

6 WORLD Kemi elected new Conservative Party chief, UK Oppn Leader
8 NATION Stand for credibility of promises under PM Modi: BJP
'Modi's promise to revive Bihar sugar mills not met'

Veteran Assamese actor-director Kulada Kumar Bhattacharya dies at 91

GUWAHATI, Nov 2: Veteran Assamese actor and director Kulada Kumar Bhattacharya died at a private hospital here after a brief illness, his family said. He was 91 at the time of death. The award-winning screen and stage personality had been unwell for the last few days and had been admitted to the hospital, where he breathed his last at 8.20 pm on Friday, they said.



the Best Narration/Voice Over Award at the National Film Awards 2023 for his voice-over for the documentary 'Hatibondhu'. Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, condoling the death of Bhattacharya, wrote on X, "I am deeply saddened to hear about the passing of veteran actor Kulada Kumar Bhattacharya. His powerful voice enriched Assamese cinema and theatre immensely. His remarkable contributions to stage acting and Akashvani dramas will be cherished by generations. Sarma added, offering condolences to the deceased's family. Born in Guwahati, Bhattacharya was a major figure in the Assamese film and theatre industry, carving a niche with his standout performances in portraying different characters with his unique style. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Priyanka slams PM Modi for destroying dignity of PM's post

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: In a scathing attack on Narendra Modi, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday said the Prime Minister has "destroyed" the dignity of the highest post of the country by repeatedly making "hollow promises" to 140 crore Indians. She also said that instead of worrying about the Congress, Modi should work on "restoring the dignity of his post by resorting to truth". Her remarks came after Modi on Friday said the Congress stands "badly exposed" in front of the people for promising to them what the party knows it will never be able to deliver.

The Prime Minister launched a fierce attack on the opposition party as he seized on Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's comments that the Congress' state units should make promises that are properly budgeted. He also said the developmental trajectory and fiscal health in the Congress-ruled states of Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana is going from bad to worse. Hitting back at the Prime Minister, Priyanka Gandhi said in a post on X in Hindi, "Mahatma Gandhi used to say (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

New twist New Delhi- Ottawa ongoing diplomatic row

Canada names India in cyberthreat list

OTTAWA, Nov 2: Canada has for the first time named India in a list of cyberthreat adversaries, suggesting that state-sponsored actors could be spying against it. Amid an ongoing diplomatic row, India is named fifth after China, Russia, Iran and North Korea in the National Cyber Threat Assessment 2025-2026 (NCTA 2025-2026) report. "We assess that Indian state-sponsored cyber threat actors likely conduct cyber threat activity against government of Canada networks for the purpose of espionage," the report said. The development comes as the bilateral relationship has gone south since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said a year ago that Canada had credible evidence that agents of the Indian government were involved in the murder of



Canadian Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia in June 2023, a charge dismissed as absurd by India. The NCTA 2025-2026 that highlights the cyber threats facing indi-

viduals and organisations in Canada was released on October 30 by the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (Cyber Centre), which is Canada's technical authority on cyber security, and part of the Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSE). While there was no mention of India in the National Cyber Threat Assessment reports of 2018, 2020 and 2023-24, the 2025-26 assessment mentions India - along with China, Russia, Iran and North Korea -- in the 'Cyber threat from state adversaries' section that introduces the state cyber threat ecosystem and discusses the cyber threats to Canada. "India's leadership almost certainly aspires to build a modernised cyber programme with domestic cyber capabilities. India very likely uses its cyber programme to advance its national security imperatives, including espionage, counterterrorism, and the country's efforts to promote its global status and counter narratives against India (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India trashes Canada's allegations against Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: India on Saturday said it has protested in the strongest possible terms the references made by a Canadian minister about Union Home Minister Amit Shah and warned that such "absurd and baseless" allegations will have serious consequences for bilateral ties. The comments by the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) came after Canada's deputy foreign affairs minister David Morrison alleged on Tuesday that Shah ordered a campaign of violence, intimidation and intelligence-gathering targeting Sikh separatists inside Canada. Morrison had also told Canadian parliament members of the national security committee that he had confirmed Shah's name to The Washington Post, which first reported the allegations. MEA spokesperson (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Kaziranga earns ₹ 65 lakh 1st month

NAGAON, Nov 2: Around ₹ 65 lakh has been collected from tourists visiting Assam's Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) in the first month of the tourist season this year, an official said on Saturday. KNPTR director Sonali Ghosh said about 29,000 domestic and international tourists visited the Park in October when it was opened for visitors this year. Of the total 28,980 tourists who visited in October, 28,401 were domestic visitors, while 579 were foreign tourists. An amount of ₹ 65,37,515 was collected from them, Ghosh said. Jeep safaris were opened for tourists (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Drive out infiltrators and protect Hindus in J'khand: Himanta

RANCHI, Nov 2: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday accused the JMM-led coalition in Jharkhand of "patronising infiltrators" and claimed that this election would be fought for driving out illegal immigrants and protecting Hindus. Sarma, who is also the BJP's Jharkhand election co-incharge, urged Hindus to remain united to save 'Santana dharm' and cautioned that if infiltration continues in the state, Hindu population will decline to 50 per cent in the next 20 years. "This election is for driving out infiltrators from

Jharkhand and saving Hindus. It is time to remain united to save Sanatan. If infiltration is not checked, the Hindu population in Jharkhand will decline to 50 per cent in the next 20 years," Sarma said while addressing a BJP rally at Panki in Palamu in favour of party candidate Kushwaha Shashi Bhushan Mehta. Hindu population in Jharkhand has declined in several areas, he claimed. "Hindus have protected India and should remain united to chant 'Jai Shri Ram'... A particular community always votes for JMM, Congress and RJD but Sanatan (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

98 pc schools have separate toilets for girls: Centre to SC

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: The Centre has informed the Supreme Court that more than 97.5 per cent of schools in the country, including government, government-aided and private ones, have provided separate toilet facilities for girl students. It has filed an affidavit in a pending PIL moved by Congress leader and social activist Jaya Thakur seeking directions to the Centre and states to provide free sanitary pads to female students of Classes 6 to 12 and ensure separate female toilet facilities in all government, government-aided and residential schools.

tional policy on the distribution of menstrual hygiene products to school-going girls in terms of the court's orders dated April 10, 2023, and November 6, 2023. The top court had directed the Centre to lay down a national model for building toilets commensurate with the number of girl students in all government-aided and residential schools across the country. While emphasising a uniform procedure, it also asked the Centre about the policy it has formulated for the distribution of sanitary napkins to female school students nationally. On April 10, the court appointed the secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) as the nodal officer to coordinate with the states and Union territories and collect relevant data for formulating a national policy. It noted that the MoHFW, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Jal Shakti have schemes for menstrual-hygiene management. The court also ordered all the states to submit their menstrual-hygiene management strategies and plans that are being executed with the help of funds provided by the Centre or through their own resources to the Mission Steering Group of the National Health Mission within four weeks. The court said the states shall also indicate to the Mission Steering Group of the National Health Mission the appropriate ratio of female toilets for residential and non-residential schools in their respective territories. It asked all the states and Union territories to also indicate the steps that have been taken to provide low-cost sanitary pads and vending machines in schools and their appropriate disposal. The plea has said girls aged between 11 and 18 years from poor backgrounds face serious difficulties in receiving education, a right guaranteed under Article 21A of the Constitution. "These are adolescent females who are not equipped with and are also not educated by their parents about menstruation and menstrual hygiene." "The deprived economic status and illiteracy lead to a prevalence of unhygienic and unhealthy practices, which have serious health consequences, increase obstinacy and lead to eventual dropping out from schools," the plea has said. (PTI)

Raas committees in Majuli to get additional grant



GUWAHATI, Nov 2: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced on Saturday a government grant of ₹ 50,000 to each Raas committee in Majuli to celebrate the festival. According to him, each Raas committee was earlier awarded a grant of ₹ 25,000; however, the government aims to make the festival even bigger with an additional grant of ₹ 50,000 to be given to the committees. Taking to X, CM Sarma wrote, "The Raas Festival of Majuli is a vibrant celebration that truly embodies the spirit and cultural essence of Assam. In honour of this significant event, the Government of Assam is pleased to announce an additional grant of ₹ 50,000 for each Raas Committee." "This amount is in addition to the previously announced ₹ 25,000, reflecting our commitment to supporting and enhancing this cherished festival that showcases Assam's rich heritage and traditions," he

added. The celebration usually occurs in October or November, on the day of the full moon in the fall. The Majuli Raas Festival, also known as the Raas Utsav or Raas Leela, is a cultural and religious festival held on the River Island every year. Through traditional dance, music, and theatre, the festival honours the life and teachings of Lord Krishna. The celebration also features regional cuisine, crafts, and customs. Lord Krishna's birth, mischief, demon-killing, victory over King Kansa, and interactions with the Gopis are all depicted in the festival's performances. The biggest populated river island in the world, Majuli Island, is the site of the event. Majuli, a hub of Vaishnavite culture, is situated on the banks of the Brahmaputra River. Devotees and visitors from all around the region come to the festival. During the event, locals on the island frequently host visitors in their homes.

STF apprehends one, 138 grams of heroin

GUWAHATI, Nov 2: The Special Task Force (STF) on Saturday conducted a raid at Kaylanpur, Hengrabari, as a notorious drug peddler was apprehended with his vehicle in the process. Alongside the man, a total of 106 vials containing heroin weighing 138.84 grams were also recovered. The seized vehicle was a Mahindra XUV 3XO bearing AS 01 GA 1759. The accused is identified as Bhaskar Kalita, aged 30, hailing from the Nityananda Bongaigaon village in the Bajali district. After the arrest, upon further investigation by the Police into his rented house located in Anandapur, Dispur, they found an additional 107 SPM-PRX Plus containing Tramadol substances weighing 80 grams. The Police also found 645 grams of suspected ganja, cash totalling ₹ 5400, and 52 empty vials. Both raids resulted in the apprehension of 138.84 grams of suspected heroin, 645 grams of suspected ganja, 107 SPM-PRX Plus containing Tramadol substances weighing 80 grams, 2 mobile phones, cash amounting to ₹ 10,700, one 4-wheeler, and 52 empty vials. Necessary formalities are being taken by the police, as per the official statement.

Train movement in Lumding resumes

GUWAHATI, Nov 2: Train movement in Assam's Lumding-Badarpur hill section of Northeast Frontier Railway resumed on Saturday, an official bulletin said. Trial runs are being conducted in the portion, with movement of passenger trains likely to resume on Sunday morning, it said. Train movement was hampered in the hill section following the derailment of a loaded wagon of a goods train inside tunnel no 2 at KM 52/5 near Mupa at about 4 pm on Thursday. The accident had completely snapped train connectivity to Assam's Barak Valley and Tripura. Train movement was restored on Saturday evening following the completion of restoration work, the NFR bulletin said. "Trial runs with light engine and goods trains are going on to ensure 100 per cent safety. Regular passenger train movement is expected to start from tomorrow morning once full safety is ascertained," it said. (PTI)

India records 17.7 pc decline in TB cases: WHO report

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: India has recorded a 17.7 per cent decline in tuberculosis incidence from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 195 per lakh population in 2023 accounting for a 17.7 per cent decline. "This is more than double the pace of decline as compared to the global decline of 8.3 per cent," the source said. The health ministry sources asserted that the leap in coverage has been due to the momentum India has created around tuberculosis case finding and reflects the efforts of decentralisation of healthcare services through over 1.7 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in the country. While WHO had downgraded its estimation of tuberculosis mortality in India last year, the current report documents the sustained reduction in deaths due to the disease achieved by India from 28 per lakh population to 22 per lakh population, a 21.4 per cent decline, they said. The government has been able to strengthen and expand the National TB Elimination Programme

with sustained domestic financing, official sources said. The tuberculosis budget saw a historic 5.3 times leap in allocation from Rs 640 crores in 2015 to Rs 3400 crores in 2022-23. The WHO report noted that a majority of the funding for the TB programme comes from government resources. Over the years, India has been



extensive TB laboratory network, the largest in the world with 7,767 rapid molecular testing facilities and 87 culture and drug susceptibility testing laboratories, the sources said. "This acknowledgement by WHO signifies the paradigm shift India has brought to tuberculosis care over the past eight years. In October, the government announced the enhancement of support under Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) from ₹ 500 per month to each patient for the entire duration of the treatment to ₹ 1,000," another source said. To date, ₹ 3,202 crore has been disbursed to 1.13 crore beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer under the scheme. While enhancement of NPY support will benefit all 25 lakh tuberculosis patients in a year, the introduction of Energy Dense Nutritional Supplementation (EDNS) would cover approximately 12 lakh under-nourished TB patients. (PTI)

Puri targets Kharge for indulging in shoot and scoot using lies, fake data

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Saturday took on Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for "delusional opinions", saying the opposition party was using "lies, fabricated figures and fake data" in its classic shoot and scoot policy.

In a series of post on X, Puri quoted data to counter Kharge's assertions saying the Modi government's inclusive development policies will make the country a developed nation by 2047.

"Congress Party and Mr Kharge seem to be oblivious of the changes that have transformed the lives of Indians for the better," he said.

The Modi government has pulled more than 24 crore Indians out of multidimensional poverty. This was aided by construction of more than 11 crore toilets, 12 crore tap water connections, over 10 crore free cooking gas connections, healthcare, bank accounts for 51 crore, three times hike in capital expenditure, and policy reforms such as GST, startup India, IBC and PFI scheme.

"We ensured the price of petrol and diesel did not rise even when the international benchmark went up by 40-70% compared to Congress-led UPA-II government when because of their folly of floating oil bonds worth ₹ 1.41 lakh crores, the country is being forced to pay back ₹ 3.2 lakh crores in return," he said.

India is demonstrating that it will achieve its development goals by 2047, he said. "Look this way Mr Kharge. These are the hard facts." Kharge had in a post on X on Friday targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying, "Lies, Deceit, Fakery, Loot & Publicity are



the 5 adjectives which best describe your Govt!" He had questioned Modi on promise of 2 crore jobs per year, inflation, demonetisation and flawed-GST, now scrapped electoral bonds, charges against SEBI chief, crime against SC/ST and India's poor ranking on global hunger index.

Ignoring most of the points that Kharge raised, Puri took on the Congress president on India's ranking on the global hunger index.

"Congress should stop looking towards foreign shores and believing in motivated indices being propagated," he said.

Stating that the hunger index is deeply flawed, Puri said an index which ranks India, a country which is distributing dry rations to its more than 81 crore people, at 105 (2024), while a country like Pakistan torn by internal strife at 109, cannot be believed.

Total FDI inflows from 2014-24 stand at USD 700 billion compared to just USD 304 billion between 2004-2014. "Does this appear to

of ₹ 22,500 crore from the sale of assets belonging to fugitive economic offenders Mallya, Modi, and Choksi, he said.

"Congress Party's classic shoot & scoot brand of social media policy based on lies, fabricated figures & fake data is back in action. Even their senior most leaders do not check facts before going public with their delusional opinions," he added.

Under Modi, India has witnessed significant employment growth over the years. Employment has increased by nearly 36 per cent, adding around 170 million jobs between 2016-17 and 2022-23, he said.

"While Mr Kharge sees stampedes", he seems unaware that the Worker Population Ratio has increased by almost 26% between 2017-2023. He is clearly looking at all the wrong places & getting fake data, or maybe is just too pre-occupied with trying to hold his imploding party together and buys whatever lies his advisors sell to him; or he is just too fixated with the unemployment of his party's travelling Shehzada," Puri said.

He asked the Congress president to "stop spreading canards on prices of goods and commodities." India's inflation rate, he said, was 1.4 percentage points below the global average in 2023. Core services inflation is at a 9-year low in FY24. RBI expects 4.5 per cent headline inflation in FY25 & 4.1 per cent in FY26.

"I would once again request Mr Kharge to stop looking at the family scion as a benchmark of unemployment & his own party's coffers as an indicator of declining savings of average Indians," he added. (PTI)

Consumer Support for Prepaid energy smart meters is on rise due to increased awareness

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 2: Assam is undergoing a major transformation in its power distribution infrastructure, aimed at ensuring a reliable and efficient electricity supply. The state government, working with various stakeholders, is implementing policies that enhance power generation, transmission, and distribution to meet growing energy demands and support economic development. In recent years, Assam's power sector has benefited from government initiatives and technological advancements. The focus has been on increasing power generation capacity, upgrading transmission lines, and modernizing distribution networks. These efforts are bolstered by central government schemes like the Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and the Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS), which target rural electrification and urban infrastructure improvement. A key development in Assam's power landscape is the rollout of smart electricity meters. These meters represent a significant advancement in energy man-

agement, enabling consumers to monitor and manage their electricity usage in real-time, leading to more efficient energy consumption and billing accuracy. Smart meters also provide utilities with better data on consumption patterns, reducing losses from theft and inefficiencies, and ensuring a stable power supply, even during peak demand.

Utpal Saikia, a local business man and a consumer of smart meters in Assam said that "Initially there was a problem in understanding the working of new system. However, now I pay according to my usage. It is helping me a lot in keeping my electricity bill within the limit."

Echoing similar sentiment, Nitra Devi, a school teacher said, pre-paid smart meter was installed at my house for free. When it was installed we had many doubts but officials addressed all our queries. I think it's a progressive step to make our electricity supply more efficient. It is also helping us save money in the long run. At present consumer sentiment in support of prepaid smart meters is divided due to various contextual reasons but as the government is engaging

consumers through social media and educating them about benefits of prepaid smart meters. Even many people are now coming forward to get prepaid smart meters installed, as the technology helps consumers to monitor usage and control expenses. According to a CEEW 2023 Report, Assam is among the leading states when it comes to successful installation of pre-paid electricity smart meters. Smart meters function as a crucial interface between consumers and utility companies, allowing for real-time data communication and better service provision. This technology not only helps in cutting energy consumption but also strengthens the financial health of utilities by reducing technical and commercial losses. With plans to replace 250 million conventional meters with smart ones by 2025-26, India is pushing for a more efficient and sustainable power sector. Assam's focus on developing a robust power distribution infrastructure, supported by forward-looking government policies, is setting the stage for a reliable and efficient power supply in the state.

ACI appoints SGK Kishore as president for APAC, Middle East

MUMBAI, Nov 2: SGK Kishore, a senior GMR Group executive, has been appointed the new president for the Asia Pacific and Middle East of the world airport operators' apex body, Airport Council International (ACI), effective January 1 next year.

Kishore, currently the executive director and chief innovation officer at GMR Airports, will succeed Emmanuel Menanteau, Board Director of Cambodia Airports/Regional Director, VINCI Airports, GMR group said in a statement.

As President of Hong-Kong headquartered ACI-APAC & MID, he will be at the forefront of support-

ing and driving growth in the region, it stated.

According to the GMR group, Kishore's leadership will focus on enhancing regional standards, fostering collaboration among members, and addressing challenges unique to this rapidly expanding aviation landscape.

This appointment further reinforces India's influence within ACI APAC & MID, supporting global partnerships that drive innovation, sustainability, and economic progress across member airports, it said. ACI APAC & MID represents the interests of over 600 airports in 47 member countries/territories. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1.

Veteran Assamese actor-director

He worked in a number of films, including 'Sakuntala', 'Latighati', 'Chikhik Bijulee', 'Maj Rati Keteki' and 'Village Rockstars'. He was also actively associated with All India Radio and the making of several documentaries over the years. (PTI)

Priyanka slams PM Modi for

"Truth is God". 'Satyameva Jayate' written in Mundaka Upanishad is our national motto. These mottos establishing truth became the ideals of the Indian freedom movement, the reconstruction of India and public life. "In a country where truth is the basis of thousands of years of culture, the person sitting on the highest post should not resort to falsehood."

The allegations levelled by the Prime Minister against the Congress are far from the truth, she said. "The Congress started fulfilling the promises made to the people as soon as it formed the government, without waiting for the next elections. Be it Karnataka, Telangana or Himachal Pradesh, people's money is being put into their pockets every day through guarantees," the Congress general secretary said in the post.

The Prime Minister has understood that his words no longer have any value before the country's people, she claimed. Sharpening her attack on Modi, Priyanka Gandhi continued, "The '100 days plan', 'taking opinion of 20 lakh people for the roadmap for 2047', '2 crore jobs every year', '100 smart cities', 'bringing back black money', 'reducing inflation and unemployment', 'doubling farmers' income', 'bringing rupee at par with dollar' and 'bringing 'Acheche Din' -- these are all promises which have been proven false and now the people of the country have no faith in them."

"Instead of worrying about the Congress, he (Modi) should work on restoring the dignity of his post by resorting to truth," she added. Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera also slammed the Prime Minister, saying the latter has lowered the dignity of his post by resorting to false promises.

Claiming that the Congress governments have fulfilled their promises in the states ruled by them, Khera alleged in a video statement that Modi had to even delete a post attacking the party out of fear of being fact-checked. On Friday, the Congress launched a multi-pronged attack on Modi over his job at the former for its poll guarantees, with party chief Kharge saying before pointing fingers, the Prime Minister should note that the "Modi Ki Guarantee" is a "cruel joke" on 140 crore Indians. Stating that the 'B' in BJP stands for 'betrayal' while 'J' stands for 'jumla', Kharge said in a post on X, "Narendra Modi ji, Lies, Deceit, Fakery, Loot and Publicity are the 5 adjectives which best describe your government! Your drumbeating regarding a 100-day plan was a cheap PR stunt!"

Besides Kharge, Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah, Himachal Pradesh chief minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu, Telangana chief minister A Revanth Reddy, former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel and Congress general secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal also lashed out at Modi, citing Congress' "track record" in fulfilling its promises. (PTI)

Drive out infiltrators and protect

votes are distributed. I appeal to you to remain united to drive out the JMM-led coalition from here. Infiltrators and a particular community are their vote bank," he added. Sarma claimed that the Santhal Pargana region, which comprises six districts of Sahibganj, Godda, Pakur, Dumka, Deoghar and Jamtara, had a total population of 23.22 lakh in 1951.

"Of the 23.22 lakh population of Santhal Paragana in 1951, 21 lakh were Hindus and Adivasis and 9 per cent were Muslim. Now the Hindu and Adivasi population has declined to 63 per cent and the Muslim population has increased to 37 per cent," he claimed. The Assam chief minister urged people to throw out the present JMM-led regime which allegedly favours infiltrators and opposes Sanatan Dharma. He also accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of playing divisive politics for dividing Hindus. Sarma claimed that if the saffron party is voted to power, it would fill up 2.87 lakh vacant government jobs and provide 1.5 lakh jobs in the very first year. Elections to the 81-member assembly in the state will take place in two phases on November 13 and 20, and votes polled will be counted on November 23. (PTI)

India trashes Canada's allegations

Randhir Jaiswal said this revelation that high Canadian government officials deliberately leaked unfounded insinuations to international media as part of a conscious strategy to discredit India and influence other nations only confirms the view that the Indian government has long held about the current Canadian government's political agenda and behavioural pattern. Replying to queries during a weekly press briefing here, Jaiswal said such irresponsible actions will have serious consequences for bilateral ties.

He said India summoned a Canadian High Commission representative on Friday, and the official was served a diplomatic note to lodge the protest in strongest terms on the "absurd and baseless" references made by the Canadian deputy minister about India's Union home minister. While addressing the parliament members, Morrison did not say how Canada knew of Shah's alleged involvement.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had said a year ago that Canada had credible evidence agents of the Indian government were involved in the murder of Canadian Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia in June 2023. Dismissing the allegations as absurd, Indian government officials have consistently denied that Canada provided evidence. (PTI)

Kaziranga earns ₹ 65 lakh 1st month

on October one in a couple of ranges of the Park, while elephant safari was opened this month. As many as 3,27,493 tourists, including 13,919 foreign nationals, had visited the KNPT in 2023-24, generating revenue of ₹ 8,81,84,161, the highest since the inception of the Park, officials had said.

The Park remains closed for tourists from May due to the onset of monsoon leading to floods. It was also hit by two devastating waves of floods this year, in which nearly 200 animals lost their lives. (PTI)

Canada names India in

and the Indian government," the assessment report said. "We assess that India's cyber programme likely leverages commercial cyber vendors to enhance its operations. We assess that Indian state-sponsored cyber threat actors likely conduct cyber threat activity against Government of Canada networks for the purpose of espionage," it said further. "We judge that official bilateral relations between Canada and India will very likely drive Indian state-sponsored cyber threat activity against Canada," it claimed.

CSE and its partners in Canada and across the Five Eyes are attuned to the cyber threats to Canada from state and nonstate cyber threat actors and are tracking them as they evolve, the report said.

NCTA 2025-2026 provides the Canadian public with CSE's current insights on the state and non-state cyber threat actors conducting malicious cyber threat activity against Canada and how we assess the cyber threat landscape will evolve in the next two years, it added. (PTI)

ADB Praises India's Fossil fuel subsidy reform

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: India has since 2010 made noteworthy progress on fossil fuel subsidy reform through a calibrated 'remove', 'target', and 'shift' approach, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a new report. "By carefully balancing the combined effect of three key policy levers - retail prices, tax rates, and subsidies on selected petroleum products - the country was able to reduce its fiscal subsidy in the oil and gas sector by 85 per cent, from an unsustainable peak of USD 25 billion in 2013 to USD 3.5 billion in 2023," it said. In its 'Asia-Pacific Climate Report', ADB said India gradually phased out the subsidy on petrol and diesel (from 2010 to 2014) and carried out incremental tax increases (from 2010 to 2017), which created fiscal space to increase government support for renewable energy, electric vehicles, and strengthening of electricity in-

frastructure. "The additional tax revenues from increases in excise duty on petrol and diesel from 2014 to 2017, a period of low international crude oil prices, were also redirected to improve access and target subsidies for expanding the use of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) among the rural poor," it said. Subsidies for LPG have since grown and "may now require efforts to improve targeting and to incubate non-fossil-fuel cooking alternatives," it said. From 2010 to 2017, Government of India introduced a cess (tax) on coal production and imports. Around 30 per cent of the cess collections were channelled to a national clean energy and environment fund that supported clean energy projects and research. ADB said the cess significantly contributed to strengthening the budget of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy during 2010-2017 and provided the initial funds for

the country's Green Energy Corridor scheme and its National Solar Mission, which helped bring down the cost of utility-scale solar energy and fund many off-grid renewable energy solutions. "However, with the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India after 2017, the cess on coal production and imports was subsumed within the country's GST compensation cess, the flows of which were redirected to compensate states for revenue losses associated with the new tax regime," it said. As a result of India's subsidy reforms and taxation measures, the country's fossil fuel subsidies plummeted from 2014 to 2018. "Its renewable energy subsidies also reached a peak in 2017 but are now once again growing, with major support schemes targeting solar parks, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and distributed renewable energy," the report said. (PTI)

Qatar pledges to invest USD 3 billion in Pakistan during Shehbaz Sharif's visit, says minister

ISLAMABAD, Nov 2: Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Friday announced that Qatar pledged to invest USD 3 billion in Pakistan during the visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The prime minister returned home on Friday after completing a two-day visit to Doha during which he had important meetings with the top leaders of Qatar and its business community. Before Qatar, he also paid a two-day trip to Saudi Arabia to attend a conference. Tarar addressing a press conference presented an overview of the visit of the prime minister to Saudi Arabia and Qatar. "Qatar and Pakistan have agreed to enhance cooperation in diverse sectors, including

trade, investment, culture and economy," he said, adding that the pledged "investment of USD 3 billion will further strengthen Pakistan's economy."

Tarar said an exhibition about Pakistani art and architecture was held during the prime minister's visit to Doha, which is a significant development in the Pakistan-Qatar relationship. He said the prime minister thanked Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani for his cooperation and support for Pakistan.

Regarding Sharif's visit to Saudi Arabia, the minister said fruitful meetings were held with the Saudi leadership, including Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. (PTI)

Govt revises wastage, input-output norms for gold, silver jewellery exports

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: The government on Friday revised norms related to the permissible amount of wastage with regard to the export of gold, silver and platinum jewellery.

The wastage norms are the permissible amount of gold or silver that can be lost during the manufacturing process of jewellery for export.

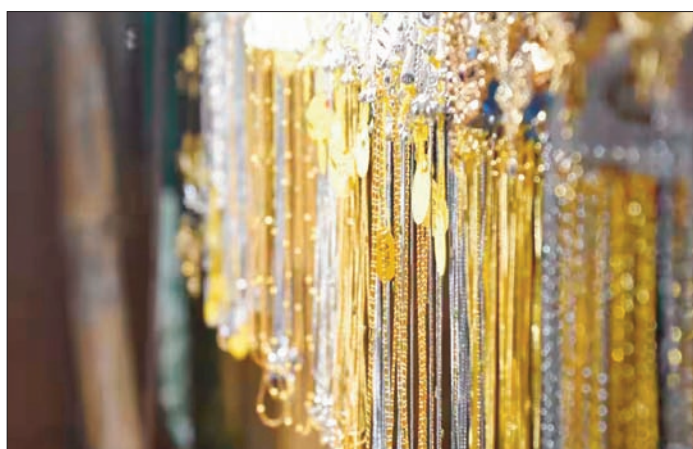
An industry official said the wastage norms have been slightly adjusted from the earlier norms, released on May 27, after the industry urged the government to look into the issue.

The industry had expressed concerns over the May rules which reduced the wastage norms across jewellery categories.

After their concerns, the Commerce Ministry deferred the implementation of those rules till December 2024.

Now, the ministry has come out with the revised norms again, which have been welcomed by the industry.

"The wastage permissible and standard input-output norms with regard to export of jewellery have been revised," the Directorate



General of Foreign Trade said in a public notice.

The new norms will be applicable from January 1, next year.

The industry had made two key requests - to set the wastage norms that realistically align with the jewellery manufacturing process and permit an adequate transition period for adapting to new regulations.

Standard input-output norms (SION) are rules that define the amount of input/inputs required to manufacture a unit of output for

export purposes. Input output norms are applicable for products such as electronics, engineering, chemical, and food products including fish and marine products, handicrafts, plastic and leather products.

In May the wastage by weight in plain gold and platinum jewellery was reduced to 0.5 per cent from 2.5 per cent and in silver to 0.75 per cent from 3.2 per cent. In studded jewellery, the wastage was reduced to 0.75 per cent in gold, silver and platinum jewellery from

5 per cent earlier.

According to the new norms announced on Friday, wastage of 2.25 per cent is allowed in handmade jewellery of gold and platinum from 2.5 per cent applicable now and 3 per cent in silver jewellery from 3.2 per cent.

For gold and platinum jewellery made by machines, the wastage of 0.45 per cent is allowed and for silver, it is down to 0.5 per cent. In studded handmade jewellery of gold, silver and platinum the new norms allow for 4 per cent wastage. For machine-made studded jewellery wastage of 2.8 per cent is allowed.

Apart from jewellery the order also covers idols, coins and medals, and other items made from these metals.

To manufacture jewellery and other items for exports, the precious metals are imported duty-free. Exports by weight must be in line with the amount of metal imported duty-free minus the wastage that can occur at the making stage. The wastage norms are strictly imposed to ensure that the duty-free metal does not find its way to the domestic market. (PTI)

NFR adds festive special trains to meet high demand



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 2: To address the high passenger demand during the ongoing festive season, North East Frontier N F Railway has announced on Saturday that a series of special trains across key routes. These additional services aim to facilitate smoother, more comfortable travel for passengers and reduce congestion on busy routes. The special trains include long-distance services from Agartala to Secunderabad and Firozpur Cantt., Ludhiana to New Jalpaiguri, and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) to Agartala. Each of these trains will run once, with detailed schedules and timings available for passengers on the IRCTC website and other official platforms. Key schedules include: Agartala to Secunderabad (Train No. 05629): Departs on November 3 at 06:20 hours, arriving on the third day at 16:15 hours.

NDRF Walkathon in Guwahati promotes vigilance and integrity

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 2: In a powerful initiative to promote vigilance and integrity, the 1st Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) organised a 10-kilometer Walkathon in Guwahati on November 2, 2024, as part of Vigilance Awareness Week. The event, which began at 5:00 am from Battalion HQ in Patgaon, aimed to foster a culture of accountability and transparency, encouraging both NDRF personnel and the community to adopt vigilance as a daily practice. The Walkathon, set against the scenic Patgaon backdrop, saw enthusiastic participation from NDRF officers and rescuers who walked together to spread the message of vigilance. Commandant H.P.S. Kandari inaugurated the event, emphasizing the importance of vigilance in building a prosperous and ethical society. "Vigilance is not just an act; it is a mindset that we must cultivate in our society. Through events like this walkathon, we hope to educate everyone about the critical importance of being vigilant and proactive in the fight against corruption," he stated in his address. The Walkathon was organized under this year's Vigilance Awareness Week theme, "Culture of Integrity for Nation's Prosperity." The theme highlights the role of each individual in creating a corruption-free society, urging citizens to be alert, act with integrity, and report any unethical activities they observe. To enhance public engagement, the walkathon featured a series of banners, stalls, and resource centers along the route. These provided participants with valuable information on how vigilance can be applied to everyday life, encouraging people to be proactive in their communities. Informative stalls were set up to showcase resources on anti-corruption measures, the importance of reporting unethical practices, and ways individuals can contribute to building a vigilant society. The Walkathon was not only an opportunity for NDRF personnel to connect with the community but also served as a reminder of the collective responsibility to uphold ethics in public and personal conduct. As participants completed the 10-kilometer route, they shared a sense of pride and commitment toward fostering a culture of integrity, one that aligns with the nation's vision of prosperity rooted in accountability. The event concluded with attendees expressing their dedication to uphold vigilance in their respective roles, aiming to inspire others to join the mission for a transparent and ethical society. The NDRF's Walkathon in Guwahati stands as a testament to the powerful impact of community-driven initiatives in building a vigilant and accountable India.



HT Correspondent
KHERONI, Nov 2: In a significant development for educational infrastructure in the region, Dr Ranuj Pegu, Education Minister, inaugurated the new Auditorium Hall at Kapili College on November 2, 2024. This state-of-the-art facility was funded by the Tribal Affairs Department, Assam, and aims to serve as a hub for academic and cultural activities for the students and faculty of Kapili College and nearby institutions. Dr Pegu was honored at the event by Honsing Terang, chairman of the governing body, and Dr Guru Prasad Upadhyay, principal of Kapili College, who presented him and other distinguished guests with the traditional Karbi Poho, a ceremonial gesture of respect and welcome. During the inauguration, representatives from local organizations and principals from ten colleges jointly submitted a memorandum to Dr Pegu, requesting the provincialization of educational institutions in the region. Among the colleges highlighted



were Kapili College, Hawraghat College, Sensonsing Engti College, and Waisong College. Dr Mohim Bora, an assistant professor, addressed the gathering and detailed the difficulties faced by venture colleges in the Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong regions. He urged the government to grant provincialization status to these colleges, taking into account No Objection Certificates (NOCs) or permissions granted before January 1, 2006. In his address, Dr Pegu acknowledged that only one of the four degree colleges in West Karbi Anglong has provincialised status. Recognizing the pressing need for additional colleges to achieve this status, he assured the au-

First in Assam with Dihanaam, Biyanaam, Rabha Sangeet, Jyoti Sangeet set to attract crowd Ayurvedic Arogya Mela in Guwahati to create awareness on medicinal plants

Nilomoni Borah
GUWAHATI, Nov 2: Socio-cultural organisation- Satsari is going to organise National Ayurvedic Arogya Mela from December 5-8 at Maniram Dewan Trade Centre in Guwahati coinciding with the birth month of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Led by the organisation's president Mandira Baruah, the mela aims to attract visitors from around the country and abroad. It is to be noted that the organisation has completed 25 years of its existence.

"The Mela aims to create awareness on medicinal plants around Assam, its benefits. We are also making efforts to create awareness on the conservation of the exotic plants," Baruah told The Hills Times. On the first day of the mela, a rally will be organised where awareness will be created with the display of around 347 medicinal plants. Cultural programmes comprising of Dihanaam, Bhupendra Sangeet, Rabha sangeet, Biya Naam, traditional dress competition will also be organised on the first day. "We are going to organise the Arogya mela for the first time in Assam. Assam is blessed with abundance of medicinal plants but due to lack of awareness among masses

Weapon recovered from Takampur forest area in Kachugaon

HT Correspondent
GOSSAIGAON, Nov 2: In a joint operation conducted by SSB and Kachugaon police personnel in the Takampur forest area under Kachugaon police station in Kokrajhar district two firearms has been recovered which were buried underground. Acting on a tip-off by the SSB's informants about the hidden firearms underground in the Takampur area within Raimona National Park, a joint operation by SSB and a team of police led by Rajendra Das from Kachugaon police station was carried out on an intervening night on Friday and two firearms were recovered successfully from thereof. Though no arrest has been made yet, the police suspect that the miscreants had buried the weapons underground. However, the investigation is on to find out more information about the illegal weapons.

Dillai Police seize Burmese Supari, arrest two

HT Correspondent
BOKAJAN, Nov 02: During a routine inspection at the Dillai Check Post in Karbi Anglong, police intercepted a dumper truck on bearing the registration number AS01PC9056. This incident happened on Saturday during a routine inspection at the Dillai Check Post in Karbi Anglong. The truck, traveling from Dimapur along NH36, was found carrying 15 bags of illegal Burmese areca nut, commonly known as "Burmese Supari." The contraband weighed a total of 1,440 kilograms and is estimated to have a market value of ₹ 12 lakhs. The truck's driver, Md Anwar Hussain from Morigaon's Borubi Chariali, and his assistant, Md Firoz Ali from Tapatjuri in Hojai district, were apprehended by the police. Officer-in-charge Akash Gogoi from Dillai Police Station confirmed the arrest and confiscation.

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the benefits are not known and plants are going extinct. This mela will be instrumental in generating awareness in this regard," Baruah said. "Through this mela we aim to reintroduce traditional healing system. The traditional healers who with their healing system have

cured many ailing patients will also be made famous along with awareness on conservation of medicinal plants. This mela will also serve as a medium of research for students of medicine. Awareness will also be generated on zero side effects of medicinal plants," she said.

Diwali night fire damages Margherita business property

HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, Nov 2: On the night of Diwali, a fire broke out at a prominent business establishment in Margherita, Assam, causing damage estimated at ₹ 10 lakh. The incident occurred around 12:10 am on Friday, at the residence and business property of R Nath, a well-known local businessman. The establishment is situated on the third floor near the Margherita post office in the town's bustling center. Preliminary reports suggest that the fire may have been ig-

nited by stray fireworks set off in the nearby Margherita Bazaar area. The Nath residence, located only a few meters from the bazaar, suffered significant damage to essential commodities, with flames spreading rapidly. However, quick action from the fire brigade prevented further escalation. The team arrived on the scene promptly and managed to contain the blaze before it could cause more extensive damage to the property or surrounding structures. In response to the incident,

Margherita Municipal Board Chairman Anand Kumar Sharma arrived at the scene to assess the situation and offer support to the affected family. While an official investigation is ongoing, local authorities have urged the community to exercise caution during festive celebrations to prevent similar accidents. This unfortunate incident highlights the need for stricter safety measures, especially in densely populated areas where fire risks increase during festive seasons like Diwali.

SBI Nagaon Branch hosts 'Vigilance Awareness Week'

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Nov 2: In alignment with the Central Vigilance Commission's initiative, the State Bank of India (SBI) Nagaon branch celebrated Vigilance Awareness Week. The awareness week started from October 28 to November 3, 2024, with a series of engaging programs aimed at educating the community about the importance of transparency and integrity in banking. The week's activities included lively quiz and debate competitions held for students from Nagaon Govt Boys' Higher Secondary School, fostering a spirit of awareness and learning among the youth. Kicking off the week, SBI Nagaon organized a rally this morning that journeyed from the bank



branch to Nagaon Natin Bazar. The rally sought to inform the public about critical issues such as banking fraud, cyber security, and corruption, emphasizing the need for vigilance in today's digital age. Prominent officials including Timon Roy, chief manager of SBI regional office Nagaon, Rajeev Roy, chief manager of SBI Haibargaon branch, and Mayukh Ma-

hanta, a bank official, participated in the rally, reinforcing the bank's commitment to promoting ethical practices in financial services. Vigilance Awareness Week is observed annually to instill values of accountability and integrity in public life, with events like these playing a crucial role in spreading awareness and encouraging community involvement.

Two arrested in Morigaon truck heist

HT Correspondent
MORIGAON, Nov 2: In a significant breakthrough, Morigaon police have arrested two individuals in connection with a high-profile robbery. The incident occurred on October 26 and the suspects were identified as Tafajul Ali of Dharantul and Mannas Ali of Moirabari, were apprehended

while in possession of a stolen truck filled with electronic devices valued at approximately ₹ 2 crore. The robbery took place on the 37 National Highway when the duo hijacked a truck transporting valuable electronic equipment from Guwahati to Silchar. The stolen cargo included items such as Xerox machines, laptops, and televisions, which

were reportedly housed at Mannas Ali's residence in Moirabari. Acting on credible information, law enforcement launched a targeted operation leading to the recovery of the stolen truck and its contents today. The arrests underscore the commitment of Morigaon police to tackling crime and enhancing public safety in the region.

Assam Rifles organises National Unity Day at Lokra

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 2: The Assam Rifles marked Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) in Lokra on Saturday. Honouring the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel with a series of events aimed at fostering national integration and unity. The celebration kicked off with an invigorating Unity Run that saw enthusiastic participation from both local residents and Assam Rifles personnel. This run served as a powerful symbol of collective strength and harmony, embodying the spirit of oneness and patriotism within the community.



Following the run, a Unity Pledge was administered, with all attendees committing to uphold the values of unity and integrity in the nation. This solemn pledge underscored the importance of standing together to safeguard the country's unity in the face of challenges.

The event attracted a total of 219 participants, including 159 locals from Lokra and 60 Assam Rifles personnel. The successful observance of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas not only celebrated Patel's legacy but also reinforced the strong bond between the Assam Rifles and the local community, highlighting their shared values of unity and national pride. This celebration served as a reminder of the crucial role that unity plays in building a resilient and harmonious nation, inspiring future generations to continue working towards these ideals.

Pubali Gupta: A journey from versatile actor-dancer to writer

By: Priyakshi Duarah
Bordoloi

Child actor at 2 and dancer at 5, Pubali catapulted into the entertainment industry with grace and success all with help of her parents who were undoubtedly the known faces in the industry. Her spontaneous dance moves, her flair of writing and acting has won accolades hugely. Pubali talks to us about love for dance, her accomplishments and upcoming projects.

1. Hi Pubali, tell us little about yourself?

Hello, I am Pubali Gupta, daughter of the eminent theatre and film personality late Sambhu Gupta and actress cum dancer late Dolly Gupta. I am born and brought up in Guwahati. I did my schooling from Disneyland which is now renamed as Sudershan Public School and completed my graduation from Handique Girls College.

After my graduation, I went to Mumbai to pursue a course on Event Management at NIEM (National Institute of Event Management). I started off with working for a few events and a few odd jobs; but I got an opportunity to work at an ad company which was

into TV commercials. In 2020 I did a film making course at T-series DreamWorks at Guwahati.

2. Coming from a film background, have you ever tried your luck on acting?

Interestingly, I first started my career with acting at the age of 2. My first shoot was for our home production film "Devi" which was released in 1982 where both me n my brother did a small appearance in the film as a child artist. Subsequently, I did a lot of child artist roles.

Though I hated acting, but what fascinates me was the portion where I could bunk my classes for acting. After that, I got the opportunity to work for the eminent Assamese filmmaker Jones Mahalia for a TV show called 'Northeast Harmony'. He then casted me in his film, "Jugantor Tejal Pua". I had also worked with my father in numerous programmes and movies like Khonikor, Ek Adhunik Golpo, etc.

3. How did you get into dancing and what forms of dance have you learnt?

Dance is my first love always. I think people should all dance because it is the most beautiful creation by Nataraja himself and it is a graceful way to emote one's

emotion. I remember every weekend after dinner, I used to dance and my audiences were my parents and my maternal uncle. I compelled them to watch the full performance and praise me.

Seeing my passion for dance, my mother took me to Padmashree Indira PP Bora. She was extremely delighted to see my flair for dancing. Madam loved my maa like her younger sister. Under her guidance, I finished my Bharatnatyam course but unfortunately could not take it further. The pressure of high school studies compelled me to stop it midway.

In 2016 when my mother left us forever, I decided to go back to dancing. My mom was an amazing Kathak dancer in her time. In 2017 I resumed dance again with Indira madam and then I got in touch with Padmashree Jatin Goswami who taught my mother Satriya. He taught me this beautiful dance form effortlessly and I performed a lot of stage shows now. At present, all my dance performance is a tribute for my mother.

4. Heard you have recently produced a short film. Tell us something

about it.

Regarding producing and direction it was something I was never sure of. Infact I started writing stories from 2017. It was my brother who enrolled me in T-series film school. I was furious because I was not at all interested. After repeated requests, I agreed and now I feel it has been the best decision ever. I totally enjoyed the whole tenure because it was films everywhere be it talking, discussing or learning.

Doomukhia happened suddenly. We were supposed to participate in some short film competition -

whereas the story was written by my friend Sonali. I hired actors from outside and finished the entire shooting in one day.

Then one fine day I saw an ad of a short film festival and randomly sent the film pictures. Surprisingly, on 31st of Decem-

ber, 2023 I got a message on my WhatsApp that my short film has received 3 awards in that festival. The news shook me a bit as I was unable to reciprocate my emotions however; it is the most memorable day of my life. So, Doomukhia is like my first child, very special.

5. What is your plan for the future?

My next short film is in post production process. And I am ready with another script for which I have my casts geared up.

6. How the idea of producing a film did come to your mind? Any inspiration?

We had a home production RN films under which my dad made "Devi". So a setting up a production house was always a dream. I wanted to have a production where I shall do meaningful projects by introducing new talents be it director, actor, script writer. I feel nothing is impossible if you are dedicated towards your work. Success is only possible with hard work, determination and dedication.

7. Who is your role model?

Of course, parents are always our role models but in my case, apart from my parents, my maternal uncle has a big influence in

my life. He is one person I look up to. He has always been there for me in every step of my life. But from career wise, I will mention Steven Spielberg, Peter Jackson, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Guru Dutt, Satyajit Ray. These are the names I look up to their work. I admire their work immensely.

For writing, I started reading Ray's short stories or his collection of stories of Feluda which has inspired me to write and in dance wise, my Bharatnatyam guru Parshwanath Upadhye from Bangalore has inspired me a lot and whenever I see him perform, tears roll down my cheeks.

Also Sushmita Sen is another person whose ideology inspires me a lot. I love watching her interviews. Her intelligence, grace, poises and confidence really makes my heart melt. The way she talks and conveys her ideas is really enticing.

8. Is there anything else you would like to say to the upcoming generation?

Yes, all I can say is do not lose track, respect your parents' decisions and be good to them. Be truthful to yourself, stay focused and work hard. (The author can be reached at duarahpriyakshi@gmail.com)



Reviving moral values: Assam reintroduces 'Charitra Path' for character building

By: Dipak Kurmi

Character is not something that is built overnight. It is a process that takes years, shaped by the experiences, teachings, and environment a person grows up in. As with many aspects of life, character development begins early - most often in childhood, at home, with parents serving as the first teachers. But beyond the home, educational institutions play a vital role in molding young minds. For children to become responsible, ethical, and empathetic members of society, schools must actively engage in character development. This is where the importance of 'Charitra Path,' or character education, becomes paramount, especially in a state like Assam where traditional values, culture, and moral responsibility hold deep significance.

In Assam, there has been a growing concern about the moral degradation among students. The focus on academic achievements - exam scores, grades, and certificates - has taken precedence over values such as compassion, respect, and empathy. Many in the state believe that the absence of structured moral education is to blame for this issue. However, a ray of hope emerged recently when Assam's Chief Minister, Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, announced the reintroduction of the 'Charitra Path' textbook into the school curriculum for classes III and VI. This decision has brought joy to many parents and educators, who see it as a significant step towards reviving character education in the state.

The role of 'Charitra Path' in character building 'Charitra Path,' once a compulsory part of the curriculum for classes V, VI, and VII, had been discontinued without any clear explanation. However, its absence was felt deeply, and many parents and educators lamented the loss of a tool that played a crucial role in shaping students' characters. The lessons in 'Charitra Path' went beyond academic knowledge; they taught students essential life skills and values such as honesty, respect, empathy, responsibility, and a sense of duty toward society.

In today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, many traditional methods of imparting moral values have been sidelined. Gone are the days when parents would sit with their children in the evenings, narrating stories with valuable life lessons. The pressure of modern life, with both parents often working full-time, means that families have less time to engage in such meaningful conversations. This has left a gap in children's moral education that schools must fill.

The 'Charitra Path' book once filled this gap. It provided structured lessons that not only taught students about good behavior and ethics but also helped to strengthen their mental and emotional health. Stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and tales of legendary figures like Bhakta Prahlad, Shrivani Kumar, and Azamil, provided children with relatable examples of virtues like truthfulness, compassion, and respect for elders. These stories, deeply rooted in Indian culture, resonated with students and left a lasting impression on their minds.

The need for moral education in today's Assam Today, Assam's students face a variety of challenges. The modern education system, with its intense focus on academic success, leaves little room for personal development. Students are often trapped in a "race" for grades, which prioritizes academic achievement over the development of critical thinking, empathy, and social responsibility.

In this highly competitive environment, many students lose sight of basic manners, respect for others, and ethical behavior. The increasing distance between teachers and students, and the lack of time parents can spend with their children, exacerbate this issue. As a result, character development takes a back seat, leading to a society where values are eroded.

Moreover, the rise of mobile technology and social media has changed the way children interact with the world. Constant exposure to unfiltered information and a culture of instant gratification can easily lead to confusion about what is right and wrong. In such an envi-

ronment, it becomes even more critical for schools to step in and provide structured moral guidance.

The reintroduction of 'Charitra Path' aims to address this issue. It serves as a tool for teachers and parents to instill important values in students, ensuring they develop into well-rounded individuals. The book provides a framework for teaching students about their duties toward themselves, their families, society, and nature. It emphasizes the importance of respect for others' opinions, compassion for the weak, and a sense of responsibility toward the environment.

A broader impact on society The decision to bring back 'Charitra Path' goes beyond individual character building. It is part of a larger vision to create a humane, beautiful, and clean society in Assam. The students of today will become the leaders, policymakers, and citizens of tomorrow. If they are instilled with strong moral values from a young age, they are more likely to contribute positively to society. They will be more compassionate, responsible, and ethical in their actions, helping to create a better future for Assam.

A society where individuals respect one another, value truth and justice, and prioritize the well-being of others over selfish interests is one that can thrive. The lessons taught through 'Charitra Path' aim to create such a society. They remind students that academic success alone is not enough; they must also strive to be good human beings. The focus on moral education is not new to Assam. In the past, students were taught about their responsibilities toward animals, plants, and nature. They were taught to respect their elders, behave courteously, and understand the difference between right and wrong. These lessons created a generation of individuals who were not only academically proficient but also morally upright. The discontinuation of 'Charitra Path' left a void, but its reintroduction promises to restore these values.

The role of parents and teachers

While the reintroduction of 'Charitra Path' is a welcome step, it is important to recognize that moral education cannot be limited to textbooks alone. Both parents and teachers have a crucial role to play in shaping a child's character. As Anne Frank once said, "Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands." Similarly, teachers can guide students and help them internalize these values.

In today's world, where parents are often busy with work and other responsibilities, it is essential that schools take a more active role in character development. However, this does not absolve parents of their responsibility. They must work hand-in-hand with schools to ensure that children are receiving consistent moral guidance both at home and in the classroom.

A milestone initiative for Assam's future The reintroduction of 'Charitra Path' by the Government of Assam is a milestone initiative that has the potential to transform the future generations of the state. By teaching students about the importance of character, ethics, and responsibility, this book will help create a society that values compassion, respect, and honesty. While the challenges of modern life may make it difficult to prioritize moral education, it is clear that it is more important than ever.

Assam's Chief Minister, Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, has taken a bold step by reintroducing 'Charitra Path' into the curriculum. It is now up to educators, parents, and students to make the most of this opportunity. If implemented effectively, this initiative can pave the way for a brighter future, where Assam's children grow up to become not only successful professionals but also good human beings. The return of 'Charitra Path' is a step toward building a society that is not only academically proficient but also morally strong—one that values humanity, kindness, and ethical behavior above all. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)



Bhai Dooj: The day of brothers and sisters

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Bhai Dooj, an important festival in the Hindu tradition, celebrates the unique bond between brothers and sisters, symbolizing the love, respect, and protection they offer each other. Falling on the second day after Diwali, this day is celebrated with great enthusiasm, especially in northern India. It is part of a series of festivals, like Raksha Bandhan, that underscore the significance of sibling relationships in Indian culture. Each year, families come together to honor the beautiful traditions associated with Bhai Dooj, adding another layer to the festive aura of Diwali.

The history of Bhai Dooj is steeped in Indian mythology and religious beliefs. The most popular story behind the festival is about Yamraj, the God of Death, and his sister, Yamuna. According to legend, Yamraj visited his sister Yamuna on this day, and she welcomed him warmly, performing a traditional ceremony called "aarti" and applying a "tilak" on his forehead. Touched by her love and devotion, Yamraj blessed her and declared that any brother who receives a tilak from his sister on this day would enjoy a long and prosperous life. Since then, Bhai Dooj has come to symbolize the bond of care, protection, and mutual blessings shared between siblings.

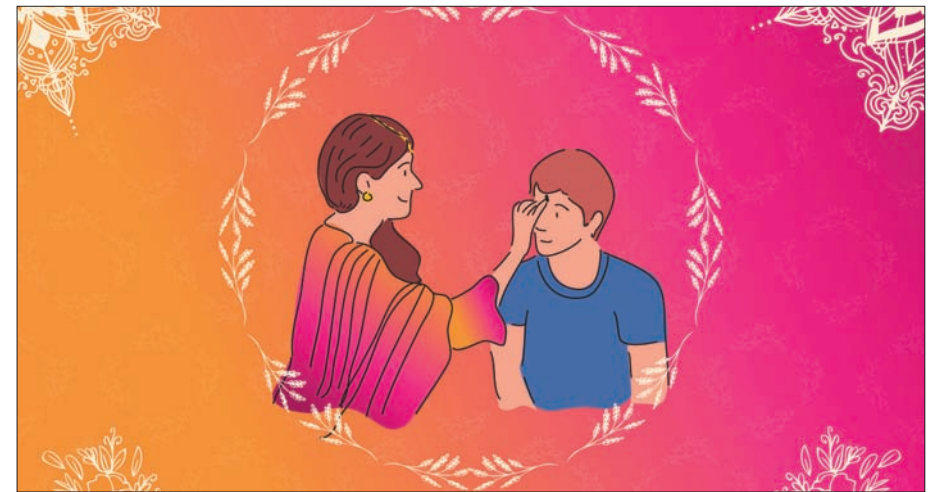
The festival's rituals reflect the deep-rooted customs and values of Indian culture. On Bhai Dooj, sisters invite their brothers to their homes and prepare a feast as part of the celebration. They perform the "aarti" for their brothers, applying a vermilion "tilak" on their foreheads as a mark of protection and good fortune. This simple yet symbolic act represents the sister's prayer for her brother's well-being and happiness. The brothers, in turn, shower their sisters with gifts, symbolizing their commitment to protect and care for them throughout their lives. This mutual exchange of affection and respect cements the bond between siblings, creating memories that last a lifetime.

Bhai Dooj celebrations vary in different regions of India, highlighting the diversity within the country's cultural landscape. In Maharashtra, for instance, the festival is celebrated as "Bhau Beej." Here, brothers and sisters reaffirm their relationship with special sweets, including the traditional "basundi puri," made especially for this day. In West Bengal, Bhai Dooj is known as "Bhai Phonta." Sisters apply sandalwood paste on their brothers' foreheads while chanting traditional mantras. Families gather for grand feasts, where brothers and sisters revel in each other's company, sharing laughter and stories. In Uttar Pradesh, the festival also takes on a unique character. Sisters fast for their brothers' prosperity and offer prayers before the rituals, making it a truly heartfelt celebration.

The spirit of Bhai Dooj is comparable to Raksha Bandhan, another festival celebrating sibling bonds. However, while Raksha Bandhan involves tying a rakhi as a symbol of protection, Bhai Dooj emphasizes the ceremonial act of applying the tilak and exchanging blessings. In a way, these festivals complement each other, together symbolizing the various facets of the sibling relationship in Indian culture. Raksha Bandhan is celebrated during the month of Sawan (monsoon season), whereas Bhai Dooj is associated with the post-monsoon harvest period, lending it a distinctly seasonal character as well.

In recent times, Bhai Dooj has adapted to modern lifestyles, yet it retains its cultural and emotional significance. With family members often living far apart due to professional or personal commitments, the festival offers an opportunity to reconnect. Some families celebrate Bhai Dooj virtually, where sisters perform the rituals over video calls, and brothers send gifts and blessings electronically.

Despite physical distances, the essence of Bhai Dooj remains intact, showcasing the adaptability of traditions in a changing world. This evolution reflects how traditional festivals can evolve to fit the demands of contemporary life without losing their core values.



The festival also holds socio-cultural significance, emphasizing the importance of family bonds in Indian society. In a culture where family plays a central role in individuals' lives, festivals like Bhai Dooj reinforce the ties that bind families together. It serves as a reminder of the emotional support system that family provides, especially the sibling relationship, which is often one of the longest-lasting relationships in an individual's life. By nurturing this bond, Bhai Dooj contributes to the stability and continuity of familial connections across generations, an aspect that is particularly valued in Indian society.

For many, Bhai Dooj is not only about rituals and ceremonies but also a time to celebrate childhood memories. Brothers and sisters often reminisce about shared experiences, re-living moments that shaped their relationship. Stories of childhood mischief, shared secrets, and sibling rivalries resurface, adding a layer of nostalgia to the celebration. For those who are separated by distance, Bhai Dooj provides a reason to come together, reaffirming their bond through shared traditions, conversations, and memories.

Another aspect of Bhai Dooj is its reflection on the concept of "dharma," or moral duty. In Indian philosophy, family roles come with specific responsibilities, and siblings are expected to support and protect each other. By participating in Bhai Dooj, brothers and sisters reaffirm their duties towards each other, with sisters praying for their brothers' longevity and well-being and brothers vowing to protect their sisters. This moral obligation reflects the idea that relationships come with inherent responsibilities, which, if honored, contribute to the harmony and strength of family and society.

The symbolic use of the tilak, or vermilion mark, in Bhai Dooj also has a deeper cultural significance. In Hinduism, the forehead is considered a sacred part of the body, representing the "third eye," associated with wisdom and spiritual insight. The tilak applied by the sister signifies her blessings and prayers, invoking divine protection for her brother. This gesture is a blend of spirituality and affection, capturing the essence of Indian rituals, which often intertwine religious beliefs with expressions of familial love.

Bhai Dooj is not just celebrated among biological siblings but extends to cousins and even close friends who share a brother-sister bond. In a society where relationships extend beyond immediate family, the festival is inclusive, encompassing all forms of sibling-like bonds. Cousins and friends who are as close as siblings partake in the rituals, reaffirming that familial bonds in Indian culture go beyond blood ties. This inclusiveness makes Bhai Dooj a festival that fosters unity and mutual respect among extended families and communities.

While Bhai Dooj is primarily a Hindu festival, its essence resonates with people of all backgrounds, celebrating the universal theme of sibling love. The idea of siblings pledging to protect and care for each other is a universally cherished value, transcending cultural and religious boundaries. In today's globalized world, Bhai Dooj serves as a reminder of the enduring importance of family and personal relationships,

even in societies where the concept of the nuclear family is becoming more common.

Modern celebrations of Bhai Dooj also highlight the changes in gender roles and expectations. Traditionally, the brother was seen as the protector, but today, sisters are equally empowered and independent. Many sisters also pledge to support and protect their brothers, reflecting the evolving dynamics of sibling relationships. In some cases, brothers also apply a tilak to their sisters, symbolizing that the love and protection in sibling bonds are mutual. This shift is indicative of the broader societal changes, where gender roles are becoming more fluid, and relationships are based on mutual support and equality.

Bhai Dooj also contributes to the economic vibrancy of the festive season, as people buy gifts, sweets, and decorations to celebrate the occasion. Markets are abuzz with activity, with siblings shopping for each other and families preparing elaborate meals. This economic boost adds to the overall prosperity associated with the Diwali season, with local businesses and artisans benefiting from the heightened demand for traditional goods. In a way, Bhai Dooj supports local economies and crafts, ensuring that cultural traditions also contribute to economic well-being.

The festival holds a special place in the hearts of those who have lost siblings. For them, Bhai Dooj is a bittersweet occasion, reminding them of the bond they shared and the memories they created. Many perform rituals to honor the memories of their departed siblings, seeking solace in the spiritual aspect of the festival. Bhai Dooj, therefore, has a dimension of remembrance, allowing individuals to cherish the relationships they have lost while keeping the memory of their siblings alive in their hearts.

Bhai Dooj's rituals and customs might seem simple, but they embody profound values of love, respect, and responsibility. These values are passed down through generations, ensuring that the essence of Bhai Dooj remains relevant and cherished. The festival teaches younger generations about the importance of sibling bonds, instilling in them a sense of duty and affection towards each other. By celebrating Bhai Dooj, families transmit cultural values to the next generation, preserving the legacy of Indian traditions in an ever-changing world.

In essence, Bhai Dooj is much more than a festival; it is a celebration of the enduring love and commitment that siblings share. It is a day when sisters pray for their brothers' well-being, and brothers promise to protect and support their sisters. Through its rituals, stories, and customs, Bhai Dooj strengthens the fabric of Indian society by reinforcing the values of family, love, and duty. As families come together to celebrate this beautiful tradition, they not only honor their cultural heritage but also affirm the timeless bonds that define and enrich their lives. The festival of Bhai Dooj reminds us that no matter how fast the world changes, some values - like love, loyalty, and familial support - remain eternal, binding us across time, space, and generations. (The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-Magazine SAMPROTIK. He can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com)

The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock: TS Eliot's modernist exploration of self-doubt and alienation in today's world

By: **Karan Chetri**

TS. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* is not just a pioneering work of modernist poetry but also a profound exploration of human anxiety, self-doubt, and social alienation. Written in 1915, the poem reflects the disillusionment and uncertainty that characterised the early 20th century. Yet, despite the passage of more than a century, Eliot's portrayal of the protagonist, J. Alfred Prufrock, continues to resonate deeply with modern readers.

Today's world, with its pervasive technology, social media, and relentless pressure to present the perfect self, can exacerbate the same insecurities and alienation that Prufrock experiences. Through a reflection of the poem's themes and ideas, I will attempt to show how Prufrock's struggles are mirrored in the modern individual's quest for identity and purpose, inviting readers to contemplate their own sense of self and the challenges they face in a hyper-connected but emotionally distant society.

The paralysis of decision-making and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

One of the central themes of *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* is the paralysis of decision-making, rooted in Prufrock's intense self-doubt and fear of judgment. He repeatedly asks himself, "Do I dare?" and "How should I begin?" These questions reveal his hesitation and inability to make decisive choices. In today's world, this hesitation can be paralleled with what is commonly referred to as the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) - a pervasive anxiety that results from the overwhelming number of choices and opportunities presented by modern society. With endless possibilities and social comparisons available at the swipe of a screen, individuals often feel paralysed by the fear of making the wrong decision or being judged by others for their choices.

Prufrock's indecision and self-consciousness resonate with the modern reader who might struggle with these very same issues. In an age where individuals are expected to curate their lives on social media, the fear of missteps or not living up to others' expectations can result in inaction and a lack of authenticity. Prufrock's refrain - "Do I dare / Disturb the universe?" - becomes a poignant question for anyone who has ever hesitated to post a thought or make a life decision out of fear of rejection or criticism.

Alienation and the fragmented self in the age of social media

Prufrock's sense of alienation and fragmentation is another key theme that finds strong echoes in the modern world. He is divided between his desire for connection and his fear of exposure and humiliation. He imagines himself as a "pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas," isolated and cut off from meaningful human interaction. Today, the illusion of constant connectivity through social media often hides a deep sense of disconnection and isolation. Despite the outward appearance of being more connected than ever, people increasingly report feeling lonely and fragmented in their identities.

The constant pressure to present an idealised version of oneself - one that conforms to societal expectations - can lead to a fragmented sense of self, much like Prufrock's. Individuals, particularly younger generations, often grapple with the tension between their true selves and the personas they create for the public eye. Prufrock's lament that he is "no Prince Hamlet" but merely an "attendant lord" captures the modern sense of inadequacy that arises from comparing oneself to others. He reduces his worth to trivialities, like his appearance - "[They will say: 'How his hair is growing thin!']" - which is a sentiment echoed in today's obsession with body image and physical appearance.

The crisis of authenticity: Speaking without being heard

Prufrock's inability to express his true feelings and the fear of being misunderstood speak to the modern crisis of authenticity. In the poem, he contemplates revealing his innermost thoughts but

imagines a dismissive response: "That is not what I meant at all. / That is not it, at all." This anxiety about being misunderstood is heightened in today's world, where genuine self-expression can often be drowned out by the cacophony of voices on social platforms. People may hesitate to share their thoughts or express their emotions because of the fear that they will be misconstrued, criticised, or ignored.

The sense of speaking without being heard, which Prufrock experiences, is particularly relevant in the digital age, where meaningful conversations are frequently replaced by superficial interactions - likes, comments, and emoji responses that lack depth. Prufrock's lament, "It is impossible to say just what I mean!" becomes a modern-day complaint for anyone struggling to find meaningful ways to connect amidst the noise of digital communication. His tragic realisation that human voices wake him only to drown him suggests a profound



loneliness and alienation that many feel when their attempts at self-expression are met with indifference or misunderstanding.

Time and the modern anxiety of achievement

Prufrock's obsession with time - "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons" - reflects his acute awareness of the passage of time and his fear that life is slipping away without purpose or fulfillment. In contemporary society, this anxiety is magnified by the relentless emphasis on productivity and achievement. There is an ever-present pressure to accomplish more, to be more successful, and to make every moment count. People are often haunted by the fear of

wasting time or not living up to their potential, leading to burnout and a sense of inadequacy.

Prufrock's fear of aging and death, symbolised by his concern over his thinning hair and his repeated refrain of "And indeed there will be time," mirrors the modern preoccupation with youthfulness and the fear of obsolescence. In a world that often equates youth with value and aging with decline, the anxiety of being left behind or becoming irrelevant is pervasive. Prufrock's introspective musings serve as a reminder that time is not just a measure of external accomplishments but also of internal fulfillment and personal growth.

The search for meaning in an existential world

At its core, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* is an existential exploration of a man grappling with his place in the world. Prufrock's constant questioning - "Do I dare to eat a peach?" - reflects his uncertainty about whether his existence has any significance. This existential angst is a timeless theme that resonates deeply with the modern reader. In an era marked by rapid change, economic uncertainty, and shifting cultural values, the search for meaning and purpose can often feel like a futile endeavour.

For many today, the struggle to define one's identity and find a sense of meaning amidst societal expectations and personal aspirations is a source of anxiety and despair. Prufrock's plight reminds us that the search for authenticity and self-expression is a deeply human one, fraught with challenges but also essential for personal growth and fulfillment.

A poem for the modern soul

Through its vivid imagery, fragmented structure, and psychological depth, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* remains a powerful reflection on the human condition. In a world that has grown increasingly complex and interconnected, Prufrock's struggles with identity, self-expression, and alienation continue to speak to readers, offering a mirror to our own insecurities and uncertainties. Eliot's poem invites us to confront our fears, embrace our vulnerabilities, and dare to "disturb the universe" in our quest for connection and meaning. By doing so, it serves not only as a masterpiece of modernist literature but also as a timeless guide for self-reflection and personal growth in an ever-changing world. *(The author can be reached at karan.chetri75@gmail.com)*

'Beyond the wild: What wolves teach us about family and integrity'



By: **Aubaid Ahmad Akhoun**

bonds of the living.

Cultural reflections
Throughout history, the wolf has been a symbol of nobility and virtue in various cultures. In Arabic, the wolf is referred to as "Ibn al-Bar," or "the dutiful son," a nod to its care for its elderly parents. In Turkish culture, wolves are admired for their nobility and strength, with parents often encouraging their children to embody the traits of a wolf—noble, brave, and loyal—rather than the more aggressive attributes of a lion.

A family united

At the heart of a wolf's life is its pack, a tightly knit family unit where every member plays a crucial role. Unlike the solitary image often painted by myths, wolves thrive in the company of their kin. The alpha pair, typically the parents, lead the pack with a sense of responsibility that ensures the survival and well-being of all members. In this environment, the young are nurtured, the elderly are respected, and the pack moves as one cohesive unit.

This familial structure offers a stark contrast to the increasing individualism seen in human society today. As we drift apart in our pursuit of personal success, the wolf reminds us of the strength found in unity, cooperation, and mutual support. A society that values family as its core, much like the wolf pack, is one that can weather any storm.

Uncompromising freedom

One of the most striking traits of a wolf is its absolute refusal to live in captivity. Wolves, when captured, often become depressed, refusing food and exhibiting behaviors that can lead to their death. This fierce independence is a powerful symbol of the value of freedom and the cost of losing it. In a world where people are increasingly subjected to various forms of control—whether social, political, or economic—the wolf's undying spirit serves as a reminder of the importance of autonomy and the right to live free from oppression.

Honour in purity

Wolves are discerning hunters, preferring fresh prey over carrion. While necessity may drive them to eat what they find, their preference for hunting demonstrates a respect for the natural order and a commitment to maintaining their role as apex predators. Additionally, the social structure within a wolf pack ensures that inbreeding is avoided, with only the alpha pair typically reproducing. This respect for genetic purity and the health of future generations reflects a deep, instinctual understanding of responsibility.

In human terms, this can be seen as a metaphor for integrity—holding oneself to high standards, making choices that honor both oneself and the community, and ensuring that actions today do not harm the prospects of tomorrow.

Lifelong commitment

Wolves are monogamous, forming strong, lifelong bonds with their mates. This commitment extends beyond life; when one partner dies, the surviving wolf may mourn for an extended period. Such loyalty is rare in the animal kingdom and serves as an inspiring example of the power of dedication and love. In human relationships, where commitment is often tested, the wolf's unwavering bond with its mate encourages us to cherish and nurture our connections with others, to value loyalty and trust above all else.

Grief and remembrance

The emotional depth of wolves is evident in their reactions to loss. When a member of the pack dies, the wolves exhibit behaviors akin to mourning—they may howl in sorrow, linger near the place where the member passed, or become visibly subdued. This capacity for grief is a poignant reminder of the importance of acknowledging our emotions and the value of remembering those who have gone before us.

In a fast-paced world that often encourages us to move on quickly from loss, the wolf teaches us that it is okay to mourn, to take the time to grieve, and to honor the memory of those we have lost. This practice not only heals the heart but also strengthens the

of the living.

Throughout history, the wolf has been a symbol of nobility and virtue in various cultures. In Arabic, the wolf is referred to as "Ibn al-Bar," or "the dutiful son," a nod to its care for its elderly parents. In Turkish culture, wolves are admired for their nobility and strength, with parents often encouraging their children to embody the traits of a wolf—noble, brave, and loyal—rather than the more aggressive attributes of a lion.

In Kashmiri culture, the wolf, known as "shaal," is deeply ingrained in the language and folklore. Several proverbs and idioms reflect the characteristics of wolves. For instance, the saying "Shaal shaal byoun byoun tungi wiz kunniye" translates to "Wolves are separate, but when they raise their voices, they act as one," symbolizing unity during times of need.

Another popular proverb is "Shaal talith bathen chob," meaning "The wolf escapes, and the man hits the ground." This is akin to the English saying "crying over spilled milk," illustrating the futility of acting too late.

There is also a taunt in Kashmiri: "Shaal jamadari," which refers to a scenario where many wolves gather in one place and make one wolf their captain by crowning him. When a lion approaches, all the wolves run back to their caves, and when the captain tries to flee, the crown prevents him from entering the cave, leading to his demise by the lion. This serves as a metaphor for giving someone responsibility while avoiding accountability yourself.

Furthermore, "shawl" in Kashmiri also refers to a famous fabric, typically a square or oblong piece of woven or knitted fabric used as a covering for the head or shoulders. Khwaja Sanaullah Shawl of Khanjar, widely recognized as Son e Shale, was the most affluent merchant and landowner in nineteenth-century Kashmir. His name, Son e Shale, has since become ingrained in Kashmiri vernacular, often used mockingly. The phrase "Zan Chu Su Son e Shale" (as if he is the Son e Shale of the past) is commonly employed to deride those who exhibit pretentiousness or self-importance. Even today, the legacy of his wealth and status serves as a cultural reference point for those who put on airs.

These cultural reflections reinforce the idea that the wolf is more than just a predator; it is a symbol of the best qualities we can aspire to.

The Central Lesson: Reclaiming our values

The wolf, with its profound sense of loyalty, respect for family, and fierce independence, offers more than just lessons in animal behavior; it provides a blueprint for living a life of integrity and honor. In a society increasingly detached from these values, the wolf stands as a reminder of what we can achieve when we stay true to ourselves and those we care about.

By looking to the wolf, we can find inspiration to rebuild the bonds of family and community, to value freedom and autonomy, and to live with the kind of integrity that ensures we leave a positive legacy for future generations. In embracing the noble qualities of the wolf, we can create a society that is not only strong but also compassionate and just—a society where loyalty, honor, and respect are not just ideals but lived realities.

Bottom line

In the end, the wolf is more than just a symbol; it is a guide, showing us the way to live with dignity, respect, and love. By following the wolf's example, we can foster a world where these values are cherished and upheld, leading to a brighter, more harmonious future for all. *(The author is a Columnist, Motivational Speaker, and Associate Editor of Weekly 'Education Quill' Presently Working as Sr. EDP Head at SKIE Classes Khanjar/Soura branch. He can be reached at akhoun.aubaid@gmail.com)*

Keep children away from social media

By: **R.K. Sinha**

If you talk informally to any person of any age around you, then you will come to know that today, the addiction of social media is eating our entire society like termites. Innocent children have especially come under its grip. Australia is considering implementing a minimum age limit for the use of social media. There, even children between 14 and 16 years can be kept away from social media. Its purpose is to connect children to the playground instead of spending too much time on digital devices. Shouldn't such a step be taken in India? One does not need to read Rocket Science to know that social media has kept children away from playgrounds and even their family members and friends in our own country.

Look at the children in your home and surroundings. They remain glued to Facebook, Whatsapp, Insta, etc. You can go to any stadium in any city of the country. You will find elderly people strolling there but you will find very few children playing. However, until about twenty years ago, children were seen playing on all the grounds from the capital Delhi to small cities.

Children used to sweat a lot while practicing in the capital's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Talkatora Stadium, National Stadium, and other grounds. They used to practice under the supervision of their coaches. But look at the condition of children in the last few years. If children do not play, then how will the country get medals in the Olympics, Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games? Will someone give us medals for free?

In China, too, the use of social media by minors has been legally banned from 10 pm to 6 am. It is true that in today's time, social media has become an integral part of our life. But, its indiscriminate use, especially for children, is proving to be very dangerous. Children are becoming victims of men-

tal health problems, cyberbullying, online exploitation, and many types of addictions due to social media. Therefore, it has become our important responsibility to protect children from these ill effects.

Some necessary steps have to be taken to protect children from the ill effects of social media. For example, the age limit of social media platforms should be followed, and children should be prevented from using these platforms until the appropriate age. It is also important to encourage children to use special apps and websites with appropriate age limits.

I believe that the time has come that parents and school teachers should have regular and open discussions with children about social media. They should be told about both their advantages and disadvantages. We should also constantly inquire about children's online activities with love. Apart from sports, they can be connected to music, dance, or any other recreational activities.

In Noida, former Indian football team player Anadi Barua gives football coaching to children. Similarly, in South Delhi, famous badminton players and badminton referee Tulsi Dureja teach children the tricks of badminton. Former players like Anadi Barua and Tulsi Dureja are giving coaching in all the small and big cities of the country. They charge a very nominal fee. Parents should take their children to watch such famous players. Obviously, when children play, they will not have time for social media.

Keeping children away from social media can be a difficult task, but it is important for their welfare. I believe that if family members spend time together eating, playing, and talking like before, then distance from social media can be maintained. Remember the time when the whole family used to sit together and eat with the head of the family in the morning and evening.

Now, in how many families everyone eats together. Now even different types of food are being cooked for each mem-

ber of the family. That is, the house has now become a hotel. Just like people staying in different rooms of a hotel order their favourite food from room service, the same is now happening in homes too! Did this happen earlier? These were not Indian values.

There is no need to tell anyone that children learn from the behaviour of their parents. If you yourself use social media continuously, it will be difficult to limit its use for children. Parents and guardians of children should try to set a good example by their behaviour regarding the use of social media. Now, even the elder members of the house are posting their photos on Facebook or Insta. After that, many enthusiastic people even call their friends to like or comment on their posts. When the parents themselves have started giving time to social media day and night, then how will they be able to keep their children away from it. They have to think seriously about this. You can ban your family members from connecting to social media in the dining room or bedroom.

You can talk to your children about why it is not right to give too much time to social media. Tell them about cyberbullying. Now, also know what cyberbullying is? Actually, cyberbullying is bullying done using digital technologies. It can happen on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms, and mobile phones. Its purpose is to scare or embarrass people. You should understand this with some examples also.

Spreading lies about someone on social media or posting their embarrassing pictures or videos. Sending abusive or threatening messages, pictures, or videos through messaging platforms. It has a very deep impact on the victims of cyberbullying. Therefore, parents or any elder member of the house should warn the member who wastes day and night on social media about its dangers. *(The author is a senior editor, columnist, and former MP)*

Poem

My Soaring Kite

By: **Hiranya Barman**

Drifted high, my soaring kite
No clouds rather into the clear sky,
Sun dipped down to provide me shade,
Hide and seek he played well.

In the sky, my soaring kite
From above, it saw immense emotions
Lovers broke, diplomats ruled losers laughed
and parents hoped.

I only pulled the strings attached,
I am unknown of man's vague emotions;
Free, untamed my thoughts have become.

Later my favorite black thick clouds emerged,
Along again came thunder and rain;
Still my kite soared towards its destiny with
pride.

Thou brother rain don't break my dear kite
again
Don't again bring upon me ruthless pain.

The Chaos

By: **Shahnaz Islam**

The chaos,
All this are alike
Familiar to egos, abuses or vulnerabilities
Whether the ears are closed or open
It is laying inside me for ages.

Rules like a tyrant
With all cruelty, forces and trials
Forbidden or shower paved with hate
Letting me not to slumber tonight.

And in the core
Flames of unseen fire
Turns everything into ashes
Where my soul was squalling in the chaos mind for set
free forever!

Who Am I?

By: **Otter Selvakumar**

Who am I
I'm not with my body
I'm asking about this question
My Father and Mother Comes With
Fight

Who am I
I Don't Ask With My Mind
I'm asking about this question
God comes with battle with Satan

Who am I
I don't ask with myself
I'm asking about this question
My body and soul and
With every minute comes battle

Who am I?
The question for me is
What's it like?

I am the only one
This is my simple answer
About me now

Badenoch replaces former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, will be opposition leader after party's crushing election defeat

Kemi Badenoch elected new Conservative Party chief, UK Opposition Leader

LONDON, Nov 2: Kemi Badenoch on Saturday became the first Black woman to lead Britain's Conservative Party as she succeeded Rishi Sunak in the House of Commons as the Leader of Opposition.

The 44-year-old Nigerian-heritage parliamentarian defeated former Cabinet minister Robert Jenrick after a three-month-long leadership election following Sunak's resignation after the Tories suffered a bruising general election defeat on July 4.

The shadow secretary of state for Housing, Communities and Local Government began by thanking her predecessor — who was the first British Indian leader of the party.

"I want to thank Rishi, no one could have worked harder in such difficult times. Rishi, thank you for everything you did. We all wish you and your wonderful family the very best for the future," said Badenoch in her acceptance speech.

Sunak took to social media to extend his support. "Congratulations to Kemi Badenoch on being elected Conservative Party leader. I know that she will be a superb leader of our great party. She will renew our party, stand up for Conservative values, and take the fight to Labour. Let's unite behind her," he said.



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer also congratulated the new Opposition leader and welcomed her as the "first Black leader of a Westminster party" as a proud moment for the country.

"I look forward to working with you and your party in the interests of the British people," he said.

After a phased election process that had whittled down the finalists in the leadership race to just two, Badenoch bagged 53,806 votes to beat Jenrick who won 41,388 from the Tory membership who had voted via online and postal ballots over the last month.

Bob Blackman, the chair of the influential Tory 1922 Committee of backbench MPs, announced the result in London as the returning officer.

He revealed that the election

had 131,680 eligible electorate of Conservative Party members up and down the UK, with a turnout of 72.8 per cent.

"Another glass ceiling shattered," Blackman said as he announced the party's new leader.

Badenoch, Member of Parliament for North West Essex, has long been popular among the Tories since she ran in a previous leadership race in 2022.

"Our party is critical to the success of our country. But to be heard, we have to be honest, honest about the fact that we made mistakes, honest about the fact that we let standards slip. The time has come to tell the truth... to stand up for our principles, to plan for our future, to reset our politics and our thinking, and to give our party and our country the new start that they deserve. It is time to get down to business, it is

time to renew," she said, pledging to get the party ready for government in time for the next election in 2029.

Having previously served as business and trade secretary and dealt with free trade agreement (FTA) talks with India, Badenoch indicated during the course of the Tory leadership campaign that she blocked the deal over demands for more visas.

"As business secretary, even as I was trying to do things to limit immigration, we had an India FTA where they kept trying to bring in migration and I said no. It's one of the reasons why we didn't sign it," Badenoch reportedly told 'The Telegraph'.

Both candidates had put immigration in the spotlight during the campaign, with Jenrick singling out India as one of the countries that should be subjected to tough visa restrictions across all categories unless it takes back its nationals who enter Britain illegally.

Badenoch, meanwhile, condemned new migrants bringing their disputes from India to cause unrest on the streets of the country.

"I saw as equalities minister people bringing cultural disputes from India to the streets of Leicester," she said back in September. (PTI)

Iran's supreme leader threatens Israel, US with 'crushing response' over Israeli attack

DUBAI, Nov 2: Iran's supreme leader on Saturday threatened Israel and the US with "a crushing response" over attacks on Iran and its allies.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei spoke as Iranian officials are increasingly threatening to launch yet another strike against Israel after its October 26 attack on the Islamic Republic that targeted military bases and other locations and killed at least five people.

Any further attacks from either side could engulf the wider Middle East, already teetering over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip and Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon, into a wider regional conflict just ahead of the US presidential election this Tuesday. "The enemies, whether the Zionist regime or the United States of America, will definitely receive a crushing response to what they are doing to Iran and the Iranian nation and to the resistance front," Khamenei said in video released by Iranian state media.

The supreme leader did not elaborate on the timing of the threatened attack, nor the scope. The US military operates on bases throughout the Middle East, with some troops now manning a Terminal High Altitude Area Defence, or THAAD, battery in Israel. The USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier likely is in the Arabian Sea, while Pentagon press secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said Friday that more destroyers, fighter squadrons, tankers and B-52 long-range bombers would be coming to the region to deter Iran and its militant allies.

The 85-year-old Khamenei had struck a more cautious approach in earlier remarks, saying officials would weigh Iran's response and that Israel's attack "should not be exaggerated nor downplayed." Iran has launched two

major direct attacks on Israel, in April and October.

But efforts by Iran to downplay the Israeli attack faltered as satellite photos analysed by The Associated Press showed damage to military bases near Tehran linked to the country's ballistic missile programme, as well as at a Revolutionary Guard base used in satellite launches.

Iran's allies, called the "Axis of Resistance" by Tehran, also have been severely hurt by ongoing Israeli attacks, particularly Lebanon's Hezbollah and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Iran long has used those groups as both an asymmetrical way to attack Israel and as a shield against a direct assault. Some analysts believe those groups want Iran to do more to back them militarily.

Iran, however, has been dealing with its own problems at home, as its economy struggles under the weight of international sanctions and it has faced years of widespread, multiple protests. After Khamenei's speech, the Iranian rial fell to 691,500 against the dollar, near an all-time low. It had been 32,000 rials to the dollar when Tehran reached its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

Gen. Mohammad Ali Naini, a spokesman for Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard which controls the ballistic missiles needed to target Israel, gave an interview published by the semiofficial Fars news agency just before Khamenei's remarks were released. In it, he warned Iran's response "will be wise, powerful and beyond the

enemy's comprehension."

"The leaders of the Zionist regime should look out from the windows of their bedrooms and protect their criminal pilots within their small territory," he warned. Israeli air force pilots appear to have used air-launched ballistic missiles in the October 26 attack.

Khamenei on Saturday met with university students to mark Students Day, which commemorates a November 4, 1978, incident in which Iranian soldiers opened fire on students protesting the rule of the shah at Tehran University. The shooting killed and wounded several students and further escalated the tensions consuming Iran at the time that eventually led to the shah fleeing the country and the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The crowd offered a raucous welcome to Khamenei, chanting: "The blood in our veins is a gift to our leader!" Some also made a hand gesture — similar to a "timeout" signal — given by the slain Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in 2020 in a speech in which he threatened that American troops who arrived in the Mideast standing up would "return in coffins" horizontally.

Iran will mark the 45th anniversary of the US Embassy hostage crisis this Sunday, following the Persian calendar. The November 4, 1979, storming of the embassy by Islamist students led to the 444-day crisis, which cemented the decades-long enmity between Tehran and Washington that persists today. (AP)



Ukraine's Zelenskyy urges allies to take steps before NKorean troops reach the front

KYIV, Nov 2: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged its allies to stop "watching" and take steps before North Korean troops deployed in Russia reach the battlefield.

Zelenskyy raised the prospect of a preemptive Ukrainian strike on camps where the North Korean troops are being trained, and said Kyiv knows their location. But he said Ukraine can't do it without permission from allies to use Western-made long-range weapons to hit targets deep inside Russia.

"But instead ... America is watching, Britain is watching, Germany is watching. Everyone is just waiting for the North Korean military to start attacking Ukrainians as well," Zelenskyy said in a post late Friday on the Telegram messaging app.

The Biden administration said on Thursday that some 8,000 North Korean soldiers are now in Russia's Kursk region near Ukraine's border and are preparing to help the Kremlin fight against Ukrainian troops in the coming days.

Western leaders have described the North Korean troop

deployment as a significant escalation that could also jolt relations in the Indo-Pacific region, and open the door to technology transfers from Moscow to Pyongyang that could advance the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile program.

North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui met with her Russian counterpart in Moscow on Friday.

Ukrainian leaders have repeatedly said they need permission to use Western weapons to strike arms depots, airfields and military bases far from the border to motivate Russia to seek peace.

In response, U.S. defense officials have argued that the missiles are limited in number, and that Ukraine is already using its own long-range drones to hit targets farther into Russia.

Moscow has also consistently signaled that it would view any such strikes as a major escalation. President Vladimir Putin warned on Sept. 12 that Russia would be "at war" with the U.S. and NATO states if they approve them. (AP)

Rescuers end search for survivors after 14 die in canopy collapse in northern Serbia

NOVI SAD, Nov 2: Serbian rescuers stopped searching for survivors on Saturday after pulling out 14 bodies from underneath tons of concrete from a fallen canopy at the entrance of a railway station in the northern city of Novi Sad.

Serbia's government declared Saturday a day of mourning as officials promised a thorough investigation into Friday's collapse of the roof that fell on people sitting below it.

The dead included a 6-year-old girl and a citizen of North Macedonia while three people were seriously injured, Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said.

Doctors said the injured ranged from 18 to 24 years old and remained in life-threatening condition on Saturday.

The train station has been renovated twice in recent years, and critics of Serbia's populist government attributed the disaster to corruption and sloppy renovations. Members of the opposition planned to protest in front of the station later on Saturday.

Officials have insisted that the canopy had not been part of the renovation work.

Goran Vesic, the government minister for construction and infra-



structure, told the state RTS television the tragedy would not have happened had the canopy been renovated as well.

Dacic said some 20 people will be questioned on Saturday as part of the investigation, including Vesic.

Authorities deployed heavy machinery and some 80 rescuers who struggled for hours to remove large parts of concrete that crashed just before noon Friday. The rescue effort lasted until late Friday evening.

Residents of Novi Sad lit candles and held a vigil for the victims at the site. Many responded to a call to donate blood.

"This morning I drank my coffee in tears. It is hard this has hap-

pened in our city," said Dragica Camber, a resident of Novi Sad. Surveillance camera footage on Friday showed people moving in and out of the building and sitting on benches on a bright, sunny day before the concrete canopy suddenly collapsed. Windows shook on nearby buildings.

The railway station, including the canopy, was built in 1964. The renovation work was carried out by Chinese companies.

The renovated station was inaugurated by President Aleksandar Vucic and his populist ally, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, over two years ago as a major stopover for a planned fast train line between Belgrade and Budapest. (AP)

Sikhs pilgrims from UK, US and Canada to get free online visas in Pakistan: Interior Minister

ISLAMABAD, Nov 2: Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said that Sikh pilgrims from the US, UK and Canada will receive free online visas within 30 minutes upon arrival in the country to pay respect to their religious sites.

Naqvi's remarks came as he met with a 44-member foreign delegation of Sikh pilgrims in Lahore on Thursday.

The minister warmly welcomed the Sikh pilgrims to Pakistan. He acknowledged that the Sikh pilgrims faced difficulties while visiting Pakistan in the past, according to a statement by the Ministry of Interior.

Naqvi announced that the government has made the visa process easier for Sikhs by making it online. He added that holders of American, Canadian, and UK passports can apply online and receive their visas within 30 minutes without any fees.

He noted that this facility extends also to Sikhs of Indian origin residing in these countries. He stated that providing more facilities to the Sikh community is his government's priority.

He encouraged Sikhs pilgrims

to visit Pakistan, saying, "You can come to Pakistan 10 times a year, and we will welcome you every time."

Naqvi said that just as Saudi Arabia is sacred for Muslims, Pakistan is sacred for the Sikh community. He announced that several Sikh heritage sites in Pakistan will be opened for visits, and no permit will be required in this regard.

Naqvi expressed his desire to increase the number of Sikh pilgrims visiting Pakistan from 1 lakh to 1 million annually with particular emphasis on attracting younger generations.

The Sikh delegation thanked Naqvi for his hospitality and appreciated the ease of online visa processing, saying, "You have won our hearts", the statement said. Naqvi also mentioned that the Pakistan government has started the facility of free-of-cost visas for the citizens of 124 countries. In a major change in visa policy aimed at attracting tourists and investment from across the world, Pakistan from August 14 completely waived the visa fee for the citizens of these countries. (PTI)

Delegates agree to establish Indigenous subsidiary body at COP16 biodiversity summit in Colombia



CALI, Nov 2: Delegates came to an agreement on late Friday at the United Nations conference on biodiversity to establish a subsidiary body that will include Indigenous peoples in future talks and decisions on nature conservation.

The COP16 summit hosted in Cali, Colombia, was a follow-up to the historic 2022 accord in Montreal, which includes 23 measures to save Earth's plant and animal life, including putting 30% of the planet and 30% of degraded ecosystems under protection by 2030. A measure to recognize the importance of the role of people of African descent in the protection of nature was also adopted on Friday.

Negotiators struggled to find common ground on some key issues in the final week, but were able to come to a consensus after negotiating late into Friday.

Global Indigenous delegations erupted into cheers and tears over the historic decision.

The decision recognizes and protects the traditional knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples and local communities for the benefit of global and national biodiversity management, said Sushil Raj, Executive Director of the Rights and Communities Global Program at the Wildlife Conservation Society.

"It strengthens representation, coordination, inclusive decision making, and creates a space for dialogue with parties to the COP," Raj told The Associated Press.

"It promotes support for Indigenous and traditional territorial biodiversity management and furthers international human rights standards referenced in the Global Biodiversity Framework."

The body will be formed by two co-chairs elected by COP: one nominated by U.N. parties of the regional group, and the other nominated by representatives of Indigenous peoples and local communities, the AP saw in the document.

At least one of the co-chairs will be selected from a developing country, taking into account gender balance, the document said.

"With this decision, the value of the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and local communities is recognized, and a 26-year-old historical debt in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is settled," Susana Muhamad, Colombia's environment minister and COP16 president, posted on social media platform X shortly after the announcement.

Also adopted was an agreement to protect human health from Earth's increasing biodiversity issues. Ecosystem degradation and loss of ecological integrity directly threaten human and animal health, environmental groups say. Pledges made by countries during the two weeks were far short of the billions needed to tackle plummeting global biodiversity, with only around \$400 million in the fund.

In Montreal's summit, wealthy nations pledged to raise \$20 billion in annual conservation financing for developing nations by 2025, with that number rising to \$30 billion annually by 2030.

Global wildlife populations have plunged on average by 73% in 50 years, according to the World Wildlife Fund and the Zoological Society of London biennial Living Planet report in October. (AP)

Pope Francis prays in front of graves of unborn children ahead of All Souls' Day Mass



ROME, Nov 2: Pope Francis paid his respects on Saturday to the "Garden of Angels," an area in Rome's third largest cemetery which houses the graves of stillborn and miscarried children.

Francis celebrated All Souls' Day Mass at the Laurentino cemetery, on Rome's southern outskirts.

Ahead of the Mass, he stopped for a silent prayer at the graves of children who were never born, an area guarded by two marble statues of angels.

The pope laid a bouquet of white roses in front of the children's graves.

Francis previously made a stop there in November 2018, when he celebrated Mass at the Laurentino cemetery for the first time.

During Saturday's celebration, Francis chose to skip the homily

and remained in meditation.

The pontiff has often stressed that there are "no words" for the pain of parents who lose a child.

The "Garden of Angels" also hosts the graves of fetuses who died due to medical procedures, including abortion.

Francis has recently reaffirmed with strong words his traditional views on abortion.

Returning from a trip to Belgium in late September, he called doctors who perform abortions "hitmen."

Earlier in September, when asked about the upcoming U.S. election, Francis said voters should choose the "lesser evil" when picking between a candidate who wants to deport migrants and one who supports abortion rights — a reference to Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. (AP)

Spain's govt to send 10,000 soldiers, police to Valencia after deadly floods

MADRID, Nov 2: Spain is sending 5,000 more soldiers and 5,000 more police to the eastern region of Valencia after deadly floods this week that killed more than 200 people, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announced on Saturday.

So far, 205 bodies have been recovered — 202 in Valencia, two in neighbouring Castilla La Mancha and one in Andalusia, in the south — in Spain's deadliest natural disaster in living memory.

Rescuers were still searching for bodies in stranded cars and sodden buildings on Saturday, four days after the monstrous flash floods that swept away everything in their path in the east of Spain. An unknown number of people remain missing.

Thousands of volunteers are helping to clean up the thick mud that is covering everything in streets, houses and businesses in the hardest-hit towns. At present there are some 2,000 soldiers involved in the emergency work, as well as almost 2,500 Civil Guard gendarmes — who have carried out 4,500 rescues during the floods — and 1,800 national police officers. (AP)

Tropical Storm Lane develops over Pacific Ocean but remains far off Mexican coast

MIAMI, Nov 2: A tropical storm formed over the Pacific Ocean on early Saturday but remained far off the coast of Mexico.

Tropical Storm Lane was located about 1,525 miles (2,455 kilometers) west-southwest off the southern tip of the Baja California Peninsula, the National Hurricane Center in Miami reported in an advisory early Saturday.

The storm system had maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (65 kph) with higher gusts while moving west at 7 mph (11 kph), the weather center said, noting the movement is expected to continue for a few days.

"Small intensity fluctuations are possible today, but weakening is forecast on Sunday through early next week," the center reported. There were no immediate coastal watches or warnings in effect. (AP)

'It will not be conducted like census or electoral roll process'

ILP implementation in Dimapur under process: Rio

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Nov 2: Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio on Saturday said the implementation of inner line permit (ILP) in Dimapur district is under process.

Addressing the platinum jubilee celebration of the Naga Council Dimapur (NCD) at Dimapur district sports complex, Rio said those non-Nagas who settled in Dimapur before 1963, the cut-off year for permanent residency, would be given permanent resident status.

"We cannot dislocate and do injustice to any Indian citizen because we are under the Indian Union," he stressed, adding other communities should also be included in the state.

He reminded that when Nagaland attained statehood, not only the Naga tribes of Nagaland but also the Kukis, Kacharis, Garos and Karbis were declared tribes of the state.

He added that since they were declared tribes of the state, they will be known as non-Naga indigenous inhabitants of Nagaland.

Rio said the permanent residents, includ-



ing non-Naga permanent residents, will get the "privilege".

On the Register of Indigenous Inhabitant of Nagaland (RIIN), he said the government is yet to decide on it. He added it will be decided only after consultations with

tribal hohos (bodies) and civil society organisations of the state.

However, Rio said, it will not be conducted like census or electoral roll process, adding a village in Nagaland is the authority to decide who is indigenous and who is

non-indigenous.

On the Naga issue, Rio said it is lacking solution because "we are not united".

"It is high time that we unite. Our goal should be focused, or our attention should be one," he stressed.

Rio noted that everybody, including the Nagaland political groups, over ground people and state politicians, is calling for integration of all Naga tribes and other communities who had come here and made this place a home.

Saluting the NCD for its vision for unity and oneness, Rio said the organisation's past leaders had sown the seeds of unity, wisdom and togetherness.

"We should continue their vision," he said.

Rio congratulated the NCD for celebrating its 75th anniversary under the theme "celebrating Naga unity", he said it is a platform for unity and oneness.

In his presidential address, NCD president Etsungmomo Kithan said the NCD was formed to address the pressing need for unity of the Nagas and the diverse communities in Dimapur for peaceful coexistence.

BJP rule fuelling hatred and instability: Tripura Congress MLA

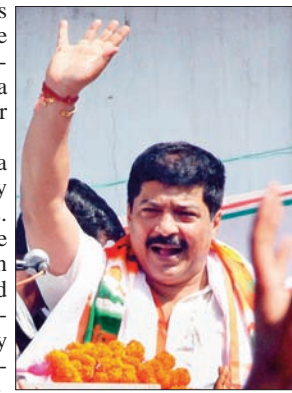
HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 2: Former Tripura minister and Congress MLA Sudip Roy Barman alleged on Saturday that since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) assumed power at the center and in Tripura, there has been a surge in fundamentalist forces fueling hatred and creating a tense environment.

Leading a "Sanhati Padyatra" (solidarity march) in Agartala, Roy Barman explained that the All India Congress Committee has decided to organize these marches from October 31, the anniversary of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination, until November 19, her birth anniversary.

"The primary objective is to spread a message of love, peace, and harmony across the nation," he told reporters. "Since the BJP's rise to power at both the state and central levels, there has been an increase in forces attempting to spread hatred and destabilize the social atmosphere. We stand by a philosophy of unity and compassion, as our leaders have consistently promoted a message of love. This is to prevent bloodshed and frustrate divisive attempts cloaked under cultural and political narratives."

Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee President Asish Kumar Saha also criticized the BJP-led government, condemning its approach as one that fosters division and unrest. "They have divided communities by spreading hatred in the name of Hindutva and pitting religions against each other. In response, the Congress has launched this Padyatra to foster love, unity, and peace," he added.



National Integration Tour flagged off from Manipur



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 2: A National Integration Tour (NIT), of 20 students including 14 girls and 6 boys accompanied with 2 teachers of Sacred Heart School, Yamthem in Imphal East district of Manipur has been flagged off by Maj Gen SS Kartikeya, SM, GOC, Red Shield Division, on Nov 2 2024 from Koirengai, Manipur. The students represent the villages of Andro, Yaripok, Yamthem, Changamdabi and Angtha. The GOC was accompanied with the Chairperson, Family Welfare Organisation, Red Shield Division. During the ceremony the GOC interacted with the students and asked them to draw maximum learning from the experience.

Under Operation Sadbhavana, the tour is scheduled to visit Delhi, Agra, and Lucknow, to foster national unity and promote cultural understanding. During the ten day tour, the students are scheduled to interact with the President of India and senior military dignitaries while experiencing the nation's rich cultural heritage and visiting significant historical and educational sites. The group is scheduled to return to Imphal on November 12.

The Indian Army continues to demonstrate its commitment to promoting national integration and empowering young minds through such multifaceted initiatives. This tour serves as a platform for students to engage with diverse cultures and strengthen their sense of belonging within the nation.

'Any policy decision to suit whims of certain group not acceptable'

SENAPATI, Nov 2: With regard to the recent "controversial" adoption and recommendation of Hill Areas Committee (HAC) to constitute an ad hoc committee to mend the functioning of Autonomous District Councils (ADC) in the hill areas pending its long overdue election, the All Naga Students' Association, Manipur (ANSAM) "puts straight forth" that the people will not accept any policy decision to suit the convenience and whims of the certain group who are in the helm without following the rules of laws.

The HAC's resolution, passed on October 14, intends the formation of a 20-member committee, with 18 members to be selected from former ADC members, local self-government experts, and eminent intellectuals, including two government nominees, the ANSAM mentioned in a press statement issued today.

The ANSAM then said it "strongly views such propositions" as an anathema to democratic principles and practices. The apex Naga student body also said the state government and HAC members are expected to strengthen the local democratic institution especially the hill areas, Autonomous District Council (ADC) which is governed by special provision, Article 371C and safeguarding the interest of the people they represent as the vanguards of hill areas by upholding the spirit and intent of the provision as enshrined in the constitution.

The statement then said, "It is pertinent to recall that the Naga people have outrightly rejected the controversial third (Manipur Hill Areas) District Councils Amendment Act, 2008, Sixth and Seventh (Manipur Hill Areas) District Councils Amendment Bill, 2022 which have heavily come down upon us, deceitfully passing the bill bypassing the HAC in the whims and desires of the state government without undergoing due process". It added, "Such an imposed nature has been going on time



and again in the pursuit of strengthening and upliftment of local political institutions-HAC, ADC in Manipur which is a sad reality that needs to be done away forthright".

Mention may be made that, ever since the expiry of the tenure of ADC on May 31, 2020, the government of Manipur has been announcing series of commitment to conduct the election of ADC including the last cabinet decision 13-06-2024 yet it never happens till today, depriving the rights of the people, the ANSAM pointed out. "Moreover, unfounded care-taker chairmen were in place for years and anti-tribal bills such as Sixth & Seventh (Manipur Hill Areas) District Councils Amendment Bill, 2022 were surreptitiously introduced and passed in the state assembly wherein rigidly rejected by all tribal apex bodies," it added.

The statement then said, "Now, the caretaker chairmanship has been struck down by the Gauhati High Court order dated 15-03-2024, WA.NO.353 of 2023, court order cancelling the system

of caretaker chairmanship with vide order No. TA-501/1/2022 e-TA & Hills, Government of Manipur". The statement further said, "In this denial of situation, the controversial move made by HAC to constitute an ad hoc committee is absurd and very unfortunate".

The statement then said that the ANSAM, as the collective conscience of the Naga students and youth, strongly opposed such an "unconstitutional resolution" and subsequent recommendation made by the HAC which will mark as one of the bad precedents in the history. "Therefore, the HAC and the authority in the helms of this present dispensation in the state of Manipur are requested to relook on the matter and take up immediate necessary actions in the right earnest, to empower its grassroots democracy, the hill areas (Autonomous District Council of Manipur) as per the spirit and intent of Article 371C and the presidential order, 1970 thereby ensures that the ADC is functional accordingly, as per the rule of law", the Naga student body added. (NNN)

Two Rohingyas nabbed in Tripura

AGARTALA, Nov 2: Two Rohingyas have been apprehended in Tripura's Gomati district for entering India without valid documents, a BSF official said on Saturday. The Rohingyas, who had come from Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, were nabbed in Korbook area of Gomati district on Friday.

"Acting on a tip-off, the BSF jawans nabbed the duo at Korbook bus stand. They were planning to return to Bangladesh. They are being interrogated for their motive behind entering India and will be handed over to the police after questioning," the BSF official added.

Both the apprehended Rohingyas are inmates of a refugee camp in Cox's Bazaar, and Indian currency, mobile phones and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) cards have been seized from their possession, he said. Meanwhile, BSF troops in Tripura foiled various trans-border smuggling attempts and seized contraband items worth ₹ 4.76 lakh on Friday, he said. The BSF said it has enhanced surveillance along the border to prevent trans-border crimes and infiltration.

Karbook sub-division shares a 49-km border with Bangladesh's Khagrachari and Rangamati districts and vigil along the international border has been tightened in view of the instability across the border, he added. (PTI)



Manipur: Sub-inspector shot dead by constable

IMPHAL, Nov 2: A sub-inspector of police was shot dead allegedly by a constable with his service rifle in Manipur's Jiribam district on Saturday, an officer said.

Sub-inspector Shah Jahan was shot dead from point blank range allegedly by constable Bikramjit in the Mongbung area of the district and an investigation is on, the officer said.

Preliminary reports said that Shah Jahan had a verbal altercation with Bikramjit on Saturday.

The constable has been arrested, the officer added. (PTI)

NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from
Mohammed Jakir
Ahmed to Jakir
Ahmed swearing a notarial affidavit at Sankardevnagar Hojai (Assam)

NOTICE

Applications are invited from qualified and experienced persons and institutions of repute situated within the State having persons possessing qualifications and experiences as set out in Schedule Annexed to Sub-Rule-1 of Rule 2A of Assam Factories Rule 1950(as amended) for recognition of a few Competent Persons, within such areas and for such period as may be specified for the purpose of carrying out tests, examinations, inspections and certification for such building, dangerous machinery, hoists and lifts, lifting machines and lifting tackles, pressure plants, confined space, ventilation systems and such other process or plant and equipment as stipulated in the Act & the Rules made there under located in a factory. Prescribed application form with terms and conditions alongwith schedule under the Act & Rules can be obtained from the office of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Assam, NPS International School Lane, Betkuchi, Lohra, Guwahati-40 on any working days and also can be downloaded from our website www.ciflabour.assam.gov.in. The last date of receipt of duly filled in application form is 20 (twenty) days from the date of publication of this notice.

Janasanyog /D/8221/24/3-Nov-24

Sd/-
Chief Inspector of Factories,
Assam, Guwahati-40.

Two women held for defrauding people in Dimapur

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Nov 2: Two women were arrested by Dimapur police for defrauding several people in the name of giving out loans after securing some security amount from them for the same.

Dimapur police PRO and deputy commissioner of police (crime), in a release, on Saturday said the duo - Sungty Tungoe @ Awala and Chipeno Murry - were summoned for enquiry and to ascertain the facts following reports on various social media and local news channels about the fraudulent case.

The release said it was admitted by the two during the course of enquiry that they had given out loans to several individuals in

lieu of a certain security amount and had executed deed of agreement on government stamp papers in the name of four unregistered societies - Limuqho Society, Royal Society, Niquomi Society and Rural Society - which did not exist.

On further enquiry, the police ascertained that they had fraudulently executed the deed of agreement and several victims were yet to receive the loan amount after depositing the security amount. A case has been registered and the two arrested are under police custody for further investigation, the release added.

The Dimapur police appealed to the victim(s) of the scam to come forward and report at West police station, Dimapur.

Assam and Manipur Governor meets VCs of Universities in Manipur

Assures all help in total implementation of NEP 2020



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 2: Assam and Manipur Governor Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya met the Vice Chancellors and Registrars of Central and State universities and discussed in details about the status of full implementation of New Education Policy (NEP) in Manipur at a

meeting held at Raj Bhavan in Imphal, on Saturday.

In the meeting the Governor besides taking stock of the implementation of NEP 2020 in Manipur, said that the VCs should act as a catalyst in implementing NEP fully to make education more experimental, holistic, integrated, inquiry

driven, flexible and of course enjoyable. Governor Shri Acharya also enquired about the issues pertaining to the strength of teaching and non-teaching staff and other developmental matters related to the institutions of higher education. He also took a presentation on the status of NEP implementation in the universities. Shri Acharya asked the VCs to go sincerely for the total implementation of the NEP 2020 and assured all help and cooperation to address any issue with regard to NEP implementation and overall development of higher education in Manipur.

Vice chancellor of Manipur University, N Lokendra Singh, vice chancellor of Dhanamanjuri University and Manipur Technical University, H Gyan Prakash and vice chancellor of Manipur University of Culture, Paonam Gunindro Singh were present in the meeting.

Government of Assam
Office of the District Adult Education Officer,
Karbi Anglong, Diphu.

No. DAE/KA/Advertisement/2024-25/137 Dated: 02-11-2024

NOTICE FOR WRITTEN TEST

It is for information of all candidates who have applied for the posts of Supervisor under Adult Education Department, Karbi Anglong, Diphu that the date of written test examination is fixed.

All candidates are requested to collect their calling letter from the office of the undersigned during office working hours. No separate calling letter from postal communication will be intimated.

Date of written test	Venue	Time
15-11-2024	Govt. Girls' Higher Secondary School, Diphu	From 10.00 am to 1.00 pm

Further, I am to inform that while scrutiny of documents, some documents are found incomplete. Therefore, in the light of the Terms and Condition of Advertisement Notice No. No. 68 Dated 02-July-2024 of Sl. No. 03, these incomplete applications of candidature stand canceled. The names of candidates where application are rejected are hung in the Office Notice board of the undersigned.

Sd/-
I/C., District Adult Education Officer,
Karbi Anglong, Diphu.

Memo No. DAE/KA/Advertisement/2024-25/137-A Dated: 02-11-2024

Stand for credibility of promises under PM Modi: BJP

India is now third in auto manufacturing and second in mobile phones manufacturing

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: The BJP on Saturday asserted that it stood for credibility of promises made to people under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and the Congress for crisis of credibility, as the ruling party fired a fresh salvo at its rival in a war of words between them over unkept poll pledges.

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi told reporters that the ruling party had gradually stepped up the scope of its welfare schemes, ranging from health insurance to free grains and cash transfer for farmers, by resorting to first creation of wealth followed by its distribution as the size of the Indian economy grew over the past decade.

"We believe in first the creation of wealth and distribution. The Congress stands for creation of corruption and destruction of wealth," he said, citing a host of alleged unfulfilled promises of Congress-led governments in different states.

A day after Mallikarjun Kharge claimed that "Modi ki guarantee" was a cruel joke on people after the prime minister had seized on the Congress president's advice to his state colleagues that they should be guided by budgetary constraints in making poll announcements, the BJP made a fresh charge.

'Modi's promise to revive Bihar sugar mills not met'

PATNA, Nov 2: RJD MP Misa Bharti on Saturday made a tongue-in-cheek remark on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "unfulfilled" promise of enjoying tea sweetened with sugar produced in mills of Bihar, which have been lying moribund for decades.

Bharti, who is the eldest daughter of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, claimed that the state's sugar industry has "not been revived so far" and wondered whether the PM has given up on his promise because of "diabetes".

"The PM is enjoying his third consecutive term in office and has not fulfilled any of the promises he made before the ascent to power," alleged the Pataliputra MP.

She added, "Hailing from Bihar, I remember the rhetorical flourish with which he had told the state's people that sugar mills of Bihar will be revived and he will himself savour tea sweetened with the produce. Why did he not fulfil his own promise? Has he developed diabetes?"

Responding to queries from journalists, she also termed "One nation one poll" as a "shigoo" (gimmick) of the Modi government and said, "They are not able to hold polls to four states together. What to speak of the entire country". The allusion was to assembly polls for Maharashtra and Jharkhand taking place about a month after elections were held in

'Batenge toh katenge' a symbolic of BJP's failure: Akhilesh

LUCKNOW, Nov 2: In an apparent reference to Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath's "batenge toh katenge" remark, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday said this "negative" slogan is symbolic of the BJP's "disappointment and failure".

He also claimed this slogan will be recorded in the country's history as the "worst slogan" and will lead to the BJP's political downfall.

Reacting to Yadav's comments, deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya termed the Samajwadi Party chief's coinage "PDA" as "Parivaar Development Agency".

By PDA, Yadav means "Pichhade (backward classes), Dalit and Alpsankhyak (minorities)".

In a post on X in Hindi, Yadav wrote, "Their negative slogan is a symbol of their disappointment and failure. This slogan has proved that the 10 per cent of the voters who are with them are on the verge of leaving. That is why they are trying to unite them by scaring them, but nothing is going to happen."

He also said negative slogans have an impact and after this "disappointing slogan", their remaining supporters are even more disappointed thinking those whom they considered powerful are talking about weakness even while being in power. "The 'ideal state' that is imagined in our country has 'abhay' (fearlessness) at its base; not 'bhay' (fear). It is true that only the 'fearful' sell 'fear' because whoever has something, he will sell that only," Yadav said.

He also advised that the BJP, in the interest of the country and the



Was Kharge speaking the truth on Friday or a day before, Trivedi said mockingly, suggesting that the Congress president's attack on the BJP was made under pressure to cover up for what he had said earlier.

Trivedi cited the construction of the Ram temple, abolition of Article 370, construction of more than 14 crore houses for the poor, opening of over 51 crore Jan Dhan accounts, and India's tough stand against Pakistan on terrorism under Modi to assert that his government had walked the talk.

As a veteran Congress member who has served in senior positions, Kharge has seen leaders such as PV Narasimha Rao and Pranab

Mukherjee, who deftly handled the economy under difficult circumstances, and is now seeing the party under the grip of urban Naxals due to Rahul Gandhi's influence, Trivedi said.

Rebutting Kharge's charges on a host of issues, Trivedi said EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) data suggested that its account holders had grown to 25 crore compared to 11 crore a decade ago.

He also cited a host of infrastructure work, including the construction of houses for the poor, 74 airports and 37 kilometres of road per day, and asserted that all these activities had led to a lot of employment. India is now third in

auto manufacturing and second in mobile phones manufacturing and if anyone still cannot see the country's development, then there is some serious weakness in their sight and mindset, the BJP spokesperson said.

When the BJP was in power in Karnataka, it was the top state in attracting investment while Maharashtra under the Congress-led alliance's rule had slipped, he said, adding that the situation was reversed after the BJP came to power in the western state while losing to the Congress in the southern state.

"The brains of some parties are so empty that they end up emptying the treasury when in power," he said.

The Congress, Trivedi alleged, had lost the ability to govern, noting that its promise to provide one woman in every household ₹ 1 lakh annually would have cost the country ₹ 31 lakh crore even though its entire budget was only about ₹ 27 lakh crore.

It was like a Ponzi scheme promise and could be part of a well thought-out conspiracy as the Congress believes in triggering chaos, he said.

Citing the welcome Modi received recently in the US, Russia and Ukraine from their top leaders, the BJP spokesperson said it was a testimony to the prime minister's

standing.

Any attempt to belittle him will have no impact on his popularity, reputation and image, he added.

To a question, he refuted opposition MP Asaduddin Owaisi's claim on Waqf boards, saying these were not religious bodies but constituted for land management.

The recent remarks of National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah suggest that he has realised after coming to power the need to deal with anti-national forces, Trivedi said, expressing hope that the Jammu and Kashmir government under his son and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah would cooperate with the Centre to curb terrorism.

Modi said on Friday that the Conference stood "badly exposed" in front of the people for promising them what the party knew it would never be able to deliver.

The prime minister launched a fierce attack on the opposition party as he seized on Kharge's comments that the Congress's state units should make promises that were properly budgeted.

Hitting back, Congress president Kharge had said the BJP stood for "betrayal" and "jumla", alleging that lies, deceit, fakery, loot and publicity were the five adjectives that best described the Modi government. (PTI)

Request PM, Shah with folded hands to clear Jharkhand's ₹ 1.36 lakh crore coal dues: Hemant

RANCHI, Nov 2: Ahead of the scheduled visits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to poll-bound Jharkhand, Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Saturday requested the Centre with folded hands to clear ₹ 1.36 lakh-crore coal dues to the state.

Modi is scheduled to address two rallies in Jharkhand on November 4 while Shah will address three public meetings on Sunday.

"The PM and the home minister are coming to Jharkhand. I once again request them with folded hands to clear the outstanding (coal dues) of ₹ 1.36 lakh crore to Jharkhand. This amount is crucial for Jharkhand," Soren posted on X.

He also appealed to BJP MPs to facilitate clearance of the amount. "I would also appeal to my BJP colleagues, especially the MPs, to help Jharkhandis in getting our dues," Soren posted on the microblogging site, sharing a copy of a letter to the prime minister.

Soren emphasised that the dues with central PSUs, like Coal India, are "rightful" to the state and claimed that "non-clearance is causing irreparable harm to Jharkhand's development".

"I, Hemant Soren, the chief minister of Jharkhand, am drawing your attention towards a serious issue which is creating obstacles in the path of the state's development. Our dues from coal companies stand at ₹ 1.36 lakh crore," Soren wrote in the letter to the PM.

"In spite of provisions in the law and judicial pronouncements, coal companies are not making any payment... These questions have been raised at various forums, including your kind office, the Finance Ministry and NITI Aayog. But till now this compensation (₹ 1.36 lakh crore) has not yet been paid," he said.

A recent ruling by a nine-judge Supreme Court bench affirmed the state's right to collect its mining and royalty dues.

Soren pointed out that the development of Jharkhand and essential socio-economic projects are getting hampered owing to the non-clearance of dues.

"Jharkhand is an under-developed state and there are lots of social economic development projects which are getting hampered due to non-payment of our justifiable demands," Soren wrote.

Last month, he suggested a direct debit from Coal India's account to the state, similar to the arrangement made for Jharkhand State Electricity Board dues to the DVC.

"This delay in payment of the just demand raised by the state has

constrained me to write to you that this negligence is causing irreparable damage to Jharkhand and its people. Various social sector schemes in education, health, women & child development, clean drinking water and last mile connectivity are unable to be translated on the ground because of lack of funds," Soren said.

Earlier, he accused the central government of indifference to the state's plight, highlighting the disparity in treatment regarding dues.

"If state-run power companies delay payments, we face 12 per cent interest and direct debits, yet coal companies' dues remain unpaid," he had remarked.

The difference in policy between dues which are "payable to us" and dues that are "payable to us" shows a "dichotomy and is arbitrary, to say the least, which puts the state in a very disadvantaged position", he had claimed.

He stressed that the people of Jharkhand "want justice, not privileges".

"The people of Jharkhand have fought a long struggle for their state, and now we want proper use of our resources and rights. We will use our outstanding amount of ₹ 1.36 lakh crore to take Jharkhand on a new path of development - a development that protects the interests of our environment, tribals and every Jharkhandi community," he said.

Soren also said the funds will be utilised for improving education and health services so that children have a bright future.

"We will better protect our language and culture so that our identity remains intact... The central government should take a decision on our rights and our money soon and should not become an obstacle in the development of Jharkhand but should become a partner," the CM said.

Earlier the ruling JMM had put up massive billboards in Ranchi last month demanding payment of ₹ 1.36 lakh crore allegedly due to the state in the form of coal royalties.

The hoardings came up barely a fortnight after Soren shot off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi making the same demand.

The huge hoardings displayed at prominent locations in the city questioned: When will we get ₹ 1.36 lakh crore dues for the development of Jharkhand's displaced, Dalits, minorities, farmers, youth, tribals, poor, children and women?

The Jharkhand assembly polls will be held in two phases - November 13 and 20.

The counting of votes will take place on November 23. (PTI)

Yet to receive proposal for re-appointment of civil defence volunteers: Delhi LG

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena on Saturday wrote to chief minister Atishi saying he is yet to receive any proposal for the re-appointment of civil defence volunteers (CDVs) who were removed as bus marshals last year.

Around 10,000 CDVs working as marshals in public transport buses in Delhi were removed from their jobs in November last year after objections were raised by the revenue and finance departments.

"Of course, you and your party leaders may continue to do the politics of taking credit for their reinstatement but any more delay in the welfare of these economically weaker and helpless people, is not right in any way," Saxena stated in the letter.

In a post on X, the Raj Niwas said the LG has again written to the chief minister underlining the non-engagement of CDVs till now and has asked her for their immediate re-appointment.

The LG has also asked for a concrete scheme to be formulated by the government for their immediate as well as long-term engagement, it said.

Saxena in his letter to Atishi accused that leaders of her Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) engaged in "undesirable politics" over the issue, yet "unfortunately he has not received any proposal from her so far".

Citing his earlier communication to the chief minister on October 24, Saxena said he had directed to ensure the re-appointment of the CDVs from November 1 and had sought a comprehensive proposal for their long-term engagement.

INDIA bloc for 'friendly battle' on three assembly seats

RANCHI, Nov 2: The INDIA bloc partners in Jharkhand are set for a "friendly battle" in three assembly seats in the upcoming assembly polls, bloc leaders said on Saturday.

JMM and CPI-ML have already decided to go for a friendly fight in Dhanwar Assembly seat, while Congress and RJD are still trying to avoid a friendly contest in Chhattarpur and Bishrampur seats, they said at a joint press conference here. The elections to the 81-member Jharkhand Assembly will take place in two phases on November 13 and 20, with counting of votes to take place on November 23.

As many as 1,211 candidates are in the fray for the 81 assembly seats after completion of nomination withdrawal exercises for both phases of the election. The JMM has fielded candidates in 43 Assembly seats, Congress in 30 seats, RJD from six and CPI-ML in four seats. "JMM, Congress, RJD and CPI-ML are

jointly contesting the Jharkhand polls under INDIA bloc. Excluding three seats — Chhattarpur, Bishrampur and Dhanwar —, seat-sharing arrangements have been settled for all the constituencies in the alliance. The JMM has decided to go for a friendly contest with CPI-ML in Dhanwar seat," JMM general secretary Vinod Pandey told reporters.

RJD and Congress have fielded their candidates from Chhattarpur and Bishrampur seats. "Discussions are still going on to sort out the issue on both the seats. We hope to see a result in a day or two," Pandey said.

Pandey said that RJD was given six seats, while CPI-ML three seats under the INDIA bloc.

Jharkhand Congress president Keshav Mahto Kamlesh said that they would contest the polls jointly and form the government of India bloc again. (PTI)

Kejriwal promises to waive inflated water, electricity bills

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: The AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal Saturday promised to waive inflated bills for water and electricity if he comes to power again following next year's Delhi assembly elections.

Taking part in an event on the occasion of Vishwakarma Day at Transport Nagar here, he said, "I am not a politician like leaders from other parties. For the past 10 years, I have worked for the development of the people. I have been educated by the institute of the country, so I know how to work."

He said that when he was in jail in connection with a case related to the Delhi liquor policy scam case, the lieutenant governor was running the city government and people got inflated water and electricity bills.

"Do not worry. Now I am out and your bills will be waived when the AAP comes into power in February," Kejriwal said. (PTI)

Revanth Reddy rebuts PM Modi's remark Cong govt ended 'darkness' in 11 months of rule in T'gana: CM

HYDERABAD, Nov 2: During the last 11 months, the Congress government in Telangana has reversed an air of gloom and despair under the previous BRS regime and ended the "darkness", chief minister A Revanth Reddy said on Saturday.

He was responding to a post by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that under Congress rule development trajectory and fiscal health is turning from bad to worse in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana. "I am happy to clarify several misconceptions and factual errors in your statements about my state and our government," Reddy said in his post.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday in a series of posts said the Congress stands "badly exposed" in front of people for promising to them what the party knows it will never be able to deliver.

"Every promise made by us to



people is a sacred commitment for us. In the last 11 months, we have reversed an air of gloom & despair under BRS, and ended the darkness. Like a morning sun, Telangana is now Rising," Reddy said in the post addressed to Modi.

Within two days of taking charge, the Telangana government

fulfilled its first and second promise - free bus travel for women across all government buses, and a healthcare and hospitalisation cover of 10 lakhs under Rajiv Aarogya, the CM pointed out.

Even before completion of first year of rule, the Congress government has implemented India's

K'taka deputy CM highlights state's 10.2 per cent GDP growth

BENGALURU, Nov 2: Karnataka deputy chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for criticising Congress over poll promises, citing data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

He said that the state's GDP growth for 2023-24 is 10.2 per cent, surpassing the national average of 8.2 per cent.

In a post on 'X', Modi on Friday said that in Karnataka, Congress is more focused on intra-party politics and "loot" than delivering on development, even planning to roll back existing schemes.

Sharing Modi's post, Shivakumar responded, citing MoSPI data: "Karnataka's GSDP growth for 2023-24 is 10.2 per cent, surpassing the national average of 8.2 per cent."

"These are facts, backed by figures, supported by credible sources. The question is: do these facts even reach the Union government, or do they miss those who formulate tweets for the highest offices at the Centre?" he posted on 'X'.

Meanwhile, information technology minister Priyank Kharge also criticised PM Modi, alleging he was "ill-informed" and relying on briefings from his social media team rather than the finance minister.

Kharge noted that the National Statistical Estimates had initially projected Karnataka's growth at 4 per cent, later revised to 13.1 per cent.

"Despite providing guarantees and facing severe drought, we've managed to grow exponentially," he told reporters here. (PTI)

largest ever, state-level farmer loan waiver of ₹ 18,000 crore covering over 22 lakh farmers, he said responding to PM's comments that in Telangana, farmers are awaiting the (loan) waiver they were promised.

Women get free electricity, with no domestic power charge for their homes up to 200 units, Reddy noted.

The CM also claimed that his government has held the largest recruitment drive and is regularly holding exams of all levels and provided jobs to over 50,000 eligible youth, a record "unmatched by any BJP state government."

The CM said the government is rejuvenating River Musi, which was allegedly neglected by the previous government and protecting lakes and other precious water bodies, encroached upon and destroyed wantonly with abandon in the last 10 years. (PTI)

Party leaders pay rich tributes

BJP holds prayer meeting for Devender Rana

JAMMU, Nov 2: The BJP on Saturday held a special prayer meeting at its party headquarters here for its legislator Devender Singh Rana who passed away on Diwali night.

The 'shradhanjali sabha' (tribute meeting) was attended by J-K BJP president Ravinder Raina, working president Sat Sharma, parliamentarians, office bearers, and recently elected members of legislative assembly, a party spokesperson said.

"Rana always played clear-headed politics with ethics beyond political barriers," Raina said, fondly speaking of the businessman-turned-politician who had retained the Nagrota assembly segment in the recently concluded elections by a highest margin of over 30,000 votes.

The J-K BJP chief said Rana's passing was a great loss for both the party and the union territory.



He exhorted the party workers and leaders to follow Rana's footsteps and learn the art of friendship and make relations with everyone, whether friend or foe.

A prominent entrepreneur and

influential politician often described as the "voice of Jammu", Rana died at a hospital in Haryana's Faridabad on Thursday night after a brief illness. He was 59.

Political leaders cutting across party lines were among the hundreds of mourners who on Friday gathered here to bid farewell to the BJP MLA.

At BJP's prayer meeting today, MP Jugal praised Rana for his proactive work despite his ill health.

"With his sheer dedication, Rana made a special niche in the hearts of party workers and common people," he said.

Rajya Sabha member Ghulam Ali Khatana said, "We have lost a 'friend of all'," and prayed for strength to the family members of the departed soul.

Former minister and MLA Sham Lal Sharma referred to his long association of more than 40 years with Rana and said he was not just a political leader but a social figure, who had gained the faith of people irrespective of their region,

religion, or gender.

"Such people are very rarely seen in the political field and Rana reached the highest position as a politician by his hard work and pain for the welfare of the masses," Sharma said adding in his demise, he has suffered a personal loss.

Former deputy chief minister Kavinder Gupta said even when Rana was a member of National Conference, he remained available to members of other parties and readily extended the best possible help.

After joining the BJP in 2021, he made a good impression on his party colleagues through his work and prompt delivery, Gupta said.

Former minister Surjit Singh Salathia, who joined BJP along with Rana, said he was popular in both political and business circles and often went out of way to help people. (PTI)

Top LeT commander killed in Srinagar encounter



SRINAGAR, Nov 2: A top Pakistani commander of the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) who was active in the Valley for several years was killed and four security personnel were injured in an encounter in the Khanyar area here on Saturday, officials said.

Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in the densely populated locality of Khanyar in the interior city following inputs about the presence of terrorists in the area. The search operation turned into an encounter as the terrorists opened fire at the search party, which retreated, a police official said.

During the operation, a fire broke out in the house where the terrorists were holed up and thick grey smoke was seen billowing into the sky.

One terrorist has been gunned down in the ongoing encounter, the officials said.

Two Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans and two policemen were injured in the encounter. They were taken to the Army's 92 Base Hospital and their condition is stated to be stable, the officials said.

A senior police officer told PTI that the slain terrorist was a Pakistani and belonged to the LeT.

"He has been identified as Usman. He was the senior-most Pakistani LeT commander here," he said.

Usman had been active in the Valley for a very long time and was involved in several attacks. His killing is a "major blow" to the LeT in Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

"Usman was also involved in the killing of Inspector Masroor Wani," the officer said.

Wani was shot dead from close range while he was playing cricket in the Eidgah ground here in October 2023.

"Usman was also the right hand of Sajad Gul, the TRF commander based in Pakistan," the officer said.

The Resistance Front (TRF) is believed to be a shadow outfit of the LeT.

In another ongoing operation, two terrorists were gunned down by the security forces near Halkan Gali in the Shangus-Larnoo area in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir, according to officials. (PTI)

Biggest and 'most complete' dinosaur skeleton to go on sale on November 16

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: The stage is set for "Vulcain", one of the biggest dinosaurs that roamed the earth 150 million years ago, to go under the hammer on November 16 in Paris.

French auction houses Collin du Bocage and Barbarossa have announced that the "most complete" and largest dino skeleton to be auctioned has already crossed its original estimates to USD 11- USD 22 million (approx ₹ 92-185 crore) since pre-registration bidding opened in July. The majestic Apatosaurus skeleton was discovered in Wyoming in the US in 2018 and measures 20.50 metres with approximately 80 per cent of bones belonging to the same dinosaur - making it the most complete dinosaur skeleton to be discovered.

"Vulcain is the largest and most complete dinosaur that stands above them all. It is the ancient find of a lifetime," Olivier Collin du Bocage, founder and auctioneer of Collin du Bocage, said in a statement.

With the market for dinosaur skeleton continuing to surge since the sale of T-Rex "Sue" in 1997 for USD 8.4 million and the record sale of "Apex" Stegosaurus for USD 44.6 million dollars earlier this year, the sale of "Vulcain" is expected to be one for the record books. The purchaser will be given the GPS point and excavation plan together with an osteological map and the rights to officially re-name the dinosaur as well as copyrights of the specimen.

"Vulcain", one of the most complete sauropod fossils from the Late Jurassic Morrison Formation, has been studied by renowned paleon-



toLOGY experts, including Christian Foth from the University of Rostock in Germany who recently uncovered the specimen to be a new dinosaur species.

According to their analysis, the "Vulcain" dinosaur shares features common to both Apatosaurus and Brontosaurus, but matches more closely with Apatosaurus ajax while sharing characteristics with Apatosaurus louisae, another recognised species of Apatosaurus.

Thus, this unique mix of characteristics suggests it could represent an intermediate species between Apatosaurus ajax and Apatosaurus louisae. Based on materials and deposits found in the fossiliferous soil layer, it was classified as an herbivore.

In comparison with the Apatosaurus specimen on display at the Natural History Museum in New York, which is made up of the skeletons of three different individual dinosaurs, Vulcain is 80 per cent a complete dinosaur and also possesses a part of its skull and gastralia (floating bones) which are rare elements absent from most of

the specimens found.

"Already in the field we could see that it was impressive, a sort of giant Mikado. We were very impressed, because not only is the apatosaurus much rarer than the diplodocus, but we could also see that it was an exceptional specimen," said Pascal Godefroit, palaeontology at Belgium's Royal Institute of Natural Sciences.

Godefroit had witnessed the discovery of Vulcain as his team was working on the same site, excavating a Diplodocus.

These findings, along with the palaeontology community and scientists at fossil fairs and the art and auction world all abuzz about the rise of dinosaur specimens, has raised greater interest and speculation surrounding where "Vulcain" will go home to after going under the gavel on November 16.

The giant American dinosaur has been on display at the Château de Dampierre-en-Yvelines outside Paris and has received a record number of more than 40,000 visitors to date since the exhibition opened in July. (PTI)

Cong's Tagore questions logic behind decision to hike prices of 8 essential drugs

LETTER TO PM



NEW DELHI, Nov 2: Congress MP Manickam Tagore has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, expressing concern over the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority's recent decision to increase prices of eight commonly-used drugs and sought the establishment of an independent review committee to assess the real impact of the price hike.

In the letter, Tagore said he was writing to express his concern regarding the recent decision by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) to increase the ceiling prices of eight commonly-used drugs by 50 per cent.

"While I understand that the government cited 'extraordinary circumstances' and 'public interest' as reasons for this increase, I believe it is crucial to clarify the rationale behind such a significant decision," the Congress MP from Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar said.

"This price hike affects vital medications for conditions like asthma, tuberculosis, bipolar disorder, and glaucoma, which are essential for millions of citizens," Tagore said.

Many patients and their families already face financial challenges in

accessing necessary treatments, he said.

A sudden increase in medicine prices can place an additional burden on these individuals, potentially compromising their health outcomes, Tagore said.

"I urge the government to provide a more detailed explanation of the extraordinary circumstances that necessitated this price hike. Furthermore, I propose the establishment of an independent review committee to assess the real impact of this increase on patients and healthcare providers," he said in the letter dated October 25.

Such a committee could offer recommendations for future pricing policies that balance industry viability with public health needs, he said.

"Transparency in this decision-making process is vital to maintaining public trust. A thorough review could lead to informed policies ensuring that essential medicines remain affordable and accessible for all," Tagore asserted.

"I look forward to your response and hope for a resolution that prioritises the wellbeing of our citizens," the Congress leader said. (PTI)

Jaishankar to visit Australia, Singapore from Nov 3-8

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will visit Australia and Singapore from November 3 to 8 during which he will meet leaders of the two countries and address the 8th Roundtable of ASEAN, an official statement said on Saturday. Jaishankar will co-chair the 15th Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue (FMFD) with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong in Canberra, the statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

"EAM will deliver the keynote address at the inaugural session of the 2nd Raisina Down Under to be held in the Australian Parliament House. EAM is also scheduled to have interactions with Australian leadership, parliamentarians, members of the Indian diaspora, business community, media and think tanks," it said. Dur-

ing the visit, Jaishankar will travel to Brisbane and inaugurate India's fourth consulate in Australia, it added. At the second India-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue held in Delhi in November last year, both sides had welcomed the positive and increased momentum of the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) that helps support the security and prosperity of the region. On the second leg of the visit, Jaishankar will travel to Singapore on November 8, the statement said.

During his visit, the minister will address the 8th Roundtable of ASEAN - India Network of Think Tanks. He will also meet the leadership of Singapore to review the close partnership between the two countries and explore avenues to further enhance the bilateral relationship, it said. (PTI)

Anti-Sikh riot survivors recount horror on 40th anniversary



NEW DELHI, Nov 2: Sonia was three years old when her parents and uncles were killed during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi.

Her sister, who was 13 at the time, later told Sonia about the violence and killings of people from the Sikh community following former prime minister Indira Gandhi's assassination, she said in Delhi on Saturday at a press conference commemorating the 40th anniversary of the riots.

"I was three years old... My sister told me about the incident and how my father and uncles were killed," she said.

With tears in her eyes, she described how her sister took care of her in her parents' absence. Sonia now works with an NGO and has two children.

Gandhi was assassinated at her home on October 31, 1984, by her two bodyguards Beant Singh and Satwant Singh.

During the press conference, senior advocate HS Phoolka said he and his team were releasing a series of 20 documentary videos titled "1984 Genocide Unending Quest for Justice" on the riots' 40th anniversary.

The documentary videos follow survivors of the riots who narrate their experience of that time, Phoolka said.

Twelve videos were released on

Saturday. The rest will be released in Chandigarh on November 9.

"The events of 1984 marked not only the murder of countless citizens but also the death of justice itself," Phoolka said.

The entire legal system collapsed and the "blindfolded" Lady Justice reflected the blindness of judges who failed to see the atrocities occurring around them, he alleged.

"It wasn't until 2017 that the Supreme Court began to take an active interest in punishing the perpetrators of this genocide. Justice Dipak Misra established a new special investigation team to re-open cases, signalling a long-overdue commitment to seeking justice for the victims," the senior advocate added.

Darshan Kaur, who was nursing an infant son and two toddlers at the time of the riots, recounted the day her life changed forever.

A mob descended on her home and, despite her repeated pleas, she watched helplessly as her loved ones were attacked.

"We had no television, no warning. The next day (November 1, 1984), when we learned of Gandhi's death, chaos erupted. They (mob) came, threw bottles filled with chemicals at our home, and my husband was taken from me," she said. (PTI)

Verification patrolling begins in Depsang: MEA

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: The Indian Army has commenced verification patrolling at Depsang, the second friction point in eastern Ladakh, the government said on Saturday.

Patrolling at Demchok had begun on Friday, a day after the Indian and Chinese troops completed disengagement at the two friction points in eastern Ladakh.

Replying to a query at a weekly press briefing, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said following the disengagement agreement with China, the verification patrolling has begun on mutually agreed terms in both Demchok and Depsang.

On Thursday, Indian and Chinese troops also exchanged sweets at several border points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on the occasion of Diwali.

The traditional practice was observed a day after both countries completed troop disengagement at the two friction points, bringing a fresh thaw in Sino-Indian ties.

Sources had earlier said that the areas and patrolling status were expected to be moved back to pre-April 2020 level.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Octo-



ber 21 said in Delhi that an agreement was finalised between India and China following negotiations over the past several weeks and that it would lead to a resolution of the issues that arose in 2020.

The agreement was firming up on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, a breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff.

The move marked a significant development in the pursuit of reduced tension along the LAC in eastern Ladakh since the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. (PTI)

Windy air quality improves to 'poor' in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: Delhi's air quality improved to 'poor' on Saturday as surface winds helped disperse pollutants.

According to the Sameer app that provides hourly updates of the national Air Quality Index (AQI) published by the Central Pollution Control Board, the national capital's AQI was at 290 compared to 362 early on Friday.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', 401 and 450 'severe' and above 450 'severe plus'.

On Saturday, the national capital's minimum temperature was recorded two notches above normal at 17.1 degrees Celsius.

At 8:30 am, the humidity was at 88 per cent. (PTI)

Classmates of slain Army officer send Diwali sweets for unit jawans

MUMBAI, Nov 2: Classmates of an Army officer from Maharashtra, who laid down his life battling militants near the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, have sent 300 kg sweets to soldiers in his unit.

Col Santosh Mahadik, the Commanding Officer of 41 Rashtriya Rifles, was critically injured during the operation in the Haji Naka forest area of Kupwara in November 2015 and succumbed to his injuries at a hospital later.

The "mithai" boxes, weighing 300 kg, landed at Kupwara airport from Chandigarh in an Air Force transport aircraft and were delivered to personnel of the 41 Rashtriya Rifles, for distribution among the soldiers the martyr once commanded, a classmate of Col Mahadik, involved in this initia-



tive, told PTI.

Col Mahadik was an alumnus of Sainik School, Satara in Maharashtra.

"Like we do every Diwali, this time also we thought of his comrades in arms, who suffer harsh

climates and the enemy from across the border. We thought this would be a nice gesture for soldiers, who spend Diwali away from their families," he said.

An officer from the elite 21 Para-Special Forces unit, Col Ma-

hadik was awarded a Sena Medal for gallantry during Operation Rhino in the North-East in 2003.

An ace football goalkeeper, a skilled horse-rider and a tough boxer, Col Mahadik was an all-rounder, his friends recalled.

Despite the inhospitable terrain that made the Kupwara operation immensely challenging, the colonel particularly chose to lead his unit.

Col Mahadik's classmates, who include several serving and retired officers from the armed forces, have launched the initiative which they call 'Operation Diwali'.

The sweets reached Kupwara on Friday and will be taken to the border posts where they will be distributed among the soldiers, a classmate of Col Mahadik said. (PTI)

Fashion industry, Bollywood stars Priyanka C Jonas, Sushmita Sen mourn Rohit Bal's death

MUMBAI, Nov 2: Noted Indian fashion designers, including Sabyasachi Mukherjee, JJ Valaya and Gaurav Gupta, as well as Bollywood celebrities like Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Sushmita Sen have condoled the death of renowned designer Rohit Bal. Bal, one of India's most celebrated fashion designers, died on Friday at a South Delhi hospital following a heart attack at the age of 63.

Sabyasachi, one of the most influential designers in India, expressed admiration for Bal, and said, "Rest in Peace Rohit Bal. You were much loved and admired by all of us at Sabyasachi."

Designer JJ Valaya bid adieu to his friend and said on Instagram, "Goodbye my friend..."

Gupta posted a picture with Bal and wrote, "Forever Gudda."

Bal was fondly called Gudda by his friends and contemporaries as well as many top stars in Bollywood.

Designers Rahul Mishra and Bibhu Mohapatra praised Bal as a mentor and legendary figure, saying his "magic will live forever". "A great mentor and a beautiful human. Gone too soon," Mishra said.

Masaba Gupta wrote, "RIP 1961 to 2024." Designer Shane Peacock of label Falguni Shane Peacock wrote "RIP RohitBal."

Sen, a prominent figure in the entertainment world, shared a touching tribute that highlighted Bal's pioneering spirit. She posted a photograph of the two of them walking the runway together, "What an indomitable spirit & what a pioneer!! Rest in peace #rohitbal," the "Aarya" star said. "Gone too young. Rest peacefully #Rohit-Bal," Chopra said on her Instagram Stories.

Sonam Kapoor penned a heartfelt tribute to Bal. "Dear gudda, I hear about your passing on my way to celebrate Diwali in your gorgeous creation that you generously lent to me for the second time. I've been blessed to have known you and worn you and walked for you multiple times. I hope you are at peace. Always your biggest fan (sic)," the actor said.

Sonam also posted a series of pictures where she is seen wearing Bal's creations on the runway. Actor Arjun Rampal fondly remembered his brother Bal, who he called Ratty. "My dearest brother Ratty, I am stunned that you left us so soon. This is devastating for all the hearts you touched and there were so many. I know you loved life so much, right now your biggest concern would be your wonderful boys and Komal. Will always have their backs my friend. You bring the heavens down. RIP @rattysood," the actor wrote. Ananya Panday posted a picture

from her last ramp walk for Bal and said, "Gudda, On Shanti."

In October this year, he presented his collection at the Lakme Fashion Week X FDCI 2024 grand finale, where Panday was the show-stopper.

Kareena Kapoor Khan shared the designer's picture from his young days when he would also work as a model and added heart emojis on the post.

Aditi Rao Hydari said, "Rest in style, Rest in beauty". Actor Sidharth Malhotra paid tribute to Rohit Bal on Instagram. He wrote, "Deeply saddened by the loss. May his soul rest in peace. Om Shanti."

Fashion Development Council of India (FDCI) president Sunil Sethi confirmed Bal's death on Friday evening.

Bal was admitted to Aashlok Hospital in Safdarjung Enclave and was being treated by Dr Alok Chopra, Sethi said.

"He had a cardiac arrest... heart failure. Rohit was a legend, we are completely shaken right now. We are trying to work out details for the cremation tomorrow," he told PTI. "He had a cardiac arrest... heart failure. Rohit was a legend, we are completely shaken right now. We are trying to work out details for the cremation tomorrow," he told PTI. (PTI)

ROHIT BAL WAS A TRUE PIONEER: MANISH MALHOTRA



NEW DELHI, Nov 2: Fashion designer Manish Malhotra on Saturday remembered Rohit Bal as a "true pioneer", praising his unique ability to blend Indian craftsmanship with modern fashion. Bal, one of India's most celebrated fashion designers, died on Friday at a south Delhi hospital following a heart attack at the age of 63.

In a statement, the designer recalled his first encounter with Bal just after the release of Ram Gopal Varma's 1995 movie "Rangeela", which featured costumes designed by Malhotra.

"Rohit Bal was a true pioneer, merging Indian craftsmanship with modern fashion in a way only he could. I remember meeting him in the '90s, just as 'Rangeela' had released. It was my first Indian fashion show I watched live, held at the Imperial Hotel in Delhi.

"Rohit welcomed me with that familiar warmth and invited me to his after-party. From his opulent shows to his unforgettable after parties, there was always joy and grandeur," Malhotra said.

After he started his own label, Malhotra said he would often cross path with Bal at fashion weeks. "Though time and the industry led us down different roads, my admiration for him never faded. Rest in peace, Gudda. Your legacy will always inspire us," he added.

Besides Malhotra, top designers like Sabyasachi Mukherjee, JJ Valaya, Gaurav Gupta, Rahul Mishra, Payal Jain and Bibhu Mohapatra mourned Bal's death.

Designer duo Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla also paid tribute to Bal. "A true visionary who will always be remembered and loved. Rest in Peace, Rohit Bal," read a message on Khosla's Instagram page.

Anamika Khanna shared a picture with Bal and called him a "friend, mentor and guide". "Someone who I cherished, respected and loved. You will be missed deeply. Moments like these made it worth their while. May your soul be in design forever," she added. Bal had been admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) of a private hospital in Gurugram for cardiac issues in December last year.

In October this year, he presented his collection at the Lakme Fashion Week X FDCI 2024 grand finale, where Ananya Panday was the show-stopper. (PTI)



Ajay Devgn's 'Singham Again' earns ₹ 65 crore globally on day 1

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: Ajay Devgn-starrer "Singham Again" amassed ₹ 65 in worldwide gross on its opening day, the makers said on Saturday. Directed by filmmaker Rohit Shetty, the action film was released in theatres on Thursday, coinciding with the festival of Diwali. In a statement, the film's team said the movie, which is the third part in "Singham" series after "Singham" and "Singham Returns", earned ₹ 43.7 crore net at the Indian box office. "India's largest cop franchise 'Singham Again' has roared to a thunderous start and set new Diwali records, amassing a massive day one total of Rs 65 crore worldwide with India net box office at Rs 43.7 crore emerging as the No 1 choice of Diwali, filling theatres to capacity across single screens and multiplexes nationwide," the statement said. The "Singham" is part of Shetty's ambitious cop universe that also includes characters played by Akshay Kumar and Ranveer Singh in "Sooryavanshi" and "Simmba". The cast for "Singham Again" includes Singh, Kumar, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Tiger Shroff, Deepika Padukone, Jackie Shroff and Shweta Tiwari as well as Arjun Kapoor, who essays the role of the antagonist. (PTI)

LUPITA NYONG'O, JARED LETO TO STAR IN LUNIK HEIST

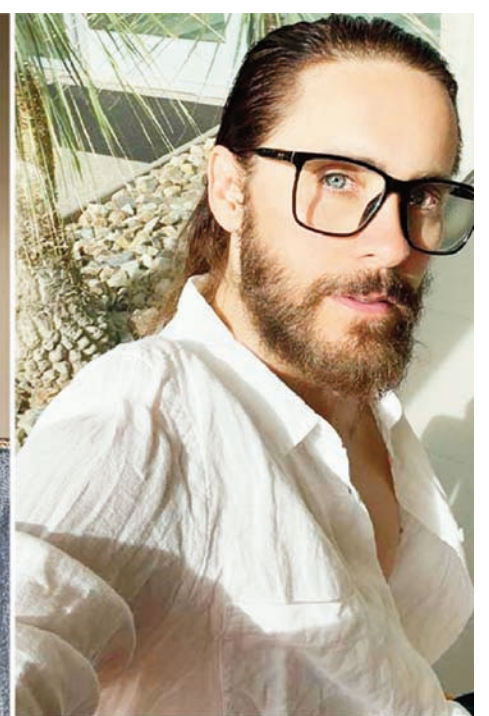
LOS ANGELES, Nov 2: Oscar-winning actors Lupita Nyong'o and Jared Leto are set to headline "Lunik Heist", an upcoming Cold War-era heist movie.

Actor-comic and "Saturday Night Live" veteran John Mulaney will also feature in the movie, which will be written and directed by Kemp Powers, reported entertainment news outlet Variety.

"Lunik Heist", which hails from Searchlight Pictures, follows the American government's plot to steal a Soviet spacecraft during a 1959 expedition in Mexico City and is based on an article by Jeff Maysh that was published in MIT Technology Review.

Powers is best known for co-directing "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse". He also wrote "One Night in Miami", which was based on his 2013 stage play.

Leto and Emma Ludbrook are producing the project under their Paradox banner, along with Mark Johnson for Gran Via Productions. Maysh serves as an executive producer. (PTI)



ROHIT BAL: THE VALLEY BOY WHO STRODE TO GREAT HEIGHTS IN FASHION



NEW DELHI, Nov 2: He blazed a trail on the catwalks of high fashion, blending traditional craft with bold aesthetics to create designs that found appeal in India and the west. Rohit Bal was a pioneer and legacy maker, his creations grandiose, his shows opulent — much like the man himself.

Known for his intricate use of rich fabrics like velvet and brocade adorned with signature flower and peacock motifs, Bal's creations redefined Indian couture on a global scale.

He was one of the early designers to take Indian fashion beyond its shores by dressing up Hollywood celebrities like Cindy Crawford, Uma Thur-

man, Pamela Anderson and Naomi Campbell.

In India, he was a much revered figure among celebrities. Actors such as Ranbir Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Katrina Kaif, Sonam Kapoor, Abhishek Bachchan, Arjun Rampal and others either walked for Bal or sported his designs at events. The couturier, who died at the age of 63 on Friday night at a south Delhi hospital following a heart attack, was not keeping well for the last few years. Bal, who was fondly called Gudda by his peers and friends from the industry, pulled through a major health scare in December last year but true to his style, he was working behind-the-scenes for his final showcase on October 13.

He looked frail and struggled to walk and even stumbled while making his way to the stage, but despite that, he kept his spirits high and danced like the true rockstar of Indian fashion as models and Bollywood star Ananya Pandey supported him. Pandey, who had turned his muse and show-stopper for the gala night, presented Bal with a rose at the end of the show to honour his designs which were filled with red blooms.

As he took the bow at the end of the Lakme

Fashion Week x FDCI show, many in the crowd cheered for him with an inkling that the magic and the beauty they just witnessed on the ramp was perhaps for the last time.

But no one in the fashion fraternity thought that Bal would pass away just two weeks later.

Bal embraced life with the same boldness and vibrancy that he infused into his designs and his collection, 'Kaaynaat: A Bloom In The Universe', was a testament to this spirit.

It was a fitting finale for a designer whose artistry and energy left a lasting impact on the fashion world.

Bal's approach to fashion was a captivating blend of art, history, and folklore, and he elevated his designs to high art by drawing on India's cultural heritage.

A history graduate from St Stephen's College, the designer was adept at marrying historical influences with his imaginative flair to create high couture. In an interview with PTI in 2019, Bal spoke about his uncompromising design philosophy. "I always stuck to who I am and never did what everybody else was doing. I have a very

strong and focused design philosophy, and I adhere to that. I believe anything you do from your heart and soul will always stay relevant. I am comfortable in being classic, elegant, and timeless, and it has contributed a lot to my brand and career as a designer," Bal said.

Born on May 8, 1961 in Srinagar, Bal followed his passion for fashion by training at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIIFT) in Delhi.

He initially worked in his family's export business, learning the industry's fundamentals before launching his own label in 1990 and then there was no looking back for him.

In 1996, Time magazine hailed Bal as India's "Master of fabric and fantasy", a title that underscored his artistic approach.

By 2001, Bal's reputation was firmly established internationally, with tennis star Anna Kournikova walking for his Paris show that year. His influence went beyond fashion, extending into luxury product collaborations such as footwear, linens, jewellery, and even watches, and he worked with industry giants like the Aditya Birla Group. (PTI)

INDIA REDUCE NZ TO 171 FOR 9 IN SECOND INNINGS ON DAY 2

Spinners do their job well, time for batters to salvage pride

MUMBAI, Nov 2: Exploiting the spin-friendly conditions, Ravindra Jadeja and R Ashwin chiselled through the New Zealand batting line-up to bring India to a stage from where they can force a face-saving victory in the third Test which is now headed for an intriguing finish.

New Zealand ended day two at 171 for nine with an overall lead of 143, which might look small but even a target in the vicinity of 150 will pose serious challenge for the Indian batters, considering the fast deteriorating Wankhede track.

This was after half-centuries from Shubman Gill (90) and Rishabh Pant (60) and a crucial 38 not out from Washington Sundar gave India a slender 28-run lead as they put on board 263.

A total of 15 wickets fell on the second day, underlining the fact that life won't be easy for the hosts while batting fourth.

Ashwin (3/63) found his rhythm while Jadeja (4/52) added four more dismissals after his 5/65 in the first essay to keep India's hopes alive to avert a clean sweep at home for the first time. Ajaz Patel (7) was at the crease when Jadeja cleaned up Matt Henry (10) for the penultimate wicket on the final ball on the second day.

Will Young's gutsy 51 was the



only resistance from the Kiwis who succumbed to pressure, after Patel (5/103) recorded yet another five-wicket haul.

Having made a subdued impact so far, Ashwin's delight on getting Rachin Ravindra (4) stumped was evident as he beat the charge of the batter with

bounce and turn.

With Glenn Phillips (26) using the long handle to a good effect, Ashwin cleaned up the New Zealand batter for another crucial breakthrough.

Young, who batted as solid as he did in the first innings, was Ashwin's third victim giving the

bowler catching practice after being outfoxed on a carrom ball.

The 37-year-old Ashwin made impact beyond his bowling when he took an outstanding catch to end a stubborn 50-run association between Young and Daryl Mitchell (21), who, for a passage of play, threatened to take the

game away.

Young and Mitchell had steadied the ship after New Zealand's top-order was blown away, but the latter's charge against Jadeja proved costly as he did not get the distance in his stroke.

From mid-off, Ashwin covered 19 metres running sideways to his left and put in a fabulous dive to complete the dismissal, post which New Zealand crumbled further.

Tom Blundell (4) chopped one onto his stumps off Jadeja while Ashwin cleaned up Phillips, who had switched to aggressive batting knowing New Zealand desperately needed more runs.

At the start of Kiwis' reply, Akash provided a rare sight of a pacer disturbing a batter's furniture on turning track when he dismissed Tom Latham's (1) off and middle stumps in the first over.

Earlier, India's progress suffered a severe blow with the exit of Pant towards the end of the morning session, as its effects were felt acutely when play resumed post lunch.

From Pant's dismissal in the 38th over to India eventually folding in the 60th, the team managed eight fours and two sixes — the wicketkeeper-batter alone hit that many during his brisk half-century earlier. (PTI)

Mumbai City FC seek winning momentum against Kerala Blasters FC



MUMBAI, Nov 2: Mumbai City FC will look to return to winning ways when they take on visiting Kerala Blasters FC in their Indian Super League match here on Sunday.

The Islanders, determined to bounce back after a draw in the last match against Odisha FC, will aim to avoid a second straight defeat to Kerala Blasters FC -- a streak they haven't experienced since the 2021-22 season. With Mumbai City FC and Kerala Blasters FC tied closely in standings, every point counts, especially in the highly competitive race for the playoffs.

Mumbai City FC have recently faced challenges in breaking down defences, netting fewer than two goals in each of their last two home matches. The Islanders haven't seen a goalless stretch of this sort since early 2023, and they'll be eager to rediscover their attacking form.

Although Mumbai City FC create an impressive 2.6 big chances per game (second highest in the ISL), their big chance conversion rate of just 15.4% is the lowest. The upcoming game will be a crucial test of their finishing skills.

Kerala Blasters FC have gone 10 straight away games without a clean sheet, a trend they will need to fix quickly. Their defence will be tested by Mumbai's home advantage and scoring potential.

With 63.4% of their shots coming from inside the box, Kerala Blasters FC's attack will seek openings in Mumbai's backline, led by Noah Sadaoui and his league-high expected assists tally of 2.15. Kick-off: 7.30 pm IST. Odisha FC, NorthEast United

desperate to rise above mid-table. An exciting clash is set to take place in Guwahati between NorthEast United FC and Odisha FC, with both teams eager to climb out of the mid-table in the second match of Sunday's double-header.

The Highlanders and the Juggernauts have eight points from six matches each, placed fifth and seventh on the table, respectively. While NEUFC are coming off an enthralling 5-0 victory over Jamshedpur FC, OFC settled for a competitive 1-1 draw at home to MCFC.

The Highlanders have netted four of their opening goals within 15 minutes into their matches this season -- the highest such tally for any team in the ISL.

Meanwhile, the Juggernauts, along with Bengaluru FC and Punjab FC, are yet to concede in this period. While Odisha would be desperate to snatch away success, having been winless in their previous seven such outings, their head coach, Sergio Lobera, too, does not have a sound record here, having not won a single game in Guwahati in his last four visits. The two teams have contested against each other on 10 instances in the ISL, with the Juggernauts and the Highlanders prevailing in six and three fixtures, respectively, while only one clash ended in a draw.

Moreover, NEUFC's Alaaeddine Ajaraie will fancy his chances to become only the second ISL player to find the back of the net in seven straight ISL ties, after Kalu Uche for Delhi Dynamos FC between January and March 2018.

Kick-off: 5.00 pm IST. (PTI)

Pulin Das Memorial Lecture highlights role of regional sports media

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 2: The 106th birth anniversary of the celebrated sports icon, organiser, and journalist Pulin Das was marked with a commemorative lecture organised by the Pulin Das Memorial Committee. The event took place at the India Club in Guwahati on Friday at 11:30 am.

Senior independent sports journalist Prarthana Hazarika delivered the Pulin Das Memorial Lecture on 'The Role of Regional Sports Journalists in Promoting Sports on a Global Platform'. As the chief guest, Hazarika shared insights from over two decades in sports journalism, underscoring how regional media can be pivotal in elevating local sports to the global stage. She shared personal stories covering athletes like Olympic medalist boxer Lovlina Borgohain and sprinter Hima Das from their early careers, illustrating the unique position of regional media in highlighting underrepresented athletes.

"With my 23 years of experience, I can confidently say that regional media play a critical role in showcasing athletes and sporting events on national and global stages. When Lovlina won her Olympic medal, national outlets had little information on her origins or journey — they relied on regional journalists like me for these details," Hazarika remarked.

Hazarika, who has also worked with the Australian Broadcasting

Corporation, recounted her experience covering the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. She highlighted sports as a unifying force, sharing a memorable conversation with Newcastle Jets FC coach Ernie Merrick, who was familiar with Indian football clubs Aizawl FC and Shillong Lajong FC. She added, "These are the kinds of stories that showcase the power of sports."

Also present was esteemed photojournalist Rituraj Konwar, who attended as the guest of honour. He shared a presentation on his experience covering the 2024 Paris Olympics, showcasing some of his notable photographs from the event. Konwar, associated with 'The Hindu', offered insights into the rigorous work and dedication behind the scenes at major sports events.

The Pulin Das Memorial Committee, represented by Secretary Kalyan Kumar Das and President Nayan Prasad, extended their gratitude to all attendees for contributing to the event's success.

Earlier, at the start of the programme, the people present on the occasion paid their tribute to Pulin Das. Born on November 1, 1918, in Guwahati, Pulin Das was a visionary who laid the foundation for a thriving sports culture in Assam. His leadership at the Gauhati Town Club and his role as a founding member of the Assam Cricket Association helped shape Assam's sports landscape.



Task cut out for India A as Australia A eye victory

MACKAY (AUSTRALIA), Nov 2: India A's first-innings batting collapse came back to haunt them as Australia A nosed ahead of the visitors after being set a target of 225 on the third day of the first 'Unofficial Test' here on Saturday.

The home team was 139 for three at stumps, needing another 86 runs for victory as the Indian bowlers could not get enough wickets to put pressure on the Australians in their second essay.

Skipper Nathan McSweeney and Beau Webster were batting on 47 and 19, respectively, at the close of play.

McSweeney, one of the top contenders to bag the vacant opener's slot in the Australian team for the marquee Test series against India, forged an unbroken partnership of 54 runs for the fourth wicket along with Webster after Australia A slipped to 85 for three.

India were all out for 312 in their second innings, a far better batting display than their forgettable outing on the first day, when they crumbled for 107. Resuming the day on 96, Sai Sudharsan (103) duly completed his century but Devdutt Padikkal fell for 88, adding only eight runs to his overnight total of 80 after having stitched a partnership of 196 runs for the third wicket with the former.

India started the day on 208 for two.

The Australian bowlers, led by pacer Fergus O'Neill (4/55) and off-spinner Todd Murphy (3/77), fought back by taking the two big wickets in quick



succession and after that, the visiting batters did not show enough application to stretch their lead.

Sudharsan was the first to go, after attempting an expansive cover drive off the bowling of Murphy.

Padikkal was trapped in front of the wicket by Murphy 13 balls later after the batter went on the backfoot to tackle the off-spinner.

Flamboyant keeper-batter Ishan Kishan walked into the middle and he looked in the mood as he played some impressive shots, including pulling O'Neill for a six.

However, Ishan got out soon, caught at second slip by Cameron Bancroft off the bowling of O'Neill. Ishan

made 32 off 58 balls during his stay in the middle in which he was dropped when on 21.

Nitish Kumar Reddy (17) also got a reprieve but he threw away his wicket by driving a low full toss by Beau Webster back to the bowler as India A stretched their lead to 199 runs.

Fast bowler Navdeep Saini chipped in 18 runs as India A's lead went past 220.

Brief scores: India A: 107 and 312 all out in 100 overs (Sai Sudharsan 103, Devdutt Padikkal 88; Fergus O'Neill 4/55, Todd Murphy 3/77)

Australia A: 195 and 139/3 in 50.3 overs (Nathan McSweeney 47 batting, Marcus Harris 36). (PTI)

35th All Assam Inter-Dist Women's Kabaddi C'ship in Morigaon from Nov 8

HT Correspondent

MORIGAO, Nov 2: The 35th All Assam Inter-District Women's Kabaddi Championship will be held on November 8, 9, and 10 at the Dalbari Juvakalyan Sangha ground in Morigaon district. Organised by the Morigaon District Kabaddi Association, the championship's preparations are underway. A reception committee has been formed to ensure the event's success, comprising 10 subcommittees for the smooth organisation of the championship.

The president of the reception committee is Morigaon MLA Ramakant Deuri, with District Sports Association's vice-president, Ramen Nath, serving as the acting president. Ramesh Chandra Kakati is the Secretary, and Sikandar Ali and Ikramul Hussain are the Joint Secretaries. The event will be inaugurated at 4 pm by Morigaon District Superintendent of Police Hemant Kumar Das and

District Kabaddi Association Advisor Suleman Ali. Following this, District Commissioner Devashish Sharma will deliver a welcome speech, and the ceremonial lamp will be lit by the acting president of the reception committee, Ramen Nath. The Kabaddi Association flag will be hoisted by All Assam Kabaddi Association President Bhubaneswar Kalita, and the reception committee flag will be hoisted by MLA Ramakant Deuri. Minister of Information & Public Relations, Piyush Hazarika, will attend the program as the chief guest. Other notable attendees include Chief Executive Member of the Tiwa Autonomous Council, Jeevan Chandra Konwar.

The closing ceremony will take place on the evening of November 10 and will be attended by Assam Government Minister Keshav Mahanta, Nagaon Lok Sabha MP Pradyut Bordoloi, and several other dignitaries.

IPL Retention: Virat Kohli drops his hints of completing 20 years with RCB till 2027

BENGALURU, Nov 2: Virat Kohli has dropped elaborate hints that he would like to continue playing competitive cricket till 2027 with an aim to complete 20 years with Royal Challengers Bengaluru after being retained by the franchise for a hefty fee of Rs 21 crore.

Having entered the twilight zone of his illustrious career, speculations are rife about how long the 36-year-old would continue in top flight cricket having endured a prolonged lull for the last four years since the start of COVID-19.

Kohli has been playing for RCB ever since IPL's inception in 2008 and is the leading run-scorer in the competition, amassing over 8,000 runs at a

healthy if not spectacular strike rate of 131.97, including eight hundreds and 55 fifties.

"At the end of this cycle, it is going to be 20 years that I am going to be playing for RCB and that in itself is a very, very special feeling for me," Kohli told 'RCB Bold Diaries' indicating that he aims to continue for at least another three years till 2027.

"I have never thought that I am going to play so many years for one team, but the relationship has truly become special over so many years.

He reiterated that he doesn't see himself playing for any other franchise.

"I don't see myself anywhere other than RCB, and I am very

happy that it happened. I am very excited that I got a chance to create a strong new squad in this auction, something that we are really looking forward to as a franchise, as a team," Kohli said in RCB's Bold Diaries video.

He also pondered on the fact that he shared a close bond with the franchise and its fans, while his goal would be to win the elusive title.

"I am super excited as ever as everyone knows what RCB means to me. It's been a very, very special relationship over so many years, which continues to grow stronger, and what I have experienced playing for RCB is truly special. I hope that the fans and everyone



who's connected to the franchise feel the same way," he continued. "I am also just looking forward to this cycle. Obviously, the goal is to win the IPL title at least once in the

next cycle."

He promised that RCB will leave no stone unturned to win their elusive IPL title.

"We are going to give it our best shot as always and try to

make everyone proud of the way we play our cricket. A big shout out to the fans for your unwavering support over so many years. I am really grateful, really thankful," Kohli concluded.

Meanwhile, following Kohli's retention, RCB head coach Andy Flower admitted that while the retention itself is not surprising, he would be the key to RCB's success in the coming years.

"Virat's retention won't come as much of a surprise to anyone in India. He is and will be a key to RCB's success in the future. He was sensational last year. He was one of the leaders who propelled us into the playoffs despite a poor first

half of the season," he told JioCinema.

Besides Kohli, RCB has also retained two more players -- Rajat Patidar (Rs 11 crore) and Yash Dayal (Rs 5 crore).

As a result, RCB will have a purse of Rs 83 crore heading into the mega auction tentatively scheduled later this month. The franchise would also contain three Right To Match (RTM) cards, allowing it to retain three more players (an uncapped player and two capped players).

Glenn Maxwell, Mohammed Siraj, Faf du Plessis and Cameron Green are among the top RCB players set to go under the hammer. (PTI)

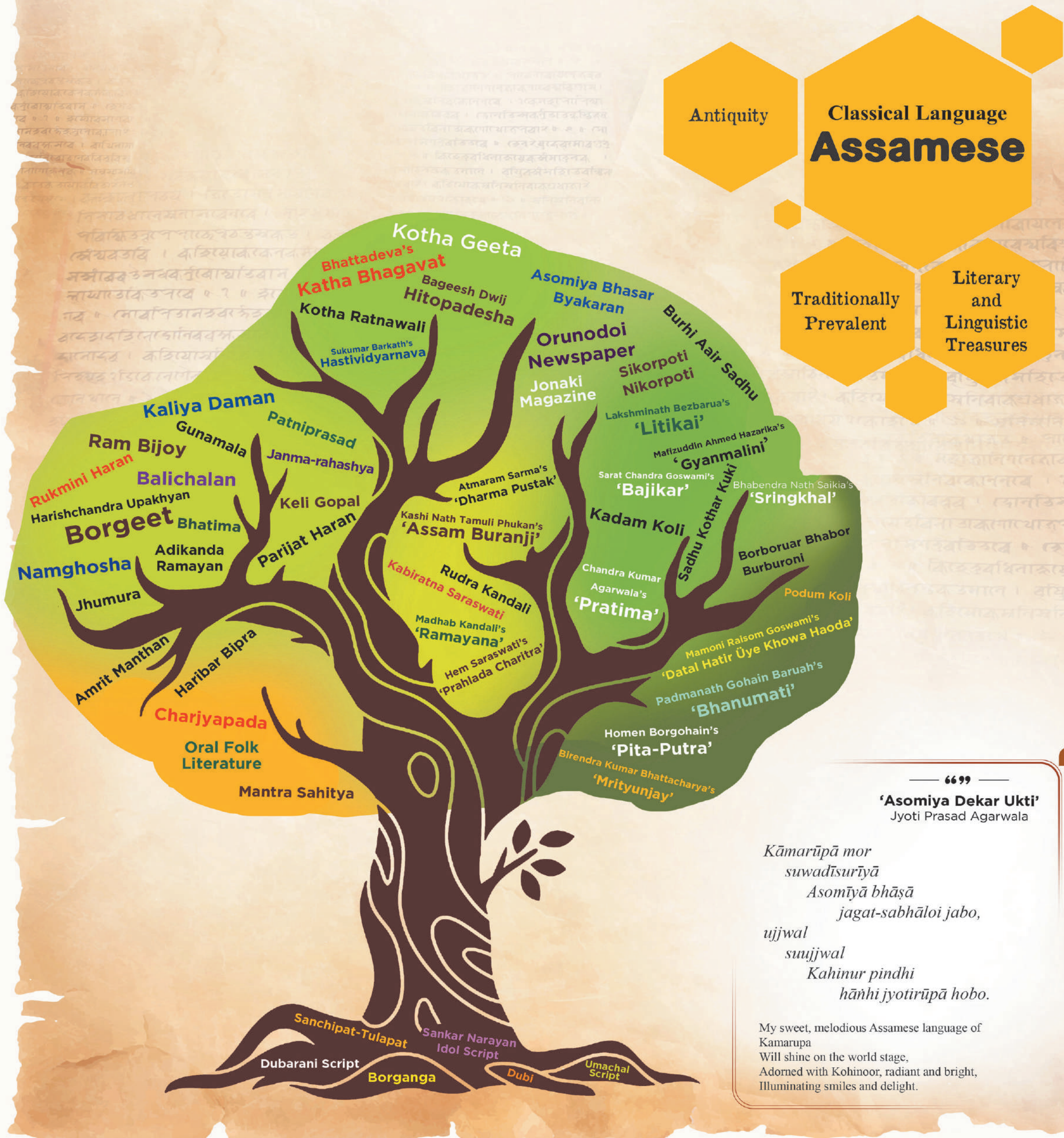


Government of Assam



The people of Assam extend their heartfelt gratitude to
Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji
 for conferring Classical Language status on the Assamese language on
 3rd October 2024. This recognition honours our rich heritage and
 strengthens our cultural identity.

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma
 Chief Minister, Assam



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'Asomiya Dekar Ukti'
 Jyoti Prasad Agarwala

*Kāmarūpā mor
 suwadīsurīyā
 Asomīyā bhāṣā
 jagat-sabhāloi jabo,
 ujjwal
 sujjwal
 Kahinur pindhi
 hāñhi jyotirūpā hobo.*

My sweet, melodious Assamese language of
 Kamarupa
 Will shine on the world stage,
 Adorned with Kohinoor, radiant and bright,
 Illuminating smiles and delight.