737-1814) evoking religious tolerance, pluralism and the nature of theological truth.

But what is fascinating is how “Surat”, an important mercantile hub and port city in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, became the setting for this story and also a literary trope of religious and cultural confluence in the colonial imagination.

Le Café de Surate (1790) is an important glimpse into Surat’s history as a cosmopolitan trade hub. It also shows how the literary trope of a vivid Surat served as a backdrop for the cultural movement of Romanticism, humanism and religious plurality, although mediated through colonial stereotypes.

The men in Le Café de Surate include a Persian theologian with a “Kefir” (a slave), a Brahmin, a Jewish broker, an Italian missionary, a Protestant minister of the Danish Mission at Tranquebar, a Turkish customs officer, Tibetan Lamas, Arabs, Zoroastrians and a Chinaman who is a student of Confucius.

In the story, the men fall into dispute arguing about God as each claims supremacy for his religion over the other. Eventually, a silent Chinaman is invited to settle the matter. The Chinaman recounts the tale of a similar dispute that had arisen among his earlier fellow-travellers about the nature of the sun and its true location. Each traveller had a different account of where it rose and where it set. The Chinaman, then concludes that just as the sun cannot be contained in any one place but shines equally on everyone, so does God.

This simple parable of religious plurality with its colonial stereotypes reflects the scepticism of social structures and scientific thought as voiced by French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who advocated nature instead as the true custodian of human freedom and truth.

Saint-Pierre, a colonial traveller and Enlightenment reformer, drew from the intellectual traditions of Rousseau and French writer Voltaire. He was part of a society and polity in transition during the decades spanning the French Revolution in 1789. Saint-Pierre also travelled with the French East India Company, served in Mauritius and wrote of his encounters in India.

As a writer, Saint-Pierre used tropes, experiences and knowledge of other cultures, however perceived by him, as sites of critique for his own society. He became well-known as one of the first proponents of cultural primitivism, which advocated a return to “simpler” times, and French romanticism.

As two scholars who analysed Saint-Pierre’s stories through a Persian perspective note, his tales endeavour to seek the truth and reach peace amid religious and theological disputes.

This “truth”, they write, is not achieved merely by scientific advancement but is manifested in nature. It is also simplistic and free of any “conceited scientific and theological argument and it brings about indescribable peace for the seekers”.

Surat and its colonial encounters Surat was a Mughal port city in decline that had already seen some of the first French colonial enterprises in Gujarat at the time Le Café de Surate was published in 1790. Surat had seen a century of cosmopolitan trade and had a diverse socio-ethnic composition alongside a mix of Hindu Banias and Muslim Bohras.

It was a centrally located entry and exit point for the North and the South and was considered a textile hub in the Mughal period. It served

as an emporium to Western trade, to the Middle Eastern and European countries (along with Cambay and later Ahmedabad). It was also seen as a gateway to Mecca. The English chronicler John Ovington (1653-1731), in his A Voyage to Surat (1689), wrote that 100 ships of different countries could be found on the ports of Surat at any given time.

Trade involved retail and wholesale business of cotton textiles, often products known for the zari (golden laced) border. In order to accommodate merchants, the city also built rest-houses, pleasure parks among facilities for traders from all over the world. The coffee-house in the story reflects the city’s culture of merchant rest-houses which saw a multitude of merchants who traded in opium and textiles.

The story also reflects the perceptions of multiple ethnicities, races that were mediated earlier in the accounts of French travelers of 17<sup>th</sup> century Gujarat such as François Bernier (1620-1688). Bernier’s influential essay “Nouvelle division de la terre, par les différentes espèces ou races d’hommes qui l’habitent” (“New Division of the Earth by the Different Species or ‘Races’ of Man that Inhabit It”) has been called by scholars as “the beginning of modern racial thought”.

This essay was in turn, to have a great influence on French coffee-houses or the ‘Salons’ which were the social and intellectual gatherings central to the cultural development of France in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The coffee-house in Surat was also linked to the salon in France.

Surat also had a robust banking system with Turkish officials in its customs house. The Kathiawad Seths and the Mahajans also developed an elaborate banking system in Surat for the exchange of currency. Money was exchanged through a “hundi” or a record of a deposit that was made at one place and which could be claimed in another part of the world. The credit system was based on trust as carrying cash during travel was risky. The Surat hundis were honoured in the markets from Cairo in Egypt, to Basra in Iraq and Antwerp in Belgium.

Saint-Pierre’s story shows the ways in which colonial cities and their mercantile contexts seeped into literary imagination. It throws light on how colonies were represented and the ways in which narratives around places and religions were mediated through trade and the trope of the cosmopolitan city.

However, by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Mughal rule declined and so did Surat as the Portuguese took control of sea routes.

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Portuguese, Dutch and the English had already set up their factories in Surat, beginning with the period of Jahangir (1569-1627). A “factory” at this time was not a manufacturing unit but a “godown” to store Indian merchandise which was then exported abroad for trade. The first French factory was established in Surat as late as 1668 by Francois Caron (1600-1673), a French Huguenot refugee to the Netherlands who served not the French but the Dutch East India Company.

The French East India Company was set up in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries to monitor French commerce in India and other colonies in eastern Africa, in the Indian Ocean and the East Indies and Pondicherry was eventually turned into the headquarters of the French settlements in India in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Saint-Pierre’s cast of characters may have found some peace in their religious ponderings in Surat, but the city soon fell into decline.

In 1668, the British East India Company shifted its headquarters to Bombay and the resulting competition was one of the reasons for Surat’s decline. By 1750, the network of Indian traders broke down as European countries gained power. They secured concessions from local courts and gained monopoly. The Hundi system declined almost completely and local bankers saw bankruptcy. By 1720, the French had lost most of their settlements at Surat, Masulipatam and Bantam to the British East India Company. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

## How Padma Hazarika’s vision transformed farming in Naduar

By: Satvabrat Borah

Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm, located in Jamugurihat, Sonitpur district of Assam, is a shining example of how sustainable agriculture can be a force for rural development and environmental conservation. This farm has become a symbol of innovation and resilience, providing a model for sustainable farming that is improving the livelihoods of farmers in the region. The farm’s transformation has largely been influenced by the vision and efforts of Padma Hazarika, the MLA of Sootea. His leadership and commitment to the betterment of the rural farming community played a critical role in the creation and success of Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm.

Padma Hazarika’s involvement in the establishment of Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm came from his deep concern for the challenges faced by local farmers. Many of the farmers in this region, like in other parts of Assam, struggled with poor soil fertility, unpredictable weather patterns, and a lack of access to modern farming techniques. These issues resulted in low crop yields, which left farmers in difficult economic situations. As a public representative, Hazarika felt a strong responsibility to address these problems and find a way to support the farming community in Sootea. He believed that improving agricultural practices and promoting sustainable farming methods would not only enhance farmers’ livelihoods but also help protect the environment for future generations.

With this vision in mind, Padma Hazarika initiated the development of Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm as a comprehensive agricultural project. The name “Bohumukhi” means “multi-purpose,” reflecting the farm’s emphasis on multi-dimensional farming practices that go beyond just crop cultivation. Under Hazarika’s guidance, the farm began to explore different aspects of farming, including animal husbandry, organic farming, water conservation, and farmer training programs. This multi-faceted approach aimed to create a self-sustaining farming ecosystem that would provide year-round income and food security for local farmers.

One of the major initiatives introduced at Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm is crop diversification. Instead of relying on a single crop, the farm grows a variety of crops throughout the year, including cereals like rice and wheat, vegetables such as tomatoes and potatoes, and fruits like mangoes and bananas. This diversification helps reduce the risks associated with crop

failure, which is often caused by adverse weather conditions or pest infestations.

If one crop fails, the farm can still rely on other crops for income, ensuring a steady stream of agricultural produce. Crop diversification also helps maintain the health of the soil, as different crops require different nutrients. By rotating crops, the farm keeps the soil fertile, which is crucial for long-term agricultural productivity.

In addition to crop cultivation, Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm has incorporated animal husbandry into its operations. Cows, goats, and poultry are reared on the farm, providing additional sources of income through dairy, meat, and eggs.

The livestock are not only a source of revenue but also play a key role in maintaining soil fertility. The manure produced by the animals is used as organic fertilizer for the crops, which eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers. This integration of crop and livestock farming creates a sustainable cycle in which each aspect of the farm supports the other.

One of the most significant achievements of Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm under Padma Hazarika’s leadership is the adoption of organic farming practices. In contrast to conventional farming, which relies heavily on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, the farm has embraced organic methods that use natural materials like compost, manure, and bio-pesticides. This shift towards organic farming has not only improved the quality of the crops but has also protected the environment by reducing chemical pollution in the soil and water.

Organic farming at Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm involves techniques like crop rotation, intercropping, and the use of biological pest control to maintain healthy crops without harming the ecosystem. The farm’s organic produce is also in high demand in local markets, as more people become aware of the health benefits of consuming chemical-free food.

Water management is another crucial aspect of the farm’s operations. In many parts of Assam, farmers face water shortages, especially during the dry season. To address this issue, Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm has implemented several water conservation techniques. One of the key methods used is rainwater harvesting, where large tanks and ponds are built to collect rainwater during the monsoon season. This stored water is then used for irrigation during the dry months, ensuring that crops have access to water year-round.



The farm also uses drip irrigation systems, which deliver water directly to the roots of the plants, reducing water wastage and ensuring efficient use of water resources. These practices have made the farm more resilient to drought and water scarcity, allowing it to maintain consistent crop production even in challenging weather conditions.

Padma Hazarika’s vision for Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm goes beyond just improving farming techniques. He has also focused on community development and farmer empowerment. The farm serves as a training center for local farmers, offering workshops and demonstrations on modern agricultural practices, organic farming, and sustainable resource management.

Through these programs, farmers are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to implement these practices on their own land. This knowledge-sharing approach has had a ripple effect throughout the region, as more and more farmers adopt sustainable practices and benefit from the farm’s success.

The impact of Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm on the local community has been transformative. Many farmers who previously struggled with low crop yields and financial difficulties have been able to increase their income and improve their livelihoods by adopting the farm’s methods. The introduction of organic farming has also reduced the costs associated with chemical fertilizers and pesticides, allowing farmers to save money while producing healthier food. The farm’s success has inspired pride within the community, and many local farmers now see sustainable agriculture as a viable and rewarding way to support their families.

Beyond the immediate economic benefits, Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm has also had a positive impact on the environment. By promoting organic farming, water conservation, and biodiversity, the farm has helped protect

the region’s natural resources. The avoidance of chemical inputs has reduced pollution in nearby rivers and groundwater, while the farm’s focus on soil health has prevented soil erosion and degradation. The use of water-efficient irrigation techniques has also ensured that the farm’s water usage is sustainable and does not deplete local water sources.

Padma Hazarika’s leadership and vision have been instrumental in the success of Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm. As the MLA of Sootea, he has used his influence and resources to support the farm’s development and ensure that it serves as a model for other farmers in the region. His commitment to sustainable agriculture and rural development has not only improved the lives of farmers in Sootea but has also attracted attention from agricultural experts, government officials, and NGOs. The farm’s success has shown that with the right combination of modern techniques, traditional knowledge, and community involvement, it is possible to create a farming system that is both productive and sustainable.

Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm stands as a testament to the power of sustainable agriculture and community-driven development. Under the leadership of Padma Hazarika, the farm has transformed from a struggling agricultural region into a thriving hub of innovation and sustainability. By focusing on crop diversification, organic farming, water management, and farmer training, the farm has created a self-sustaining ecosystem that benefits both the farmers and the environment. The farm’s success has had a ripple effect throughout the region, inspiring other farmers to adopt similar practices and contributing to the overall development of the community. Kanyaka Bohumukhi Farm is not just a farm; it is a model for the future of agriculture in Assam and beyond. (The author can be reached at [satvabratborah12@gmail.com](mailto:satvabratborah12@gmail.com))

## The evolution of Goddess Lakshmi

By: Sudipto Pal

In the vast landscape of Hindu deities, Lakshmi holds one of the oldest representations. Her earliest surviving imagery dates back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, predating the warrior-goddess Mahishamardini, one of Hinduism’s most worshipped deities. Lakshmi’s presence in Indian iconography parallels the early depiction of Vishnu in his Vasudeva form, the oldest sculpted Hindu deity. However, their iconographies developed independently. Early depictions of Lakshmi appear in Buddhist art on the walls and gateways of stupas such as Sanchi and Bharhut.

In these depictions, Lakshmi appears as Gajalakshmi, seated on a lotus and anointed by two elephants pouring water over her from raised trunks. Created between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE and 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, these sculptures emerged during the Satavahana and Shunga dynasties and became so popular that by the 7<sup>th</sup> century, nearly every Hindu temple entrance in North and South India featured Gajalakshmi. Her image spread as far as ancient temples in Cambodia and Vietnam, and her lotus-seated, elephant-anointed form has remained almost unchanged for over 2,200 years—a rare continuity in the history of Indian art, and perhaps the world.

The Buddhist image of Gajalakshmi is often associated with Mayadevi, the Buddha’s mother, for a good reason. In Sanskrit, Gaja means elephant. According to Buddhist legends, Mayadevi was bathed by two Naagas after Buddha’s birth. Since Naaga can refer to either serpents or elephants in Sanskrit, being bathed by two snakes is less plausible than being anointed by elephants—making the unity of Gajalakshmi and Mayadevi very likely.

Beyond Buddhist and Brahminical traditions, non-sectarian depictions of Gajalakshmi

also appeared frequently in the exotic terracotta art of Chandraguptar in West Bengal, dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE.

The Rigveda references Lakshmi just once, in a hymn from the tenth mandala, saying, “May the auspicious Lakshmi reside in their words” (“Bhadraisham Lakshmir-nihitaadivaachi,” Rv 10.71.2). The Atharvaveda, however, mentions her more frequently; for instance, the 115<sup>th</sup> hymn of its seventh book describes rituals that invoke the auspicious Punya-Lakshmi while dispelling the negative Ajustha Lakshmis. While Vedic Lakshmi may predate the Buddhist Gajalakshmi, it was Buddhist art that first gave her a material stone form.

During the Gupta period, another significant image of Lakshmi emerged—Lakshmi mounted on a lion. Gupta coins often depict the king or royal couple on one side, and a deity, usually Lakshmi, on the other side, either seated on a lotus, riding a lion, or both. In the “Lion Conqueror” (Simhavi-krama) coins of Chandragupta II, we see the king subduing a lion on one side, with Lakshmi serenely seated on a lion on the other. On Kumaragupta’s coins, she sits on a lotus placed on a lion, with a second lotus beneath her feet, identified by the inscription “Shri.”

The lion, a symbol of royalty and governance, signified state authority. This association between the lion and the state stretches back into antiquity. Emperor Ashoka erected pillars topped with four lions facing in all directions, symbolizing his rule over India; post-independence India later adopted this Ashokan pillar as a symbol of sovereignty. Ashoka’s lions draws inspiration from the Persian Achaemenid Empire.

In future, in the coins of Kushan kings lion appears as a royal emblem and their regnal goddess Nana appears on a

lion. Lakshmi’s blessings being essential for a king’s rule, naturally made her a lion-rider, aligning her with royal power.

Though Gupta coins don’t always bear the goddess’s name, some inscriptions help identify the lotus-seated goddess as “Shri” or Lakshmi. On Kumaragupta’s lion-riding coin, for example, “Shri” is inscribed. Often holding a cornucopia, symbolizing prosperity, Lakshmi is seen seated in the ardhaparyanka-mudra posture, with one leg bent on the throne and the other resting on the ground—a pose also seen in Gajalakshmi’s depictions at Sanchi.

Additionally, inscriptions from Skandagupta’s era describe how kings ascended the throne with her blessing, as noted in his Junagarh inscription: “Lakshmi aban-

doned a l i

o t h e r  
p r i n c e s  
a n d  
c h o s e  
h i m  
 (“Vyapetya Sarvaan Manujendraputraan Lakshmi Swayam Yam Varayamchkaara”).

Lakshmi’s connection with the lion reaches a fascinating zenith on a Gupta-period pillar discovered in Bilsad, Uttar Pradesh, where she is seen seated on a lion with lotus stems in her hand, anointed by two elephants—a union of both Gajalakshmi and the lion-riding Lakshmi. From the sixth

to eighth centuries, several other sculptures from Jammu-Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh depict this dual form. A sculpture from this period, preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, shows her seated on a lotus with two elephants above anointing her, two lions below, and a cornucopia in her hand.

Despite the presence of a fearsome animal, the lion-riding Lakshmi appears non-violent, wielding no weapons; she is a calm, sovereign figure, holding a cornucopia or lotus rather than armaments. Although she does not fight, she embodies the composed, authoritative force of the state.



The third significant form of Lakshmi emerged later, as Vishnu’s consort. This evolution into Vishnu’s attendant coincided with the depiction of Vishnu reclining (Anantashayee Vishnu), a motif originating in the Gupta period.

The oldest reclining Vishnu, from the early 5<sup>th</sup> century Gupta period, is found in the Udayagiri caves of Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh, and does not

include Lakshmi. The second oldest, from the Deogarh Dashavatara temple of the early 6<sup>th</sup> century Gupta period, shows a consort at Vishnu’s feet. This devoted consort figure reappears in the Chalukyan Badami caves of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

As Lakshmi began to lose her lion-riding, regal status, her lion was transferred to another goddess. Almost parallel to Lakshmi, another goddess iconography arose in 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE India—that of the buffalo-slayer Mahishamardini. Though her sculptures were widespread during the Kushan and Gupta periods, she rarely held the royal status of Lakshmi, nor was she depicted with a lion until the Chalukyan period in the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE. The Ravanaphari cave temple of Chalukyan Karnataka first depicted Mahishamardini on a lion, establishing a motif that continued.

The lion became inseparable from Mahishamardini, and thus the lion of Lakshmi was transferred to the warrior Goddess Mahishamardini. While Gajalakshmi remained prominent in Hindu coinage, the image of Lakshmi riding a lion gradually faded. As society evolved, so too did Lakshmi’s image, which transformed from a royal lion-mounted goddess to a gentle household deity, primarily portrayed in her domestic role alongside Vishnu.

In modern-day Bengal, Lakshmi’s identity reflects regional sensibilities. Here, she rides an owl, though the origin of this choice is unclear—it may derive from yoginis who rode owls or from Garuda-riding Vishnu-Lakshmi forms. In Bengal, she is cherished not as Vishnu’s consort but as an independent goddess, often regarded as a daughter of the household. With her symbols of rice, paddy, and baskets, she is a guardian of the agricultural economy and its prosperity. (Courtesy: Youth Ki Awaaz)



Germany is Ukraine's second biggest weapons supplier after the US

## Germany's top diplomat in Kyiv as Ukraine gears for impact of US election on the war

KYIV, Nov 4: Germany's top diplomat arrived on Monday in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv on an unannounced visit, in what appeared to be a show of European support for Ukraine on the eve of a U.S. presidential election that could bring far-reaching changes in Washington's policy toward Russia's all-out invasion of its neighbor.

Germany is Ukraine's second biggest weapons supplier after the U.S., and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock vowed that Berlin's backing would remain steadfast.

"Together with many partners around the world, Germany stands firmly by Ukraine's side," she said, German news agency dpa reported. "We will support the Ukrainians for as long as they need us so that they can continue on their path to a just peace."

The war is at a critical moment for Ukraine, with the Russian army making creeping



gains on the battlefield and another hard winter ahead after Russia relentlessly battered the Ukrainian power grid.

Ahead of the U.S. vote, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy attempted to lock Ukraine's Western supporters into a long-term "victory plan," including a formal invitation for Ukraine to join NATO and permission to use Western long-range missiles to strike military targets in Russia, but the response was disappointing for Kyiv officials.

Russia is using its superior numbers to heap pressure on

Ukrainian positions along the front line. Ukraine's top commander, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyy, said Saturday his troops are struggling to hold back "one of the most powerful (Russian) offensives" of the war.

Russia is now adding to its offensive push what Western intelligence sources say is a force of about 10,000 North Korean combat troops sent by Pyongyang under a pact with Moscow.

That has deepened Zelenskyy's frustration with Western help. On Saturday, he urged al-

lies to stop "watching" and take steps before the North Korean troops reach the battlefield.

Zelenskyy said Kyiv knows at which Russian camps the North Korean troops are being trained but Ukraine can't strike them without permission from allies to use the Western-made long-range weapons to hit targets deep inside Russia.

Baerbock arrived in Kyiv hours after debris from drones intercepted by air defenses fell in two districts of the city, starting small fires, officials said. No people or property were harmed, according to the head of the Kyiv city administration, Serhii Popko.

A Russian glide bomb attack on Sunday night injured 15 people in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city in the northeast, regional police said. Russia fired some 80 Shahed drones at Ukrainian cities overnight, Ukraine's air force said. (AP)

## South Korea and EU condemn North Korea's reported troop dispatch to Russia

SEOUL, Nov 4: Top South Korean and European Union officials on Monday strongly condemned North Korea's reported troop dispatch to aid Russia's war against Ukraine and agreed to work together to try to block deepening military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang.

North Korea's alleged troop deployment threatens to expand the almost 3-year-long war and is causing security jitters in South Korea, where many worry Russia might reward the North by giving it sophisticated weapons technology or offering a defense commitment in the event of a conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

In a meeting in Seoul, South Korean Defense Minister Kim Yong Hyun and the EU's visiting foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, expressed "serious concerns" about North Korea's reported troop dispatch and "strongly condemned" it, according to a statement from the South Korean Defense Ministry.

The two agreed to work together with the international community to try to obstruct Russian-North Korean security cooperation, the statement said.

The U.S. government said Thursday that about 8,000 North Korean soldiers were in Russia near Ukraine's border and preparing to join Russia's fight against Ukraine in the coming days. Ukraine's

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday urged allies to stop just "watching" and take steps before North Korean troops deployed in Russia reach the battlefield.

According to U.S., South Korean and Ukrainian intelligence assessments, North Korea was estimated to have moved about 10,000-12,000 troops to Russia.

If they start fighting against Ukraine forces, it would mark North Korea's first participation in a large-scale conflict since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

North Korea leader Kim Jong Un has used the Russia-Ukraine war as a way to expand defense and economic cooperation with Russia in the face of an intensifying U.S.-led pressure campaign against his advancing nuclear program.

The U.S., South Korea and others accuse North Korea of having already exported artillery shells, missiles and other conventional arms to Russia.

In the past two years, Kim has also ramped up tests of nuclear-capable missile systems, as Russia and China have repeatedly blocked U.S.-led attempts to toughen international sanctions on North Korea over its testing activities in defiance of U.N. bans. North Korea has also pushed to sever relations and abandon its long-standing goal of reconciliation with South Korea. In a background briefing with local media Monday, South Korea's mili-

tary said North Korea has built anti-tank, trench-like structures at two sites near the Korea's heavily armed border, where it blew up northern parts of unused cross-border road and rail routes last month in a display of anger toward South Korea. One of the sites is on the western portion of the border and the other on the eastern section.

Details of the briefing were shared with The Associated Press.

The structure at the eastern part of the border was assessed to be 160 meters (524 feet) long while the one at the western part of the border was about 120 meters (393 feet) long, according to the South Korean military briefing.

In a war situation, the North could easily fill up the trenches with piles of dirt nearby to create routes to invade the South, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Recent commercial satellite images suggest that the work on the trenches began shortly after North Korea staged choreographed demolitions of a road near the western North Korean border city of Kaesong and a combined road and rail section near the Korea's eastern border on Oct. 15. Last week, North Korea test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile designed to attack the U.S. mainland for the first time in almost a year. (AP)

## Turkiye ousts 3 elected pro-Kurdish mayors from office; replaces them with state officials

ANKARA, Nov 4: Turkey on Monday removed three elected pro-Kurdish mayors from office over terrorism-related charges and replaced them with state-appointed officials, the Interior Ministry said.

The move, which comes days after the arrest and ouster from office of a mayor from the country's main opposition party for his alleged links to a banned Kurdish militant group, is seen as a hardening of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government's policies toward the opposition.

It also raises questions about the prospects of a tentative new peace effort to end a 40-year conflict between the militant group and the state that has led to tens of thousands of deaths.

The mayors of the mainly Kurdish-populated provincial capitals of Mardin and Batman, as well as the district mayor for Halfeti, in Sanliurfa province, were ousted from office over their past convictions or ongoing trials and investigations for links to the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, according to an Interior Ministry statement.

The mayor are members of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party, or DEM, which is the third-largest party represented in Parliament. They were elected to office in local elections in March.

Last month, the leader of the far-right nationalist party that's allied with Erdogan had raised the possibility that the PKK's imprisoned leader could be granted parole if he renounces violence and disbands his organization. His comments had sparked discussion and speculation about a potential peace effort.

Ozgur Ozel, the leader of Turkey's main opposition party, CHP, branded the mayors' removal from office as a "coup" and accused Erdogan of seizing "municipalities" he could not win in the elections.

Politicians and members of Turkey's pro-Kurdish movement have frequently been targeted over alleged links to the PKK, which is considered a terror organization by Turkey, the US and the European Union.

Legislators have been stripped of their parliamentary seats and mayors removed from office. Several lawmakers as well as thousands of party members have been jailed on terror-related charges since 2016.

"We will not step back from our struggle for democracy, peace and freedom," Ahmet Turk, the ousted mayor of Mardin, wrote on the social platform X. "We will not allow the usurpation of the people's will." (AP)

## Trial opens in France in the beheading of a teacher over prophet cartoons

PARIS, Nov 4: The trial of eight people in Paris on terrorism charges started on Monday over the beheading of teacher Samuel Paty, who was killed by an Islamic extremist after showing caricatures of Islam's prophet to his middle school students for a lesson on freedom of expression.

Paty's shocking death left an imprint on France, and several schools are now named after him. Paty was killed outside his school near Paris on Oct. 16, 2020, by an 18-year-old Russian of Chechen origin, who was shot to death by police.

Those on trial include friends of assailant Abdoullakh Anzorov who allegedly helped purchase weapons for the attack, as well as people who are accused of spreading false information online about the teacher and his class.

The proceedings started Monday in the presence of members of Paty's family, including his two sisters.

The trial was held under high security, with many police officers patrolling and making checks outside and inside the courtroom.

Five of the accused, who are currently imprisoned, were seated in a wide glass box. Three others, placed under judicial supervision, sat on the defendants' benches outside the box.

The attack occurred against a backdrop of protests in many Muslim countries and calls online for violence targeting France and the satirical French newspaper Charlie Hebdo. The newspaper had republished its caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad a few weeks before Paty's death to mark the opening of the trial over deadly 2015 attacks

on its newsroom by Islamic extremists.

The cartoon images deeply offended many Muslims, who saw them as sacrilegious. But the fallout from Paty's killing reinforced the French state's commitment to freedom of expression and its firm attachment to secularism in public life.

Much attention at the trial will focus on Ibrahim China, the Muslim father of a teenager who was 13 at the time and claimed that she

had been excluded from Paty's class when he showed the caricatures on Oct. 5, 2020.

China, 52, sent a series of messages to his contacts denouncing Paty, saying that "this sick man" needed to be fired, along with the address of the school in the Paris suburb of Conflans Saint-Honorine.

In reality, China's daughter had lied to him and had never attended the lesson in question.

Paty was giving a Moral and Civic Education lesson mandated by the National Education Ministry on freedom of expression. He discussed the caricatures in this context, saying students who did not wish to see them could temporarily leave the classroom.

An online campaign against Paty snowballed, and 11 days after the lesson, Anzorov attacked the

teacher with a knife as he walked home, and displayed the teacher's head on social media. Police later shot Anzorov as he advanced towards them armed.

China will be tried for alleged association with a terrorist enterprise for targeting the 47-year-old teacher through false information.

His daughter was tried last year in a juvenile court and given an 18-month suspended sentence. Four other students at Paty's school were found guilty of involvement

and given suspended sentences; a fifth, who pointed out Paty to Anzorov in exchange for money, was given a 6-month term with an electronic bracelet.

Abdelhakim Sefrioui, 65, is another key figure in the trial opening Monday for the adult suspects. He presented himself as a spokesperson for Imams of France, although he had been dismissed from that role. He filmed a video in front of the school with the father of the student. He referred to the teacher as a "thug" multiple times and sought to pressure the school administration via social media.

Sefrioui founded the pro-Hamas Cheikh Yassine Collective in 2004, which was dissolved a few days after Paty's killing. Sefrioui had long criticized and threatened Muslims who advocate friendship with

Jews, including the rector of the Grand Mosque of Paris.

Sefrioui and China face 30 years in prison if convicted.

China denied any incitement to "kill" in his messages and video, claiming he did not intend to incite hatred and violence, according to judicial documents.

Sefrioui's lawyers have said they would seek his acquittal, and that the video filmed by Sefrioui in front of the school was not seen by the terrorist.

Anzorov, who had wanted to go to Syria to fight with Islamic extremists there, discovered Paty's name on jihadist social media channels, according to investigators. Anzorov lived 100 kilometers (60 miles) from Paty's school and did not know the teacher.

Two of Anzorov's friends face life imprisonment if convicted on charges of complicity in murder in connection with a terrorist enterprise. Naim Boudaoud, 22, and Azim Epsirkhanov, 23, are accused of helping Anzorov buy a knife and a pellet gun. Boudaoud also drove Anzorov to Paty's school. They turned themselves in at the police station, and deny being aware of the attacker's intentions.

The other four individuals are charged with criminal terrorist conspiracy for communicating with the killer on pro-jihad Snapchat groups. They all deny being aware of the intent to kill Samuel Paty. One of them sent smiling emojis after the decapitated teacher's head was shared.

On Oct. 13, 2023, another teacher in France was killed by a radical Islamist from Russia, originally from Ingushetia, a region bordering Chechnya. (AP)

## Pakistan's Punjab province ministers blame India for worsening smog as air quality index hits record high in Lahore

LAHORE, Nov 4: Ministers in Pakistan's Punjab province on Monday blamed winds from India for worsening smog here, urging the Indian authorities to take up the matter seriously, after the air quality index in the capital city hit a record high over the weekend.

Toxic grey smog has sickened tens of thousands of people, mainly children and elderly people, since last month when the air quality started worsening in Lahore, the city bordering India.

The concentration of PM

2.5, or tiny particulate matter, in the air, approached 450, considered hazardous, the Punjab Environment Protection Department said.

"The wind direction brings air from India into Pakistan, yet India does not seem to be taking this problem as seriously as it should," Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari told the media here.

She urged the Indian side of Punjab state to take this matter seriously.

"Delhi ranks first in smog levels today, with Lahore following closely in second

place. Delhi's air quality index is around 393, while Lahore's is close to 280," she said, adding that China has been battling smog for the past 26 years.

Earlier, Punjab senior minister Mairryum Aurangzeb said the province was going to request the Pakistan Foreign Office to take up the issue of cross-border pollution with India.

"The easterly winds from Amritsar and Chandigarh are spiking the air quality index in Lahore to over 1,000 for the past two days," she said.

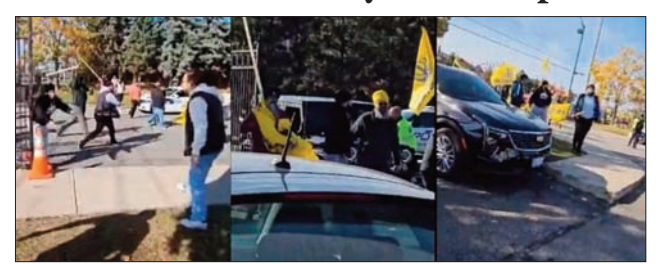
"The wind from India towards Lahore taking the smog to dangerous levels and the wind is likely to sustain its direction for at least next week. The people should take care of themselves by avoiding unnecessarily coming out of their houses. The elderly and children should be particularly careful," Aurangzeb said.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz also called for climate diplomacy with India and said she would soon write to the chief minister of the Indian side of Punjab to jointly address the issue of smog.

Meanwhile, the Punjab government has closed primary schools in Lahore for a week in the wake of rising smog. The government has already closed schools for specially-abled children for three months.

Lahore was once known as a city of gardens, which were ubiquitous during the Mughal era from the 16th to 19th centuries. However, rapid urbanisation and surging population growth have left little room for greenery. (PTI)

## Clashes at Hindu temple in Canada, Trudeau says unacceptable



OTTAWA, Nov 4: Protesters carrying Khalistani flags clashed with people at a Hindu temple in Brampton, triggering condemnation by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who said every Canadian has the right to practise their faith freely and safely.

On Sunday, Peel Regional Police said that a protest occurred at the Hindu Sabha temple in Brampton and unverified videos circulating on social media appeared to show demonstrators holding banners in support of Khalistan, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reported.

The videos showed fist fights and people striking each other with poles on what appears to be the grounds surrounding the Hindu Sabha Mandir temple, the report added.

Taking to X, Trudeau thanked the local authorities for the swift response to protect the community and probe this incident.

"The acts of violence at the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton today are unacceptable. Every Canadian has the right to practice their faith freely and safely. Thank you to the Peel Regional Police for swiftly responding to protect the community and investigate this incident," Trudeau said in a post on X on Monday.

Meanwhile, the High Commission of India in Ottawa also issued a strong statement on Monday condemning the recent attack on Brampton's Hindu Sabha temple by "anti-India" elements.

This incident disrupted a consular event co-organised by the Hindu Sabha Mandir and the Indian consulate.

In its statement, the High Commission remarked, "We have seen violent disruption today (November 3), orchestrated by anti-India elements outside the consular camp co-organised with the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton, near Toronto."

Peel Regional Police said on X Sunday afternoon that they were

aware of the protest taking place at the Hindu Sabha Mandir, and had increased its presence at the temple to maintain public order and safety.

"We respect the right to protest in a peaceful and safe manner but will not tolerate violence and criminal acts," Chief Nishan Duraiappah posted on X Sunday after the videos began circulating.

"Those that do participate in this activity will be pursued, arrested and charged."

Peel police told CBC Toronto no arrests were made at the temple Sunday.

Police did not provide further details about the social media videos, what happened or whether any complaints were filed.

Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown condemned the violence in a post on X Sunday afternoon, saying those responsible should be punished to the greatest extent of the law.

"I am disappointed to hear about acts of violence outside of the Hindu Sabha," he said. "Religious freedom is a foundational value in Canada. Everyone should feel safe in their place of worship."

The recent attack on the Hindu Sabha temple in Brampton witnessed widespread condemnation by Canadian politicians, including opposition leader Pierre Poilievre.

"Completely unacceptable to see violence targeting worshippers at the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton today. All Canadians should be free to practice their faith in peace. Conservatives condemn this violence unequivocally. I will unite our people and end the chaos," Poilievre said on X.

Premier Doug Ford praised police for their "quick response," adding that the incident is "completely unacceptable and must be condemned."

"No one should feel unsafe at their place of worship," he wrote on X. (PTI)

## Israel ends agreement with UN agency providing aid in Gaza

JERUSALEM, Nov 4: Israel said on Monday it had terminated the agreement facilitating the work of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, the main aid provider in Gaza, in what appeared to be a step to implement legislation passed last month that would sever ties with the agency and prevent it from operating in Israel.

Israel says the agency, known as UNRWA, has been infiltrated by Hamas. UNRWA denies the allegations and says it takes measures to ensure its neutrality.

On Sunday, Israel said its troops had carried out a ground raid into Syria to seize a Syrian it accuses of working with Iran. It was the first time in the current war that Israel announced its troops operated in Syrian territory.

Despite growing pressure from the United States and others in the international community for a cease-fire in Gaza and Lebanon, intensified Israeli strikes

against the Hezbollah militant group are expanding beyond Lebanon's border areas. Israel is also fighting a seemingly endless war against Hamas in northern Gaza.

Since the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah erupted last year, at least 2,900 people have been killed and 13,150 wounded in Lebanon, the Health Ministry reports, not including Friday's toll. Health authorities say that a quarter of those killed were women and children.

More than a year of Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza has killed more than 43,000 people, Palestinian health officials say. They do not distinguish between civilians and combatants, but say more than half of those killed were women and children. The war began after Palestinian militants stormed into Israel on October 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting 250 others. (AP)

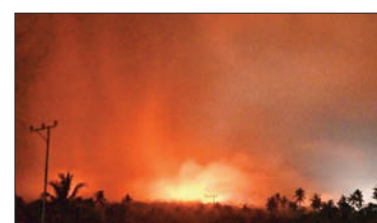
## Volcanic eruption burns houses in Indonesia, killing 6

MAUMERE (INDONESIA), Nov 4: Indonesia's National Disaster Management Agency said Monday that at least six people have died as a series of volcanic eruptions widens on the remote island of Flores.

The eruption at Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki just after midnight on Monday spewed thick brownish ash as high as 2,000 meters (6,500 feet) into the air and hot ashes hit a nearby village, burning down several houses including a convent of Catholic nuns, said Firman Yosef, an official at the Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki monitoring post.

The Disaster Management Agency lowered the known death toll from an earlier report of nine, saying it had received updated information from local authorities.

It said that information was still being collected about the extent of casualties and damage, as local media reports said more people were buried in collapsed houses.



Authorities also raised the danger level and widened the danger zone for Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki on Monday, following a series of eruptions that began last week.

The country's volcano monitoring agency increased the volcano's alert status to the highest level and more than doubled the exclusion zone to a 7-kilometer (4.3-mile) radius after midnight on Monday as eruptions became more frequent.

The agency said at least 10,000 people have been affected by the eruption in Wulanggitang District, in the six nearby villages of Pululera, Nawokote, Hokeng Jaya, Klatanio, Boru and Boru Kedang.

In Ile Bura District, 4 villages were affected, namely Dulipali Village, Nobo, Nurabelen and Rieng Rita, while in Titehena District it affected four villages, namely Konga Village, Kobasoma, Bokang Wolomatang and Watowara.

He said volcanic material was thrown up to 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from its crater, blanketing nearby villages and towns with tons of volcanic debris and forcing residents to flee.

A nun in Hokeng village died and another was missing, said Agustina Palma, the head of the Saint Gabriel Foundation that oversees convents on the majority-Catholic island.

"Our nuns ran out in panic under a rain of volcanic ash in the darkness," Palma said. Photos and videos circulated on social media showed tons of volcanic debris covering houses up to their rooftops in villages like Hokeng, where hot volcanic material set fire to houses.

It's Indonesia's second volcanic eruption in as many weeks. (AP)

## Bengali only Indian language on New York's ballot papers

NEW YORK, Nov 4: More than 200 languages are spoken in New York, according to the Department of City Planning, backing the claim of it being the melting pot of America. However, the ballot papers in the US presidential elections will have only four other languages apart from English.

And guess what? Bengali represents the Indian languages in this list.

The US will on Tuesday vote to elect its 47th President.

"We are required to service four other languages besides English. It is Chinese, Spanish, Korean and Bengali as the Asian languages," says Micheal J Ryan, Executive Director, Board of Elections, NYC.

Subhshesh, who works as a sales agent in a store in Times Square, has Bengali roots. He is happy that his father living in the Queens area will get linguistic assistance when he goes to cast his vote.

"People like me know English but there are many in our community who are comfortable in the native language. This helps them at the polling station. I am sure my father will like the idea of seeing a Bengali language ballot paper," says Subhshesh. (PTI)



# 16<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission team arrives in Nagaland

State government is likely to present to the Commission, demands for grants-in-aid for the next five years

**KOHIMA, Nov 4:** Members of the 16th Finance Commission arrived in Nagaland on Monday on a three-day visit, an official said. The Finance Commission team comprising chairman Arvind Panagariya and members Ajay Narayan Jha, Annie George Mathew and Manoj Panda was received at Dimapur Airport by deputy chief minister Y Patton and chief secretary J Alam. During the three-day stay, the Finance Commission team would hold a closed-door meeting with the chief minister, ministers and senior officers in Kohima on Tuesday. Other than the funds provided to the state through Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), the state government is likely to present to the Commission, demands for grants-in-aid for the next five



years, amounting to nearly Rs one lakh crore on various sectors, the official said. The sectors include revenue deficit grants, funds for local governments to empower the rural and urban local bodies, sector specific grants to supplement expenditures in sectors such as education and health and also state-specific grants given to the specific states for specific projects, the official said. The demands would be made through a power-point presentation by additional chief secretary and

finance commissioner Nagaland at the meeting, sources said. The Finance Commission team will also meet representatives of trade, industries and commerce, rural and urban local bodies and political parties on Tuesday. They are also scheduled to visit the picturesque Kapamodzu Peak in Phek district to meet women entrepreneurs and get updates of their work on empowerment oriented experiential tourism. After the three-day stay, the team will leave for Manipur on November 7. The Sixteenth Finance Commission was constituted on December 31, 2023. The commission has been requested to make its recommendations available by October 31, 2025, covering an award period of 5 years commencing April 1, 2026. (PTI)

# 24 players, 3 clubs banned for match manipulation in Mizoram

**HT Correspondent**  
**AGARTALA, Nov 4:** The Mizoram Football Association has imposed ban on 24 players and three clubs after they were allegedly found in manipulating the recently concluded Mizoram Premier League-11. The Association has banned 20 players for lifetime, four players were banned for five years, 10 players were banned for 3 years while 8 players were banned for 1 year. All the three clubs were banned for three years. The secretary of the Association, Lalrengpuia said that through diligent investigation including support and cooperation from local law enforcement agencies, the MFA has uncovered cases of corruption in the form of match manipulation in the recently concluded Mizoram Premier League-11. "These activities, involving a few miscreants however represent a severe breach of our



values, undermine the integrity of the sport, and disrespect the fans who passionately support Mizoram football. The MFA is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity in our competitions. As a consequence of these findings, we have imposed strict penalties on those involved. We also assure stakeholders that Clubs found to be complicit in these activities will face sanctions affecting their participation in future competitions, and players and

officials implicated will be subject to suspensions and other disciplinary measures deemed appropriate by the MFA. We want to assure all fans, partners, and stakeholders that we are taking every measure to prevent any recurrence of such incidents", the statement reads. It said that the MFA will enhance its regulatory frameworks and strengthen monitoring mechanisms to safeguard the fairness of our competitions. "We call upon Football fans, partners, and the broader football community to stand with us as we address this challenging chapter. Your continued support is vital as we work to restore trust and ensure that Mizoram football continues to be a beacon of fair play, passion, and unity. The MFA remains steadfast in our commitment to a clean and transparent sport, and together, we will build a stronger, more resilient football community", it added.

# Bhupendra Mel held in Jorhat



**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** The 13th death anniversary of Bhupen Hazarika was marked with an exceptional programme - a discussion at Chandannagar in Jorhat on Monday. The discussion was held at the courtyard of Ranjan Kumar Dutta and Jyoti Rekha Dutta, a well-known names for the culture lovers of Assam creating an emotional atmosphere. The fair started with a lantern lighting ceremony in front of the portrait of Sudhakantha. The discussion was participated by Akhil Chakraborty, a popular singer, playwright and novel-

ist, who launched a book on the life and works of Sudhakanth by Ranjan Kumar Dutta. A modern Bengali song recorded "Amar Sureri Alkananda" was inaugurated by popular artist Kukila Goswami during the programme. The song is composed by Ranjan Kumar Dutta and Rajumoni Saikia. The programme was attended by artistes Sandhya Devi, Minu Barua, Mamata Barthakur, Kokila Goswami, Ila Dutta, Rinjuman Barua, Hemanta Kumar Nath, Pankajiyoti Barua, Pranati Barua, Popi Barua Tagore, Niku Sharma, Pallavika Goswami, Susmita Barthakur and Jyomi Baruah, Mamata Chakraborty, Gaurishankar Baruah revived the moments with songs and lecture. Jita Baruah and Rita Dutta recited poems of the Sudhakantha. Other participants Antara Saikia, Swapnil Dutta, Ragini Sarma and Jashika Saikia performed songs during the discussion. Orchid Boy Sameer Roy planted orchids in the names of Sudhakantha and Lata Mangeshkar and Ranjan Kumar Dutta in honor of their contributions to the society. The event was recorded by Snigdhashikha, senior journalist of satellite channel DY 365 and Darshana Barthakur, journalist of Aakakbani. Viewers would be able to watch the programme which will be telecast on November 4 at 8 pm.

# People of Mizoram duped online of ₹ 8 cr till Sep this year: Police

**AIZAWL, Nov 4:** Online fraudsters have duped people of Mizoram of ₹ 8 crore from January to September this year, a senior police officer said. Nearly 80 per cent of the cybercrime cases were online financial fraud cases, he said. The highest monthly loss of people's money to fraudsters was reported in July at ₹ 2.57 crore, followed by ₹ 1.59 crore in March, he said. Retrieving funds from fraudsters continues to be a challenge as only 10 per cent of the duped money has been recovered so far, the senior officer said. Among the online frauds, the most common in Mizoram was 'army scam', in which fraudsters pretending to be military personnel called up victims and phished off money on the pretext of selling goods at cheap rates, he said. Most cybercriminals operate from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, he added. (PTI)

# Tripura Police seize Yaba worth ₹ 3 crore

**HT Correspondent**  
**AGARTALA, Nov 4:** Tripura Police have arrested one person and seized Yaba Tablets worth ₹ 3 Crores on Sunday late night from Panisagar under North District of Tripura. According to Tripura Police, at about 10 PM on Sunday night one White Coloured Maruti Suzuki S-Cross (SUV) vehicle bearing AS 01 BY 0198 coming from Assam side towards Panisagar was intercepted by the police staff at Panisagar Naka. During the search of vehicles we have recovered 750 small packets containing a total 150,000 Yaba tablets in presence of SDPO Panisagar, Executive Magistrate and independent witnesses", said Police. The police said that the approx. market price/value of seized Yaba tablets would be around ₹ 3 cr 75 lakh. The driver in the vehicle is detained. A specific case under NDPS Act is being registered for the matter at Panisagar Police Station", said police.

# 5 Bangladeshis held in Tripura while crossing border

**HT Correspondent**  
**AGARTALA, Nov 4:** The Border Security Force on Monday informed that they have apprehended 8 persons including 3 Indians and 5 Bangladeshi nationals while illegally crossing the International boundary with Bangladesh at Sabroom under South District. As per BSF, on November 4 at about 2.40 pm, three Indian and five Bangladeshi nationals were apprehended in a joint operation of BSF and Tripura Police from Jalkumbha in south Tripura district. "All the three Indian nationals were apprehended while crossing the border, are residents of Baikhora, South Tripura district while all the Bangladeshi nationals are resident of village jaganath, Ramgarh, Khagracheri in Bangladesh. Preliminary inquiry is going on", said BSF.

# Daimary attends 67<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Sydney

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** Assam legislative Assembly speaker Biswajit Daimary attended the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) held in Sydney, Australia from November 3-8. On Monday Daimary attended the planning and review sub-committee and executive committee meetings of the International Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (ICPA), held at International Convention Centre, Sydney, representing India. During the Planning and Review Sub-Committee meeting, as the representative of India, Daimary raised issues such as taking up top-



ics not related to the legislative domain and of non-Commonwealth

issues on burning geo-political issues and challenges to global stability, etc and the need to have wider consultation taking into account that these issues are apparently outside the mandate of CPA. "In the Executive Committee meeting, on behalf of India, I intervened on the issue of granting of Permanent Observer status to non-Commonwealth countries and I stressed on the need to streamline the modalities for granting such status to non-Commonwealth countries," Daimary said. The 67th CPC will continue till November 8 during which various workshops on important topics of Parliaments will be discussed.

# Felicitation volume honouring Indreswar Bora released

**HT Correspondent**  
**SIVASAGAR, Nov 4:** The felicitation volume of writer and educationist Indreswar Bora was released at a function in Bakshu, Dhaitaipukhuri, by Dr Jyoti Prasad Saikia, professor in the department of Sociology at Dibrugarh University, on Saturday. Dr Saikia remarked that the volume contains words with a hidden flame to inspire the youth. The book, entitled "Pragyawanta", was published by Dhaitaipukhuri Sahitya Sabha. Indreswar Bora retired as the headmaster of Dhaitaipukhuri Adar-

sha Vidyalaya and is associated with Asom Sahitya Sabha and numerous other organisations in the region. Noted socialist leader and educationist Phani Chetia, who attended the function, lauded the organisers, while Dilip Saikia presided over the event. The meeting was also attended by former president of Sivasagar Jila Sahitya Sabha, Juga Gogoi, along with Manoj Kumar Gogoi, Kamal Siring, Dibakar Bora, Paresh Hatimuria, Kusha Borgohain, Partha Pratim Bora, and several others.

# Workshop on citrus and plantation crop farming kicks off at Margherita College

**HT Correspondent**  
**MARGHERITA, Nov 4:** Margherita College launched a comprehensive three-day workshop on Monday, which will continue until November 6. The workshop was about sustainable citrus and plantation crop farming, organised by the National Institute of Agricultural Marketing (NIAM), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, in collaboration with the Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Labourers Development Association. This initiative aims to explore marketing opportunities and challenges faced by small-scale cultivators, facilitated by the Entrepreneurship Development Cell at Margherita College. The workshop commenced on Monday with a formal inauguration led by Dr Atonu Kakoty, principal of Margherita College, and was joined by notable figures including Dr Gautam Purkayastha, vice principal of Margherita College; Dr Ranjit Pandit, academic coordinator of Margherita College; resource person Dr Bijit Kumar Saud, principal scientist at the Assam Agriculture University's Citrus and Plantation Crops Research Station in Tinsukia. Also in attendance were Ashwini Kumar Tasa, general secre-



tary of the Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Labourers Development Association; Pranjal Baraik, convener; Ankur Gogoi, advisor of the Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Labourers Development Association; and joint coordinators of the workshop, commerce department teachers Anjan Kumar Bordoloi and Yemokhya Fakay. Over 50 partici-

ants, including students, alumni, farmers, and local cultivators, engaged in the workshop. The ceremonial lighting of the lamp marked the official start of the event. Dr Atonu Kakoty expressed his enthusiasm for the workshop's goals, stating, "Margherita College is proud to host such a significant workshop on sustainable citrus and plantation crop farming, providing knowledge that will benefit farmers, cultivators, and interested youth in the greater Margherita region." Each of the distinguished guests was honoured with a traditional Assamese phulam gamosa and a commemorative memento. During his address, Dr Bijit Kumar Saud highlighted the unique biodiversity of Assam and the Northeastern states, emphasising the region's wealth of flora and fauna, particularly in citrus plantations. He noted, "Assam is home to 23 of the 27 citrus species found worldwide, providing an opportunity for self-reliance in agriculture without the constant need for employment elsewhere." Dr Saud encouraged participants to engage fully in the workshop, assuring them that they would gain valuable insights into cultivating citrus and plantation crops. At the conclusion of the workshop, all participants will receive a certificate of participation from the organising committee, as confirmed by Ankur Gogoi, further incentivising their engagement and learning. This initiative not only aims to empower local cultivators but also seeks to enhance the overall agricultural landscape of the region.

# Residents protest relocation of Revenue office

**HT Correspondent**  
**SIVASAGAR, Nov 4:** Residents of over 109 villages in Anguri and Janjhi in Sivasagar district are strongly opposing the relocation of the Anguri Revenue Circle Office, organising widespread protests against the government's decision at various locations. The Janjhi unit of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) recently submitted a memorandum to the chief minister through the circle officer, requesting that the Revenue Circle Office not be moved to Nazira. Rajior Dal, Chitra Mukti Sangram Samiti, the Congress, and other organisations have also demanded the immediate rescission of the order over the past several days.

# LOST

I, Ruhita Roy daughter of Karuna Roy and Rita Roy lost my original HSLC Admit Card. Name : Ruhita Roy V/O - Buragaon P/O - Jurapukhuri P/S - Lanka, Hojai, Assam Pin - 782442

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER::WEST KARBI ANGLONG::**  
**HAMREN::**  
No. WKA/Estt/IT/2024/12 Dated Hamren the 19th October, 2024

**ADVERTISEMENT**

In pursuance of notification No.IT.206830/3 dated 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 and No. IT 206830/2022/71 dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2024 of the Information Technology Department, Government of Assam, the District Commissioner-cum-Chairperson, District e-Governance Society (DeGS), West Karbi Anglong, Hamren invites applications from the eligible Indian Citizens and permanent residents of Assam for the following posts under the DeGS, West Karbi Anglong, Hamren on contractual basis initially for a period of 11(eleven) months.

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of post	Monthly remuneration fixed
1	District Project Manager (DPM)	1 (one)	Rs. 22,000.00
2	District Technical Support Staff (DTSS)	2(two)	Rs. 14,000.00

For more details contact the office.

Sd/-  
District Commissioner,  
Cum Chairperson, DeGS,  
West Karbi Anglong, Hamren

No. WKA/Estt/IT/2024/12 Dated Hamren the 19th October, 2024

**অসম পাবলিক সার্ভিস কমিছন**  
**ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**  
Diswaharagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781002

No. 57PSC/CON/Exam-13/2024-2025

**NOTIFICATION**

The Assam Public Service Commission hereby declares today, the 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2024, the results of the Screening Test (OMR based) for recruitment to the post of **Veterinary Officer/Block Veterinary Officer, Class-B, Class-I (Jr. Grade) under Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Department, Assam, Guwahati (Adv. No. 06/2024 Dtd. 04/03/2024)** conducted by the Commission on 14/09/2024. Candidates bearing the following Roll Numbers will have to appear in the interview to be conducted by the Commission. The date(s) of interview will be notified shortly.

Roll Number of candidates to be appeared in the Interview are stated below (horizontally):

10001	10002	10004	10005	10006	10007	10008	10009	10010	10011
10012	10015	10017	10020	10022	10023	10024	10025	10026	10027
10030	10031	10033	10038	10039	10040	10041	10045	10047	10048
10051	10052	10054	10055	10058	10062	10063	10064	10066	10067
10070	10072	10073	10075	10076	10077	10081	10082	10083	10084
10085	10087	10089	10090	10092	10093	10094	10095	10096	10097
10098	10103	10106	10107	10109	10110	10111	10113	10115	10116
10119	10120	10121	10123	10128	10130	10133	10134	10135	10136
10137	10138	10139	10140	10141	10143	10146	10149	10151	10153
10158	10159	10161	10163	10164	10165	10167	10168	10172	10173
10174	10176	10179	10180	10181	10182	10183	10185	10187	10189
10191	10196	10197	10198	10201	10203	10204	10206	10207	10212
10213	10214	10216	10220	10223	10224	10225	10226	10227	10228
10230	10231	10236	10237	10240	10241	10245	10247	10248	10249
10251	10252	10253	10255	10256	10260	10263	10264	10266	10268
10274	10275	10276	10277	10279	10281	10283	10285	10287	10291
10292	10294	10296	10298	10299	10301	10302	10303	10305	10307
10308	10310	10311	10312	10313	10314	10315	10316	10318	10320
10324	10325	10328	10329	10330	10332	10334	10335	10338	10339
10340	10343	10344	10346	10348	10350	10351	10353	10354	10355
10356	10357	10359	10360	10361	10362	10363	10366	10368	10369
10372	10373	10374	10377	10378	10380	10381	10385	10386	10390
10391	10393	10396	10398	10399	10400	10403	10404	10406	10409
10410	10411	10413	10414	10419	10421	10422	10423	10428	10429
10436	10441	10442	10443	10445	10446	10447	10448	10449	10450
10456	10459	10461	10462	10463	10464	10466	10467	10468	10471
10473	10474	10476	10477	10479	10480	10482	10484	10486	10487
10489	10490	10491	10492	10493	10495	10496	10497	10500	10501
10502	10503	10506	10507	10508					

NB: Results may be accessed through the APSC's website [www.apsc.nic.in](http://www.apsc.nic.in)

Sd/-  
Principal Controller of Examinations,  
Assam Public Service Commission,  
Diswaharagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781002

**Janasanyog/D/8334/24/5-Nov-24**



# PM Modi terms JMM-led coalition 'Gushpaithiya Bandhan', 'Mafia ka Ghulam'

**RANCHI, Nov 4:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday launched a scathing attack on the JMM-led coalition in Jharkhand, labelling it a "Gushpaithiya Bandhan" (infiltrators' alliance) and "Mafia Ka Ghulam" (mafia's slave) for allegedly supporting Bangladeshi infiltrators.

Scams by coalition leaders in Jharkhand have become an industry and corruption has devoured the state like termites, the Prime Minister said.

"Appeasement politics has reached its pinnacle in Jharkhand where the JMM-led coalition is busy supporting Bangladeshi infiltrators. If this continues, the state's tribal population will shrink. This is a threat to tribal society and the country. This coalition has become a 'Gushpaithiya Bandhan' and a 'Mafia ka Ghulam'," Modi said at a rally in Jharkhand's Garhwa.

This was Modi's first visit to Jharkhand following the announcement of assembly elections scheduled on November 13 and November 20 with counting of votes on November 23. It was also any prime minister's maiden visit to Garhwa.

"Termites of corruption make the country hollow. In Jharkhand, the JMM, Congress and RJD have crossed all limits as far as corruption is concerned. This has impacted the poor, dalits, tribals and the backward communities. Jharkhand CM, MLAs and MPs of JMM-led coalition are neck-deep in



corruption," the PM said, asserting that only the BJP can provide 'Suvridha', 'Suraksha', 'Sthirta' and 'Samridhi', which is "Modi's guarantee".

Modi accused the JMM, Congress, and RJD of using Bangladeshi infiltrators for "vote bank politics," enabling their settlement in Jharkhand, which he deemed a threat to the state's social structure. He emphasised the urgency of the situation, saying, "It is Roti, Beti, Maati Pukar to make BJP-NDA Sarkar in Jharkhand."

"If Saraswati Vandana is prevented in schools, you can understand the level of threat," he said and added that curfews during festivals like Durga Puja have become common.

The PM said Jharkhand has become a hub for sand smuggling and claimed that rumour-mongering has

turned into an industry in the state, with "one family active in Delhi and another in Jharkhand."

He criticised the Congress for spreading falsehoods since Independence, alleging that it has devastated states like Himachal, Telangana, and Karnataka. Modi said AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge admitted that the party makes false guarantees.

"I am surprised how Kharge Ji spoke the truth that Congress's irrelevant announcements will bankrupt states," Modi remarked, asserting that Congress and its partners can never be relied upon.

He also pointed out that the JMM-led coalition spread rumours discouraging farmers from accepting funds under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, leading them to believe the money would be taken away. However, he added that the

implementation of the scheme has instilled confidence among the farmers.

He criticised the JMM-led coalition for misappropriating thousands of crores allocated by the Centre for various schemes, asserting that it is time for a "double engine government" in Jharkhand to ensure development over the next 25 years.

"The Centre is making all efforts to boost infrastructure in Jharkhand, while the JMM-led coalition is trying to hinder progress," he said, citing the stalled North Koel Reservoir project as a key example.

The foundation of the project on North Koel river flowing through Palamu and Garhwa districts was originally laid in 1972 but failed to take off.

The PM said highways in Jharkhand were being widened while railways infrastructure was being augmented and 12 Vande Bharat Express trains were operational here.

Modi said Jharkhand BJP came up with an excellent 'Sankalp Patra' (manifesto), promising initiatives such as the Gogo Didi scheme, which would provide women with ₹ 2,100 per month and unemployment allowances of ₹ 2,000 to the youth under the 'Yuva Sathi Bhatta' programme.

He said gas cylinders would be available for ₹ 500, with two free cylinders provided during festivals. Additionally, he mentioned that three lakh government posts would be filled, and local youth would re-

ceive ₹ 5,000 per month under a PM package while interning with major companies.

If the BJP is voted into power, he pledged that paddy would be procured at ₹ 3,100 per quintal, and forest produce would be purchased at minimum support prices.

"The JMM, Congress and RJD have made false promises and done nothing for women and the people in the past five years and are now copying the BJP," he said and added, "JMM-led coalition's exit is certain this election."

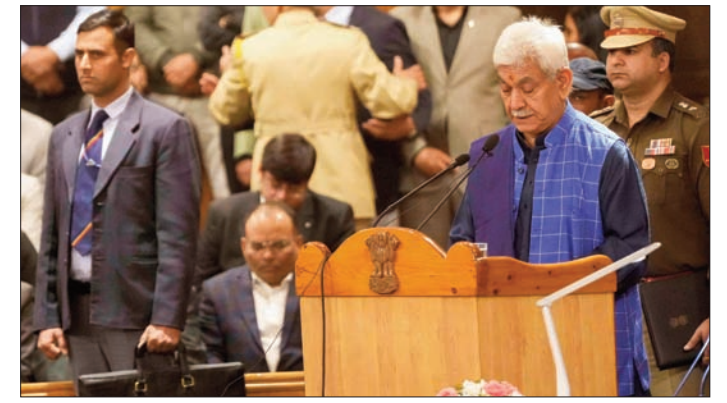
Modi said 16 lakh houses have been built under the PM Awas Yojana for SC, ST, and OBC communities in Jharkhand, with a promise to construct another 21 lakh.

"JMM-led coalition betrayed the poor in the name of Abua Awas Yojana...scams have become an industry in Jharkhand. Paper leaks are common. Several youth lost their lives. JMM, Congress, RJD believe in dynastic politics and they insulted tribal leaders like Champai Soren," the PM said.

He concluded by reiterating that the coalition's leaders have misused funds sent by the Centre for their personal gain.

"Thousands of crores sent by Centre for schemes have been devoured by JMM-led coalition's corrupt leaders in Jharkhand," he said and added that BJP is making all efforts to revive tribal glory and the entire country will celebrate tribal icon Birsu Munda's 150th anniversary next year. (PTI)

## Aspiration for return to statehood remains strong: J-K LG Sinha



**SRINAGAR, Nov 4:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said the high voter turnout in the assembly polls reflected the enduring faith of the people in the democratic process, but the aspiration for the return to statehood remains strong.

In his maiden address to the first-ever legislative assembly of the Union territory of J-K, he also said the government will make efforts to rehabilitate Kashmiri Pandits in the valley with dignity, for which a safe and secure environment will be created.

"It gives me great pleasure to welcome all the newly elected members of the legislative assembly to the inaugural session of the assembly. We gather here after the successful and peaceful conduct of the first democratic elections in over a decade," he said.

The LG said the elections, the first since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019 and the reorganisation of J-K into a Union Territory, are "a critical milestone" in restoring democratic governance after a period of "political uncertainty".

"This is a testament to the enduring spirit of democracy, the strength of our institutions, and the faith that the people of this region have in their democratic representation through this assembly. It is a privilege to witness the restoration of this august House, which once again reflects the aspirations of the people of J-K," he said.

Sinha said one of the most encouraging aspects of the assembly elections was the high voter turnout which reflects the enduring faith of the people in democratic processes.

"The high turnout, particularly in regions that traditionally could not participate fully because of a vociferous minority sympathetic to separatist sentiments, indicates that the people of J-K continue to see electoral participation as a means to voice their concerns and aspirations. The successful completion of the electoral process marks an epoch in the history of J-K," he added. Sinha said he looks forward to work together with all for strengthening the democratic institutions, and providing the people the governance and the future they deserve.

He said the people of J-K now look up to the government with many hopes and expectations, and the government is fully geared up to realise these hopes and fulfil these expectations. The LG, however, said the aspiration for the return to statehood in J-K remains strong.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on several occasions has already expressed his commitment to restoring statehood, which has been a source of rekindled hope and reassurance for the people.

Referring to the resolution passed by the J-K's Council of Ministers calling for the immediate restoration of statehood, Sinha said the resolution reflects the collective will of

the elected representatives, echoing the aspirations of the people for the reinstatement of full democratic governance.

"My government will make all efforts for restoration of full statehood and constitutional guarantees available to the state. It would be a befitting reciprocation of the faith reposed by the people of J-K in our democratic institutions," he said.

"In the meantime, I urge all stakeholders to work together as one team and extend full support to my government in fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the people," he added.

The LG said the government is fully committed to implementing the promises made to the people for further political empowerment and for creating an enabling environment for employment, sustainable development, social inclusiveness and expansion of the economy for enhancing the overall quality of life.

It will work relentlessly on the three principles of 'Economy, Ecology and Equity' that will shape our future. "We commit ourselves to this balance for a better and brighter future for all," he said.

Sinha said every section as well as every region of J-K will be treated equally and developed for ensuring inclusiveness and balanced development, which will be a solemn and sacred commitment of my government.

"I believe that the new legislators, the administration, and all other stakeholders will work together to handle the challenges before us for a better and prosperous society," he added.

Asserting that the government will make efforts for a dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits, Sinha said a safe and secure environment will be created for their return to the valley. "Work on transit accommodation projects for Kashmiri Migrants employees will be speeded up for providing them suitable accommodation at designated places," he said.

He also announced that all the vacancies in the government sector will be identified and filled up on fast-track basis. The government is committed to expedite the process of compassionate appointments as well, he said, while noting that J-K is at a pivotal moment in its history, standing on the threshold of a transformative era filled with immense promise and opportunity.

"This transformation is not merely a governmental endeavour, it is a collective journey that calls for unity and shared purpose across all communities, institutions, and sections of society.

"Today, as we embark on this journey, I call upon each one of you to play an active and committed role in building a prosperous, inclusive and forward-looking J-K. This should be done with unity of purpose and commitment to uplifting the lives of the people of J-K, without any occasion for partisanship of any hue," he said. (PTI)

## Oppn MPs indicate move to disassociate from Waqf panel over its Chair's 'unilateral' functioning

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Opposition MPs in the parliamentary committee scrutinising the Waqf (Amendment) Bill are scheduled to meet Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday to protest its chairperson Jagdambika Pal's alleged "unilateral" decisions and attempts to "bulldoze" proceedings, indicating that they may disassociate themselves from the panel.

Claiming that they have been "stonewalled" during the committee's proceedings, opposition MPs have listed their grievances, including objections against the proposed law, in the letter addressed to Birla.

Opposition sources said they have prepared a joint letter -- signed by a number of MPs, including Congress's Mohammad Jawed and Imran Masood, DMK's Raja, AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi, AAP's Sanjay Singh and TMC's Kalyan Banerjee -- that will be submitted it to the Speaker on Tuesday.

They accused Pal, a four-term MP representing the BJP, of taking "unilateral decisions" on fixing the dates of sittings -- which were at times for three consecutive days -- and whom to call witnesses.

They said it is not practically possible for MPs to interact with deponents with adequate preparation.

The committee's proceedings have been marred by frequent protests from opposition members over a host of issues, while the BJP members have accused them of deliberately trying to scuttle its work.

With the Bill taking on distinct political hues and both the ruling BJP and the opposition INDIA bloc firm on their stand in favour

and against it respectively, the panel's meetings have often resembled a political battleground as it works in overdrive to meet its deadline of the first week of Parliament's winter session.

In their joint letter, opposition MPs will urge Birla to direct Pal to have a formal consultation with members of the committee before taking any decision to assure the country that the committee is functioning in a free and fair manner, without any bias and departure from the established parliamentary procedures.

"Otherwise, we humbly submit that we may be forced to disassociate with the committee once for all as we have been stonewalled," it said.

Asserting that the joint committee of Parliament examining the Bill is like a mini Parliament, they said the panel should not be treated as a mere "ventilating chamber" to get the proposed legislation passed as "desired" by the government, ignoring the due process.

Not giving reasonable time against the will of the committee's members is nothing but an act of "atrocious onslaught on the Constitutional religion and Parliament".

Opposition MPs have also recorded their strong reservations against the Bill, claiming that the government's step is nothing but a surreptitious attempt to mitigate the earlier legislations of 1995 and 2013, enacted by Parliament with due care ensuring the secular credentials of the Constitution.

They alleged that the bill proposes over 100 amendments to the existing Act against the government's claim of only 44 changes. (PTI)

## Pawar, Patole welcome EC's decision to transfer Maharashtra DGP before state polls



**MUMBAI, Nov 4:** NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and his MVA allies Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress on Monday welcomed the Election Commission's move to direct the Maharashtra government to transfer DGP Rashmi Shukla with immediate effect.

The EC, which took the decision after complaints from political parties, directed the Maharashtra chief secretary to hand over Shukla's charge to the next senior-most IPS officer in the cadre. The chief secretary was also directed to send a panel of three IPS officers by Tuesday afternoon for appointment as DGP, sources said.

The chief secretary has asked Mumbai police commissioner to hold the additional charge of the post, they said.

Maharashtra goes to polls on November 20.

"The Election Commission has taken the right decision. Such persons should not continue in the post," Pawar told reporters in Mumbai.

"It was absolutely inappropriate

to keep her in the position and grant her extensions. It's a positive development that the EC moved to remove her. Her tenure in the state had already come to an end," the former Union minister said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray, who was present at the media briefing, also welcomed the EC's decision on Shukla.

Briefing reporters in Nagpur, state Congress president Nana Patole said his party had approached the EC three times seeking Shukla's transfer, citing her alleged role in tapping phones of opposition politicians, and asked why it took so long for the poll body to take the decision.

He requested the EC to ensure Shukla is not given any election-related duties.

"Shukla used to support the BJP and had tapped phones of opposition leaders and we had filed complaints against her. We had been continuously demanding from the state government not to give important posts to such an officer," the Congress leader said. However,

(Deputy Chief Minister) Fadnavis and (CM) Shinde gave her an "illegal" extension of two years and made her DGP for their own electoral interest, Patole alleged.

"Hence, we had complained to the Election Commission and it took cognizance of our complaint. But, the question arises why it took so long," the Congress leader said while thanking the EC for its decision.

The DGPs of West Bengal and Jharkhand were transferred immediately after the announcement of elections there, Patole said.

"Why it took so long for the Election Commission to transfer Maharashtra DGP Shukla?" he asked.

On Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange's decision to stay away from the November 20 assembly polls, Pawar said nobody from the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) has anything to do with Jarange's decision.

"We are pleased to hear that Manoj Jarange has decided to withdraw from the Maharashtra assembly elections. Had he chosen to continue his campaign, it could have inadvertently benefited the BJP in the election process. Therefore, we wholeheartedly welcome his decision," he said.

Asked if MVA leaders were secretly helping Jarange to continue his tirade against the BJP, Pawar said, "As MVA, we want to clarify that we are not involved in Jarange's choices. However, we welcomed his decision to withdraw the candidates, as it may have benefited the BJP in the upcoming Maharashtra assembly elections." (PTI)

## Confident of win in J'khand, Maharashtra but 'watchful' of Haryana-like 'mischief' by BJP: Ramesh

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** The Congress is confident of securing a decisive mandate in Jharkhand and Maharashtra but is "extra watchful" to avoid a repeat of any Haryana-like "last-minute mischief" by the BJP and the local administration, senior party leader Jairam Ramesh said on Monday.

In an interview with PTI, Ramesh said the decision on the chief ministerial face of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra would be taken after the November 23 results and expressed confidence that the selection of the alliance's chief ministerial face would be a "smooth affair".

As the campaign heats up for the assembly polls in Jharkhand and Maharashtra, Ramesh dismissed suggestions that the momentum had shifted away from the INDIA bloc following the Congress' defeat in Haryana and said the alliance was confident of securing a decisive mandate in the two states.

"It is true that the result in Haryana was unexpected as far as the Congress is concerned. We are confident in Maharashtra where we have a very strong alliance, and we are very confident in Jharkhand where also we are fighting in an alliance," the Congress general sec-

retary in-charge communications said.

"We are confident but we are extra watchful, we don't want a repeat of the Haryana situation in all the last-minute mischief that can be played by the BJP and the local administration. We are more watchful (this time)," he said.

The Congress has a positive agenda in Jharkhand and the alliance is running on the five years of achievements of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Congress government, he said.

In Maharashtra, the MVA government was destabilised by the BJP after about two years and the Mahayuti government ruled for three years, he said.

Ajit Pawar and several other MLAs broke away from the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) led by his uncle Sharad Pawar and joined the Shiv Sena-BJP government in the state last year.

Prior to that, in June 2022, Eknath Shinde led a section of Shiv Sena MLAs to rebel against the leadership of then party president and chief minister Uddhav Thackeray. After the split, the Shinde-led party formed an alliance government with the BJP and he took over as chief minister.



The Mahayuti government of the Shinde-led Shiv Sena, BJP, and Ajit Pawar's NCP has betrayed the people of Maharashtra, particularly the farmers and the weaker sections, Ramesh alleged.

"So we are confident but we are careful and watchful," he added.

On who the chief minister could be if the MVA won a majority, Ramesh said, "We are not fighting a 'kaun banega mukhyamantri', we are fighting for -- whose gov-

ernment will be formed -- MVA or that of the Mahayuti. We are fighting for getting a decisive mandate for the MVA and I have absolutely no doubt in my mind that the selection of the CM face will be a smooth affair."

"But that is not the question, it is very premature, we have to get the majority," he added.

Ramesh asserted that elections in India were not a beauty contest between individuals but a choice

between political parties, political alliances, their agendas, their manifestoes and their performance.

On the bickering over seat sharing among INDIA bloc allies in Jharkhand and Maharashtra, Ramesh said it was "natural" as there were a lot of aspirants.

It reflects the fact that there is a lot of enthusiasm for getting tickets from the Congress in both Jharkhand and Maharashtra, he claimed.

"You look at the cracks that have appeared in the Mahayuti alliance. The difference between the BJP on the one side and Ajit Pawar's NCP on the other and between the BJP and Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena are there (before the people). So, I don't think one can single out the problems in the MVA alliance in seat sharing," Ramesh said.

Ramesh acknowledged that it was a "tough bargain" among MVA constituents, noting that everybody wanted to maximise their position.

"On November 6, we are going to hold a big rally in Mumbai where all the leaders of the MVA, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and (Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha)

Rahul Gandhi, will be there. We will be releasing our guarantees for the elections," he said.

Asked about the criticism of the Congress over not contesting any of the bypolls in Uttar Pradesh, Ramesh said the party's position had been put forward by general secretary in-charge of the state Avinash Pande and Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee chief Ajay Rai.

"We have a very strong INDIA group in Uttar Pradesh that performed very well in the Lok Sabha elections. We worked cohesively and campaigned cohesively. This was done to strengthen our alliance and strengthen the hand of our INDIA partners. I don't think we are abandoning our political position in Uttar Pradesh," he asserted.

Ramesh also accused the BJP of resorting to polarisation in its campaign in Jharkhand and Maharashtra.

"The choice of Himanta Biswa Sarma as chief campaigner was a clear signal as to which way the campaign was headed. The Assam chief minister is the master of communal rhetoric. He is the man who uses the worst form of intimidatory and polarising language. We have complained to the Elec-

tion Commission (EC) and I hope the EC takes note of the campaign speeches of the Assam chief minister," he said.

It is going to be a BJP campaign of "polarisation, intimidation and spreading hatred and bigotry" because the BJP has no answer to the popular programmes that have been implemented in an impactful manner in Jharkhand, he said.

The real issues in Maharashtra are that of the farmers, of "caste census", the issue of removing the 50 per cent cap on reservations for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, Ramesh said.

"These are all the issues the Congress had raised in the Lok Sabha elections and it continues to raise in the assembly elections as well. In Maharashtra, we also have the situation that a last number of investments that had been promised or were scheduled to have been invested in Maharashtra have been hijacked and taken away to Gujarat by Mr Modi," he alleged.

Elections in Jharkhand will be held in two phases on November 13 and 20, while Maharashtra goes to the polls in a single phase on November 20. The results will be declared on November 23. (PTI)



# Canada temple 'attack': Indian consulate's request for security 'intentionally' ignored, says VHP

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** The Vishva Hindu Parishad on Monday said the "attack" on a Hindu temple in Canada was a cause of concern and alleged that the Indian consulate's prior request to the Canadian administration for providing security was "intentionally" ignored.

Protesters carrying Khalistani flags clashed with people at Brampton's Hindu Sabha Temple on Sunday, prompting the High Commission of India in Ottawa to issue a strong statement, condemning the attack by the "anti-India" elements.

Reacting to the incident, VHP international president Alok Kumar said the attack was a cause of concern, more so because a consular camp had been organised by the Indian consulate at the temple.

The Indian consulate had informed the police about the event three days ago and had specifically



said that in view of the security environment in Canada, adequate protection was required for the camp and the temple, he said.

"The request was ignored," Kumar said, adding that it was not

tacked, he said.

"We had seen a statement by Prime Minister Trudeau on Deepawali. He noted that the Indo Canadians form the biggest migrant groups in Canada. He also said that they had become the greatest contributors to the life of Canada. And had assured them safety, and security. That has not happened," Kumar said.

"We do believe that this may be rather intentional," he said, adding, "We condemn the attack".

The VHP chief criticised Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and hoped that his government would take "firm and determined action" to stop the incidents of attack on Hindu temples in the country. "We remind the Hindus there that the right to defend themselves is given to them by law," he added.

On Sunday, Peel Regional Police said a protest occurred at the

Hindu Sabha Temple in Brampton and unverified videos circulating on social media appeared to show demonstrators holding banners in support of Khalistan, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reported.

The videos showed fist fights and people striking each other with flagpoles on what appears to be the grounds surrounding the temple, the report added.

Taking to X, Trudeau thanked the local authorities for the swift response to protect the community.

"The acts of violence at the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton today are unacceptable. Every Canadian has the right to practice their faith freely and safely.

Thank you to the Peel Regional Police for swiftly responding to protect the community and investigate this incident," Trudeau said on Monday. (PTI)

## Jammu: Rashtriya Bajrang Dal holds protests against Farooq Abdullah for remarks on terrorists



**JAMMU, Nov 4:** The Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (RBD) held a protest march here on Monday against the National Conference (NC) over the recent remarks by ruling party president Farooq Abdullah.

The Dal also protested against the increasing terror incidents and also against Pakistan for aiding and abetting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Abdullah had recently stirred a political controversy by suggesting that terrorists should be captured rather than killed in order to uncover the masterminds behind the recent surge in terror attacks across JK.

The RBD demanded strict action against Pakistan-sponsored terrorists and the locals allegedly supporting them in the Union Territory (UT).

Led by RBD president Rakesh Kumar, scores of Dal members rallied in Jammu city, condemning Pakistan's role in fostering terrorism and Abdullah's comments.

Carrying an effigy of Abdullah, they raised slogans against Pakistan, NC and Abdullah.

The protesters burnt Abdullah's effigy and demanded strict action against him for allegedly supporting terrorists.

"Farooq Abdullah recently said that terrorists should not be killed. We condemn his pro-terrorism statement. We ask him, should we offer prayers to them?" Kumar

told reporters.

Criticising Abdullah for "sowing confusion" with his statements, Kumar argued that the NC chief should face consequences for his remarks.

He accused the NC and the Abdullah family of promoting anti-India forces in Kashmir, alleging that terrorism was at its peak during the tenures of both Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah previously.

"Cases were withdrawn against those involved in law and order issues and other activities. This promoted terrorism to benefit the interests of the regional politicians," he said.

The RBD chief alleged that terror incidents have increased several times after the formation of the NC government in JK. Everyone is watching this, he added.

The Dal is protesting Abdullah's remarks regarding the terrorists.

"If they (terrorists) are caught, then we will find out who is behind this. They should not be killed; they should be captured and questioned about who is backing them.

"We should investigate if an agency is trying to destabilise Omar Abdullah," Abdullah said.

The NC further said, "How is it that this government has come in and these attacks are happening? I suspect that those who want to destabilise the government might be responsible." (PTI)

the first time that a Hindu temple in Canada had been attacked.

Earlier, Hindu temples were attacked in Greater Toronto and British Columbia. The BAPS temple in Edmonton was also at-

## Maharashtra woman held by Goa cops for railway job fraud

**PANAJI, Nov 4:** A woman hailing from Maharashtra's Kolhapur district was arrested by Goa police on Monday for allegedly duping a person of ₹ 20 lakh on the pretext of providing railway jobs to her children, an official said.

Priya Ajay Yadav from Kolhapur's Phulewadi was allegedly helped by constable Rohan Venji, who was suspended earlier and his bank accounts frozen, said Deputy Superintendent of Police (Bicholim) Jivba Dalvi.

"The complaint was lodged at Bicholim police station on August 22. The duo took ₹ 20.70 lakh from the complainant by claiming she had a plot near Kolhapur station, which had been taken over by the authorities and in return she was given the option of getting 10 people employed in the railways," Dalvi said. "The complainant was



even shown a random plot near Kolhapur station to convince her. The complainant paid ₹ 10 lakh initially to the duo for jobs for her children. Yadav then took another ₹ 6 lakh and finally managed to dupe her of ₹ 20.70 lakh," the deputy SP said.

A probe has found Yadav has

duped several persons in Bicholim of at least ₹ 1 crore with this modus operandi, he added.

Yadav, who was on the run for two months, was finally held from Phulewadi in neighbouring Maharashtra due to technical surveillance and intelligence inputs, Dalvi said. (PTI)

## Need green spaces for kids: SC junks plea against order saying no transfer of sports complex land

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea of the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO), challenging a Bombay High Court order against the Maharashtra government's move to reallocate the land meant for a sports complex to private builders in Navi Mumbai. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra emphasised the importance of preserving green spaces in urban areas like Navi Mumbai.

"We need some green spaces for our children, especially in cities like Mumbai," remarked the CJI while underscoring the diminishing availability of open areas amid urban sprawls. The CJI went on to add, "These are some of the few remaining green lungs left, and we must preserve them. Let's not say much about the CIDCO."

Green areas had been given to builders for constructing malls and residential complexes, he pointed out.

The CJI noted that the children of Navi Mumbai were not supposed to travel several kilometres to the neighbouring Raigad district to play sports after returning from schools. The state government had also de-

clined to shift the sports complex to Mangon in Raigad district which was 115 kilometre away from the existing site.

The bench had previously stressed on the preservation of the few remaining green lungs in cities like Mumbai and Navi Mumbai that were only witnessing a vertical growth.

The land in Navi Mumbai was earmarked for the sports complex in 2003 and in 2016, but the planning authority had allotted a portion of it to a private developer for residential and commercial purposes.

"It is a much-known practice. The government creeps into whatever green spaces are left and gives them to the builders," the top court had said during a brief hearing.

The CJI further said, "There are a very few green lungs left in cities like Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. These cities have vertical growth.... You have to preserve them and not give to builders to build, build, build and build..."

The bench was prima facie astonished to learn that the land, meant for the state-level sports complex, was being allotted to development and the proposed facilities were to be shifted to the Raigad district. (PTI)

## SC relaxes Kerala journalist Kappan's bail rider, says no need to report to UP police



**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** The Supreme Court on Monday relaxed the bail condition imposed on Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan in a UAPA case saying he doesn't have to report to a Uttar Pradesh police station every week.

A bench of Justices P S Narasimhan and Sandeep Mehta relaxed the condition imposed by the top court on Kappan at the time of his bail in September, 2022.

"The order dated September 9, 2022, is modified and it shall not be necessary for the petitioner to report to the local police station. The other prayers made in the present application can be agitated independently," said the bench.

Kappan was arrested in October, 2020 while on his way to UP's Hathras, where a Dalit woman had died after allegedly being sexually assaulted by a group of men.

While granting bail to Kappan, the court had directed him to report to the police station concerned every week.

The top court had on September 17 asked the state government to file its reply on Kappan's plea. The top court granted him bail after he had spent almost two years in prison and observed every person had the right to free expression.

Kappan was then saddled with several bail conditions, including the one directing him to remain in Delhi for the following six weeks after his release from prison and reporting to the Nizamuddin police station every Monday.

"The appellant shall be taken to the trial court within three days and

shall be released on bail on conditions as deemed fit by the trial court," the bench had said.

The court had, however, allowed him to travel to Malappuram in Kerala, his home state, after six months maintaining that he would have to report to the local police station and mark his presence there every Monday.

Kappan was directed not to leave Delhi's jurisdiction without the permission of the court besides being ordered to attend the trial court every day either personally or through his lawyer.

"The appellant shall deposit his passport with the investigative machinery," added the top court.

The case was registered against Kappan and three others under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for allegedly having links with the Popular Front of India (PFI).

The PFI had been accused in the past of funding protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act across the country and the police claimed that the accused persons had attempted to vitiate the law and order situation in Hathras.

The woman in question had died at a Delhi hospital a fortnight after her alleged rape by four men from her village on September 14, 2020.

She was cremated in the middle of the night at her village but the family claimed that her last rites were performed without their consent and they were not allowed to being her mortal remains home one last time. (PTI)

## Two Bandhavgarh reserve officials suspended after death of 10 elephants

**BHOPAL, Nov 4:** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has suspended two senior officials of the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) for lapses after a high-level probe team submitted its reports in connection with the death of 10 elephants in the park.

The initial report doesn't point to any pesticide (in the food consumed by the elephants) or the role of "another side", the CM on Sunday said, adding the autopsy report will come in two or three days.

BTR director Gaurav Choudhary and in-charge assistant conservator of forests Fateh Singh Ninama were placed under suspension. The reserve has drawn national attention following the deaths of the jumbos in 72 hours.

"The high-level team has submitted its report. Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve director has been suspended for switching off his phone, not returning to work after leave and other reasons. ACF Fateh Singh Ninama has also been suspended," the CM told PTI.

Both have been suspended for showing laxity in performing their duties, he added.

Calling the jumbo deaths "very painful", the CM said the government took the matter seriously and sent the forest minister and senior officials to the reserve for a probe into the

matter. Officials had earlier talked about toxicity along with huge quantities of kodo millets in the stomachs of the 10 elephants that died in the reserve. The CM on Friday night called an emergency meeting and sent a team comprising MP forest junior minister Pradeep Ahirwar, additional chief secretary Ashok Baranwal and head of Forest Force Aseem Shrivastava to the reserve to probe the elephant deaths and submit a report. The team returned to Bhopal on Sunday evening.

On October 29, four wild elephants were found dead in Sankhani and Bakeli under the Khalil range of the BTR in Umaria district, while four died on October 30 and two on October 31. On Saturday, two persons were killed and one injured in an elephant attack in the area.

CM Yadav also underlined the need for an elephant task force, radio tracking and a long term plan with the help of wildlife experts to avoid a repeat of jumbo deaths and attacks on humans.

"The elephants coming from other states, including Chhattisgarh, are not turning back due to the good environs and management of our parks. They have become an integral part of MP forest activities. Keeping this in mind, we have to look for a lasting plan for them," Yadav said. (PTI)

## Public buildings facing Ganga ghats in Patna lit up in blue for Chhath

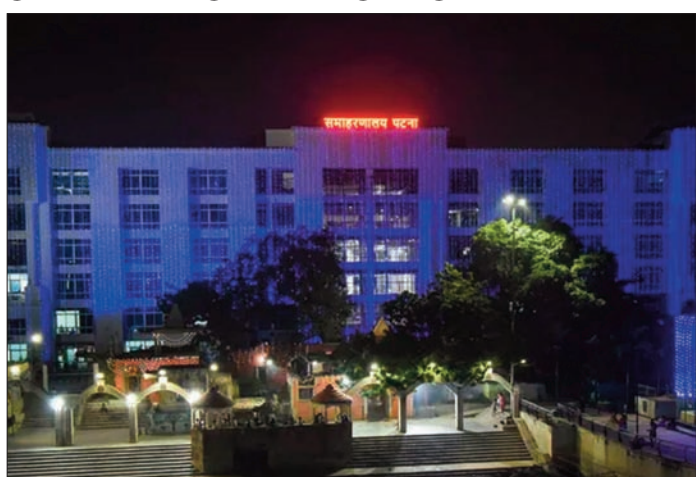
**PATNA, Nov 4:** The historic Darbhanga House, the newly-built complex of the district collectorate and 'Sabhaya Dwar' are among the several public buildings located along the banks of Ganga in Patna which have been illuminated in blue hue ahead of the Chhath festival.

The night-time illumination of these structures, some of which face popular old ghats in the city such as the Collectorate Ghat and Kali Ghat, have been done as part of a 'Go Blue' campaign of the Patna district administration.

"Recently, we issued a public appeal to individuals and private entities who have properties located along the ghats of Ganga, to also illuminate those buildings with blue-colour lights, the theme for illumination during the Bihar Diwas celebrations here every year, to mark Chhath festivities," a senior official told PTI.

The four-day Chhath festival, celebrated as a 'Mahaparv' in Bihar, will be held this year from November 5-8. On the last two days, devotees offer 'arghya', first to the setting sun and the next day to the rising sun.

On Sunday, after dark, the over 120-year-old Darbhanga House, a palace built by the erstwhile Darbhanga Raj estate that currently houses the PG department of the Patna University, stood out on the



city skyline.

The palatial building, known for its iconic architecture and aesthetic grandeur, faces the Kali Ghat along the river, which draws huge number of devotees during the Chhath celebrations. The building also houses an old Kali temple.

Traditionally, people gather along the banks of Ganga to observe this ancient festival, but due to impact of rapid urbanisation on the river and other constraints, many now prefer to either do rituals in nearby water bodies or on rooftops using makeshift arrangements.

The Collectorate Ghat is one such example where the river

water has receded, but only to come back during the monsoon season.

The new high-rise complex which is expected to be inaugurated soon after the Chhath Puja, has been decorated with blue lights and commuted using the Ganga Drive built along the riverfront can catch a glimpse of the illumination. A huge neon signage 'Samharanaley Patna' mounted on its rooftop, glows in vibrant red at night, adding to its aura.

"This illumination of the new Collectorate complex began around Diwali," the official said.

The old Collectorate was a cluster of heritage buildings from Dutch era and British period,

which were demolished in the second half of 2022 to make way for the new complex, despite protests from several quarters.

Till recent years, devotees from far-off places in the state used to gather in the old Collectorate campus and some used to even camp there for four days to observe Chhath as the eponymous ghat is located right next to the site.

The buildings of the old Collectorate were part of the collective consciousness of the people living in the city, as multiple generations have visited it for official work and the Collectorate Ghat during the Chhath Puja, thus creating an emotional bond.

The demolition of its heritage buildings "severed that cultural link", many heritage experts had argued after the historic structures were razed as part of the Patna Collectorate redevelopment project, considered a pet project of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

The Patna district administration is currently working in full swing to make all arrangements for the Chhath Puja when lakhs of people will through the ghats from Digha to Deedarganj.

In its appeal notice, which was also shared on its social media platforms, the district administration has said that the 'Go Blue' campaign was launched in view of

the link of 'Chhath Mahaparv' with historic legacy and cultural heritage of Bihar, and to celebrate it with safety and communal harmony.

This year, it has been decided to deck up ghats and pathways leading to them with blue lights, as done during Bihar Diwas celebrations, the notice in Hindi reads.

The riverside face of the 'Sabhaya Dwar', a modern ceremonial gateway built in old style and located on the rear side of the Gyan Bhawan complex near Gandhi Maidan, has also been decorated with blue lights.

Some of the high-rise under-construction buildings of the Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH) -- which is also undergoing a drastic transformation as part of a phase-wise redevelopment project -- located in the vicinity of the Darbhanga House, among other buildings, have also been dressed up with few strands of blue lights.

The building of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Cardiology, located next to the PMCH, also wears a blue hue after dark thanks to the illumination.

Besides, buildings located along the ghats, some of the buildings in the main city, such as Biscomaun Bhawan facing Gandhi Maidan has also been thematically lit up. (PTI)

## Crackdown on criminals in west Delhi, 253 arrested in October

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** In a special drive during the festival season, police arrested 253 criminals, including 33 robbers and 34 snatchers, wanted for alleged involvement in street crimes this October in west Delhi.

According to the police, there was 39 per cent reduction in snatching-related PCR calls and 24 per cent robbery calls till October this year as compared to the same corresponding period in last year.

"The West District police launched a crackdown on street criminals and nuisance mongers during the festive season in October 2024," an official said.

With the arrest of 33 robbers, 21 cases were solved along with the recovery of one mobile phone, three gold chains and other gold items, three knives and cash.

Police arrested 34 snatchers solving 30 cases, besides recovering four mobile phones, one gold chain, two two-wheelers and cash. Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Vichitra Veer said.

Similarly, 12 burglars were arrested and seven cases of burglary were solved along with the recovery of mobile phones, two-wheelers and other items. Police also nabbed 174 thieves and solved 209 cases of theft. A total of 44 mobile phones, 56 two-wheelers, six cars, one e-rickshaw cash etc. were re-

covered, the DCP said.

It was a comprehensive and unwavering campaign across all fronts to curb crime, the official said.

A total of 1,442 PCR calls of snatching were reported till October 2023, while 875 such calls were reported till October this year, which is a reduction of over 39 per cent, police said.

A total of 785 PCR calls of robbery were reported till October 2023, while 592 PCR calls of robbery were reported till October 2024, which is reduction of over 24 per cent.

Further, there is an overall reduction of over 12 per cent in the cases reported under motor vehicle theft, Veer said.

During the festive season in October, intensive checking through bomb disposal squads (BDS) and dog squads was done in markets and areas of high footfall, officials said.

Police stated that 36 cases were registered under the Arms Act in which 36 people have been arrested with recovery of four country made pistols, 32 knives and seven live rounds.

A total of 39 cases of Excise Act were registered in which 46 people have been arrested with a recovery of 8,028 quarters of illicit liquor and 617 beers. (PTI)



## 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3', 'Singham Again' cross ₹ 100 crore-mark in opening weekend



**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Action drama "Singham Again" and horror comedy "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3", both highly anticipated Hindi films which hit the screens on November 1, have raised over ₹ 100 crore at the box office in the first weekend of their release. The two star-studded movies were showcased in over 6,000 screens in cinemas nationwide during the Diwali weekend. "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3", directed by Anees Bazmee, saw Kartik Aaryan reprise his role as Rooth Baba from 2022's "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2". Vidya Balan, who played Avni/Manjulika in the original 2007 film by Priyadarshan, returns to the franchise, with Madhuri Dixit Nene and Triptii Dimri joining as new additions. Aaryan shared the film's box office update on his Instagram account.

"ROOH BABA ON CLOUD 100. ONE OF THE FASTEST 100 CRORES IN JUST 3 DAYS !! Thank you Janta Janardhan for the blockbuster love !! #BhoolBhulaiyaa3 in Theatres," he wrote. According to a poster shared by the actor, "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3" clocked Rs 110.2 crore net in India within the first three days of its release. It is produced by T-Series Films and Cine1 Studios, and distributed by AA Films. Rohit Shetty's "Singham Again", the third instalment in the "Singham" franchise, features Ajay Devgn, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Ranveer Singh, Akshay Kumar, Deepika Padukone, Tiger Shroff, and Arjun Kapoor.

According to trade website Sacnilk, the movie minted ₹ 121.75 crore (India net collection) by Sunday. "Singham Again" is presented by Jio Studios in association with Rohit Shetty Picturez and Devgn Films. (PTI)

## Spanish Prez Pedro Sanchez seeks close ties with Indian film industry

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Spanish President Pedro Sanchez met a delegation of the Producers Guild of India (PGI) during his two-day official visit to India last week in which he expressed his government's keen interest in strengthening ties with the Indian film industry.

The delegation of the guild comprised Shibashish Sarkar, president of PGI and Group CEO of Reliance Entertainment, Aashish Singh (Red Chillies Entertainment), Ankur Garg of Luv Films, Shiv Chanana (T-Series), Nitin Tej Ahuja, CEO of PGI, and Akshaye Widhani of Yash Raj Films.

The meeting, which took place in Mumbai on October 29, was also attended by First Lady of Spain Begona Gomez, Minister for Industry and Tourism Jordi Hereu Boher, and Minister for Transportation and Sustainable Mobility Oscar Puente as well as Dinesh Patnaik, Indian Ambassador to Spain.

Sanchez said the meeting marks "the beginning of a process of closer collaboration between the two filmmaking communities", according to a press release issued by the guild.

Sarkar shared insights into the "scale and multilingual nature" of the Indian film industry, as well as the factors influencing Indian producers' choices when selecting international locations for film shoots, it stated. (PTI)



## SHAH RUKH KHAN SAYS HE HAS QUIT SMOKING

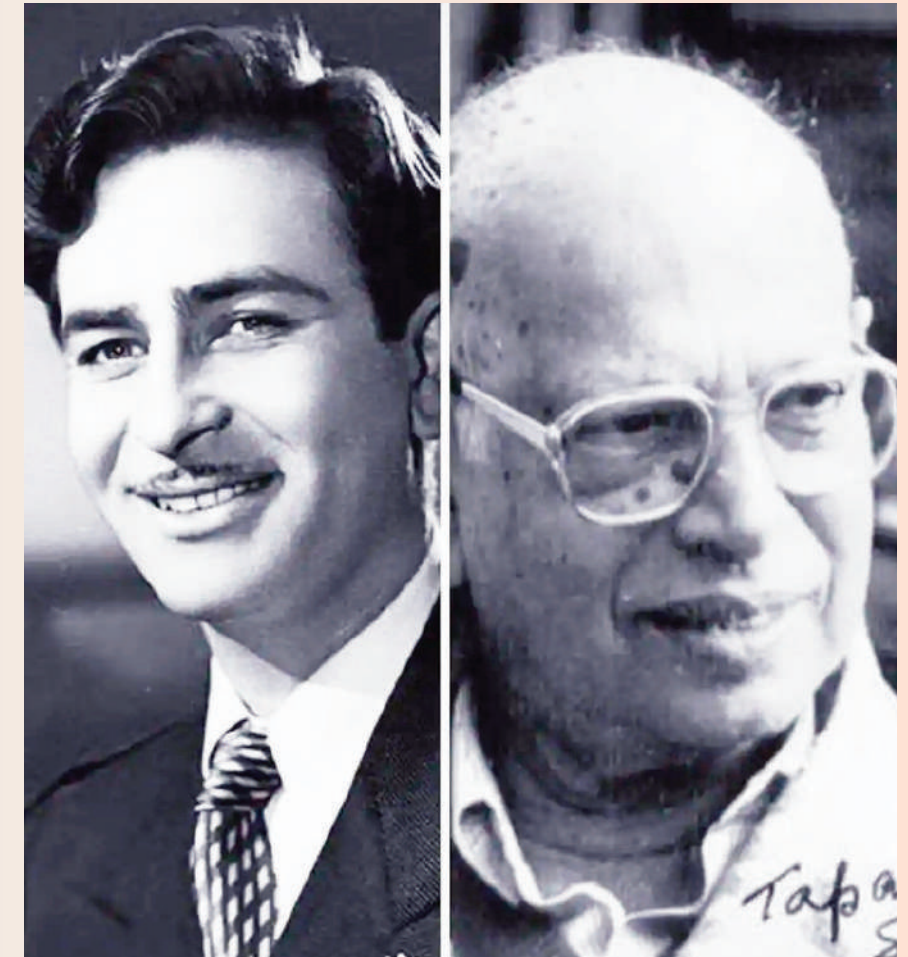


**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan, who used to be a heavy smoker, has revealed that he has finally kicked the habit. The actor shared the health update with his admirers who gathered to celebrate his 59th birthday on Saturday at an auditorium in Mumbai. In a video from the event shared by his fan club on X, Shah Rukh can be heard saying: "There's a good thing - I'm not smoking anymore, guys. I thought I won't feel so breathless after quitting smoking, but I still feel it (the side-effects). Inshallah, that will also get ok." In 2012, the actor drew flak for smoking in public during an IPL match between his team Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals, but escaped with a paltry fine of Rs 100 after he pleaded guilty before a court in Jaipur.

At a media event in 2017, Shah Rukh said he was planning to quit smoking and drinking for the sake of his children Aryan, Suhana, and AbRam. At Saturday's fan event, Shah Rukh also promised fans to entertain them for at least next 10 years.

"I want to make special films for the next 10 years. I really want to entertain all of you happily," he said. (PTI)

## IFFI to celebrate centenaries of Raj Kapoor, Tapan Sinha, ANR, and Mohd Rafi



**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** The International Film Festival of India will mark the centenary of four icons of Indian cinema Raj Kapoor, Tapan Sinha, Akkineni Nageswara Rao, and Mohammed Rafi at its upcoming 55th edition, the organisers said on Monday.

The gala, which will be held in Goa, will also present restored versions of their timeless classics during its nine-day run.

The opening ceremony of IFFI, set to take place on November 20, will pay tribute to these legends, accompanied by an audiovisual presentation bringing their cinematic journeys to life.

"The 55th IFFI's centenary celebrations are an homage to the enduring influence of Raj Kapoor, Tapan Sinha, Akkineni Nageswara Rao, and Mohammed Rafi on Indian cinema.

"By bringing together art, history, and interactive experiences, IFFI seeks to inspire future generations through the legacies of these luminaries. Join us as we celebrate the spirit of Indian cinema and honor the legends who continue to inspire audiences and creators worldwide," a press release stated.

Sinha, one of the most prominent Bengali cinema directors in the 1970s and 1980s forming a quartet with Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak and Mrinal Sen, will be honoured with the presentation of his 1976 classic "Harmonium". His centenary was observed on October 2.

IFFI will showcase a digitally restored "Awaara", headlined and directed by Kapoor, known as the Showman of Indian Cinema. Rafi will be celebrated for his songs in the 1961 film "Hum Dono", which will be screened in its enhanced audio and visual restoration.

The birth centenaries of Kapoor and Rafi will be commemorated officially on December 14 and December 24, respectively.

During its course, the festival will hold in-depth panel discussions and in-conversation sessions with esteemed guests and family members who will provide unique insights into the lives and legacies of the four cinema legends.

In a special tribute, IFFI will unveil a unique 'My Stamp' dedicated to these luminaries, along with a 'Caravan of Songs', a musical journey featuring 150 songs by Kapoor and Rafi, and 75 songs associated with Sinha and ANR.

A curated exhibition, featuring rare memorabilia, photographs, and artifacts from the lives of ANR, Kapoor, Sinha, and Rafi, will also be open to audiences.

On the days dedicated to each personality, there will be thematic activities, including quizzes, planned throughout the Entertainment Arena.

A sand art illustration by renowned artist Sudarshan Pattnaik as a tribute to the legendary artistes will be on display as part of the centenary celebrations. IFFI will come to a close on November 28. (PTI)

## STRONG REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AT DIFF 2024: FESTIVAL CO-FOUNDER

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Twenty four out of 45 films to be screened at the 13th edition of the Dharamshala International Film Festival are directed by female filmmakers, says festival co-founder Ritu Sarin, who believes it's essential to celebrate voices of women in cinema.

The gala, which will run through November 7-10 in Dharamshala, will present more than 80 films from over 28 countries around the world, spanning narrative features, documentaries, and short films, alongside powerful stories from South Asia.

Cannes Grand Prix winning-film "All We Imagine As Light", directed by Payal Kapadia, will open the festival.

"I am incredibly proud to see such a strong representation of

women in this year's festival, with 24 out of 45 feature films being directed by women - 13 of them by Indian filmmakers - along with 19 short and mid-length films directed by women.

"As a filmmaker myself, I believe it's essential to uplift and celebrate the voices of women in cinema. Their stories are vital, and this year's lineup is a testament to the creativity and talent within our community," Sarin said in a statement.

This year's festival will also feature special programmes, including panel discussions, Q&A sessions and masterclasses with national and international filmmakers.

Director Dibakar Banerjee, whose unreleased film "Teens" will be screened at the festival, will

also conduct a masterclass at DIFF.

DIFF co-founder Tenzing Sonam said the gala has always been about more than just watching films.

"It's a space for filmmakers and audiences to engage deeply with cinema and the stories that shape our world," Sonam added.

Another highlight at the gala would be a conversation between actor Shahana Goswami and DIFF programming director Bina Paul.

Some of the movies which are part of the line-up are: "Separated", "The Room Next Door", "MA - Cry of Silence", "Agent of Happiness", "Second Chance", "Girls Will Be Girls", "Marching in the Dark", "Nocturnes", "A Fly on the Wall", and "Village Rockstars 2".

Continuing their collaboration with the festival, the Film Critics Guild will present the Juried Gender Sensitivity Award, established in 2019 to honour filmmakers addressing gender issues and to promote discourse around gender equality in cinema.

DIFF, with the support of PictureTime, the festival's technical partners, will run a full programme of films across four theatres - two auditoriums on site and two of PictureTime's patented portable digital theatres.

In addition, DIFF Online will enable audiences worldwide to access a curated selection of films remotely, after the physical festival.

"Pooja, Sir" by Deepak Rauniyar will bring down the curtain on DIFF 2024. (PTI)





# Man U makes its worst league start in almost 40 years after 1-1 draw with Chelsea

**MANCHESTER, Nov 4:** A tumultuous week for Manchester United ended with a 1-1 draw against Chelsea and the unwanted statistic that the club has made its worst league start for almost 40 years.

Moises Caicedo's stunning long-range volley secured a point for Chelsea and left United on 12 points which Opta, the Premier League's stats supplier, said was its lowest after 10 games since the 1986-87 season.

That was the year Alex Ferguson was hired and went on to lead the club to a period of unprecedented success, winning 13 Premier League titles and two Champions Leagues.

United fans will have to hope that is a good omen after Erik ten Hag was fired this week and replaced by Ruben Amorim.

"Whenever you see a manager go you have to take some of the blame on yourself, it is because the team is not doing so well," United captain Bruno Fernandes said Sunday. "I spoke to the manager (Ten Hag) and apologized to him. I was disappointed he has gone and I tried to help him."

Fernandes fired United ahead from the penalty spot in the 70th minute against Chelsea as interim head coach Ruud van Nistelrooy looked to win back-to-back games during his temporary reign, having beaten Leicester 5-2 in the League Cup on Wednesday.

But in front of the watching Olivia Rodrigo, Caicedo's strike from the edge of the box four minutes later ensured the points were shared.

"I think we did the most difficult thing in this stadium against this team ... we were down and we came back immediately," Chelsea head coach Enzo Maresca said.

Chelsea moved up to fourth in the standings, ahead of Arsenal on goal difference, while United is six points behind in 13th and playing catchup in the race for Champions



League qualification.

Tottenham beat Aston Villa 4-1 earlier in the day.

Ten Hag was fired on Monday and while Amorim has been confirmed as his replacement, he does not take charge until Nov. 11.

Van Nistelrooy is holding the reins until then and for a short while was making top-flight management look relatively simple.

Fernandes' penalty put United in sight of a win that would have moved it to within four points of the top four. That was until Caicedo's strike.

"I am disappointed we didn't win, we had the better of the chances in the game but overall the performance was fantastic. They left their all out there on the

pitch," Van Nistelrooy said.

The Dutchman's future is unclear once Amorim takes over. But he has two games - against PAOK Salonika in the Europa League and Leicester in the league - until he hands over to the new head coach.

"We'll be backing him (Amorim) and helping them to get Manchester United to where we want it to be," Van Nistelrooy said.

Dominic Solanke scored twice as Tottenham thrashed Aston Villa 4-1. The forward struck two goals in the space of four second-half minutes at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium after Villa had led at the break. Solanke scored in the 75th and 79th as Spurs produced a stunning second-half performance to

follow up its victory against Manchester City in the League Cup on Wednesday. Morgan Rogers had given Champions League-chasing Villa the lead in the 32nd minute, but Brennan Johnson leveled the game four minutes after the break.

Solanke's double put Spurs 3-1 ahead and James Maddison curled a free kick into the top corner in the sixth minute of added time. Solanke is now on five goals for the season.

Tottenham is up to seventh in the standings, while sixth-place Villa missed out on the chance to move into the top three.

AFC Wimbledon beat MK Dons 2-0 in the first round of the FA Cup and took bragging rights in one of English soccer's fiercest

grudge matches.

Matty Stevens and Omar Bugiel scored either side of halftime at Stadium MK in a competition that holds deep ties for fans of both clubs.

Wimbledon was a shock winner of the Cup in 1988 when beating the mighty Liverpool 1-0. The team relocated to Milton Keynes in 2002 and was renamed MK Dons, which prompted disgruntled fans to create a phoenix club called AFC Wimbledon.

And it was the traveling AFC Wimbledon fans who were left celebrating Sunday after securing its place in the next round of the Cup. There will be no Cup run for Wrexham this season after losing 1-0 at Harrogate Town. (AP)

*I've come to know the feeling of running the drinks really well: Will Young*

**MUMBAI, Nov 4:** Replacing a player of Kane Williamson's stature can be a daunting task but Will Young, who played a pivotal role in New Zealand's historic 3-0 Test series win in India, saw it as an opportunity to create his own mark after "running the drinks" as a reserve batter for four years.

If New Zealand's batting appeared thin with Williamson not making it to India for the first Test in Bengaluru due to injury, the 31-year-old Young banished any such doubts with his unbeaten 48 as the Kiwis hammered the hosts by eight wickets.

As it became evident that Williamson would not make it to India in time to help New Zealand clear trials by spin at Pune and Mumbai, Young had given enough indications that he was ready for the challenge.

"Since my debut about four years ago, I've been in and out through form (or) through selection. I've been a reserve batter for a number of years now so I've come to know the feeling of running the drinks really well," Young told media here after New Zealand's historic win, insinuating that he was always ready.

"When I do get an opportunity to play, I'm more excited to go out and do my own thing in my own way and not try to replace Kane or whoever it might be, just play my own game and see it as a great opportunity rather than big boots to fill," he added.

Young acknowledged the role Williamson played in New Zealand's training camps back home and also during his presence on the earlier assignments in the Indian subcontinent.

"Unfortunately Kane's not here and if he was, he'd be a

great person to lean into and to ask what he thinks in certain situations. We also had three really good camps leading into the series back home and he was at those camps.

"But it's great at the moment because we've got fantastic batters all throughout our line-up and they've all got slightly different methods and on the day you've just got to pick what method you think will work and you've got to have the courage to back that and show your skills."

"Yeah, I try not to bat like Kane, I try to bat like me and do it my own way," he added.

For New Zealand to beat India at their own game on spinning wickets was as special as their series win in this part of the world, and Young conceded scoring runs on turning tracks in Pune and Mumbai was more satisfying.

"If you look at all three matches, there was different challenges in each. In Bangalore, a lot of wickets fell to spin and then (in) Pune and Mumbai it was a lot more challenging against spin."

"As a New Zealander coming over here and playing in Indian conditions, it's always going to be slightly more satisfaction of scoring runs against spin, so I'd suppose scoring runs in Pune or Mumbai felt more special," said Young, who ended the series as the third highest run-getter.

With 244 runs at 48.80 across three Tests, Young finished behind India's Rishabh Pant (261 runs) and compatriot Rachin Ravindra (256 runs).

However, his biggest contributions came in the third Test at Mumbai when Young's 71 and 51 across the two innings helped New Zealand become the first team ever to beat India 3-0 in their own backyard. (PTI)

## Dani Olmo leads Barcelona to city derby win over Espanyol

**MADRID, Nov 4:** Dani Olmo made the most out of his return as a starter with Barcelona, scoring twice to lead the Catalan club to a 3-1 win over Espanyol in the city derby on Sunday in the Spanish league. Raphinha also scored for Barcelona, which a week ago had routed Real Madrid 4-0 in the clasico at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Barcelona is now nine points ahead of Madrid, whose game at Valencia on Saturday was postponed because of the deadly floods that killed more than 200 people in southern Spain last week. The game between Villarreal and Rayo Vallecano also was postponed, as were three second-division games scheduled to be played in the region this weekend.

The victory extended Barcelona's 27-match unbeaten streak against Espanyol in the league. Espanyol, sitting in 17th place, has lost six of its last seven league matches.

Olmo scored his double in his return as a starter after hurting his right hamstring on Sept. 15 against Girona. He had come off the bench in the team's wins against Bayern Munich in the Champions League and Madrid

in the Spanish league.

"I was excited about coming back," Olmo said. "I'm feeling well. It was important to keep winning." He put Barcelona ahead in the 12th minute from close range after a neat cross by Lamine Yamal with the outside of his left foot. Olmo's second goal came with a strike from outside the area in the 31st.

In his first season with Barcelona, Olmo now has five goals in five matches.

Raphinha added to the lead in the 23rd by redirecting the ball into the net with one touch after Marc Casado's long cross into the area. Barcelona has outscored its league opponents 40-11 in 12 matches. Madrid has the second-best attack with 21 goals scored.

"We are a team that can score a lot, not only with our strikers but also with the players in the second line," Olmo said. "We play very direct and create many opportunities." Espanyol thought it had moved closer in the 27th but Jofre Carrera's goal was called off after video review because of offside. It also had a goal by Alvaro Tejero disallowed for offside in the 58th, then Javi Puado finally scored a goal that counted in the 63rd.

Barcelona also had a goal called off in stoppage time.

Before the match, Barcelona honored those who received awards at the Ballon d'Or ceremony last week, including Yamal, who earned the Kopa Trophy award for best Under-21 player, and Aitana Bonmati, who won the award for the world's best woman soccer player. Barcelona also won the best women's team prize.

There was also a moment of silence in honor of the flood victims, which has taken place at all league matches this weekend.

Giuliano Simeone, son of Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone, scored his first goal with the club in the team's 2-0 win against Las Palmas.

The goal came more than 20 years after Simeone's last league goal with the club as a player.

Alexander Sorloth netted Atletico's second goal on Sunday, helping move the club back to third place, 10 points behind Barcelona.

Sixth-place Athletic Bilbao drew 1-1 against Real Betis, while 10th-place Real Sociedad won 2-0 at Sevilla with goals from Takefusa Kubo and Mikel Oyarzabal. (AP)

## Women's FTP 2025-29: India to host England, Australia in marquee home series



**DUBAI, Nov 4:** India will host Australia and England in high-profile home series as the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday gave significance to Test matches and bilateral rubbers while announcing women's cricket Future Tours Programme (FTP) for the 2025-29 cycle.

Apart from the storied rivals, India will also face Bangladesh and Zimbabwe, who was unveiled as the 11th member of the FTP, at home during the four-year period.

The Women in Blue will also travel to New Zealand, West Indies, Ireland and South Africa in

this phase as each member nations are scheduled to play four series at home and abroad.

Apart from this, India will also feature in a tri-series in England ahead of the 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup, the third team being reigning champions New Zealand.

England will host the 2026 Women's T20 World Cup.

Members have also penciled in more Test matches this time, with Australia, England, India, South Africa and the West Indies all agreeing to play multi-format series that include ODIs and T20Is," said Wasim Khan, ICC

General Manager of Cricket, in a media release.

"Australia will play the maximum such series - two each against England, India and South Africa and one against the West Indies," he said.

The members have scheduled, by mutual agreement, tri-series as preparation for ICC events in this cycle.

"Ahead of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026, England will host India and New Zealand for such a three-team T20I tournament while Ireland will host Pakistan and the West Indies. Sri Lanka and the West Indies are among other Members scheduled to host tri-series, in 2027 and 2028, respectively," Khan added.

The FTP also outlined the fixtures for the fourth edition of the ICC Women's Championship.

The 2025-29 cycle, set to shape the lineup for the 2029 Women's Cricket World Cup, will expand to feature 11 teams - with one more than the current 10 - with Zimbabwe joining the full member sides.

"Notably, Zimbabwe will make their debut in the tournament, marking a significant step toward broader global representation in women's cricket," he said. (PTI)

## HIL: Delhi SG Pipers sign Australian Olympian Jacob Whetton

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Delhi SG Pipers on Monday announced the signing of three-time Olympian Jacob 'Jake' Whetton of Australia for the upcoming Hockey India League season.

The 33-year-old midfielder will be replacing Dutchman Jorrit Croon, who has pulled out due to an ankle injury.

"It's never easy to replace a player of Jorrit Croon's calibre. Unfortunately, his recovery from the ankle injury isn't progressing as hoped, which has led us to make this difficult decision," Delhi's head coach Graham Reid stated in a release.

"On a brighter note, I am thrilled to welcome Jacob Whetton to the SG Delhi Pipers for the 2024 season. Jacob's experience and skill set will be invaluable in filling the void left by Jorrit."

"His ability to control the midfield aligns perfectly with our game strategy, and I have known Jacob since 2009, so he is well-acquainted with my coaching style. I'm excited about the energy and expertise he will bring to our team."

Whetton has a wealth of experience with him, featuring in 253 games for the Kookaburras, netting 75 goals, and also helping the side win the silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

Besides, the Queenslander also won the World Cup in 2014 and helped his team finish third four years later.

He also helped his side win gold medals at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow 2014, Gold Coast 2018 and Birmingham 2022.

Whetton has also won Champions Trophy twice (2012 and 2018) and a bronze in 2014. He also has four Oceania Cup titles and an FIH Pro League gold (2019).

The HIL is returning after a seven-year hiatus and will run from December 28-February 1. (PTI)

## International Calendar packed but seniors also need to show 'intent' for Ranji Trophy

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** The grueling Test tour of South Africa had finished in early January of 2007 and towards the end of that month, India were playing West Indies in a bilateral ODI series as a tune-up to the 50-over World Cup set to be played in the Caribbean in a month and a half's time. India played four ODIs on January 21, 24, 27 and 31 at Nagpur, Chennai, Cuttack and Vadodara.

On February 1, four members of that team -- Sachin Tendulkar, Zaheer Khan, Ajit Agarkar and Sourav Ganguly were all taking a flight from Vadodara to Mumbai. Reason? Mumbai was playing Ranji Trophy final against Bengal from February 2-6 and none of them wanted to miss the prestige battle. Tendulkar scored a hundred, Ganguly scored 90

and Zaheer took a bagful of wickets.

Within 48 hours of that Ranji Trophy final, Tendulkar, Ganguly, and Zaheer had to play an ODI international series against Sri Lanka. "Workload management" was yet to become a talking point at that time.

The Indian team that was blanked 0-3 by New Zealand at home on Sunday had seniors who were exempted from playing Duleep Trophy despite having a decent break after the the T20 World Cup with only a three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka in the interim.

Save Jasprit Bumrah, whose injury-prone body and exceptional skills demand workload management, questions are no being raised as to why the likes of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, R



Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja opted out of Duleep Trophy.

"In gruelling heat of second week of April, in the year 2000, he played Ranji Trophy semifinal for Mumbai against Tamil Nadu and scored a double hundred in a first innings chase of

nearly 500," former India opener Devang Gandhi, who had been a national selector between 2017 to 2021, recalled while talking to PTI. "In another three days, he was playing the Ranji final against Hyderabad team which had Mohammed Azharuddin and

VVS Laxman and scored a fifty and a hundred. Tendulkar played Ranji semi-final and final in a space of two weeks in April after playing ODIs till end of March," added the former player.

For the record, the last Ranji Trophy game that Kohli played was in Ghaziabad against Uttar Pradesh in 2013, a match that also featured Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Ashish Nehra, Ishant Sharma, Suresh Raina, Mohammed Kaif and Bhuvneshwar Kumar. Perhaps one of the last star-studded games ever played in Ranji Trophy.

Rohit's last Ranji Trophy match for Mumbai was in 2015.

After that, both have played one first-class game each -- Kohli for India A before a tour of Sri Lanka (2017) and Rohit for India A before a home series against

South Africa (2019) when he was set to open in Tests.

Tendulkar played 310 first-class games including his 200 Tests. So, the maestro played 110 first-class matches, including four games, in 24 years despite his hectic international schedule.

In comparison, Kohli has played 32 first-class games and Rohit fairs a shade better with 61 matches in 18 years of first-class cricket since 2006.

But to be fair, the Tendulkars, Laxmans, Dravids and Ganguly, in their prime, didn't have two months of IPL and T20 Internationals engagements which the current generation plays. Rohit has played 448 career T20 games while Kohli is one short of 400.

"Obviously workload is important and so is rest," Gandhi said. (PTI)



# Saha announces retirement from cricket after this year's Ranji Trophy



**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Spectacular with the big gloves, quietly assured with the willow and yet happy to be in the shadows, Wriddhiman Saha, in his 40 Test matches for India, has certainly been more than the sum total of all his parts.

But having been out of India reckoning for over three years now, the 40-year-old has decided to call it quits from the game at the end of his team Bengal's ongoing Ranji Trophy campaign. The announcement was made on his social media page late last night.

"After a cherished journey in cricket, this season will be my last. I am honoured to represent Bengal one final time, playing only in the Ranji Trophy before I retire," Saha said.

"Let's make this season one to remember," he added in a post that went up late on Sunday night, typically unambiguous from the unassuming player.

He never had the aura of a Mahendra Singh Dhoni or the insane daredevilry of a talented Rishabh Pant but Saha, with his hands as safe as a house, was more than a mere hyphen between the two powerhouse performers of Indian cricket. The 104 dismissals behind the stumps, including 92 catches in Tests,

some of them absolutely splendid, Saha's three centuries and six fifties aren't always spoken about for their effectiveness. Neither the eight six-laden century in a losing cause for erstwhile Kings XI Punjab in the 2014 IPL final.

But Saha, for the better part of the 17 years since his Ranji debut in 2007, was happy to stay out of the spotlight.

Patience came easy to him as he had to wait nearly two years between his debut and second Test and nearly three years between his second and third Tests.

He was always that ever present understudy to Dhoni, knowing well that he will have to wait till the great man called time in whites.

Saha was an old fashioned Indian keeper like Syed Kirmani or Nayan Mongia -- brilliant behind the stumps and a safe batter, who could be used as a floater in the middle order.

Whether keeping up to R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja on perennially under-prepared Indian tracks or gauging the wobbly seam movement of Ishant Sharma's deliveries, between 2015 and 2018, Saha was undoubtedly one of the world's best glovemen at work.

And one can say that with assurance despite his contemporaries being Matthew Wade, BJ Watling, Mushfiqur Rahim, and Jonny Bairstow.

There were moments behind the stumps that one simply cannot forget.

A flying catch to pouch South Africa's Faf du Plessis off Ashwin's delivery in front of silly point, which earned him the moniker of 'Superman WriddhiMan', was a moment of sheer brilliance. His keeping was so exceptional that despite an IPL hundred, three Test tons and a brilliant Irani Cup double ton in a tricky chase, his batting never got the due it deserved.

And when Pant burst into the scene with his 'X-factor' batting, he was again confined to being the second keeper.

Once Gabba happened, the writing was on the wall for Saha and Rahul Dravid, the new coach, in a frank discussion during the tour of South Africa decided to show him the mirror that at 38, it makes no sense to be a second keeper behind a 20-something.

Having scored a fifty (vs New Zealand) in a preceding series and probably misunderstanding former BCCI president Sourav Ganguly's generic encouragement as an assurance, his impregnable patient "defence" was breached as he fired some verbal salvos.

A spat with a Cricket Association of Bengal office-bearer saw him leave for Tripura for a couple of years before coming back home for a final hurrah.

His attitude towards life remained the same.

From the time he was a 16-year-old, who came from North Bengal's Siliguri and stayed at a dingy PG in central Kolkata's Koley Market area, to the time he became a known figure with a posh South Kolkata apartment and a luxury car, all he wanted to do was complete his tasks and answer only in mono-syllables.

Trust Virat Kohli to find that enduring.

"You particularly feel happy when a team-man like Saha does well. Such a nice person, never cribs about anything, does not have a bad word to say about anybody, ready to bat at Nos 8, 9, or 10," the skipper had once said about his teammate. (PTI)

# Series defeat against NZ will impact India's performance against Aussies: Gilchrist, Warner



**SYDNEY, Nov 4:** Australian legends Adam Gilchrist and David Warner have little doubt that Indian players' psyche would have been scarred after the recent whitewash at home by New Zealand, but they said it will be naive to consider Rohit Sharma's side "easy beats" in the five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy, beginning at Perth from November 22.

The Tom Latham-led Kiwis blanked India 3-0, marking one of the lowest points in their Test history, also denting the chances of qualifying for the World Test Championship (WTC) final next year.

"It does (series defeat has an impact), more for the Indian players and the Indian team internally. They have to be asking themselves pretty hard questions," former wicket-keeper batter Gilchrist told Fox Sports.

"But I'm not expecting them to come out and be easy beats, but I do think on the back of that loss and the fact that it was a clean sweep -- I cannot remember when that's happened to them, just losing a series, let alone a clean sweep -- I think that will raise some questions internally.

"The pressure and the expectation and the desire from a passionate cricketing nation to see that change around, that'll ride heavily on those shoulders of all those players." Gilchrist said India has the wherewithal to regroup after the heavy setback.

"There are a few ageing players (with the Indian team) who may start to even second guess themselves a little bit. There're some

high-class cricketers in that Indian squad. It's going to be fascinating to see how they rebound from that challenge," he added.

Former opener Warner said the series defeat against the Black Caps will certainly be playing in Indian cricketers' minds.

"It (the series defeat) helps the Australian guys. They're coming here after being beaten at home 3-0 for five Tests against the Australian boys, (who have) three world class quicks and a world class spin bowler, and I'd be nervous if I'm in their batting order. I would be nervous," said Warner.

The left-hander felt that counter-attacking pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj would be key to Australia's success in the upcoming series.

"The Australian top order needs to make runs against Bumrah and Siraj who are their spearheads. I think if Australia can get through those two gentlemen, there could be some big runs put on the board.

"But we're going to have to come out with our chest out against India. We have lost our last two series here against India (and) they have got a lot to play for."

Warner also did not read too much into the modest form of Indian veterans like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

"You have got Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Ashwin, Jadeja. You got these guys there who are in the back end of their careers. So, there's a lot to play for there, and whether or not they finish their careers this year or next year, they will want to finish on a high. (PTI)

# Shami's return to competitive cricket delayed; not to play for Bengal against Karnataka, MP

**BENGALURU, Nov 4:** Mohammed Shami's return to competitive cricket has been further pushed back after the veteran pacer was not named in the Bengal squad for the next two rounds of the Ranji Trophy against Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

Bengal will take on Karnataka at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here from Wednesday, before travelling to Indore to take on MP from November 13.

Shami was expected to play the fixture against Karnataka to test his fitness in a real-match situation as he bowled at full tilt at nets after India's recent Test match against New Zealand here, though with bandage on his operated leg.

On that occasion, he was also monitored by India's bowling coach Morne Morkel.

Later Shami said during a promotional event that he was feeling "100%" at nets.

"I had been bowling with half a run-up on and off since I can't put too much stress on my body. So, we decided that I would bowl properly, and I gave my 100%.

"It felt great, and the results are good. Hopefully, I'll be back on track soon," he had said.

India skipper Rohit Sharma had also opined against taking an undercooked Shami to Australia.

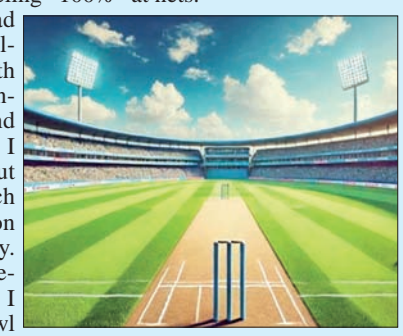
"We don't want to bring undercooked Shami to Australia. We are keeping our fingers crossed," Rohit had said in Bengaluru recently.

Other than Shami, Bengal will also miss the services of prolific opener Abhimanyu Easwaran, wicketkeeper batter Abhishek Porel and pacer Mukesh Kumar, who are with India A squad in Australia.

Pacer Akash Deep, who was part of the Indian team for the recent series against New Zealand, was also not named in the state squad.

However, veteran wicketkeeper batter Wriddhiman Saha, who has announced his retirement from cricket after the ongoing domestic season, has been named for the two matches.

Bengal squad against Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh: Anustup Majumdar (capt), Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Sudip Chatterjee, Sudip Gharami, Shahbaz Ahmed, Wriddhiman Chatterjee, Aviln Ghosh, Shuvam Dey, Shakir Habib Gandhi, Pradipta Pramanik, Aamir Gani, Ishan Porel, Suraj Sindhu Jaiswal, Mohammed Kaif, Rohit Kumar, Rishav Vivek. (PTI)





सत्यमेव जयते  
অসম চৰকাৰ

# সুধাকণ্ঠে

## শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলি

৫ নৱেম্বৰ ২০২৪

ভাৰত ৰত্ন ড° ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ  
পৱিত্ৰ মৃত্যুতিথিত বিশ্ববৰেণ্য  
শিল্পীগৰাকীলৈ অসমবাসীৰ হৈ  
গভীৰ শ্ৰদ্ধা নিবেদন কৰিছোঁ

ড° হিমন্ত বিশ্ব শৰ্মা  
মুখ্যমন্ত্ৰী, অসম



তথ্য আৰু জনসংযোগ সঞ্চালকালয়, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত

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অসম বাৰ্তা ছাবস্ক্ৰাইব কৰিবলৈ ৭৬৩৬৮৩৪৯৪৩ ত Assam লিখি ৱাটছএপ কৰক

Janasanyog /D/8316/24/5-Nov-24