

6 WORLD

● US Vice Presidential hopeful Walz joins Diwali celebrations

● N Korea's top diplomat in Moscow to help the war on Ukraine

8 NATION

● BJP demands apology from Kharge, Rahul for 'unrealistic promises'

● BJP slams Cong for its vote bank politics over Waqf row in Karnataka



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www.thehillstimes.in

THE HILLS TIMES

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU

Voice of the hills people

Vol .No. I

Issue No. 241

RNI-ASSENG/2023/86488

GUWAHATI, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2024

PAGES 12

PRICE ₹ 8

Six employees of Dipankar's company quizzed by CBI



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: Assam Police and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) questioned at least six workers of DB Stock Limited, a major suspect in the online trading scam run by Dipankar Barman, on Friday in Guwahati.

Barman hired about 15 employees for his contentious business, DB Stock Limited, where he allegedly embezzled crores of public funds by enticing ordinary citizens to invest in trading under the false pretense of earning significantly larger returns than the going rate.

Six DB Stock employees—Nitumani Choudhury, Jintumani Kalita, Puja Patel, Sujit Das, Biswajit Barman, and Mahesh Rajja—were contacted by the police.

Both the CBI team and the Assam Police have questioned them. It has been learned that the central probe agency confiscated the mobile phones of the six persons who were subject to interrogation.

Earlier, on Thursday, Dipankar Barman faced marathon interrogation by a team of Assam Police officials in Guwahati; however, according to sources, he has hidden a lot of information regarding the scam.

The accused also tried to evade some key questions regarding the scam by the investigation team.

As per a highly placed source, there was sharp contrast between the statements of Barman and his girlfriend who is also under police custody for her alleged involvement in the trading scam.

Police arrested a Chartered Accountant (CA) who had worked for Barman and the investigation team found a difference between his and Dipankar Barman's statement as well. A senior police official said that the Hawala transaction was involved in this huge scam and the CA accepted this fact during the interrogation. But, according to sources, Barman denied involvement of Hawala in his business which allegedly looted crores of money from general people on the pretext of giving them much higher returns against their investment. Barman was arrested four days ago from a homestay in Goa and he was brought to Guwahati on Tuesday. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Diwali turns tragic on Guwahati road

Two killed in head-on collision between two vehicles ● Entry bands of bar found on deceased's hands

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: Two persons were killed in a head-on collision between two vehicles in Guwahati on Friday, police said.

Two persons were also injured in the collision that took place early in the day on GS Road in the Khanapara area when one of the two SUVs was making a U-turn and the other was coming from the opposite direction, a senior officer said.

"The accident occurred when an SUV with white colour coming from Six Mile side was making a U-turn at the Assam Rifle Transit Camp point and a black Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) was coming from the opposite direction," the police officer told PTI.

The vehicle coming from Khanapara was at a very high speed and the impact of the collision was so huge that the black SUV climbed up to the footover bridge and then fell on the road, he added. The black SUV broke the iron railing of the structure and damaged the footover bridge, and it got mangled after the accident, the officer said. The occupants in the black SUV probably came from a nearby bar as entry bands were seen tied on their hands, he said.



Two youths in the black-coloured vehicle were declared dead. Gauhati Medical College and Hospital Superintendent Abhijit Sarma said. The deceased persons have been identified as Deepat Dey (22) and Konamika Narjaree (19),

Sarma said. "One injured girl was also brought to the hospital by the police and discharged after treatment. Another person was also injured in the accident," he added. (PTI)

HT BRIEFS

Khel Maharan

GUWAHATI: Assam's highly anticipated Khel Maharan 2.0 is set to become a landmark event, with registrations already surpassing 54 lakh, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced on Friday. With two weeks still remaining for registration, Sarma took to the micro-blogging site X to share the extraordinary response and encourage more youth to participate. He wrote, "The #KhelMaharan2 will see competitors vying for top honors in 7 sporting disciplines. With 2 weeks still remaining, over 53 lakh participants have already registered. Athletics, Swimming, and Kabaddi are the most applied disciplines till now."

Three arrested

GUWAHATI: In a significant operation, the Assam Rifles successfully apprehended three insurgent cadres in the Tengnoupal district of Manipur, the Assam Rifles informed on Friday. Acting on precise intelligence inputs regarding the movement of armed militants in the area, the Assam Rifles launched coordinated search and ambush operations in the Yangoubing region, intensifying efforts to curb insurgency in the northeastern state.

Cyber Fraud

GUWAHATI: In a successful effort by Guwahati Police, a team from the Cyber Police Station (Cyber PS) has recovered ₹ 49,999.33 that had been lost in an unauthorized online transaction, the city police officials informed on Friday. As per reports, the amount was credited back into the bank account of a resident from Ahomgaon, Gorchuk, who had reported the issue after discovering the unapproved transaction. Taking to the micro-blogging site X, the Guwahati Police stated, "A team from Cyber PS recovered the full amount of ₹49,999.33 after it was credited into the bank account of victim from Ahomgaon, Gorchuk."

Hindu American groups praised Trump for condemning minority persecution

WASHINGTON, Nov 1: Hindu American groups have applauded Republican presidential candidate and former president Donald Trump for promising to protect the human rights of Hindus across the world, including the US and Bangladesh and protect them from the "anti-religion agenda of the radical left."

In his Diwali greetings on Thursday, Trump strongly "condemned the barbaric violence against Hindus, Christians, and other minorities in Bangladesh", which he said remains in a "total state of chaos."

"It would have never happened on my watch. Kamala and Joe have ignored Hindus across the world and in America. They have been a disaster from Israel to Ukraine to our own Southern Border, but we

will Make America Strong Again and bring back Peace through Strength," he said.

"We will also protect Hindu Americans against the anti-religion agenda of the radical left. We will fight for your freedom. Under my administration, we will also strengthen our great partnership with India and my good friend, Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi," Trump had said. Utsav Sanduja, founder and chairman of Hindus for America First told PTI in an interview that they are very grateful to President Trump.

"I'm very grateful to President Trump, eternally grateful and eternally appreciative. It sucks that Kamala Harris hasn't said anything about this (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BJP backs CEM Ronghang's land pattas initiative

DIPHU, Nov 1: BJP spokespersons from East Karbi Anglong have extended their support for the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang, in his initiative to distribute 2 lakh free land pattas under the program 'Purthimi Akemang' to indigenous communities residing in the two hill districts of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong.

During a press conference at the Hill People Cultural Forum (HPCF) office on Thursday, Laichan Englang, spokesperson for the BJP-East Karbi Anglong District Committee (KADCC), stated that the CEM's efforts to protect the land of indigenous communities by providing land pattas deserve appreciation.

"Many villagers cannot prepare land pattas on their own, but now the Land & Revenue Department is going to provide them for free. This



initiative by the CEM needs recognition," Englang added.

They also criticised the All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC) for opposing the KAAC's initiative.

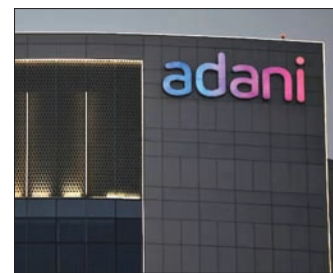
"While villagers are excited about receiving land pattas, the APHLC has begun to mislead the public by criticizing the scheme. There is infighting within the

Adani reduces power supply to Bangladesh by half: Report

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: India's Adani Power Jharkhand Limited (APJL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Adani Power, has stopped half of its power supply to Bangladesh because of outstanding bills of USD 846 million, according to a local media report on Friday.

Data from Power Grid Bangladesh PLC showed the Adani plant reduced supply on Thursday night. The Daily Star newspaper said. Bangladesh reported a shortfall of more than 1,600 megawatts (MW) on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday as the 1,496 MW plant is now producing 700 MW from a single unit, the newspaper reported.

Earlier, the Adani company wrote to the power secretary asking the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) to clear its outstanding



dues by October 30.

The letter, dated October 27, said that if the bills are not paid, the company shall be constrained to take remedial action under the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) by suspending the power supply on October 31. The company said that the PDB has neither provided a letter of credit (LC) for an amount of USD 170.03 million from Bangladesh Krishi Bank nor cleared the outstanding amount of USD 846 million.

The newspaper quoted a PDB official as saying that they had earlier cleared a portion of previous dues, but since July, Adani has been charging more than the previous months. He said the PDB has been paying around USD 18 million weekly, while the charge is more than USD 22 million.

"This is why the due payments increased again," he said, adding that they had submitted last week's payment to Krishi Bank as well, but due to a dollar shortage, the bank failed to open a letter of credit against the payment.

About the additional payment, he said, when the PDB raised a question on the coal pricing in February last year, they signed a supplementary deal that obliged Adani to quote coal prices less than the rates charged by the other coal-fired power plants. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

System needed in which skills get their due: Rahul

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday called for creating a system in which people's skills get their due and everyone's contribution is respected, as he shared a Diwali video in which he interacts with paint job workers and potters.

Posting the over nine-minute video which features him also having a conversation with his nephew Raihan Rajiv Vdra on YouTube, the former Congress chief said, "A memorable Diwali with special people - I celebrated this Diwali working with some painter brothers and making earthen diyas with a potter family."

"I saw their work closely, tried to learn their skills and understood their difficulties and problems. They don't go home. We celebrate festivals happily and to earn some money, they forget their village, city, family," Gandhi said.

"They make happiness from clay. While lighting up the festivals of

others, are they able to live in light themselves? Those who build houses can hardly run their own houses!" he said.

Gandhi said Diwali means light that can remove the darkness of poverty and helplessness.

"We have to create such a system -- in which people's skills get their due and contribution is respected -- makes everyone's Diwali a happy one. I hope this Diwali brings prosperity, progress and love in the lives of all of you," he said.

In the video, Gandhi is seen working with labourers at the 10 Janpath residence and learning to paint walls along with his nephew. In the second part of the video, Gandhi goes to the house of a woman who makes earthen lamps with her five daughters. Gandhi tries his hand at pottery and makes 'diyas', which he says he would give to his mother and sister. Since his Kanyakumari to Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Will not tolerate big brother attitude of Congress: CPI leader

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: The opposition unity in Assam was shaken when the Congress party put forward a candidate for the by-election in the Behali assembly seat. The anti-BJP faction is even more tense after the united opposition forum nominated a CPI-ML candidate for the next bypoll here.

Meanwhile, CPI (M-L) leader Bibek Das, sharply attacked the Congress party on Friday and declared that they would not tolerate the opposition party's big brother attitude.

Das said, "The majority of the opposition parties want to fight together against the BJP, but we need the Congress party in the alliance to respect us. We will not tolerate Congress' big brother attitude."

The CPI (M-L) leader also criticised Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi and said, "The Congress MP has undermined the proposals given by opposition leaders—Akhil Gogoi,



Lurinijyoti Gogoi, Ajit Bhuyan, Suprakash Talukdar and Gaurav Gogoi fielded Jayanta Borah in Behali. I believe that this is not a good thing for the opposition unity."

Congress named Jayanta Borah as the party's nominee to contest elections in the Behali assembly seat. He switched sides from the

BJP and joined the Congress party a few days ago.

The Behali seat became a bone of contention in the united opposition forum of fifteen parties in Assam which compelled Congress leader Bhupen Borah to tender his resignation from the post of president of the forum for the difference in seat sharing.

Byelections in five assembly constituencies—Dholai, Samaguri, Behali, Bongaigaon, and Sidli became due following the elections of five legislators in the lower house of the parliament in this year's Lok Sabha polls.

Congress will contest bypolls in all five assembly segments.

However, CPI-ML—a constituent of the united opposition forum strongly demanded to leave the Behali seat for them. Bhupen Borah earlier said that a proposal to form a five-member committee to choose (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

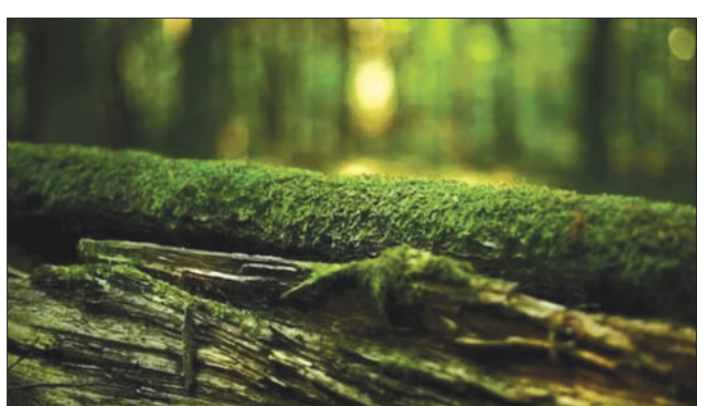
India home to 7-8% of the world's recorded species

India commits to 30% protected areas in updated biodiversity plan

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: India has launched its updated biodiversity action plan with a goal to protect at least 30 per cent of its terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine areas by 2030, in line with global biodiversity targets.

The updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), unveiled at the 16th UN Biodiversity Conference in Cali, Colombia, outlines 23 national targets aligned with the 23 global goals set under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF), which was adopted at the 15th UN Biodiversity Conference in Canada in 2022.

A key goal of the KM-GBF is to protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and ocean areas by 2030. It also aims to restore de-



graded ecosystems, such as forests, wetlands, and rivers, to ensure they continue providing essential resources like clean water and air.

India, recognised as one of the 17 megadiverse countries, became a

party to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1994. It harbours 7-8 per cent of the world's recorded species within just 2.4 per cent of the global land area.

According to the updated

NBSAP, India spent around ₹ 32,200 crore on biodiversity protection, conservation, and restoration from 2017-2018 to 2021-2022. The projected annual average expenditure for biodiversity conservation through 2029-2030 is estimated to be ₹ 81,664.88 crore.

India has set its biodiversity goals in three main areas. The first theme of 'Reducing Threats to Biodiversity' includes eight targets. The first five targets directly address major threats to biodiversity: Land and sea use changes, pollution, species overuse, climate change, and invasive alien species. The other three targets focus on restoring ecosystems, managing species and genetic diversity, and ensuring the legal, sustainable use of wild species. The second (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Global climate finance reached USD 1.5 tn in 2022, must rise fivefold by 2030: Report

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Global investment in combating and adapting to climate change reached nearly USD 1.5 trillion, doubling between 2018 and 2022, but it must increase at least fivefold by 2030 to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, according to a new study.

The "Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2024: Insights for COP29" report, published by global think tank Climate Policy Initiative (CPI), said climate finance currently represents only 1 per cent of global GDP, far short of the required level. Emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs) may need around 6.5 per cent of their GDP by 2030 to meet climate goals.

"While global climate finance has made some strides, a much more ambitious, cohesive, and effective approach is essential to address the vast funding gap," said Barbara Buchner, CPI's Global Managing Director.

"The data from CPI's Global Landscape report leaves no doubt that investment needs to scale across all fronts -- domestically, internationally, and across sectors -- to reach our mutual climate goals. COP29 is an opportunity to establish clear, collaborative commit-



ments to finance the transformation needed for a sustainable future."

Annual climate finance flows rose from USD 674 billion in 2018 to USD 1.459 trillion in 2022. However, a fivefold increase is still needed to reach the USD 7.4 trillion required annually through 2030 to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the report said.

Alarmingly, fossil fuel investments continued to rise globally throughout 2023 and 2024, surpassing USD 1 trillion despite global commitments to reduce fossil fuel investments. Subsidies for fossil fuel consumption in emerg-

ing economies increased fivefold during the same period, it noted. At the UN climate conference in the UAE in 2023, countries reached a historic agreement to transition away from fossil fuels.

At this year's UN climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, countries are expected to agree on a new climate finance target that developed countries need to provide to developing countries, beginning in 2025, to combat and adapt to climate change.

The CPI's report warns that economic losses by 2100 could be five times greater than the climate finance needed by 2050 to stay

within the 1.5-degree Celsius limit.

The report also said that adaptation finance more than doubled from 2018 to 2022, reaching USD 76 billion. However, annual adaptation flows have reached just one-third of the volume needed each year from 2024 to 2030 in EMDEs alone.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted in 1992, high-income, industrialised nations -- which have historically benefited from industrialisation and contributed most to greenhouse gas emissions -- are responsible for providing finance and technology to help developing countries combat and adapt to climate change.

These countries include the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and EU member states such as Germany and France.

Developing and poorer countries view an ambitious new climate finance goal as crucial to increasing climate action. They argue that expecting them to do more, especially when many are still grappling with poverty and inadequate infrastructure amid worsening climate impacts, undermines the principle of equity. (PTI)

ATF price hiked 3 pc, commercial LPG up ₹ 62 per cylinder

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Jet fuel, or ATF, price on Friday was hiked by 3.3 per cent and rate of commercial LPG used in hotels and restaurants increased by Rs 62 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with international oil price trends. The aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was increased by ₹ 2,941.5 per kilolitre, or 3.3 per cent, to ₹ 90,538.72 per kl in the national capital, according to state-owned fuel retailers.

The hike comes after two rounds of reduction that had taken the rates to their lowest this year.

ATF price on October 1 was cut by 6.3 per cent (₹ 5,883 per kl) and by ₹ 4,495.5 per kl, or 4.58 per cent on September 1.

The ATF rate in Mumbai was increased to ₹ 84,642.91 per kl on Friday from ₹ 81,866.13 previously. Oil firms also increased the price of commercial LPG by ₹ 62 to ₹ 1,802 per 19-kg cylinder.

This is the fourth straight monthly hike in commercial LPG prices. Prices were hiked by ₹ 48.5 to ₹ 1,740 on October 1. Prior to that rates were increased by ₹ 6.5 per cylinder on August 1 and by ₹ 39 on September 1. The four rounds of increase follow four monthly price reductions.

In four price reductions, rates were cut by ₹ 148 per 19-kg cylinder and now in four rounds of increase, prices have gone up by ₹ 156 per bottle.

Commercial LPG now costs ₹ 1,754.50 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, ₹ 1,911.50 in Kolkata and ₹ 1,964.50 in Chennai.

The rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at ₹ 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) revise prices of ATF and cooking gas on the first of every month based on the average price of benchmark international fuel and foreign exchange rate. (PTI)

Petrol sales rebound in festival season, diesel demand continues to drop

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: India's petrol consumption soared 7.3 per cent in October on the back of increased demand from the start of festive season but diesel sales were down 3.3 per cent, preliminary data of state-owned firms showed on Friday.

Petrol sales of three state-owned firms, which control 90 per cent of the fuel market, rose to 3.1 million tonnes during October when compared to 2.87 million tonnes of consumption in the same month last year.

Diesel demand dropped 3.3 per cent to 6.7 million tonnes.

While petrol sales were up mostly due to an increase in use of personal vehicles as the festive season kicked in, diesel demand dropped due to lower demand from the agriculture sector owing to the extended rainy season.

Petrol and diesel sales have been tepid during the last few months as monsoon rains reduced vehicular movement and demand for the agriculture sector. Month-on-month petrol sales were up 7.8 per cent when compared to 2.86 million tonnes of consumption in September. Diesel demand was however almost 20 per cent more than 5.59 million tonnes of consumption in September.

Diesel is India's most consumed fuel, accounting for almost 40 per cent of all petroleum product con-

sumption. The transport sector accounts for 70 per cent of all diesel sales in the country. It is also the predominant fuel used in agriculture sectors, including in harvesters and tractors.

Consumption of petrol during October was 10.5 per cent more than in October 2022, and 32.8 per cent more than in Covid-marred October 2020.

Diesel demand was up 1.7 per cent over October 2022, and 12.6 per cent compared to October 2020.

Jet fuel (ATF) sales rose 2.5 per cent year-on-year to 6.47,700 tonnes during October 2024. But this was 2.6 per cent lower month-on-month when compared with 6,31,100 tonnes of fuel sold in September.

Like petrol and diesel, ATF demand too is now firmly above pre-Covid levels. ATF consumption was 11.5 per cent more than in October 2022, and 1.9 per cent more than in October 2020.

Cooking gas LPG sales were up 7.5 per cent year-on-year at 2.82 million tonnes in October 2024. LPG consumption was 13.1 per cent higher than in October 2022, and 19.1 per cent more than in October 2020. Month-on-month, LPG demand was up 3.5 per cent against 2.72 million tonnes of LPG consumption in September, the data showed. (PTI)



Nara Lokesh pitches Vizag to Google Cloud CEO for setting up data centre

SAN FRANCISCO (US), Nov 1: Andhra Pradesh's IT and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh has pitched port city of Vizag in his state for setting up a data centre to Google Cloud CEO, saying the new government in the state has taken various initiatives for supporting industry that will help it transform into a cloud infrastructure hub.

The state is focused on setting up data centres in Visakhapatnam and the minister invited Google Cloud to establish its data centre in the port city.

As part of his mission to attract investments during his ongoing visit to the United States, Lokesh visited the Google campus in San Francisco where he met Google Cloud chief executive Thomas Kurian, its global networking vice-president Bikas Koley, vice-president of its business applications RAO Surapruneni, and vice-president of Google Maps Chandu Thota.

The minister asked all these top echelons of Google to consider setting up of a data centre in Visakhapatnam under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

"Under the visionary leadership of the Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, the State Government is im-

plementing Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based e-governance and is implementing programmes like smart city.

"Also, Andhra Pradesh is the right place for investments," he told Google top bosses and asked them to consider providing services like AI tools and enterprise solutions to help digitalise government services for better public services.

Lokesh also sought the cooperation of Google with the State Government in real time management, disaster response and urban planning besides interlinking the smart cities with Google Maps which are part of Geospatial services.

He also wanted Google to hold AI-based training classes to the youth on digital education and for their skill development.

Responding to Lokesh's proposals, the Google top echelons said they will soon take a decision after holding discussions with their colleagues.

They said that their organisation got global recognition in online services like cloud-computing and digital advertising. (PTI)

GST records second-highest collection at ₹ 1.87 lakh cr in Oct driven by domestic sales

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Gross GST collection in October rose 9 per cent to over ₹ 1.87 lakh crore, the second-highest ever, on pickup in domestic sales and improved compliance.

The Central GST collection stood at ₹ 33,821 crore, State GST at ₹ 41,864 crore, Integrated IGT at ₹ 99,111 crore and cess at ₹ 12,550 crore during the month.

As per the government data released on Friday, the total gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue grew 8.9 per cent to ₹ 1,87,346 crore. In October 2023, the mop-up was at ₹ 1.72 lakh crore.

October 2024 recorded the second-best GST mop-up. The highest ever collection was in April 2024 at over ₹ 2.10 lakh crore.

During the month under review, GST from domestic transactions grew 10.6 per cent to ₹ 1.42 lakh crore, while revenues from tax on imports rose about 4 per cent to ₹ 45,096 crore.

Refunds worth ₹ 19,306 crore were issued during the month, registering 18.2 per cent growth over the year-ago period.

After adjusting refunds, net GST collection grew 8 per cent to over ₹ 1.68 lakh crore.

Deloitte India Partner MS Mani said the buoyancy in GST collections is on account of an excellent combination of festive season sales and increased compliance.

"The driver appears to be domestic supplies... While many large states have recorded an increase in GST revenue above 9 per cent, some of them and many of the smaller states have shown a below average increase, which would be an area of concern for those states," Mani said.

EY Tax Partner Saurabh Agarwal, however, said the single-digit growth in monthly GST collections signals a cooling-off period, indicating a potential slowdown in consumer spending in India, which surged in the previous fiscal year.

He said the November collections will show a better picture of the festive demand and the performance of the automobile sector will be crucial in determining the short-term trend.

"While the festive season is expected to boost collections, the



overall outlook for the near future remains cautious despite short-term uncertainties, the long-term prospects for GST collections remain promising due to India's expanding consumer base and the government's pro-growth policies," Agarwal said.

KPMG Indirect Tax Head & Partner, Abhishek Jain, said the collections depict the robustness of the economy.

Deloitte India, Partner and Leader, Indirect Tax, Mahesh Jais-

ing said "as we look ahead to the November GST Council meeting, key discussions on streamlining the tax rate structure and continued focus on trade facilitation areas are expected."

The GST Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister and comprising state counterparts, are slated to meet this month and take up the recommendations of the Group of Ministers (GoM) on rate rationalisation on over 100 items. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1.

Six employees of Dipankar's

The accused was at large since August and he was successful in evading arrest since the reports of a huge trading scam conducted by his company DB stock limited surfaced. It is learned that at least 21,000 people in Assam invested in Burman's company DB stock limited.

Hindu American groups praised

issue. I think that there's going to be a big change in this election coming from this," Sanduja said. Hindu Action also thanked Trump for his statement. "As you rightly pointed out, the situation of the Hindus in Bangladesh is precarious. Below is a summary head with regularly updated data on the atrocities against Hindus in Bangladesh," it said.

"Thank you President Trump for showing moral clarity and unequivocally condemning anti-Hindu pogroms in Bangladesh," said Indian-American Nathan Punwani. "Trump is a great man and, a great leader, full credit goes to him for wishing all the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jain Sikhs a very blessed Diwali. I think Trump really, really cares about these communities. He really understands what's going on in Bangladesh. He sees the ongoing persecution of Hindus. He is concerned about religious minorities that are suffering right now in that country," Sanduja said. "He has done such a great favour to millions of Americans who are concerned about human rights issues. To deliver on Diwali, such an auspicious day, such a magnificent thing. I'd like to say that many of us in the Hindu community played a small part in persuading President Trump's team, talking about this, giving briefings, and putting papers together," he said.

"We are seeing that 60 per cent of Indian Americans are supporting Kamala Harris. In the last election, I think 68 per cent supported Biden. There's a dip in support for the Democratic presidential candidate. Trump, last time around, had 22 per cent of the Indian American community. Now he's at 32 per cent. This is according to Carnegie Endowment's latest survey on Indian American attitudes," he said.

"With this statement, it's going to open up the eyes of more Indian Americans, Hindu Americans, and so on. They're going to give President Trump the vote," Sanduja said. (PTI)

Adani reduces power supply

After the tenure of the one-year supplementary deal, Adani has again started charging as per the PPA, the report said.

According to the PPA, coal prices are calculated based on the average price of two coal indices -- the Indonesian coal index and the Australian Newcastle index -- which increases the prices.

Adani said that during the period of suspension of supply, the company reserves its right to recover capacity payments under Section 13.2(1) of the PPA. Adani has been pressing the interim government to pay the dues since they took charge after the ouster of then-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. An interim government led by Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus was installed in Bangladesh on August 8. Gautam Adani, chairman of Adani Group, also wrote to Chief Adviser Yunus. (with additional inputs from PTI)

BJP backs CEM Ronghang's

accuse the KAAC of allegedly selling land to outsiders without any evidence. Another spokesperson, Chomang Kro, stated that the 'Purthimi Akemang' program is designed to provide land pattas to deserving villagers who are unable to apply for them on their own.

"This is a genuine effort to help villagers, not intended for any political gain. It is the APHLC that is trying to exploit this for political benefit by calling for an end to the scheme. If the scheme is halted, it will be the villagers who suffer," Kro said.

Meanwhile, Karbi Anglong Territorial Social Security Association (KATSSA), a social organisation in Karbi Anglong, has raised concerns about certain loopholes in the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) flagship program 'Purthimi Akemang,' which aims to distribute free land pattas to indigenous communities in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong.

Regarding the KAAC's initiative, KATSSA president Semson Engti, at a press conference held at Forest IB on Friday, stated that before the Lok Sabha elections in 2024, KATSSA submitted a memorandum to the KAAC CEM and to BJP East Karbi Anglong district committee president Roland Killing, requesting action on issuing land pattas to villagers, including those living across state and district lines. During that meeting, Killing assured the organisation that the BJP government would address these issues after the elections. KATSSA also demanded the withdrawal of land pattas being issued to non-indigenous communities. Engti noted that V-forms were being distributed at polling stations and party meetings.

"Distributing V-forms in party meetings is meant for political purposes. These meetings typically involve only party workers and supporters. Distributing B-forms at such meetings does not serve the interests of indigenous communities and facilitates access for all. Government officials should implement these schemes without party involvement," Engti stated.

He urged officials from the ARO office to directly visit villages and consult local headmen to identify genuine individuals from the scheduled tribes before distributing forms. Engti further stated that while the KAAC claimed that 5.61 lakh land pattas had been distributed previously, villagers have reported no records in the ARO office, with discrepancies in tag numbers and plot numbers.

"We demand that land pattas be distributed only to indigenous communities. The ruling party should not use this for publicity but should genuinely value the needs of villagers. The KAAC must take bold steps to protect the land of indigenous people," Engti asserted.

He also called for stricter oversight from the Taxation Department regarding trading licenses issued to non-scheduled tribe individuals operating businesses in the district. He highlighted that money laundering is flourishing without the department's knowledge, with outsiders engaging in such activities without proper permissions and documentation, leading to significant losses in revenue.

"The Taxation Department must regulate money laundering and enforce strict measures to curb these practices," Engti concluded.

System needed in which

and his Manipur to Mumbai Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, Gandhi has been interacting with a cross-section of people from mechanics and cobblers to labourers and bus drivers. He often posts videos of his numerous interactions and highlights the plight of various sections of society. (PTI)

Economist Bibek Debroy dies

in 2015 until June 2019. Debroy was awarded the Padma Shri in 2015. Prime Minister Narendra Modi described Debroy as "a towering scholar, well-versed in diverse domains like economics, history, culture, politics, spirituality and more".

"Through his works, he left an indelible mark on India's intellectual landscape. Beyond his contributions to public policy, he enjoyed working on our ancient texts, making them accessible to the youth," Modi said in his condolence message on X.

"I have known Dr. Debroy for many years. I will fondly remember his insights and passion for academic discourse. Saddened by his passing away. Condolences to his family and friends. Om Shanti." President Droupadi Murmu said in the demise of Debroy, the country has lost an eminent public intellectual who enriched diverse fields, from policy making to translating great scriptures.

"His understanding of India's social, cultural and economic landscape was exceptional. For his extraordinary contributions, he was honoured with Padma Shri. I convey my condolences to his family, friends and admirers," the President said in a post on X.

While India's G20 Sherpa and former CEO of NITI Aayog Amitabh Kant said the country has lost one of its "brightest minds", Congress leader Jairam Ramesh described Debroy as a "man of unusually wide-ranging interests" and one who had a skill for "lucid exposition".

Member of the PM's EAC member Sanjeev Sanyal said he has lost a "friend and a mentor". Debroy had worked at Presidency College, Kolkata; Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune; Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Delhi; and also as the Director of a Ministry of Finance/UNDP project on legal reforms. He authored/edited several books, papers and popular articles and has also been a consulting/contributing editor with several newspapers. In September, Debroy resigned as chancellor of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) after the Bombay High Court extended interim relief to Vice-Chancellor Ajit Ranade, who was earlier removed from his post.

He was appointed as chancellor of GIPE, a deemed to be university, in July. (PTI)

India commits to 30% protected

theme of "Meeting People's Needs through Sustainable Use and Sharing Benefits" includes five targets aimed at sustainably managing agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, and forests.

These areas are crucial for the livelihoods of rural communities, including farmers, herders, fishers, tribal people, and forest dwellers. These targets also cover sustainable use of wild species, management of ecosystem services, better access to green spaces for urban residents, fair sharing of biodiversity benefits, and encouraging public support for conservation.

The third theme of "Tools and Solutions for Implementation" includes ten targets focused on integrating biodiversity into broader development goals, promoting sustainable production and consumption, reducing waste and repurposing harmful subsidies, building skills, sharing knowledge, mobilising resources, and supporting inclusive, fair, and gender-responsive planning and decision-making in biodiversity efforts.

Under National Biodiversity Target 3, India aims to expand Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) to cover 30 per cent of the country's landscapes. This target emphasises the crucial role of communities in biodiversity conservation while ensuring sustainable use.

India's National Biodiversity Target 2 acknowledges widespread ecosystem degradation and aims for the effective restoration of at least 30 per cent of degraded terrestrial, inland water, coastal, and marine ecosystems by 2030. "Agricultural expansion, industrialisation, linear infrastructure development, mining, urbanisation, and other developmental activities, coupled with the overexploitation of natural ecosystems by resource-dependent communities, especially post-independence, have led to large-scale ecosystem degradation, reducing the ecosystem services they once provided. This makes the target a top priority for focused actions," the NBSAP said.

The NBSAP's Target 16 addresses overconsumption and waste generation as root causes of biodiversity loss. India has launched Mission Life to encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly lifestyles.

Adopted in 1992 to protect the world's biodiversity, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) requires countries to create an NBSAP, which is a key tool for conserving and sustainably using biodiversity at the national level. Countries are also required to report their progress every four years through national reports. (PTI)

Will not tolerate big brother

the Behali nominee was discussed at a meeting on October 18 in Guwahati that was attended by prominent Congress figures, including the General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) and the Secretary in charge of Assam, Jitendra Singh Alwar.

Borah backed this coalition manoeuvre because the CPIM (L) had claimed the seat. The Congress leader mentioned that the AICC had rejected the committee's recommendation.

Balipara Foundation announces 2024 awards

Honouring excellence in conservation and sustainable development

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: The Balipara Foundation announces the 12th Balipara Foundation Awards 2024, scheduled for November 27, 2024 in Guwahati.

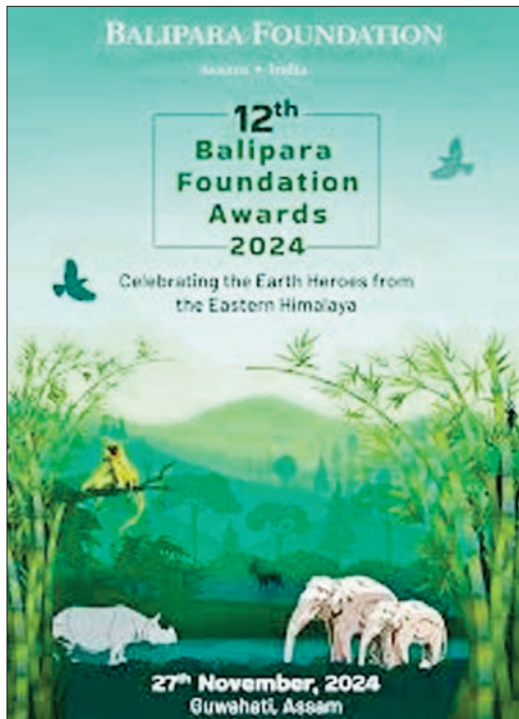
This year marks a milestone as the foundation celebrates 12 years of recognizing Earth Heroes across the Eastern Himalayan belt who have made significant contributions to the conservation and sustainable development of the region.

Since the inception of these awards, 154 recipients have been celebrated for their dedication to restoring natural assets, promoting biodiversity, and empowering local communities in the Eastern Himalayas. The Balipara Foundation Awards honor exceptional achievements across a range of impactful categories, from conservation leadership and community engagement to sustainable business practices and innovative environmental solutions.

This year's categories include the Rural Futures Rewilding Award, Naturenomics™ Award, Green Journalist Award, Green Guru Award, Young Naturalist Award, Food for the Future Award, Forest Guards & Rangers Award and Lifetime Service Award—each recognizing dedicated efforts to foster a sustainable future for the Eastern Himalayas.

"Every year, the Balipara Foundation Awards shine a light on the extraordinary efforts of those who are committed to protecting our planet. These awards not only celebrate achievements but also inspire others to join the movement towards a sustainable future", said Ranjit Barthakar, Founder, Balipara Foundation.

The award ceremony is set to be an inspiring evening of recognition, collaboration and commitment to a sustainable future, joined by stakeholders from across the globe.



Haflong hosts march & pledge; Guv Acharya leads tributes in Imphal; Gossaigaon marks the day with 'Unity Run'; Sonitpur observes with pledge ceremonies

National Unity Day observed

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Nov 1: In a vibrant display of solidarity and commitment to national integrity, National Unity Day, also known as Rashtriya Ekta Divas, was celebrated with great fervor on Thursday. The event commenced with a spirited march from Lal Field to the NCHAC parking field, symbolising the collective strength of our diverse nation.

This year's celebration marked the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the eminent architect of India's unity. A ceremonial pledge-taking event was organised, where attendees reaffirmed their dedication to maintaining the nation's integrity and promoting harmony among its citizens.

The celebration was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including the minister for Power, Nandita Gollisa; chairman of NCHAC, Mohet Hojai; district commissioner Simanta Kumar Das, ACS; and superintendent of police Mayank Kumar, IPS. They were joined by officials from various departments, all united in their commitment to fostering a spirit of unity and inclusiveness. The day poignantly reminded citizens of Sardar Patel's vision for a united India and the importance of strengthening national bonds.

Our Bureau adds: Assam and Manipur Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya, along with officers and staff of the Governor's Secretariat of Manipur, paid floral tributes to the Iron Man of India, Bharat Ratna Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the nation's first Home minister who worked relentlessly for the unity and integrity of India, on his birth anniversary celebrated as National Unity Day at the Durbar Hall of Raj Bhavan in Imphal on Thursday.



Paying rich tributes, the Governor remembered the role of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was instrumental in strengthening the unity of the country. He said that Sardar Patel was known for making important decisions without wasting time. He also noted that Sardar Patel unified the nation by annexing princely states after independence. The Governor further stated that Patel was highly inspirational and that his life is a source of knowledge. He added that the Unity Run, organised on the occasion of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birth anniversary, is an opportunity to celebrate unity amidst diversity and work together for the betterment of the nation.

Our Gossaigaon correspondent adds: The 31st Battalion of Sashstra Seema Bal (SSB), Gossaigaon, observed Rashtriya Ekta Divas with great enthusiasm and commitment on Thursday.

The celebrations took place at the Battalion Headquarters, its Border Outposts (BOPs), and the deployed Election 788/E-Coy Batu, Lonere, and 788/D-Coy Boisar in Maharashtra.

The observance began with per-

sonnel taking the pledge of unity, reaffirming their commitment to national integration and harmony. This was followed by a 'Unity Run', which saw enthusiastic participation from all unit members, symbolising their dedication to the nation's unity and integrity.

Dilip Kumar Sarkar, deputy commandant, along with other personnel, participated in the events, emphasising the importance of unity in diversity. The activities aimed to foster a sense of togetherness and solidarity among the personnel, reflecting the true spirit of Rashtriya Ekta Divas.

The 31st Battalion SSB Gossaigaon's observance of Rashtriya Ekta Divas was a resounding success, reinforcing the values of national unity and collective strength.

Our Tezpur correspondent adds: With the rest of the nation, the Sonitpur district administration also paid homage to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, fondly known as the Iron Man of India, on his birth anniversary on Thursday, celebrated as Rashtriya Ekta Divas (National Unity Day). On this occasion, a 'Rashtriya Ekta

Divas Pledge' ceremony was held at the District Commissioner's Office in Sonitpur, where district commissioner Ankur Bharali paid floral tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his 150th birth anniversary, honouring his legacy as India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Home minister. He also administered the 'Rashtriya Ekta' oath to officers and employees.

Earlier, addressing the officers and employees, he highlighted the great statesman's pivotal role in India's independence struggle and his unparalleled work to unify the nation post-independence. District commissioner Bharali also mentioned the government's plan to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of the great leader with a two-year-long program starting this year. He further informed that the district administration had organised a 'Run for Unity' event on Tuesday in connection with the celebration. It is worth mentioning that, along with the District Commissioner's Office, various government departments of the district also took the 'Rashtriya Ekta Pledge' in their respective offices.

Fire claims one life in Sivasagar blaze

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 1: A devastating fire engulfed several houses near Sivasagar Police Station on Thursday night, killing at least one person and injuring several others before fire tenders could douse the flames. Ram Charan Rai, a street vendor, died before rescuers reached the spot. He lived as a tenant in one of Pradip Dutta's rented houses. Several LPG cylinders burst due to the fire, making it difficult for firefighters to contain the blaze. A Magistrate and police officials arrived on the scene immediately to oversee the rescue operation. The cause of the fire has not yet been ascertained. The administration's warning against the use of high-intensity firecrackers had fallen on deaf ears, as no one bothered to use green crackers during last night's Diwali festivities, with firecrackers booming until late.

Accident claims life in Kachugaon

HT Correspondent

GOSSAIGAON, Nov 1: In a tragic road accident at Kachugaon on National Highway 27 near the Mahamaya Temple under Gossaigaon subdivision, a woman was killed on the spot, and two others sustained serious injuries in the early hours of Friday.

The incident occurred around 9:30 am on Friday when the woman, along with her children, was on her way to fish at Kachugaon on a bicycle. She was hit by a private vehicle bearing registration number AS 01 BR 9808, which was heading towards Guwahati.

The impact killed the woman on the spot, while her son and daughter were critically injured. Locals immediately rushed the injured to Kachugaon Primary Health Centre, but seeing the severity of their injuries, doctors referred them to Kokrajhar Medical College for better treatment. Currently, both are in critical condition and undergoing treatment.

Drug dealer Dipankar Maan nabbed in police operation

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Nov 1: On Thursday, Margherita police apprehended a youth with drugs from his house located at Number 1 Makum Pathar under Margherita Police Station in Tinsukia district.

The apprehended drug dealer has been identified as Dipankar Maan, who has been running the illegal drug trade from his home for many years.

A total of 36.88 grams of banned drugs were seized from Dipankar Maan's possession, concealed on the bonnet of his Tata Nexon vehicle bearing registration number AS 23T 5218.

Dipankar Maan was caught with drugs in a secret operation carried out by Margherita police.

The operation was led by Di-



nesh Pratap Singh Rathod (IPS), Margherita co-district police officer, and Protap Gogoi, officer-in-charge of Margherita Police Station.

As of filing this report, drug dealer Dipankar Maan has been brought to Margherita Police Station, and further investigation is ongoing.

Kali Puja brings devotees together across state

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 1: The Shantipara Second Lane Kali Puja is one of the prominent Kali Pujas in Dibrugarh. This year, they have chosen 'Swastik' as their theme.

With all traditional rituals, the Kali Puja was performed at the puja pandal on Thursday night. "We started the Kali Puja in 2007, and since then, we have been observing it traditionally. This year, our theme is based on the 'Swastik'. It is one of the popular Pujas in the Shantipara area, and every year, devotees gather here during the puja," said Jeet Roy, one of the organisers.

He added, "Since 2007, we have been organising the Kali Puja here, and people have appreciated our themes."

"This time, we have sponsorship from Italica Tiles, and on November 2, we will organise a cultural program with Dibrugarh Municipal mayor Dr Saikat Patra and deputy mayor Ujjal Phukan as guests," he said. Around 150 participants from various groups will perform at the cultural event on Saturday at the puja pandal.

Our Demow correspondent adds: Kali Puja

celebrations began in Demow and its surrounding areas on Thursday. The idols of Goddess Kali were brought to the pandals of Demow on Thursday morning. Organised under the patronage of Sri Sri Sitala Mandir and in association with the people of Demow for the third consecutive year, the Kali Puja celebration started in front of the Sri Sri Sitala Mandir premises and will continue for two days. The Kali Puja held near the State Bank of India (SBI), Demow branch, is the oldest in the Demow area. Kali Puja is also celebrated in Demow Santipur. Banana trees were placed in front of business establishments in Demow on Thursday, and earthen lamps were lit in the businesses and homes in Demow and nearby areas on Thursday evening. Diwali, being the festival of lights, saw colourful lights illuminating business establishments and houses on Thursday evening. Children were also seen bursting crackers on Thursday evening.

Our Sivasagar correspondent adds: Thousands thronged the historic Kalibari Kali Mandir on Thursday and the day before on the auspicious occasion of Kali Puja, performed with tra-

ditional rituals every year. The devotees lit earthen lamps and offered sacrificial goats, pigeons, ducks, white gourd, etc., on the altar of the century-old Ma Kali's stone idol, one of the oldest in the state. The head priest, Navajyoti Sarma, performed the puja. The puja committee did an appreciable job by offering 'bhog' (khiichdi) to all devotees who visited the mandir.

Kali Puja in Kalibari here holds special significance for devotees as the stone idol was unearthed in the very spot in 1925 where the mandir now stands. According to elderly members of the committee, a woman from the Manorama Phukan family felt something hard while mopping the front yard of her house seven decades ago. Later that night, Goddess Kali appeared to her husband, Birajananda Boruah, the owner of the plot, in his dream. Boruah told his neighbors about the dream, and they subsequently recovered the massive single stone cut-out Kali idol (5.5' x 6.5') inches from beneath the surface of the land. The people of the locality began worshipping the idol, which, over time, has become a center of Shakti worship.

OBITUARY



Former assistant teacher of Thanuram Gogoi HS School, vice president of Rangpur Sahitya Sabha, and a popular lady of the town, Anjali Hazarika (79), died of a prolonged illness in her rented house in ASTC Tinali here on Thursday. She was actively associated with Parag Chaliha's cultural troupe as a singer and the Sahitya Sabha as a writer. She leaves behind three daughters and their families.

Hem Barua, president, Jeuti Bhunya, secretary, Rangpur Sahitya Sabha, and the Brihat Sivasagar Press Club have mourned her death.

Residents alarmed by land purchases by Bengali-speaking minority

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, Nov 1: Indigenous residents of Jaluguti, Tukunabori, Saru-Chakabaha, Boramari, and Majarbari under Mikirbitha Police Station face an existential crisis as Bengali-speaking religious minority people, often referred to as 'Miya', have reportedly been purchasing lands in these areas for an extended period. Allegations suggest that numerous Bengali-speaking minority individuals are acquiring land from indigenous residents through brokers, permanently settling there, and stirring significant discontent across the district.

Local residents claim that land brokers first purchase indigenous lands at lower prices, exploiting the sellers' financial constraints, only to later resell these lands to Bengali-speaking religious minority people at higher prices. Additionally, they express concerns that this group is posing a threat to local agricultural lands. Many locals fear that, if the trend continues, both residential and agricultural lands will be lost to these buyers through intermediaries.

In response, residents recently submitted a memorandum to the district commissioner and the local MLA, demanding rigorous verification of the citizenship status of the purchasers. In particular, residents of Tukunabori village are concerned that numerous individuals of Bengali origin have constructed houses on farmland in Baotali Pathar and Majarbari-Jaluguti Kissam. They urge that measures be implemented to restrict non-residents from buying, selling, or living in these areas in the future.

The memorandum, however, has reportedly stalled in official channels, attributed to the recent transfer of the revenue circle officer. Meanwhile, residents from Rangdalai and Majarbari villages have submitted a petition to the district commissioner and local MLA, Ramakant Deuri, requesting decisive action.

Moghai Oja Kalakshetra former president Umesh Baruah passes away

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: Former president of Moghai Oja Kalakshetra, companion of Srimanta Sankardev Sangha and

noted social worker Umesh Baruah passed away on Thursday at around 9 am at his residence at Asoybari village.

The passing away of Baruah, who was also the former employee of ONGC cast a pall of gloom in the area. Well wishers in around Asoybari village thronged Baruah's residence as soon as the news of his demise broke out.

Office bearers of Moghai Oja Kalakshetra Assam, East Jorhat Press Club, Hatigarh High School, Hatigarh Sports Association, Hatigarh Samilita Yuva Mancha, Bachapathar branch of Sankardev Sangha, Moghai Oja Shishu Niketan, BJP Sipahi Khola Mandal Samitee 29 Sankar Jyoti primary school condoled the demise of Baruah.

Baruah is survived by his wife, son, daughter in law and two grandchildren.

Sivasagar students rally for 'My Bharat'



HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 1: Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK), Sivasagar, organised a road safety, cleanliness, and patriotism awareness drive with volunteers and students from various institutions on Wednesday to mark the first anniversary of the 'My Bharat' app launch by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

NYK volunteers and students, holding banners and placards,

urged everyone to keep the environment clean and pollution-free as part of the 'Diwali with My Bharat' program being implemented across the country.

They distributed petitions and awareness flyers among pedestrians and vehicle drivers on the road. They also encouraged two-wheeler riders to wear helmets, drivers to use seatbelts, and everyone to obey traffic laws. Additionally, they requested people to

avoid high-intensity fireworks that can cause noise and air pollution during Diwali.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the My Bharat portal on October 29, 2023, as an initiative to raise awareness about cleanliness and combat environmental pollution," said Papai Das, district youth officer, Nehru Yuva Kendra. He also urged the district's youth to join the My Bharat portal.

Margherita woman conquers Everest Base Camp

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Nov 1: Dr Divya Singh Borthakur, medical superintendent of Central Hospital, NEC CIL, Margherita, became the first Assamese woman from Margherita to reach Everest Base Camp, a journey which took place from September 26 to October 5.

Dr Divya Singh Borthakur was accompanied by Sangujacta Sharma Borkotaky and Dr Rima Borthakur Goswami, successfully completing an extraordinary trek to Everest Base Camp, which stands at an impressive elevation of 5,364 meters. In partnership with VOJAS Adventures, they embarked on this 9-day journey, starting

from Paiya, Nepal, and triumphantly reached their destination on October 5, 2024.

While briefing media persons in Margherita on Thursday, Dr Divya Singh Borthakur said that she learned mountaineering and trekking from YouTube channels and also practices yoga, gymnastics, and aerobics, which enabled her to reach Everest Base Camp at 5,364 meters.

Dr Divya Singh Borthakur stated that she is the first woman from Margherita to reach Everest Base Camp and appealed to the youth of Margherita to consider mountaineering and trekking as a career.



AAUBC demands action against anti-Brahmin remarks

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 1: On the occasion of its second anniversary, the All Assam United Brahmin Council (AAUBC), through an executive meeting held at the Amolapaty Hindu Dharma Namghar premises in Sivasagar on Wednesday, condemned the offensive anti-Brahmin comments made on the social media platform Facebook by individuals with criminal mentalities over a considerable period. The meeting, chaired by Manoj Kumar Borthakur, passed a resolution to lodge an FIR against an individual from the 'Hanhi Furti Group', who recently posted an abusive message on Facebook. The committee demanded stringent legal action against the individual and sent a petition to the chief minister through the SP of Sivasagar.

The meeting also resolved to organise a state-level

convention for Brahmins residing in the state on December 1, where a full-fledged state committee will be formed to determine future actions. Addressing the members, Mani Pathak stated, "Enough is enough," adding that the silence and forbearance of Brahmins have been misinterpreted as weakness by certain divisive elements. Arabinda Baruah, treasurer of AAUBC, emphasised the need for legal action against anti-social elements attempting to disrupt communal harmony. Gopal Pande, secretary of AAUBC, remarked that Brahmins everywhere are marginalised and deprived of their rightful place in democratic India, asserting that it is now time to voice their concerns and protest. The meeting also included speeches from Jugal Sharma (Demow) and Abhinav Kashyap.

Later, the committee submitted a complaint to the OC of Sivasagar Police Station.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Silent gratitude isn't much use to anyone.
-Gertrude Stein

Trump's Diwali message to Modi

Republican candidate Donald Trump's Diwali message, just four days before the crucial November 5 presidential elections in the USA, has enormous significance, which goes beyond the possible impact on Hindu-Americans voters on the polling day. The content of the message will have a big impact on Bangladesh politics in the event of a Trump victory. This message was the first comprehensive reaction by any political leader of the USA on the situation in Bangladesh after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on August 5 and her fleeing to India the same day. So far, the Biden government is dealing favourably with the interim government in Bangladesh headed by Dr. Muhammad Yunus, a personal friend of the Clintons, and no US Democratic Party leader has spoken against the attacks on the Hindu minorities in the country since August 5. The Hindus constitute eight per cent of the current population of Bangladesh. The Republican candidate has made it clear that he has no confidence in the interim government and the country is in chaos. Charging the Biden administration for being silent spectators to the killing of minorities, Trump mentions 'it would have never happened on [his] watch'.

The latest political scenario in Bangladesh is in critical state. The interim government has decided to disallow Awami League from political activities, though the BNP is not agreeable to this decision. BNP wants a crippled Awami League to participate in the elections so that the party can claim legitimacy after coming to power in the new national elections. Then the Jatiyo Party, an important political party after BNP, was attacked and its central office was burnt on Wednesday, October 30 by the anti-quota students' body, and this was done openly by giving a call through its Facebook page. Interestingly, Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has cordial relations with Narendra Modi, is looking for the victory of Donald Trump for different reasons. Russian official sources do not admit that, but the trends are discernible. President Putin feels that Trump in power will help Russia in the Ukraine war as Trump is sure to lessen US commitment to Ukraine and President Zelensky. In fact, Trump distrusts Zelensky. He is of the view that the Ukraine president is wasting NATO funds in a long-drawn war which he cannot win. As against this, China is rooting for the Democratic Party candidate Kamala Harris, though Chinese President Xi Jinping has not officially said anything. China's worry is about further hike in tariff rate on imports from China by the US. As the proponent of Make America Great Again (MAGA), Trump is insistent on this and the supply of semiconductor chips. On both issues, Trump is expected to be stiffer compared to Joe Biden. Taiwan and Asia Pacific will come later. China's economic goals will be greatly disturbed by Trump, if he comes to power, Chinese policy makers feel.

The interim government is very eager to have political discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but the Indian PM is stalling it. He is also waiting for the November 5 results, looking for a victory for Donald Trump. The Republican victory will be a double bonanza for him politically. Trump will be soft on all human rights issue and will be of help India in getting over the delicate Canada problem knocking on the Government of India's doorstep, screaming the alleged involvement of the Indian Union home minister Amit Shah himself in the extrajudicial extraterritorial murder of Sikh separatist Nijjar. As regards Bangladesh, Trump is sure to make life difficult for Dr. Yunus, a close friend of Hillary Clinton, whom Trump despises the most among the Democratic Party leaders. The Indian Prime Minister cannot wish for a better outcome than Donald Trump's victory at the decisive November 5 polls.

India-China relations: A fragile thaw amidst persistent challenges

In a development that may ease tensions along the volatile eastern Ladakh border, India and China have recently reached an agreement on phased disengagement and patrolling procedures in the contested Depsang and Demchok areas. This breakthrough, following over four years of military confrontation, signals cautious progress in managing a prolonged standoff along one of the world's most complex borders. However, as India reflects on this diplomatic step, it faces pressing questions about Beijing's commitment to upholding such agreements, especially given China's history of territorial aggression and strategic maneuvering in the region. While the move toward disengagement appears promising, India must remain vigilant, keeping in mind the deep-seated trust deficit between the two nations.

Unresolved tensions: Beyond the Disengagement Accord

Although recent talks have yielded this phased disengagement, the underlying issues plaguing India-China relations remain unresolved. Both nations have yet to restore ties to their earlier warmth, demonstrated during the informal summits in Wuhan and Mamallapuram in 2018 and 2019. The recent bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping, held on the sidelines of the BRICS summit, lacked the cordiality of these earlier encounters. Despite superficial progress, both leaders are acutely aware of the chasm in mutual trust and the significant diplomatic ground still to cover.

For New Delhi, the approach to China has evolved dramatically since the Ladakh incursions in 2020. The Indian leadership now embraces a more calculated stance, understanding that China's territorial posturing poses an enduring challenge to India's sovereignty. The Depsang and Demchok agreements, while a step forward, represent only an initial step in India's roadmap, which also emphasizes de-escalation and eventual de-induction of troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). New Delhi's red line remains firm: any lasting resolution must prioritize "peace and tranquility on the border." India, therefore, is unlikely to lower its guard anytime soon, acutely aware that the disengagement agreements may not preclude future transgressions.

Broader regional implications and strategic concerns The India-China confrontation is part of a larger boundary dispute spanning the 3,488 km LAC. The Ladakh standoff reflects a complex pattern of Chinese encroachment, marked by a recurring tactic of incremental territorial grabs or "salami-slicing." China's assertiveness is not limited to India's borders but extends to Bhutan as well, as evidenced by its ongoing attempt to dominate disputed territories in the Doklam plateau. In 2017, the Indian Army intervened to block Chinese road construction near the Sikkim-Bhutan-Tibet trijunction. Although this led to a 73-day standoff and eventual disengagement, China's permanent troop deployment in northern Doklam signals a lingering challenge to regional stability. This pattern of incremental territorial aggression illustrates China's broader strategy to assert dominance in South Asia. The incursions of 2020 were only the latest iteration of these tactics, designed to unsettle the status quo and test India's resolve. The deadly clash in Galwan on June 15, 2020, which resulted in 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese casualties, highlighted the severe consequences of these tactics, plunging bilateral ties into a deep freeze. This experience underscores the need for India to tread cautiously as it navigates the complex dynamics of its relationship with Bei-



The Pakistan factor and the China-Pakistan nexus

India's challenges along the LAC are compounded

by the ongoing tensions with Pakistan along its western

border. The China-Pakistan alliance presents New Delhi with a formidable two-front strategic threat. With nuclear-armed Pakistan posing a constant challenge, India must carefully balance its engagement with Beijing to avoid becoming bogged down in regional conflicts that would stifle its aspirations for global influence.

The China-Pakistan axis amplifies New Delhi's strategic concerns, necessitating a calibrated approach in dealing with Beijing. As a countermeasure, Prime Minister Modi and President Xi recently agreed to resume the meetings of the Special Representatives (SRs) mechanism, a diplomatic framework established in 2003 to oversee border management and facilitate dialogue on the boundary issue.

While the SR mechanism has produced 22 rounds of discussions so far, its efficacy remains uncertain. The long-standing boundary dispute, compounded by China's reluctance to reach a conclusive settlement, limits the SR mechanism's impact to maintaining an open line of communication rather than achieving a substantive resolution.

The challenge of mistrust and India's evolving foreign policy

The boundary dispute with China highlights the

broader trust deficit between the two nations, exacerbated by China's failure to uphold previous agreements aimed at maintaining

peace and stability along the border. For New Delhi,

this lack of trust has significant implications for its foreign policy. In response, India has strategically deepened ties with the United States and other members of the Quad, positioning itself as a critical player in the Indo-Pacific region. China, viewing the Quad as a countermeasure to its regional dominance, closely monitors India's alliances, which it perceives as threats to its strategic interests.

Despite the geopolitical rivalry, India recognizes the need to engage pragmatically with Beijing. The bilateral economic relationship is a case in point. India's trade dependency on China remains high, with imports from China totaling \$101.7 billion in 2023-24, dwarfing exports of \$16.7 billion. This trade imbalance, while a source of economic vulnerability, highlights the complexity of India's position.

While domestic policies have aimed to reduce dependence on Chinese imports, particularly following the border standoff, the reality is that India's industrial sectors, including telecommunications, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals, are still heavily reliant on Chinese supplies.

Military vigilance and strategic autonomy

As New Delhi engages in delicate diplomacy, it is equally committed to maintaining a robust military presence along the LAC. The government has signaled a shift towards a more assertive defense posture, unwilling to allow China to exploit perceived weaknesses. Since the Galwan incident, India has intensified its military preparations along the border, reinforcing its strategic installations and increasing patrols. This approach underscores India's resolve to counter Chinese advances, with the recent disengagement agreement serving as a step toward stability, not complacency.

Simultaneously, India's military strategy also emphasizes the need for de-escalation and dialogue to prevent further confrontation. The phased disengagement agreement represents a tentative move in this direction, allowing both nations to maintain a working relationship while continuing to address outstanding issues through diplomatic channels.

Balancing economic realities with national security

Despite India's desire to achieve economic self-sufficiency, the trade relationship with China remains asymmetrical, favoring Beijing. Recent policy initiatives have sought to reduce reliance on Chinese imports, but the results have been limited, and sectors such as electronics, machinery, and pharmaceuticals still rely heavily on Chinese supplies. This dependence has forced India to balance economic pragmatism with national security considerations, recognizing that decoupling from China is not an immediate option.

India's economic strategy, however, remains focused on fostering alternative supply chains and diversifying its trade partnerships. The "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India) initiative aims to enhance domestic production capacities and reduce the need for imports.

While progress in this area has been gradual, the initiative reflects India's commitment to strengthening its economic resilience and reducing its strategic vulnerability.

A path forward: Diplomacy and defense in equal measure

The future of India-China relations hinges on a balanced approach that combines diplomatic engagement with military vigilance. While the phased disengagement represents a modest step forward, India cannot afford to let its guard down. The territorial dispute with China, along with the broader strategic rivalry, demands a nuanced approach that prioritizes national security while keeping the door open for dialogue.

At the same time, India's economic dependence on China presents an ongoing challenge. To address this, India must continue to diversify its supply chains and strengthen domestic industries to reduce its vulnerability to geopolitical disruptions. By pursuing this dual approach, India can work towards maintaining a stable relationship with China, while safeguarding its own strategic interests.

The recent disengagement agreement is a welcome development, but it does not signify the end of India's challenges along the LAC. As New Delhi navigates its relationship with Beijing, it must remain cautious, mindful of the risks of over-reliance on diplomatic assurances alone. For India, the path forward involves a careful balancing act, one that combines economic pragmatism, military vigilance, and diplomatic engagement.

This multifaceted approach, grounded in strategic caution, will be essential in managing the complex dynamics of the India-China relationship and preserving India's long-term security and stability. *(The writer can be reached at dipakkurmigptd@gmail.com)*

India-China border issue is sensitive, will take long time for an agreement

By: Ashok B Sharma

The relationship between India and China is a contentious issue. The boundary issue between the two nations is a longstanding problem. China has the concept of expansionism. It does not follow the Mac-Mahan Line and Johnson Line drawn by the erstwhile British colonial rulers in consultation with relevant parties. But in regard to Myanmar, it agrees on Mac Mahan Line, not in the case with India. As a result in 1962, China defied these two lines, invaded and occupied large chunks of Indian territory. Thus the Line of Actual Control (LAC) was drawn between the two countries. Still not satisfied with the occupation, Beijing claims parts of Indian territory like Ladakh and Arunachal as its own. Chinese expansionism is not the concept of Chinese Communist Party alone, it existed with the imperialist dynasties and the Nationalist Kuomintang Party also.

Beijing refuses to accept the LAC and the buffer zone between the two countries. There has been skirmishes along the LAC many times. The recent one was in June 2020 when COVID pandemic was at its peak around the globe. Incidentally Xi Jinping visited India in 2019 to have an interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu a few months before the military standoff at Galwan valley in June 2020.

The incident at Galwan valley took a toll of 20 Indian brave hearts and killed or injured about 40 Chinese soldiers. Number of agreements were signed at Mahabalipuram. Modi and Xi Jinping never interacted since then till the BRICS meeting this month.

Just before the 16th BRICS Summit at Kazan in Russia, New Delhi and China resolved to disengage their troops at both sides of only Demchok and Depsang plain and not other friction points. Troops of both sides will fall back to positions they held in April 2020, and they will patrol areas where they patrolled till April 2020. This was a gesture to

have peace and tranquillity at the border. China probably wants to concentrate on Taiwan issue at the moment rather than focusing on boundary dispute with India. Another thing was to have an interaction with Modi at the sidelines of the BRICS Summit.

Disengagement of troops have already begun at Demchok and Depsang plain and is slated to be completed by this month end. But the moot question remains is what about other areas like Gogra-Hot Springs in Ladakh. Intelligence sources say that China continues to hold large swathes of India territory to the north in the Depsang plains.

A similar agreement should be worked out for in Arunachal Pradesh where a standoff developed in Yangtse, Asaphila and Subansi valleys. Depsang is critical for India since it provides access to the strips at Daulat Beg Oldie and prevents Chinese troops from threatening vital logistics centres in the area. Demchok is divided in two by the LAC; India controls the western part, which is claimed by China.

According to sources, in Depsang area, the Indian troops should now be able to patrol beyond the 'bottle-neck' area as the Chinese had been preventing Indian troops from accessing the patrolling points that lay beyond. In Demchok, Indian troops should now be able to get to the patrolling points at Track Junction and Charding Nullah.

Next after disengagement, the issues of de-escalation, sanctity of buffer zones and border management remain. The issues remain to be resolved when the Special Representatives of both sides - India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi meet.

After the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement, "PM Modi welcomed the recent agreement on complete disengagement and resolution of the issues that arose in the India-China border areas in 2020. He emphasized the need to handle differences and disputes re-

sponsibly, ensuring they do not disrupt peace and tranquillity. Both leaders agreed that the Special Representatives on the boundary question will meet soon to manage peace and work toward a fair, reasonable, and mutually acceptable solution. Additionally, dialogue mechanisms at the Foreign Minister and official levels will be employed to stabilize and rebuild bilateral relations.

During the bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Kazan, Russia, on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "We are having a formal meeting after 5 years. We believe that the India-China relationship is very important not only for our people but also for global peace, stability and progress. We welcome the consensus reached on the issues that have arisen in the last 4 years on the border. Maintaining peace and stability on the border should remain our priority. Mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual sensitivity should remain the basis of our relations."

The issues need to be resolved are - What would happen to the buffer zones like the site of a memorial in Rezang La to war hero Shaitan Singh, a Param Vir Chakra awardee? Will Indian graziers once again be given the right to access traditional grazing grounds in Mukpa Re, Helmet Top, Rezang La, Table Top, Rinchen La and Gurung Hills in Chushul? Can Indian troops be able to patrol up to the claim line in Depsang to five patrolling points pass the Bottleneck junction, three patrolling points in Demchok, Finger3 and Finger 8 in Pangong Tso and three patrolling in Gogra-Hot Spring area as they were able to do earlier?

So there is nothing to be ballistic about the positivity of the India-China statement on LAC issued in October 21. China has conceded a small portion, it has kept under its control other Indian land. Indian negotiators have to pursue these remaining issues in the coming talks. China has the policy of two steps forward and one step backward to confuse India. Indian Government should not fall in that trap. *(IPA Service)*

Home Minister Amit Shah's Kolkata visit on October 27 disappoints Bengal BJP leaders

By: Arun Srivastava

West Bengal has been favourite tourist destination for Narendra Modi's most reliable lieutenant and Chanakya of BJP, Home Minister Amit Shah. But Sunday, October 27, visit was different. He used the occasion of an official engagement to launch the election campaign though the assembly elections will be held in April/ May 2026.

But what was most noticeable was this visit did not augur well for him. The agitating junior doctors as also the common citizen of the state are feeling insulted by his indifferent attitude towards the prevailing political situation and his refusal to give a hearing to the parents of the raped and killed woman medic of R G Kar Hospital.

After assured of a patient hearing by Shah, which was conveyed to her parents by the state BJP leaders, her father had made a written request to him for "in-sight, guidance, and help". He was quite sure of a meeting which would have eased the family of "immense mental pressure and helplessness" under which they were going. Father of the medic wrote; "I am the father of Abhaya, and I am writing to request an appointment with you at your convenience or at any other location you may suggest. After that heinous unforeseen incident happened to our daughter, we are going through tremendous mental pressure and feeling helpless now".

Happless father nursed the belief that Shah's experience and guidance would be invaluable in the situation. He wrote; "I, along with my wife, want to meet you to discuss a few things regarding the situation and pray for your guidance and help. I would be truly grateful for the opportunity to speak with you and gain your insights on the issue, as I believe your experience and guidance would be invaluable".

But apparently Shah was so captivated by his electoral priorities and compulsions that he preferred to ignore his request. Neither the office of Shah nor the state BJP leaders apprised the father of the reason. Till Shah left for Delhi the father of Abhaya was expecting a hearing.

Nevertheless, some state BJP leaders feel that there are at least two major reasons for Shah distancing from medic's parents. It is worth recalling that just after the gruesome incident which took place on August 9, Shah had signalled the state leaders to take up the issue seriously.

The BJP leaders are not so specific, but confide that Shah nursed the feeling that father of the medic was trying to politicise the issue and this would prove to be detrimental to the party. Already the CBI is at work

and the Supreme Court was also seized with the task. If he has some additional information and material he could have apprised him and for this certainly there was no need for a hearing.

There is also a lurking apprehension that he is being used by some elements opposed to BJP. The leaders cite the statement of a junior doctor, who was also part of the protest movement, "The parents have every right to seek justice. We will also continue our demands to seek justice for Abhaya", to express their apprehensions.

Shah's voyage as usual had the titillating element. He made a solemn promise to the people of Bengal to change the power structure and bring BJP in power. The most ridiculous observation he made at the official bash was the state is still wit-

nessing massive infiltration and the BJP government will end infiltration and corruption by 2026.

Nevertheless the question that is making rounds in the political circle and has turned the original state BJP leaders restless is, what made Shah to formally launch election campaign in the state. He ought to have devoted his precious time in the neighbouring Jharkhand, where Modi has his personal interest at stake, he has been devoting time in Bengal. It raises the question, whether everything is politically correct in the party. Some leaders point out that for some time a major chunk of the turnout BJP leaders were planning to go

back to their parent party, the TMC of Mamata. If they really desert just ahead of the assembly election, the BJP will have a big crisis.

Yet another piece of information is quite alarming. Subhendu Adhikari and his close associates have of late been feeling sidelined in the decision making process. Central leadership has also been cold shouldering them. A section of these leaders have been jockeying with the idea to float a separate party and enter into electoral alliance with the Congress and even CPI(M). Once they leave the BJP, their acceptability graph will rise in the political circle. These leaders nurse the view that the BJP does not have a future in the state and failure of the RSS and BJP to exploit peoples' anguish arising out of murder of medic has simply endorsed their perception.

These leaders are also betrayed at the failure of central leaders to protect the citizenship

right of the millions of Bangladeshi Hindus who settled in the state before 1971. Though RSS has been trying to make the security of the Hindus in that country as its main election agenda in 2026 assembly election, it was not concerned of the rights of those who are settled here for decades and have become the integral part of the Bengali society.

These leaders feel that the Shah's promise to stop infiltration at the Indo-Bangladesh border if BJP wins Bengal in 2026 has no relevance. He has been making this promise ever since Modi came to power and he became the home minister. But he has in true sense failed miserably. They point out if he has really been serious and sincere to stop it he could being the home minister should have issued strict orders for BSF and other forces to stop it at any cost. If they seek to know for how long he would play with the sentiments of the people.

Their questioning Shah's moves and intentions echoes Mamata's allegation that Modi-Shah were ill treating the state and denying the benefits to the people of the state. They also point out Shah's statement that funds sent by the Modi government are routed to corrupt Trinamool leaders. "Mamata Didi talks about injustice in MGN-REGA. You (Mamata) were part of UPA. But now in the NDA regime, Modi, in the last ten years, has sent Rs 56,000crore for NREGA." But at the same time underline his observation: "those who have been getting hundred days of work should be told in clear words of the benefits they were getting from BJP and should also be told that once party comes to power in 2026, it would settle the account". Political circles are trying to make out the real intentions of Shah behind this observation: whether this is a threat, vote BJP or it will stop benefits. *(IPA Service)*



Preserving audiovisual heritage as a career

By: Ranjan K Baruah

We learn from our past and the best way to preserve the past and heritage is through various documents or equipment. One of the easiest ways to store and share with others includes audiovisuals or AV. Audiovisual archives tell us stories about people's lives and cultures from all over the world. They represent a priceless heritage which is an affirmation of our collective memory and a valuable source of knowledge since they reflect the cultural, social and linguistic diversity of our communities. Conserving this heritage and ensuring it remains accessible to the public and future generations is an essential goal for all memory institutions as well as the public. The

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Archives has launched the project "Digitizing our shared UNESCO history" with this very goal in mind.

The World Day for Audiovisual Heritage (WDAH) is a commemoration of the adoption, in 1980 by the 21st General Conference, of the Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images and it takes place every 27 October. This commemorative day was chosen by UNESCO to raise awareness of the significance and preservation risks of recorded sound and audiovisual documents (films, sound and video recordings, radio and television programmes).

There is no doubt that audiovisual documents, such as films,

radio and television programmes, audio and video recordings, contain the primary records of the 20th and 21st centuries. Transcending language and cultural boundaries, appealing immediately to the eye and the ear, to the literate and illiterate, audiovisual documents have transformed society by becoming a permanent complement to the traditional written record.

These documents are vulnerable and also are threatened due to the

digital revolution. Much of the world's audiovisual heritage has already been irrevocably lost through neglect.



resources, skills, and structures, thus impoverishing the memory of mankind. Much more will be lost if stronger and concerted international action is not taken.

We must preserve the audiovisual heritage and it brings opportunity for us to work in this field and build our careers. AV learning is a type of learning which is described by delivery and the use of instructional content that involves sound and sight.

There are many careers in audiovisual heritage, including audiovisual archivist, AV technician, etc. These professionals develop strategies, manage policies and procedures and

ensure the long-term preservation and access of audiovisual assets. They operate audio and visual equipment, such as microphones, speakers, video screens, projectors, and video recorders. They work in the audiovisual industry, which is growing and offers many jobs. They may repair, manage, and maintain systems, or provide customized solutions for businesses.

This field is purely a technical field like learning audio visual engineering with the mixing with digital technology. Things can be made simpler and heritage can be preserved in a better way. Hence, the technician needs to be more creative and skillful to succeed in the field and also to excel in a creative way.

One may also learn sound engineering or similar areas to

work in this field. Aspirants from electronics or electronics and communication engineering would do much better in this field.

Job opportunities are in government as well private sectors or international organizations like UNESCO. Archives and libraries preserve audiovisual heritage for researchers and readers which are managed by government or other agencies. Passionate people would be more successful as this field needs more patience and commitments. *(The author is a career mentor and skill trainer and currently Adviser of Skill Employment and Entrepreneurship Department of Bodoland Territorial Council, Kokrajhar and can be reached at 8473943734 or bkranjjan@gmail.com)*

APSC recruitment 2024 – 19 Assistant Director Posts @ SCERT, Assam

Last Date: 03/11/2024

Assam Public Service Commission has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 19 Assistant Director Posts in the rank of Assistant Professor in the directorate of SCERT, Assam under the Department of School Education. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Assistant Director in the rank of Assistant Professor

No of posts: 19 posts

Name of department: Directorate of SCERT, Assam under the Department of School Education.

Scale of pay: Pay scale: ₹ 30000 to 110000, **Grade Pay:** ₹ 13900

Age Limit: The candidates should not be less than 21 years of age and not more than 38 years of age as on 01/01/2024.

Educational Qualification: Candidates may check official notification for educational qualification related information.

Other Criteria of APSC Recruitment

Citizenship: Candidates must be Indian Citizens as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India.

Residency:

(i) The candidate must be a permanent resident of Assam.

(ii) The candidate must produce PRC issued in Assam for educational purpose/ Employment Exchange Registration certificate as proof of residency along with the application form.

Age Relaxation: The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

SC: 5 years
ST: 5 years
OBC/MOBC: 3 years
PwBD: 10 years
For more details pl read the official notification/s.

Employment Exchange Registration: Candidates must be registered themselves in any of the employment exchanges of Assam.

Small Family Norms: The candidates have to submit a declaration regarding "The Small Family Norms" in Form-A at the time of applying for the post.

Application Fee: Category-wise application fee is as under.

Category	Fee (in Rs.)
General	₹ 297.20
SC/ST/OBC/MOBC	₹ 197.20
BPL/PwBD	₹ 47.20

Important Dates of APSC Recruitment 2024

Starting date of submission of online application: 4th October 2024
Last date of submission of online application: 3rd November 2024

PESL recruitment 2024 – 47 Trainee Engineer (Electrical) posts

Last Date: 06/11/2024.

Powergrid Energy Services Limited (PESL) - 100% subsidiary of POWERGRID has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 47 Trainee Engineer (Electrical) posts through GATE 2024. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Trainee Engineer (Electrical)

No of posts: 47 posts

Category-wise vacancy:

UR: 21
EWS: 4
OBC/NCL: 12
SC: 07
ST: 3

Pay Scale: Selected candidates shall undergo training for a period of one year. They will be placed in the pay scale of ₹ 30,000 - ₹ 1,20,000, IDA, HRA and Perks @ 12% of Basic Pay per month during training period. On successful completion of 1-year training, they will be placed as Asstt. Engineer at E0 level in the pay scale of ₹ 30,000 - ₹ 1,20,000 (IDA).

Upper Age Limit: 28 years as on 06.11.2024.

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

SC/ST: 5 years
OBC: 3 years
PwBD: 10 years over and above category relaxation

Essential Qualification: Full Time B.E./ B.Tech/ B.Sc. (Engg.) in Electrical discipline or equivalent from recognized University/ Institute with minimum 60% marks or Equivalent CGPA.

Discipline: Electrical/ Electrical (Power)/Electrical and Electronics/Power Systems Engineering/Power Engineering (Electrical).

Valid Score in GATE 2024: Candidate should have appeared in the corresponding paper of GATE 2024 as shown in the following table and Qualified in the same. The qualifying marks as declared by GATE 2024 Organizing Body shall be considered.

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

Category	Fee
Others	₹ 500
SC/ST/PwBD/Ex-SM/DESM	NIL

Important Dates of POWERGRID Energy Services Limited Recruitment 2024

Starting date of submission of online application: 16th October 2024
Last date of submission of online application: 6th November 2024

Gauhati University recruitment 2024 – 3 Field Investigator posts

Last Date: 10/11/2024.

Gauhati University has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 3 Field Investigator Posts in Gauhati University for an ICSSR sponsored project entitled "Social Network, Functional Health, and Urban Environment: Assessing their Interrelationship for creating an Age-Friendly Environment". Intending and eligible candidates may apply.

Name of post: Field Investigator

No of posts: 03 posts

Pay: ₹ 20,000 per month

Educational Qualification: MA/MSC in Anthropology with minimum of 55% marks in the qualifying examination.

Other Skills: Communication skill for empirical field work and writing proficiency. Ability to work in computer programmes like MS Word, MS Excel and MS PowerPoint.

How to Apply for Gauhati University Recruitment ?

Intending and eligible candidates may send their resume at the Email id - guicssrproject@gmail.com latest by 10th November 2024.

Candidates will have to appear for an interview at the Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University at their own cost.

Original documents of their qualification and also other supporting documents will go on a check also for verification at the time of interview.

PGCIL Diploma Trainee recruitment 2024 – 802 posts, online apply

Last Date: 12/11/2024

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 802 Diploma Trainee (Electrical/ Civil/ Electronics) & Junior Officer Trainee (HR)/ (F&A) & Assistant Trainee (F&A) Vacancy. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

1. Diploma Trainee (Electrical)

No of posts: 600

Educational Qualification: Full Time Regular Three Years Diploma in relevant discipline of engineering - Electrical/ Electrical (Power)/ Electrical and Electronics/ Power Systems Engineering/ Power Engineering (Electrical), from recognized Technical Board/Institute with minimum 70% marks for General/OBC (NCL)/ EWS Candidates and pass marks for SC/ST/PwBD.

2. Diploma Trainee (Civil)

No of posts: 66

Educational Qualification: Full Time Regular Three Years Diploma in Civil Engineering from recognized Technical Board/Institute with minimum 70% marks for General/ OBC (NCL)/ EWS Candidates and pass marks for SC/ST/PwBD.

3. Junior Officer Trainee (Human Resource)

No of posts: 79

Educational Qualification: Three years full time Graduate Regular Degree - BBA/ BBM/ BBS or equivalent qualification from recognized Institute/ University with not less than 60% marks for General/ EWS/ OBC (NCL) category candidates.

4. Junior Officer Trainee (Finance and Accounts)

No of posts: 35

Educational Qualification: Inter CA/ Inter CMA.

5. Assistant Trainee (Finance and Accounts)

No of posts: 22

Educational Qualification: B.Com. with minimum 60% marks for General/OBC (NCL)/ EWS and pass marks for SC/ST/ PwBD.

Other Criteria of PGCIL Diploma Trainee Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidate upper age limit must be 27 years as on 12.11.2024.

Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as under.

OBC/ NCL: 3 years
SC/ ST: 5 years
PwBD: 10 years over & above category relaxation

Application Fee: Candidates need to pay an application fee of ₹ 300 for the posts of DTE/DTC/ JOT (HR)/ JOT (F&A) and ₹ 200 for the post of Asst. Tr. (F&A).

Important Dates of PGCIL Recruitment 2024

Opening date of online submission of application: 22nd October 2024
Closing date of online submission of application: 12 November 2024

Samagra Shiksha recruitment 2024 – 147 Academic Resource Person (ARP) posts

Last Date: 13/11/2024.

Samagra Shiksha, Assam (SSA) has released an advertisement for the recruitment of 147 Academic Resource Person (ARP) posts under Samagra Shiksha, Assam on contractual basis. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Academic Resource Person (ARP) - for Career Counseling

No of posts: 147 posts

Pay: ₹ 25000 per month

Educational Qualification: Minimum at-least Graduation with certificate of diploma in Career Counseling/PG Diploma in Counseling or Masters in Psychology (preferred). Preferred minimum of one-year experience in providing career/educational counseling to students at schools.

NOTE: If it is a graduate with a diploma - at least 5 years of teaching/counseling experience. If Master's, 1 year of relevant experience.

Age Limit: The candidate should not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 62 years of age as on 01-01-2024.

Place of posting: As Block Resource Coordinators in the 147 education blocks under Samagra Shiksha Assam.

Tenure of Service: Tenure should be one year to cover the entire academic session.

Important Dates of Samagra Shiksha Vacancy 2024

Starting date for online application submission: 30th October 2024
Last date for online application submission: 13th November 2024

Seven Sisters Development Assistance (SeSTA) recruitment – 2 posts

Last Date: 05/11/2024

Seven Sisters Development Assistance (SeSTA), a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 2 Executive Trainee (Researcher) and Executive (Researcher) posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

1. Executive (Researcher)

No of posts: 1

Pay: ₹ 40,000 to ₹ 45,000 (As per relevant years of experience)

Age Limit: The age limit for applying is 35 years

Place of Posting: Guwahati

Eligibility Criteria: Looking for a passionate young persons who have the urge to work for rural disadvantaged communities to bring meaningful changes in their lives, with Master's Degree in Social Sciences, Development Studies, Economics having at least 50 % marks (45% for SC/ST) in last qualifying exam. Women and individuals from LGBTQ+ community are encouraged to apply.

- At least 2 years of proven experience in research-related work, with a focus on data analysis, report writing, and conducting field studies.
- Have strong understanding and practice of Research Methods and Methodologies.
- Strong communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Analytical mindset with the ability to process complex information.
- Willingness to learn, adapt, and grow in a professional environment.
- Extensive travel and a strong willingness to work in rural, interdisciplinary, and multicultural environments.
- Interest in development work and a passion for community engagement.

2. Executive Trainee (Researcher)

No of posts: 1

Pay: Rs 27,000 per Month

Age Limit: The age limit for applying is 27 years

Place of Posting: Guwahati

Eligibility Criteria: Looking for a passionate young persons who have the urge to work for rural disadvantaged communities to bring meaningful changes in their lives, with Master's Degree in Social Sciences, Development Studies, Economics having at least 50 % marks (45% for SC/ST) in last qualifying exam. Women and individuals from LGBTQ+ community are encouraged to apply.

- Master's Degree in Social Sciences, Development Studies, Economics or a related field.
- Have strong understanding and practice of Research Methods and Methodologies.
- Strong communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Analytical mindset with the ability to process complex information.
- Willingness to learn, adapt, and grow in a professional environment.
- Open to travel and work in rural, interdisciplinary, and multicultural settings.
- Interest in development work and a passion for community engagement.

Application Fee: Nil.

How to Apply for Seven Sisters Development Assistance (SeSTA) Recruitment ?

Please send your complete bio-data (including % of marks in all exams) to recruitment@sesta.org .

Last date of submission of application: 5th November, 2024 .

N Korea's top diplomat in Moscow to help the war on Ukraine



MOSCOW, Nov 1: Russia's top diplomat on Friday hosted his North Korean counterpart for talks amid reports that Pyongyang has sent thousands of troops to Russia to support its military in the war in Ukraine.

Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui's visit to Moscow and her meeting with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov came on the heels of the Pentagon's statement that North Korea has deployed about 10,000 troops to Russia to fight against Ukraine within "the next several weeks."

Western leaders have described the North Korean troop deployment as a significant escalation that could also jolt relations in the Indo-Pacific region.

Neither Moscow nor Pyongyang have specified the agenda for Choe's talks in Moscow, but in a closed-door hearing at South Korea's parliament, the South's spy agency said Choe may be involved in high-level discussions on sending additional troops to Russia and negotiating what the North would get in return.

South Korean and Western officials have voiced concern that Russia may offer technology that could advance the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programme.

Meeting Choe in Moscow on Friday, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov hailed ties between Moscow and Pyongyang, saying that they "have reached an unprecedented high level over the past few years," and proposed discussing the implementation of the strategic partnership agreement the two nations signed earlier this year.

"We will have discussions on a series of issues regarding politics and foreign policy as well as matters that require a joint response between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation," Choe said, invoking the North's formal name.

She reiterated Pyongyang's support "for the just fight of Russia's military and people to defend their country's sovereign rights and security interests" in Ukraine.

Moscow and Pyongyang have responded vaguely to South Korean and Western claims of the North Korean troop deployment to Russia, emphasising that their military cooperation conforms with interna-

tional law, without directly admitting the presence of the North's forces in Russia.

The United States and its allies also have accused North Korea of providing millions of artillery shells and other equipment to Russia to fuel its military action in Ukraine.

Russia, along with China, has blocked US-led efforts at the Security Council to tighten sanctions on North Korea over its recent missile testing, which intensified after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Russia also vetoed a UN resolution to extend the mandate of monitors in March, in a move that effectively abolished oversight by UN experts of Security Council sanctions against North Korea.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol last month raised the possibility of supplying Ukraine with weapons while saying Seoul is preparing countermeasures that could be rolled out in stages depending on the degree of military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow.

South Korea, a growing arms exporter, has provided humanitarian aid and other non-lethal support to Ukraine and joined US-led economic sanctions against Moscow. It has so far resisted calls by Kyiv and NATO to directly supply Ukraine with weapons, citing a longstanding policy of not providing arms to countries engaged in active conflict.

In other developments: Russia launched three aviation missiles and 48 drones of various types, including Shaheds, at Ukraine overnight, Ukrainian air force said. One missile and 31 drones were intercepted, 14 drones were jammed, three drones flew to the territory of Belarus, the air force said in a report on Friday morning said. Several civilian facilities, as well as apartment buildings and private houses in Poltava, Cherkasy, Kyiv and Odesa regions were damaged by drone debris.

The Russian military on Friday said it intercepted and destroyed a total of 83 Ukrainian drones over four Russian regions near the border with Ukraine and the annexed Crimean Peninsula. In the Bryansk region, a drone hit a residential block, local authorities said. No casualties were reported. In the Stavropol region, a drone hit an oil depot, according to local officials. Unconfirmed media reports said the oil depot caught fire. (AP)

Tim hails 'rising' political voice of Indian-Americans

US Vice Presidential hopeful Walz joins Diwali celebrations

PHILADELPHIA, Nov 1: US Vice Presidential hopeful Tim Walz attended a Diwali celebration at a prominent Hindu temple in Pennsylvania, reaching out to the Indian-Americans in the crucial battleground state as the race for White House heads towards a photo-finish.

In his brief remarks at the event in the Bharatiya temple in Montgomery County on Thursday, the Democratic leader highlighted the "rising" political voice of the Indian-American community in the US and urged them to save energy to "celebrate" Kamala Harris's "victory" in the presidential election next week.

"Happy Diwali everyone. It is a privilege for me to be with you on this special day," he said.

"The Indian and the South Asian community are so much a fabric of our state and our identity," the Minnesota governor said, drawing cheers from the audience.

Besides lighting a 'diya', Walz posed for selfies, greeted Indians with a 'Namaste' and exchanged pleasantries.

Pennsylvania is one of the seven battleground states which is expected to play a critical role in the overall election outcome.



With Pennsylvania witnessing a tight race between Republican nominee Donald Trump and Harris, political observers said the position of the Indian-American community would be pivotal for the poll outcome.

"Diversity is the strength of the country (the US) and that is why we continue to want to make it a place where people want to come to. This place needs to remain so," Walz said.

Though he did not elaborate further, the comments are seen as an indirect criticism of Trump's immigration policy.

"On this happiest day of light

over darkness, I hope you find peace, find calm and save a little energy to celebrate next Wednesday morning," Walz said, referring to Election Day.

In his campaign speeches, the former Republican president promised a radical shift to tighten the US's immigration policy and vowed to carry out the "largest" domestic deportation operation in American history of undocumented immigrants if he is re-elected.

Walz's presence at the Diwali celebration at the Hindu temple drew widespread appreciation from leading Indian community

leaders.

"Tim Walz's visit is very significant for the Indian American community in Pennsylvania. His visit highlighted the importance of the Indian-American community in this swing state of Pennsylvania," said prominent Indian community leader Mukund Kute.

"We see this as a recognition of our contribution to mainstream America," he told PTT.

A similar sentiment was echoed by Manish Ingle, the CEO of medical devices firm Nova Probe Inc. and a leading community leader.

"This is a significant gesture by Walz. In our area, we never had a person of this authority to have graced such an occasion. The Indian American community is very fortunate to receive Tim Walz, who if all goes well, will be the next Vice President of the US," he said.

"On Diwali, he lit the 'diya'; here, I am very amazed that we got an opportunity in Bharatiya temple to greet someone like Walz," said Ingle, who also serves on boards of several institutions including the Pennsylvania Governor Advisory Council for Inclusive Procurement.

After Harris received the Democratic presidential nomination in

August, various Indian-American and South Asian American groups have been engaged in mobilising support for her including through raising funds.

The number of Indian Americans residing in the US is around 5.2 million forming the second-largest immigrant community, and out of them, around 2.3 million are eligible to vote.

Around 55 per cent of Indian American eligible voters identified as Democrats as against 26 per cent as Republicans, according to a 2024 survey conducted by research organisation AAPI before President Joe Biden pulled out from the re-election bid.

A survey this month by the Carnegie Endowment found that 61 per cent of registered Indian American voter respondents plan to vote for Harris while 32 per cent intend to vote for Trump.

It said 67 per cent of Indian American women intend to vote for Harris while 53 per cent of men, a significantly smaller share, say they plan to vote for Harris.

Twenty-two per cent of women intend to vote for Trump while a significantly larger share of men, 39 per cent, plan to cast their ballots for him, it said. (PTT)

5 schoolchildren among 7 killed in blast in southwest Pakistan

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI, Nov 1: Seven people, including five schoolchildren and a policeman, were killed while 17 others were injured on Friday in a remote-controlled blast targeting a police van in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province.

The blast occurred at 8.35 am near a girl's high school at the Civil Hospital Chowk of the Mastung district of the province. Terrorists used a remote control device to detonate explosive material hidden in a parked motorbike, officials said. "It was an IED (improvised explosive device) used in the blast, and the target apparently was a police mobile parked near the school," Kalat Division Commissioner Naeem Bazai said.

The IED detonated when the police mobile came close to it, and a school van was caught in the mayhem. The police van and several auto-rickshaws were also damaged in the explosion. "The blast was so powerful that schoolchildren who were going to the school at that time were hit by the explosion," Bazai added.

Mastung District Police Officer (DPO) Miandad Umrani confirmed that five schoolchildren, one police official and a civilian were killed in the blast.

The 17 injured, including schoolchildren between the ages of eight and 13 as well as policemen, were shifted to various hospitals in the province.

Those with the most serious injuries were taken to the

capital Quetta for treatment. According to DPO Umrani, 11 people were moved to the Quetta Trauma Centre for treatment. TV footage after the attack showed policemen and other people surrounding a charred vehicle.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet, but ethnic Baloch terrorists and Taliban terrorists often attack the security forces in the province, which has been facing a low-level insurgency for about two decades now.

Meanwhile, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti took to X to condemn the blast, calling it "inhumane".

He said terrorists had now "targeted innocent children along with poor labourers" in an apparent reference to a recent attack by unidentified gunmen at a dam construction site in the province's Panjgur district, which killed five workers and injured two others.

"We will avenge the murder of innocent children and people," CM said, adding that civilians in urban areas also needed to be on the watch for the terrorists. "The monster of terrorism can only be fought together," he said.

He added that terrorists had targeted children, deeming them to be a "soft target".

In the aftermath of the blast, an emergency was declared across all Quetta hospitals. Geo News reported, quoting the provincial health department spokesperson, adding that all doctors, pharmacists, staff nurses and other medical staff were summoned. (PTT)

Algeria pardons, releases journalist Ihsane El Kadi

ALGIERS (ALGERIA), Nov 1: Algeria has pardoned a journalist who emerged as a key voice during the country's 2019 pro-democracy protests and was later imprisoned for taking foreign funding for his media outlets and threatening state security.

Ihsane El Kadi was released from prison on Thursday evening, along with eight others who were imprisoned after criticising the state. Their release coincided with the 70th anniversary of the start of Algeria's revolution, a date that authorities have in the past used as an occasion to offer pardons.

Fetta Sattat, one of El Kadi's lawyers, told The Associated Press that he was released from El Harrah

prison after receiving a presidential pardon. He had been serving a sentence for receiving foreign financing for Radio M and Maghreb Emergent, two media outlets that were key outlets during the Hirak protests that led to the resignation of octogenarian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 2019.

He was among 4,000 released on Thursday based on clemency decrees signed by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, according to a statement from his office.

Those released included people imprisoned for low level crimes and for "undermining public order," a charge that Algerian authorities have used to target dissidents in the past. (AP)



UN-backed experts: Russia's torture of Ukrainian civilians, prisoners is a crime against humanity

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 1: Russia's torture of Ukrainian civilians and prisoners of war is a crime against humanity, U.N.-backed human rights experts said Thursday.

Erik Mose, chair of the independent commission investigating human rights violations in Ukraine, told reporters that the panel previously described Russia's widespread and systematic use of torture in Ukraine and Russia against civilians and prisoners, both men and women, as a war crime.

"Our recent findings demonstrate that Russian authorities have committed torture in all provinces of Ukraine that came under their control, as well as in the detention facilities that the commission has investigated in the Russian Federation," he said.

Russia's U.N. Mission said it had no comment on the press conference or the report by the commission, which is appointed by the Geneva-based U.N. Human Rights Council.

Mose said the commission is an investigative body. He noted that Ukraine's prosecutor general and the International Criminal Court are investigat-

ing possible war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine and the commission may be asked for evidence. The commissioners examined reports from 41 different detention centers, from makeshift centers to well-established facilities, in nine occupied regions of Ukraine and eight areas in Russia, Mose said.

He said the commission identified further evidence that violent practices common in Russian detention facilities were also practiced in similar facilities in Russian-occupied areas in eastern Ukraine, he said. The commission also found additional evidence of the recurrent use of sexual violence as a form of torture, Mose said.

Detainees were subjected to rape, long periods of forced nudity, body searches and more, commission member Vrinda Gover said. She said most prisoners of war reported being subjected to sexual violence and suffering long-lasting psychological trauma. Ukrainians in detention facilities in Ukraine and in Russia also reported "a brutal so-called admission procedure," Gover said.

"Harsh practices designed to scare, break, humiliate, coerce and punish detainees were used routinely," she said.

Surveillance cameras were used to watch detainees and severe collective punishment of detainees was imposed for every breach of rules, while "interrogations were accompanied by some of the most violent treatment documented," Gover said. Commission member Pablo de Greiff told reporters it now has evidence of the Russian organizational structure that coordinated and enabled torture in the detention facilities.

"Moreover, the Commission now has evidence that the leadership of detention facilities or other higher ranking Russian authorities ordered, encouraged, tolerated or took no action to stop torture or ill treatment," de Greiff said.

Mose said the commission's investigation also found that the violent practices against detainees in Russia were transferred by Russian security forces and staff to detention facilities run by Russia in areas it occupied in Ukraine. (AP)

Biden and Harris lead America in celebrating Diwali

WASHINGTON, Nov 1: US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris led Americans in celebrating the Festival of Lights! on Thursday as temples and many iconic places across the country decorated in lights.

"This Diwali, may we show the power in the gathering of light. The light of knowledge, of unity, of truth. The light for freedom, for democracy, for an America where anything is possible," Biden said in a post on X. Earlier this week, he hosted the largest ever Diwali at the White House by inviting some 600 eminent Indian-Americans from across the country.

"Tonight, we join more than 1 billion people across America and around the world lighting diyas and celebrating the fight for good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and

light over darkness," Harris said on a post on X from her campaign trail.

"Happy Diwali to everyone celebrating the Festival of Lights!" said the vice president who had been hosting Diwali at her official residence for the past several years but could not do so because of her hectic campaign. Secretary of State Tony Blinken said for many, the Diwali season represents the victory of light over darkness and the triumph of good over evil.

"It serves as a reminder of the ability of each and every one of us to bring more light into our communities. We celebrate alongside families and friends all around the world — including millions of people here in the United States — who are gathering together, sharing sweets, decorating

homes, and lighting diyas," he said.

"Reflecting on the strength that diversity brings our nation, we also take this occasion to reiterate the importance of freedom of religion or belief for all people everywhere," Blinken said. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Harris' running mate visited the Bharatiya Temple in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania to celebrate Diwali. The governor participated in a diya lighting ceremony before receiving a blessing.

"Happy Diwali to everyone. It's a privilege for me to be with you on this special day, a privilege to stand amongst you. You can feel the sense of community here. You can feel the sense of love. You can feel the sense that there is something bigger than all of us," he said. (AP)

After Halloween, Christians observe All Saints' Day

WARSAW (POLAND), Nov 1: It's the time of year — tradition says — when the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead is lifted.

That traditional belief has morphed over the centuries into the spooky and secular celebration of Halloween.

But one day later, Christians in many countries around the world are celebrating All Saints' Day on Friday, a sombre and spiritual day in the church's liturgical calendar that shares pagan roots with Halloween.

The word "Halloween" derives from "All Hallows Eve," which means the eve of All Saints' Day, a holiday that has also been known as All Hallows. It honours martyrs and saints — those who were hallowed, or deemed holy — a tradition begun by the Roman Catholic church in the early medieval period.

Scholars believe that the spectral aspects of Halloween emerged primarily from Samhain, an ancient Celtic festival that occurred during the harvest season, said Morgan Shipley, a professor of religious studies at Michigan State University in East Lansing.

It was a time when people were "transitioning from harvest and bounty and the fullness of summer to the desolation of winter," he said. "And it was said that in this time the veil between the physical, material human world



and the spiritual world essentially disappears away."

Some of the spirits or spectral beings were viewed as demonic in nature, and bonfires became a way to ward them away, or were used in divination by druid priests and priestesses when the veil between the material and spiritual world broke down, he said.

As Christianity spread, many pagan rituals were adapted to the new faith to be more attractive to converts. The period of reflecting on the dead continues though November 2, which is All Souls' Day.

In Central Europe, the Slavic and Baltic populations had their own rituals in which the living communed with the dead between October 31 and November 1.

Believers and non-believers alike in many traditionally Roman Catholic societies observe the day.

In Poland, it is one of the most important days of the year. Many travel back to their family homes to gather with those still living and reflect on those who have left them.

So many people observe the holiday that cemeteries are transformed into flickering carpets of light so impres-

sive that even the most secular cannot help but feel moved. Cities including Warsaw and Krakow run many additional tram and bus lines to ferry the huge numbers to — and between — cemeteries. While the reflections are mostly personal, people also leave candles at the graves of national heroes. So many people visit cemeteries at the same time that the celebration takes on a communal quality.

It has become so much part of the wider culture in Poland that people place candles in the Jewish and Muslim cemeteries as well.

In the Philippines, millions trooped to cemeteries across the country Friday to observe the annual tradition, visiting tombs of their loved ones. Thousands were seen visiting and offering flowers and candles to be placed at the graves of their deceased loved ones in the Manila North Cemetery in the capital.

"Even if I'm old, I still visit the tombs of my relatives, especially my husband's, during All Saints' Day. As long as I can walk, I will visit him," said Manila resident Dory Olquino.

All Saints' Day has been a family reunion for many Filipinos, where they keep vigil at the tombs.

"All Saints' Day is the day we celebrate and remember our departed loved ones, so that even if they are

gone our memories with them would still be fresh on our minds," said Luis Montibon.

Italians traditionally visit cemeteries to pay tribute to deceased family members on All Souls' Day, lighting candles or laying flowers. Pope Francis will visit Rome's third-largest cemetery, the Laurentino Cemetery, to celebrate Mass and lead prayers for the dead. The pope visited the same cemetery in 2018, stopping to pray in an area dedicated to fetuses.

In recent years as the holiday approaches, there are discussions about Halloween and its compatibility with Christian beliefs in the afterlife.

Poles began to celebrate Halloween after the fall of communism in 1989, but some worry that the foreign cultural import could eventually dilute the tradition of All Saints' Day. Some Catholics worry that it also might be sinful due to allusions to devils and ghosts. Pushing back, some church groups have begun holding alternative events for All Saints' Day.

This week, a church group organised the 3rd All Saints' Ball in the Polish town of Plock, according to a Catholic news site, Niedziela — meaning Sunday — which reported that "the children came dressed as saints and blessed of the Catholic Church and as angels." (AP)

Civil body seeks to stop outsiders' entry into voter list in Mizoram

There are over 8.58 lakh voters, including 4.42 lakh female voters

AIZAWL, Nov 1: Mizoram's largest civil society organization would take steps to ensure that only genuine residents are enlisted in the state's voter list in the ongoing special summary revision.

A leader of the central committee of the Young Mizo Association (CYMA) said that the organisation has taken the decision since over 42,000 people from Myanmar, Bangladesh and Manipur have taken refuge in the state due to various reasons.

The CYMA on Thursday sent letters to its branches across the northeastern state instructing them to take steps to ensure that no outsider gets entry into the voter list.

In the letter, YMA members were asked to file complaints with



the authorities concerned if any registered elector is found to be a foreigner or non-domicile resident to ensure that the person's name is removed from the voter list.

There are over 8.58 lakh voters, including 4.42 lakh female voters, in Mizoram, according to the draft voter lists published on Tuesday. The CYMA's instruction came

when more than 42,000 refugees and internally displaced people from Myanmar, Bangladesh and Manipur are taking shelter in Mizoram due to political unrest and violence in their countries and state.

The Myanmar nationals, mostly from Chin state, fled to Mizoram following a military coup in the neighbouring country in February 2021, while the asylum seekers from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) came to the state after a military offensive against an ethnic insurgent group in 2022.

A large number of Kuki people from Manipur have taken shelter in Mizoram after ethnic violence broke out with Meiteis in May last year. (PTI)

Move to annihilate the Naga from their homeland not acceptable: UNC

SENAPATI, Nov 1: While reacting strongly to the statement of the Kangpokpi based Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU), the United Naga Council (UNC) said recently that it "will not tolerate any move to annihilate the Naga brethren from their age old ancestral homeland and should the council offers its humble advisory to all concerns that it is best for all communities to mutually respect each other's history and position and continue to co-exist peacefully".

Whilst expressing its best greetings and wishes of peace and prosperity to the Liangmai Naga community during the celebration of Chaga-Ngee Festival, 2024, which usually occasions in the post harvest that holds close to their heart, practicing traditionally intertwined with their land, culture, stories and livelihood of the people since time immemorial, the UNC, in a statement issued to Newmai News Network tonight, said that it was shocked to learn the "misnomer statement made by one so called Committee on Tribal Unity

(COTU), disrespecting the sentiment of the Liangmai people and disrupting the solemnity of its festivity on October 30, 2024". The Naga body said such an "outrageous statement amounts to disturbing the essence of the festivity of one community and aggressive claims as their domain 'Kukis areas' over the Liangmai Naga ancestral land by the COTU is absurd".

As a matter of fact, the UNC said that Manipur is a home of mixed communities with different set of cultures and rich festivities of the various communities occasioning across the length and breadth of the state that has been mutually respected for ages which also ushers social harmony and peaceful co-existence of the different community living in the state. "Essentiality of maintaining the same needs to be realized by all concerns as usual, despite all differences and circumstances we are in, to ensure peace and cordiality amongst the communities," the UNC added. (NNN)

Apex Naga body irked by Arambai Tengol



SENAPATI, NOV 1: The United Naga Council (UNC) is irked by the "unwarranted act" of looting, physical and mental assaults meted out to an innocent Naga fellows namely V. Hrangao Blesson of Kodom khullen and Dalou of Liyai Khullen belonging to Poumai Naga tribe on October 31, 2024 at Lamshang areas, Imphal, on their way back to Senapati "by the so called" Arambai Tengol (AT). The cUNC in no uncertain terms condemned "such a barbaric act" and questioned the motive behind their actions.

In a statement made available to Newmai News Network tonight, the apex Naga body in the Manipur state said, "Seventeen months have well passed ever since the mayhem broke out on May 3, 2023 and all the ethnic communities living in the state of Manipur including Nagas as the third parties have been suffering untold miseries in every sphere".

With all concern and patience,

hoping for resolution to the ongoing conflict between the warring communities viz, Kuki-Zo and Meiteis, Naga people have endured all the hardships and provocations from both the communities yet, it turns out otherwise and weight is being put upon the Naga people continuously in many ways, the UNC added.

The Naga body then said it seriously viewed "this provocative action" and demanded the state authorities to immediately identify and arrest those perpetrators of the crime and promptly dispense justice to the victims as per the law of the land. The UNC also urged concerned civil society organizations to look into the matter earnestly and initiate proactive steps to contain all these sporadic incidents.

Further, the UNC drew the attention of various authorities and the responsible civil organizations in the state for immediate intervention to put at rest these wanton and unwarranted checking/frisking/detentions and various strictures imposing upon Naga people in sporadic areas and unabated illegal taxation/extortion towards the commuters and suppliers of essential commodities along the national highways and inter-district highways once and for all in the greater interest of all the communities living in the state of Manipur. (NNN)

Nagaland LS MP donates 6 community ambulances

'Jamir's selfless service has earned him appreciation and recognition'

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Nov 1: Nagaland's lone Lok Sabha MP S Supongmeren Jamir donated six community ambulances, funded under MPLADS 2024-25, to six districts of Kohima, Phek, Wokha, Zunheboto, Tsemnyu, and Peren.

The ambulances were handed over to the respective tribal apex organisations of the districts here on Friday.

Appreciating the MP for this noble gesture, the Unified Naga Land for Christ, in a release, said by judiciously utilising MPLADS funds, Jamir has set a shining example for his counterparts in the northeast and beyond.

His dedication to the people of Nagaland is evident through his efforts to improve healthcare fa-



ilities in the region, the release said.

It said Jamir's selfless service has earned him appreciation and recognition, solidifying his reputation as a leader who truly cares

ANSAM accuses Arambai Tengol of alleged torture



SENAPATI, Nov 1: The All Naga Students' Association, Manipur (ANSAM) has accused the Arambai Tengol Unit-18 of torturing two Nagas recently.

While strongly condemning the incident, the apex Naga student body in Manipur, while taking this incident with serious concern, "strongly urged the responsible authority in the state to take up swift expeditious and befitting actions against the perpetrators involved in committing such barbaric act and justice is delivered as per the law of the land".

Narrating the sequence of the incident, the ANSAM, in a statement made available to Newmai News Network, said that, on October 31, 2024, around 2 am, a "very unfortunate incident" took place at Lamshang, Imphal, where two Naga civilians namely V. Hrangao Blesson Poumai, son of Veino

from Kodom Khullen village, and Dalou Poumai, son of Hriinii from Liyai Khullen village was physically assaulted and "seriously tortured" by members of Arambai Tengol (AT) Unit-18 while they were returning from a livestock purchase in Thoubal. "Despite the victims' disclosure about their identities as Poumai Naga from Senapati district, they were stopped, detained and dragged into their Unit 18 AT Camp and subjected to serious physical torture leaving behind multiple injuries and bruises on their body. They were also repeatedly threatened with automatic rifles and a sum of ₹ 61,400 (sixty one thousand four hundred) was seized from them at gunpoint," the Naga student body alleged.

The ANSAM strongly condemned this "bestial act of the Arambai Tengol (AT) towards the

BSF apprehends 2 Rohingyas and seizes contrabands



HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, Nov 1: The Border Security Forces in Tripura have detained two Rohingya nationals and seized narcotics worth ₹ 4 lakh.

A Press Release issued from BSF Tripura said on Friday that on a specific information, regarding presence and movement of Rohingyas illegal Migrants in Karbook area, two Rohingyas migrants were apprehended at Karbook bus stand under Gomati District by BSF troops of BOP Bhatiabari under Gomati District

while they were planning to infiltrate into Bangladesh.

The BSF said that both the apprehended Rohingyas illegal Migrants are resident of Rohingya refugee Camp located in Cox Bazar, Bangladesh. Indian currency, mobile and UNHCR card recovered from their possession.

In addition alert troops of BSF Tripura in different operations foiled various attempts of trans-border smuggling along the Indo Bangladesh border and seized 1,600 kg Sugar and other contraband items worth ₹ 4,76,479.

Families not covered under NFSA to get special ration cards in Mizoram

AIZAWL, Nov 1: Mizoram chief minister Lalduhoma on Friday announced that his government will provide special ration cards to low income families that are not covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

At the launch of the convergence between the state's Handholding Scheme and the National Livestock Mission, the chief minister announced that special ration cards (of red colour) will be issued to 2,500 families, covering 1 lakh beneficiaries.

"In the ongoing revision of ration cards, the government will arrange special ration cards for those who avail white ration cards (non-NFSA) but have limited sources of income," Lalduhoma said.

He said that beneficiaries seeking to avail the special ration cards should approach their respective district civil supply officers.

The government will also re-

quire the support of local councils and NGOs in the process of selecting beneficiaries, he said.

In Mizoram, ration card holders are divided into three categories -- yellow (Antyodaya Anna Yojana or AAY), blue (priority household or PHH) and white (non-NFSA). AAY and PHH beneficiaries are covered under the NFSA.

State Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister B Lalchanzova had earlier said that the government would revise the existing ration cards system as the government has decided to drop subsidies to white card beneficiaries.

He had said that any existing non-NFSA beneficiary or white card holder whose annual income is less than 4 lakh for urban and ₹ 2.5 lakh for rural will be converted into NFSA beneficiary.

At the launch, Lalduhoma said that the Handholding Scheme would be implemented in pilot

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Nov 1: Nagaland chief information commissioner I Meyionen Jamir underscored the urgent need for a collective effort to combat corruption, starting with transforming the mindset of the people.

"This transformation hinges on educating individuals about the detrimental effects of corruption in society," Jamir said while speaking at the culmination programme of the Vigilance Awareness Week at the Lumami campus of Nagaland University in Zunheboto district as the chief guest on Friday.

Jamir said this while observing the shift in the Naga society from its traditional values of simplicity, hospitality, and honesty to a troubling acceptance of corruption as a norm. He stressed that public awareness of their rights is crucial to prevent the misappropriation of welfare schemes meant for the masses.

Speaking on the significance of



the theme of the Vigilance Week "Culture of Integrity for Nation's Prosperity", Jamir said integrity, defined as adherence to moral and ethical principles, serves not only as a personal virtue but also as the foundation of successful societies.

"In our national context, integrity cultivates trust among citizens, fosters cooperation, and enhances transparency in governance and business practices," he added. Jamir noted that educational institutions, such as colleges and universities, play a pivotal role in shaping future citizens.

"By embedding a culture of integrity within these environments, we can empower students to appreciate the importance of honesty, accountability, and respect for others," he said.

Saying that these qualities are essential for personal growth and vital for national advancement, he said a culture of integrity not only enriches individual character but also strengthens the social fabric, promoting responsibility and trust, which are invaluable in any society. He called for inclusion of ethical discussions in academic curricula, advocating for open dialogues about moral dilemmas and modeling integrity through actions.

This approach nurtures critical thinkers who are aware of the implications of their choices on their communities and the nation, he said adding educating children and youth about public integrity equips them with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to actively prevent, condemn, and combat corruption.

UCM urges for unity among the indigenous communities in Manipur



IMPHAL, Nov 1: President of the United Committee Manipur (UCM), YK Dhiren has urged for unity among the indigenous communities in Manipur to combat against the "divisive policies" and "foreign influences" in the state.

He was speaking at the "Remembrance of October Mass Rally - 2018" programme, which was organized recently by UCM at Manipur Press Club in Imphal.

Notably, UCM has been annually organizing the event in commemoration of the "Mass Rally" which was held on the theme "To Let Manipur Live and Grow Together" on October 31, 2018, in Imphal.

In his speech, Dhiren further said that strengthening the bond of brotherhood among the indigenous communities in the state is paramount in defending the state from external threats while sounding alert that Manipur is facing a proxy-

war using "Chin-Kuki-narco terrorists" from Myanmar.

He lamented that the Government of India is "silently looking into the ongoing crisis in Manipur" while noting that the state's integrity has been threatened on multiple occasions.

The UCM president also stated that the "idea of Manipur", which builds on the basis of "living the diverse communities together and growing them together" has been eroding since after the state merged with the Union of India.

Dhiren then appealed to all the indigenous communities in the state to set aside their differences and stand together as one.

Former Joint Committee on Inner Line Permit System (JCIPLS) convener Khomdram Ratan, advocate Leishangthem Jadu, and Tourangbam Birjit also attended the programme. (NNN)

Financial support to Manipur delegates attending IFFI in Goa

IMPHAL, Nov 1: The Manipur State Film Development Society (MSFDS) has announced the selection of four delegates from the state to receive financial support for attending the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), scheduled from November 20 to 28, 2024, in Goa.

The chosen individuals, representing diverse roles within the film and media industry, include Shanti Raj (Film Technician), Thoresho Keishing (Film Actor and Music Director), A Bishwajit Sharma (Journalist), and filmmaker Ajit Yumnam, the MSFDS said in a press release on Friday.

A Bishwajit Sharma, the only journalist selected, has been tasked with covering the prestigious event and film bazaar, bringing insights back to the state,

it also said.

The other three delegates—recognized by the Selection Committee for their dedication and vision—will form a specialized team to gain exposure to global cinema trends, film marketing, and finance.

An accumulated fund of ₹ 1,10,000 from MSFDS's grant-in-aid for promotional activities will be allocated to support these film delegates for IFFI 2024.

Each year, MSFDS offers financial support to members of the film and arts community, as well as journalists and film writers, to attend IFFI, the largest film festival in Asia, organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. (NNN)

Nagaland govt asked to show magnanimity to IRB jawans

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Nov 1: The Rising People's Party (RPP) on Thursday urged the Nagaland government to show magnanimity to Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) jawans from the state by addressing the harsh realities of their life particularly the low TA/DA for outside duty.

The party suggested that the TA/DA per jawan be increased to ₹ 1000 at the minimum.

Saying that while the respect accorded to ex-parliamentarians of the state during the 60th anniversary celebration of statehood of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly on October 29 is notable, the RPP requested

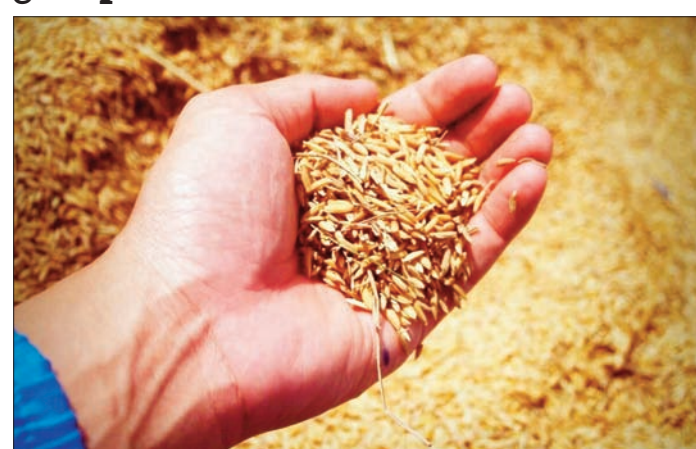
the state government to give due respect to the brave jawans who will soon be deployed to Jharkhand and Maharashtra for election duties in November.

The party, in a release, said the conduct of the state government during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections was dishonourable.

"Our jawans who crisscrossed the entire country in the utterly unbearable Indian summer were paid the paltry amount of ₹ 550 as TA/DA with some even losing their lives due to heatstroke," the party noted.

It said the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party-BJP coalition government in the state should not repeat such mistakes again.

Families not covered under NFSA to get special ration cards in Mizoram



phases for the current fiscal and in a broad way from the next financial year.

He said that the scheme was launched specifically to assist those who work hard and are determined to become economically self-sufficient.

Under this scheme, the govern-

ment will act as guarantor for beneficiaries (partners) seeking loans from a bank and the government will provide subsidies to them on loan interest, he said.

The chief minister added that the meat processing industry will also be included under the handholding policy. (PTI)

BJP demands apology from Kharge, Rahul for 'unrealistic promises'

Claims Congress-led states face financial strain fulfilling guarantees

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: The BJP Friday demanded Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge's apology following the Congress president's advice that his party's state units should make only those promises that are fiscally doable, a statement seen by many as an acknowledgment of financial constraints that some of its guarantees face in states.

BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad asked mockingly if Kharge has given his first "gyan" to Gandhi, noting the former Congress president often boasts of "khata khat" (immediate) transfer of money to different population segments during state and national elections in the case of his party coming to power.

Kharge has realised that the Congress should not make reckless announcements, the former law minister told reporters, claiming that the party-run governments in states like Karnataka, Telangana



and Himachal Pradesh are faced with financial hardships in fulfilling the guarantees offered to people. In Himachal Pradesh, Congress ministers were asked to not take salary and even a toilet tax was introduced, which was withdrawn after protests, he added.

In Karnataka, the state government is reviewing its promise for

free bus rides to women, Prasad added.

Hitting out at the Congress, he said it is the party's history of fooling voters by making them false promises, and recalled the "garibi hatao" slogan given by Indira Gandhi during the 1971 polls.

Unlike the Congress, he claimed, the BJP makes only those

promises which are guided by "fiscal prudence". The party had promised to transfer ₹ 6,000 annually to 11 crore farmers, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been fulfilling it with a click of button. Whether it is giving free grains to 80 crore people or welfare measures for women in different states, the BJP has been fulfilling them, Prasad added.

It has led to a reduction in poverty, he said.

"I greet Kharge sahab for realising this wisdom at this age. This should have dawned on him earlier. Please give the first lesson of your confession to Rahul Gandhi," the BJP leader said.

Kharge should apologise to the country and so should Gandhi, he said. The senior BJP leader also took a swipe at AAP leader and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal as well, saying he also makes all kinds of announcements. (PTI)

BJP slams Cong for its vote bank politics over Waqf row in Karnataka

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: The BJP on Friday accused the Congress of seeking to convert the lands of farmers and temples into Waqf properties due to its vote-bank politics and asserted that it would oppose such attempts "tooth and nail."

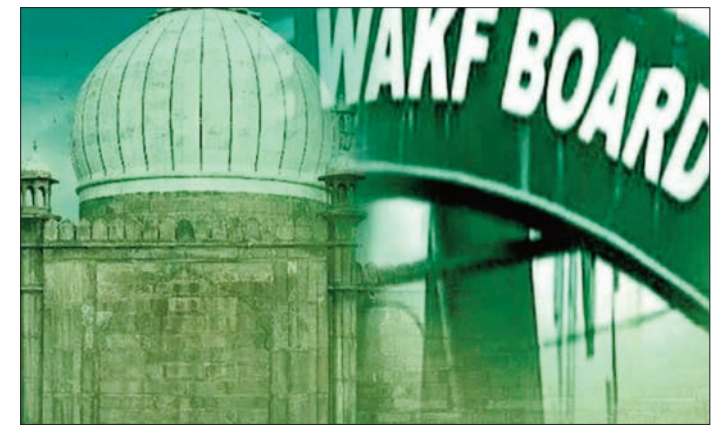
Senior BJP leader and former law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad cited notices served on farmers in Karnataka's Vijayapura district for allegedly encroaching on Waqf properties and alleged that a temple is also facing similar claims.

Forty-four properties of farmers have received such notices in three weeks, he told reporters.

The Congress has been doing it due to its vote bank politics, Prasad added while asserting that the BJP would "protest any such attempt tooth and nail".

Only after a row erupted that Karnataka law minister M B Patil sought to defuse the crisis by blaming a gazette error for the notices, he claimed.

At the press conference, Prasad also slammed Shiv Sena (UBT)



MP Arvind Sawant for his derogatory swipe at Shaina N C, a BJP leader who has switched to Shiv Sena to become its candidate from the Mumba Devi constituency.

He described Sawant's comments as shameful, scandalous and condemnable.

To a question about former US president and Republican nominee in the November 5 presidential polls Donald Trump's condemnation of attacks on Hin-

du, he said it is for the External Affairs Ministry to comment.

Trump, in a social media post, has vowed to strengthen ties with India and described Prime Minister Narendra Modi as his "good friend".

Bangladesh, he said, remains in a total state of chaos and alleged that his Democratic rival Vice President Kamala Harris and her boss President Joe Biden have ignored Hindus around the world and in America. (PTI)

Congress slams EC's response on Haryana Polls, warns of legal action



NEW DELHI, Nov 1: The Congress on Friday hit out at the Election Commission after it rejected allegations over irregularities in the Haryana assembly polls, saying if the poll panel's goal is to "strip itself of the last vestiges of neutrality", then it is doing a "remarkable job" at creating that impression.

The opposition party claimed that the EC's reply was written in a tone that is condescending and warned that if the poll panel persists with such language then it would have no choice but to seek legal recourse to expunge such remarks.

The Congress's response came days after the EC rejected allegations levelled by it over irregularities in the just-held assembly polls, saying the party was raising "the smoke of a generic doubt" about the credibility of an entire electoral outcome like it did in the past.

In its letter to the EC signed by nine senior Congress leaders, including general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh, the party said, "We have carefully studied your response to our complaints. Not surprisingly, the EC has given a clean chit to itself. We would normally have let it be at that. However, the tone and tenor of the EC's response, the language

used, and the allegations made against the INC compel us to submit the counter-response."

"We do not know who is advising or guiding the hon'ble Commission, but it seems that the Commission has forgotten that it is a body set up under the Constitution and charged with the discharge of certain crucial functions - both administrative and quasijudicial," the response by the Congress leaders said.

Posting the reply on X, Congress general secretary Ramesh said, "ECI gave a non-reply to Congress' specific complaints in 20 Vidhan Sabha constituencies in Haryana."

The Congress letter said that if the Commission grants a recognised national party a hearing or examines issues raised by them in good faith it is not an "exception" or "indulgence" but it is the performance of a duty which it is required to do.

"If the Commission is refusing to grant us a hearing or refusing to engage on certain complaints (which it has done in the past) then the law allows recourse to the higher courts' extraordinary jurisdiction to compel the ECI to discharge this function (as happened in 2019)," the letter said.

BJP leader Devender Singh Rana passes away at 59



JAMMU, Nov 1: BJP MLA Devender Singh Rana, who passed away late Thursday night, was a prominent entrepreneur and influential politician often described as the "voice of Jammu".

Rana died at a hospital in Haryana's Faridabad after a brief illness. He was 59 years old.

The legacy of Rana -- who is survived by his wife, two daughters, and a son -- is marked by his remarkable journey from building a multi-crore automobile company to becoming a significant political figure advocating for the "Dogra chief minister" narrative in Jammu and Kashmir. Born into a Dogra family in Doda district in 1965, Rana was the son of former bureaucrat Rajinder Singh Rana and the younger brother of Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Jitendra Singh.

Rana's residence witnessed a long queue of mourners from early morning to offer their condolences to the family.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed shock at the death of Rana and said his "untimely demise is shocking". In a post on X, the prime minister said, "...He

(Rana) was a veteran leader, who worked diligently towards Jammu and Kashmir's progress. He had just won the assembly polls and had also played a noteworthy role in making the BJP stronger in Jammu and Kashmir."

"In this hour of grief, my thoughts are with his family and supporters. Om Shanti," he added.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also expressed grief over Rana's untimely passing.

"Devendra ji, who was always dedicated to the peace and development of Jammu and Kashmir and the interests of the people, made an invaluable contribution to the progress of the region. His demise is an irreparable loss for the BJP family. I express my condolences to his family and supporters," he said.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who visited Rana's residence on Friday afternoon, posted an emotional message on his X handle, saying, "The terrible news from late last night isn't really sinking in."

I know the last few years have been marked by our differences, Devender, but I prefer to focus on the fun times we shared together, the excellent work we did together and the memories." "You have been taken from us all too soon and will be missed. May your soul rest in peace now, DSR. My heart goes out to your family as I struggle to find the words to convey my condolences to them," he said. (PTI)

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

The leaders said the Congress' communications confine themselves to issues and are written with a regard for the high office of the CEC and his brother Commissioners. "However, the ECI's reply are written in a tone that is condescending. If the current ECI's goal is to strip itself of the last vestiges of neutrality, then it is doing a remarkable job at creating that impression," the party said in its letter to the EC.

"Judges who write decisions do not attack or demonise the party raising the issues. However, if the ECI persists then we shall have no choice but to seek legal recourse to expunge such remarks (a remedy with which the ECI is familiar since it unsuccessfully sought to do the same with a high court's unflattering but accurate observations after Covid)," said the letter signed by Ramesh, K C Venugopal, Ashok Gehlot, Bhupinder Hooda, Ajay Maken, Abhishek Singhvi, Uday Bhan, Partap Bajwa and Pawan Khera.

In a strongly-worded letter to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, the poll panel had said such "frivolous and unfounded" doubts have the potential of creating "turbulence" when crucial steps like polling and counting are in live play, a time when both public and political parties' anxieties are peaking.

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

Congress links growing monopolies to India's economic woes



NEW DELHI, Nov 1: The Congress on Friday claimed growing monopolisation by five big conglomerates, including the Adani Group, was linked to India's shaky economic growth, unemployment crisis, and high inflation, and asserted that companies must expand but the government had a responsibility to ensure oligopolies or monopolies did not emerge.

The opposition party's remarks came days after the Adani Group said it had agreed to acquire CK Birla Group firm Orient Cement Limited in a deal valued at ₹ 8,100 crore.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said on X, "Aap chronol-

ogy samajhiye: September 2022: Modani acquires Ambuja Cements and ACC to become the country's second largest cement player."

"August 2023: Adani acquires Sanghi Industries, India's largest single-location cement unit. June 2024: Adani acquires Penna Cements, giving it substantial market share even in the last remaining region of south India. October 2024: Adani acquires Orient Cement, gaining an additional 2 per cent market share. Upcoming: Adani exploring the acquisition of Saurashtra Cement, Vadraj Cement, and the cement business of Jaiprakash Associates," he added.

As former RBI deputy governor and noted financial economist Dr

slumdweller have remained unheard for the past 20 years, while the city faces a garbage collection crisis.

"A sum of ₹ 2,000 crore was received for the 'smart city' project, but is Thane a smart city? Unauthorised construction is rampant. There is lack of urban planning. Thane has been held to ransom for the last 20 years. Why did the Shinde government announce waiver of toll (at entry points to Mumbai) just ahead of (assembly) polls," he said.

The Shinde government has failed to tackle farmer suicides and curb atrocities against women as well, Dighe further claimed.

"I believe the youth and senior citizens will support me. Senior citizens do not want the next generation to suffer. Youth have been misled. People want to be self-sufficient, but those in power want people to be dependent and vote for them," Dighe asserted. Dighe said his vision for Thane comprised jobs for youngsters and welfare of its people.

Queried about Shinde's supporters constantly harping on the CM being a hands-on leader unlike Uddhav Thackeray, Dighe said, "Why keep saying that I am there for the people. You (CM) are not doing anyone a favour. It is your job to stand by them." (PTI)

BJP trying to divert common man's issues: Congress on Jharkhand CM's age controversy

RANCHI, Nov 1: The Congress on Friday accused the BJP of diverting common man's issues by lodging a complaint with the Election Commission, alleging that Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren provided wrong information about his age in the poll affidavit.

BJP's Barhait nominee Gambliel Hembrom filed the complaint with the EC on October 30, alleging that Soren provided wrong information about his age in the affidavit.

Speaking to reporters here over the BJP's allegation regarding the age of Soren, Congress general secretary KC Venugopal said, "They will tell new things to divert common man's issues."



Hembrom, in his complaint, alleged that Soren mentioned 42 years as his age in the affidavit filed in the 2019 Jharkhand assembly elections.

PM Modi slams congress for 'Fake Promises' and poor governance

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday 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.

Modi launched a fierce attack on the opposition party as he seized on its president Mallikarjun Kharge's comments that the Congress' state units should make promises that are properly budgeted and do not lead to financial troubles amid reports of fiscal problems the party-ruled states are facing in keeping some of their pre-poll announcements.

The prime minister said, "The Congress party is realising the hard way that making unreal promises is easy but implementing them properly is tough or impossible."

Campaign after campaign they promise things to the people which they also know they will never be able to deliver. Now, they stand badly exposed in front of the people!"

He said the developmental trajectory and fiscal health in the Congress-ruled states of Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana is turning from bad to worse.

People will have to be vigilant against the Congress-sponsored culture of fake promises, he said. "We saw recently how the people of Haryana rejected their lies and preferred a government that is sta-

ble, progress-oriented and action-driven."

There is a growing realisation across India that a vote for the Congress is a vote for non-governance, poor economics and unparalleled loot, the prime minister said in a series of posts on X with the hashtag "fake promises of Congress".

He said the "so-called guarantees" of the Congress lie unfulfilled, which is a "terrible deceit" upon the people of these states.

Modi added that the victims of such policies are the poor, youngsters, farmers and women who are not only denied the benefits of these promises but also see their existing schemes diluted.

In Karnataka, the Congress is busier in intra-party politics and loot instead of even bothering to deliver on development. Not only that, they are also going to roll back existing schemes, Modi said. In Himachal Pradesh, he added, salaries of government employees are not paid on time and Telangana farmers are waiting for the waiver they were promised.

"Previously, in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, they promised certain allowances which were never implemented for five years. There are numerous such examples of how the Congress works."

The people of India want development and progress, not the same old fake promises of Congress," the prime minister said. (PTI)

Leaders emphasise contributions and future growth

Haryana, MP, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Kerala celebrate statehood day

BENGALURU/BHOPAL, Nov 1: Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala Friday celebrated their formation day with their chief ministers highlighting how their states have contributed immensely to nation-building.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the nation in greeting the people of these states.

While Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala came into being on this day in 1956, Haryana was formed in 1966 while Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh in 2000.

In a post in Hindi on X, Murmu said she wishes that the people of these states "continue to contribute to the country's development journey and that their lives be filled with peace and prosperity".

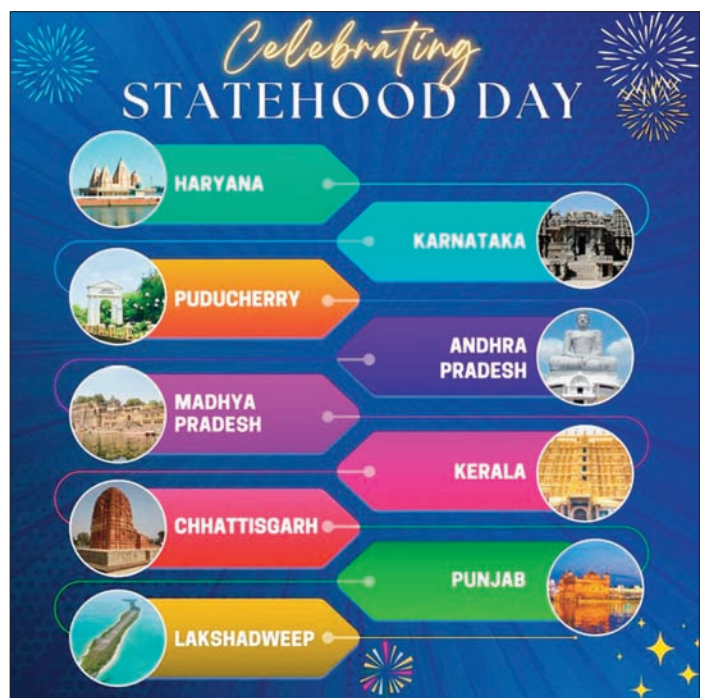
Modi also took to X to highlight various features of these states.

"Kannada Rajyotsava" is a very special occasion, recognising the exemplary culture and traditions of Karnataka, he said.

"This state is blessed with outstanding people, who are powering growth and innovation across sectors. May the people of Karnataka always be blessed with happiness and success," he added.

Modi noted that Madhya Pradesh is blessed with bountiful natural resources and cultural heritage and described Chhattisgarh as a state known for its impressive folk traditions and tribal culture, wishing the states continued development.

In another post, he said, "Kerala is known for its mesmerising landscapes, vibrant traditions and hard-working people. People from



Kerala have made their mark all over the world, across different fields. May the people of the state keep progressing in the times to come."

Haryana is known for its rich and historic heritage, and has always made important contributions to the country's development, the prime minister added.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said all these states have contributed immensely to nation-building. In separate messages on X, Shah expressed hope that the states would continue the journey of progress and development uninterrupted in the coming years.

Addressing people on the occasion

of the 69th state formation day at Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said there is injustice happening to Karnataka.

The state is contributing more than ₹ four lakh crore as revenue to the Centre and it is the second largest contributor to the central tax revenue after Maharashtra, he said.

"Even though we give more than ₹ four lakh crore, we are only getting ₹ 55,000 crore to ₹ 60,000 crore. Kannadigas should know this. We are getting 14 to 15 per cent only of our contribution," the chief minister said.

Under the federal system, there should not be any injustice just be-

cause Karnataka is a progressive state, he observed.

"Just because a milch cow is giving milk, we should not milk it completely. We should leave some milk for the calf too or else it will malnourish. This no one should ever forget," Siddaramaiah said.

A cultural programme themed around 'Hesarayithu Karnataka, Usiragali Kannada' (the state got the name Karnataka, now Kannada should become the breath) was held on the occasion.

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra extended their wishes to the people of the state and Keralites worldwide on the state's 68th formation day, known as 'Keralappiravi'.

Governor Khan, in a video message on Facebook, said that since its formation, Kerala has embraced a unique developmental journey, marked by enviable high human developmental indices and remarkable progress in literacy, healthcare and quality of life.

Vijayan, in a Facebook post, said Kerala has always upheld the values of democracy, secularism and social justice and has grown into a model for the entire country in terms of quality of life and people's welfare.

"The achievements made by Kerala in many areas, including health and education, have attracted attention all over the world," he said. Priyanka, who is contesting in the bypoll for the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat, wished Keralites on the occasion in a post in Malayalam on X. In Chhattisgarh, the three-day

Rajyotsav celebrations will be held from November 4 to 6 in Nava Raipur Atal Nagar.

Governor Ramen Deka said since its establishment, Chhattisgarh has created a unique identity and new dimensions of development in various fields.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, in a post on X, said, "Our Chhattisgarh should continue to move forward on the path of progress and prosperity. This 'rice bowl' should always remain full. This is the wish. On this unique occasion of Rajyotsav (statehood day), light lamps in your respective homes and celebrate Rajyotsav along with Deepotsav. Jai Johar, Jai Chhattisgarh."

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini also greeted the people on the state's formation day and wished them a bright future.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin paid tributes on the occasion of Border Martyrs Day, recalling the contribution of those who had struggled for the inclusion of Tamil-speaking areas in the state.

BJP state president K Annamalai and TVK founder, actor Vijay said the present geographical boundaries of Tamil Nadu were defined on this day when the states were reorganised on linguistic basis on November 1, 1956 and said this day should be therefore celebrated as Tamil Nadu Day.

The Stalin-led DMK government had last year announced that July 18 would be observed as Tamil Nadu Day, since a resolution was moved by then CM C N Annadurai in the Assembly, seeking to rename Madras Presidency as Tamil Nadu, on July 18, 1967. (PTI)

Delhi court acquits three in 2017 attempt to murder case

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: A Delhi court has acquitted three men in a 2017 attempt to murder case, highlighting serious doubts over the investigation that could not be brushed aside.

Additional Sessions Judge Atul Ahlawat said the motive as an essential element of crime, based on the injured eyewitness' version, was a "double-edged sword" which could also be used to falsely implicate the accused.

The court was hearing the case against Faem Kureshi, Naeem Kureshi and Hanif Khan, who were accused of allegedly entering complainant Aslam's house on October 18, 2017, and thrashing him.

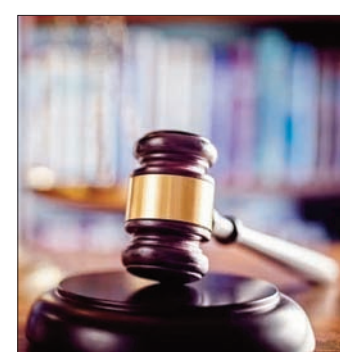
During the incident, Faem also fired upon Aslam, the prosecution said.

In the 72-page verdict pronounced on October 9, the court noted Aslam's statement according to which his brother Shakil had reached the spot after he was fired at, but underlined some "improvements" in his testimony, where he claimed to have witnessed the entire incident, including the scuffle and Faem allegedly shooting Aslam.

Calling it a "blow to the prosecution's case", the court noted the absence of bullet holes on Aslam's trousers, which was never sent for forensic analysis.

The court observed neither the alleged weapon of crime was recovered nor the bullets were found on the crime scene and even the blood samples collected from the spot weren't analysed.

"Therefore, it could not be established whether the blood allegedly recovered from the scene of crime pertained to the injured or not. It could not even be established in the present case, that the said blood pertained to a human



being or an animal," the judge's verdict underlined.

The court further took into account the view of the doctor who treated Aslam not ruling out the possibility of self-infliction of the injuries.

"In the present case, there are serious doubts about the investigation, which cannot be brushed aside," it added.

Regarding the motive of previous enmity between the complainant and the accused, the court said motive alone was insufficient.

It said, "Motive in itself is a double-edged sword. In cases which are based upon circumstantial evidence, motive plays an important role, however, not of so much importance in cases based on eyewitness evidence."

The court also observed several lapses in the investigation, including the testimony of the person who called the police helpline number not being recorded; police witness' testimony being "highly dubious and suspicious" and handwriting mismatches in the submitted documents.

"Therefore, it does not inspire any confidence and the possibility of the accused persons being falsely implicated in the present case cannot be ruled out," the court said. (PTI)

Experts cite enforcement gaps for firecracker ban violations in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Gaps in enforcement, limited monitoring, and easy access to firecrackers from the NCR region where restrictions were slack were largely responsible for the widespread flouting of the cracker ban in Delhi on Diwali, experts have opined.

Although the Delhi government had set up 377 enforcement teams and spread awareness through local associations to ensure compliance with the firecracker ban, neighbourhoods across the eastern and western parts of the city reported large-scale flouting of the restrictions.

Experts highlighted that unchecked sales and an influx of firecrackers from neighbouring regions combined with weak on-ground presence of authorities contributed to the mass violations that left the city shrouded in smog on Thursday.

A senior Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) official said they conducted several awareness campaigns against bursting crackers but enforcing the ban was the Delhi Police's responsibility.

However, a senior police official denied the "failure of administration" charge, while asserting that legal actions were taken against people found flouting the ban.

The city's air quality dropped to the "very poor" category, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 330 at 10 pm on Diwali. Key areas, in-

cluding Anand Vihar, saw the AQI plunge into the "severe" category while PM2.5 concentrations soared, creating hazardous conditions for respiratory health.

Many authorities lacked real-time monitoring tools to control the distribution and usage of firecrackers within city limits, making it challenging to uphold the ban effectively, environment experts said.

Rajiv Kakria, the convener of Save Our City (SOC), a South Delhi-based collective of resident welfare associations (RWAs), NGOs and activists said the firecracker ban in Delhi was not enforced effectively.

"The porous Delhi-NCR borders make it easy for people to buy firecrackers without any difficulty. It's challenging to impose this ban because while firecrackers are banned in Delhi, those can be easily obtained from neighbouring areas."

"There wasn't adequate checking at the borders and police patrolling was also limited during Diwali," he said.

He added the ineffective enforcement of the ban reflects an institutional failure and also pointed out that "during the COVID-19 pandemic, orders were followed more effectively by both authorities and the public because it was imposed properly".

Atul Goyal, president of United

RWAs Joint Action (URJA), an umbrella body of 2500 RWAs across Delhi, also blamed the slack in strict enforcement of the ban for the widespread bursting of crackers.

"Firecrackers were being sold on the streets in many localities. It's difficult for the police to nab every seller. People had easy access to firecrackers," he said and emphasised the need for a more coordinated regional strategy to ensure compliance across borders.

A senior DPCC official said, "We conducted extensive campaigns and requested people not to burst firecrackers. However, enforcing the ban was under the jurisdiction of the Delhi Police."

This year, the pollution levels on Diwali were not as high as anticipated. However, it is expected to reach the severe category by November 3, an official from Skymet, a private weather forecasting agency, added.

"We expected air quality to fall into the severe category and two factors helped prevent this," said Mahesh Palawat, Vice President of Meteorology and Climate Change at Skymet.

"Since last night, wind began flowing from the northwest at a good speed, which dispersed pollutants. Additionally, the temperature did not drop during Diwali, which often leads to smog formation," he said. (PTI)

Bihar: Police team attacked by villagers in Motihari

MOTIHARI (BIHAR), Nov 1: Two policemen were injured after they were allegedly attacked by villagers in the Paharpur area of Bihar's East Champaran district on Friday when they went there to investigate a case, police said.

The police registered a case against seven people in the area and arrested a woman in connection with the attack.

Soon after the incident, the Office of the Superintendent of Police (SP) of Motihari (district headquarters of East Champaran), ordered withholding the salary of the Station House Officer (SHO) of the Paharpur police station and initiated departmental proceedings for dereliction of duty.

The SP office has also sought an explanation from the Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) and the SHO of Areraj police station for their alleged inaction in sending additional security personnel to protect the injured policemen.

According to a statement issued by the SP office, "The incident took place when policemen, Sonu Kumar and Munna Kumar Paswan, reached Paharpur village in connection with their investigation into an abduction case in the morning on Friday."

When they started questioning the whereabouts of the son of Shambhu Prasad, a resident, they suddenly attacked the former." (PTI)

A day after Diwali, air quality 'poor' in Kolkata

KOLKATA, Nov 1: Kolkata's air quality index (AQI) was 'poor' across different pockets on Friday morning, a day after Kali Puja and Diwali, an official said.

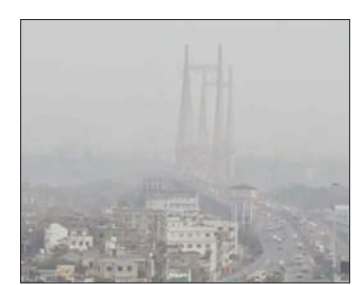
A West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) official told PTI, that AQI levels in terms of PM 2.5 were 173 in Ballygunje area and it hovered around 166 in pockets like Jadavpur, Belegata, Sinthi on Friday morning and was classified as 'poor'.

It was 129 at Rabindra Sarobar, 115 at Fort William, 124 at Victoria Memorial.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe', the officials said.

"On October 31 night, from average 60 mg PM 2.5 at 6 pm, till 2 am the AQI PM 2.5 fluctuated crossing 250 mark in some places like Jadavpur, Kasba, Rabindra Bharati University, Belegata which can be classified as very poor," the official said.

"Our guideline for use of green fireworks only and the clampdown on sale of clandestinely made illegal crackers made in districts like South 24 Parganas helped a bit to stop the AQI from crossing the 300 limit. But we urge the common people to be more responsive and stop use of banned fireworks and stop bursting crackers after 10 pm.



It becomes difficult to put every single person in every household under surveillance," he said.

Kali Puja and Diwali were celebrated in West Bengal on Thursday with people bursting firecrackers.

The PCB's monitoring cell at Paribesh Bhavan was at work throughout Kali Puja night and monitored the situation.

Environmentalist and green activist Somendra Mohan Ghosh alleged that sound crackers were burst rampantly from 9 pm till 12 midnight and even after 1 am, in Dhakuria, Jadavpur, Ballygunje, Chella, Belegata, Sinthi and several other pockets of the city.

"I think if hourly monitoring was done for every pocket of the city the AQI would have even crossed 350 mark in many parts and gone down a little bit when the madness stopped in the morning hours," he said.

Ghosh said the decibel limit violation must also be included in the criteria as parameters to monitor sound pollution. (PTI)

Two more arrested over gang rape of girl in Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESWAR, Nov 1: Two more persons were arrested on Friday in connection with the gang rape of a 17-year-old girl in Bhubaneswar, police said.

With the fresh arrests, a total of five people, including a female friend of the victim, have been arrested in the case so far.

Police had on Thursday arrested two men, both aged 19 years, and a 16-year-old girl in connection with the incident.

Two other persons, aged 21 and 23 years, were also detained. They have been arrested after their involvement in the case was found during investigation, Bhubaneswar DCP Pinak Mishra said.

The girl was allegedly gang-raped in a hotel in the Odisha capital on October 16.

A case was registered with Nayapalli police station on Wednesday on the basis of a complaint lodged by the survivor, he said.

The arrested girl was a common friend of both the victim and the accused and had allegedly introduced the survivor to the accused, another police officer said.

"The accused had allegedly spiked the victim's soft drink with some intoxicant and gang-raped her," he said.

The accused had also videotaped the incident and tried to extort the victim and her mother. (PTI)

Fire Breaks out in banquet hall in Delhi's Shahdara



NEW DELHI, Nov 1: A two-floor banquet hall was gutted in a fire that broke out in Delhi's Shahdara, police said on Friday. No casualties were reported.

The police suspects that the fire broke out when a misfired cracker struck the banquet hall.

However, the exact cause is yet to be ascertained, they said.

On the night of Diwali, the police was patrolling in the Krishna Nagar area when they saw a banquet hall, in flames, prompting them to call the fire department, they said.

The hall was locked from the outside.

Ten fire tenders were immediately rushed to the spot and doused the flames. The ground, first and second floors of the hall

were damaged. "The crime team inspected the spot and recorded the incident. The forensic science team will also visit the spot for further investigation."

The owner of the building, Rakesh Nagpal, was contacted. The exact cause of the fire remains under investigation," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Prashant Gautam said.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Fire Services experienced a surge in fire-related calls this Diwali with more than 300 such incidents reported across the city, which is the highest in the past 13 years, an official said on Friday.

According to officials, the increase is attributed to the extensive use of firecrackers.

"The figure marks the highest number of Diwali-related fire and emergency incidents in the past 13 years," DFS chief Atul Garg said.

The DFS, which had ramped up its readiness for the festival by deploying fire engines and personnel across the city, reported that most calls were received between 5 pm on October 31 and 5 am on November 1. (PTI)

Delhi air quality stable despite pollution norms violation: DPCC

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Delhi's pollution board claimed that the air quality index did not show any significant change this Diwali even after many flouted pollution norms.

According to a report by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, the 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) reached 328 on Thursday, rising to 360, a day after Diwali, which avoided a severe spike.

The report stated that the PM2.5 levels decreased by 4 per cent as compared to the Diwali last year. While the PM10 levels, consisting of particulate matter that is 10 micrometres or less in diameter, increased by 11 per cent.

PM2.5 are fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometres and smaller, and are the greatest risk to health. The acceptable annual standard for PM2.5 is 40 micrograms per cubic metre.

However, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data claimed that Delhi recorded its most polluted Diwali in three



years. On Thursday, the city's 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 330, compared to 218 in 2023 and 312 in 2022.

The national capital's AQI was recorded in the "very poor" category with a reading of 362 at 9 am on Friday.

Most monitoring stations in Delhi showed similar pollution levels, with 37 out of 39 reporting air quality in the "very poor" category. However, it avoided a severe

spike due to various pollution control efforts implemented across the city, the report said.

A significant reduction in crop residue burning incidents also helped mitigate severe pollution levels. The data revealed a 51 per cent reduction in residue-burning incidents in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh as compared to 2023, contributing to lower overall regional pollution.

The report further underscored the effectiveness of government ef-

NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from Mohammed Jabir Ahmed to Jabir Ahmed and my father name from Mohammed Zakir Hussain to Zakir Hussain by swearing a notarial affidavit at Sankardevnagar Hojai(Assam)

AFFIDAVIT

I Hussain Ahmed, S/O- Abdul Jabbar, Vill+P.O-Koroguri, P.S. Doboka,Dist. Hojai(Assam) That, my actual and correct name is Hussain Ahmed. That, some documents my name has been recorded as Huson Rahman, Huson Ahmad & Huson instead of Hussain Ahmed. That, Hussain Ahmed, Huson Rahman, Huson Ahmad & Huson are the names of one and same person.

Just going whichever way god is showing me: Actor Abhimanyu Kashinath

BENGALURU, Nov 1: The title of his latest film, 'Ellige Payana Yavudo Daari' pretty much sums up his life's journey, said Abhimanyu Kashinath, who plays the hero of the debut film of Kiran Surya.

"I know I want to be a good actor, but I am not sure of my wheres and hows also. Like my film title, I am full of questions too. So, I am doing the next best thing – just going whichever way god is showing me," said Abhimanyu.

Son of Kashinath, one of the legendary actor-directors of the Kannada film industry, Abhimanyu said unlike most star kids, growing up he was busy chasing the dreams of being a cricketer.

"My father always believed that we all must do what we want to do, so he stood by all my decisions. He never said I should try my luck in films instead of cricket. That is how I ended up playing for Bengaluru University," said Abhimanyu.

But despite going for selection matches for the state team at all levels – under 16, 19 and 22 – Abhimanyu said he could not really make the cut.

"I guess there came a point when I had to make up my mind about cricket. So after finishing my college, I decided to get into films," added Abhimanyu.

When he decided to carve a career for himself in the film world, Abhimanyu said his father again took it in his stride. "But he told me to try theatre first, so I understand the nuances of acting. And that is what I did for a couple of years," said Abhimanyu.

While the theatre took care of his acting training, he knew to be a hero in the Insta era, he had to hone his body too.

"If given a choice, I would choose just to act. But nowadays, you have to market yourself too. Whether you like it or not, you have to get on social media and show the world how good you are. I am more on the scrawny side, so I knew I needed to build some mass. I also learnt to dance, and trained myself for stunts..." said Abhimanyu.

Although a newcomer, since his father is a veteran, Abhimanyu said his journey into the film world was somewhat smooth.

"For instance, my first film 'Baaji', which also featured the legendary Anant Nag, was directed by S Shidlaghatta Srinivas, who had trained under my father. I know my father tried to ensure that I did something different," said Abhimanyu.

His second film, 'I2am Madhyarathri', a horror film, was produced by his father, who also appeared in a supporting role. The success that was enjoyed by his father eluded him, said Abhimanyu.

"At the end of the day, it doesn't matter if your father is famous or not. Unless you give a hit, there is no way you can sustain yourself in this industry," he said.

Still, having a mentor like Kashinath was something he never took for granted, said Abhimanyu. So, when his father passed away in 2018, Abhimanyu said he was doubly heartbroken as he lost not just his father but also his mentor.

"For most part my father left me on my own, so I could figure things out for myself. But whenever I went to him with things that were bothering me, he was there to guide me," said Abhimanyu. (PTI)



Angelina Jolie to be honoured with Performer Tribute at Gotham Awards

LOS ANGELES, Nov 1: Hollywood star Angelina Jolie will be felicitated with the Performer Tribute at the 34th edition of Gotham Awards in New York City.

The Oscar-winning actor will be honoured for her role in filmmaker Pablo Larraín's 'Maria', about the popular American-born Greek opera singer Maria Callas, the Gotham Film & Media Institute, which organises the award gala annually, said in a statement.

The awards will be held on December 2 at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City.

"Like the legendary figure she portrays, Angelina Jolie transcends mere performance to craft something extraordinary. Her interpretation captures both Maria Callas' complexity as an artist and the cultural resonance that defines an icon," The Gotham executive director Jeffrey Sharp said in a statement, as per The Hollywood Reporter.

Directed by Pablo Larraín, known for films like 'Jackie' and 'Spencer', 'Maria' portrays Callas' retreat to Paris following a glamorous yet tumultuous life in the public eye.

The film also features a talented cast, including Kodi Smit-McPhee, Alba Rohrwacher, Pierfrancesco Favino, and Valeria Golino. Maria Callas, who passed away in Paris in 1977 at the age of 53, remains an enduring figure in the world of opera, and her story resonates deeply with audiences.

The film received a standing ovation during its premiere at the New York Film Festival in September, further heightening anticipation for its release.

At the festival, Jolie expressed her gratitude, stating, "I'm so happy to be here tonight. And I'm so happy to share this stage with these extremely talented, wonderful people and my dear friends." The Gotham Awards honour star talent in front of and behind the camera and is a key fixture during Oscar season. (AGENCIES)



Prithviraj Sukumaran's 'L2: Empuraan' to hit theatres in March 2025

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: "L2: Empuraan", the sequel to Malayalam star Prithviraj Sukumaran's 2019 film "Lucifer", will be released in theatres on March 27, the actor announced on Friday.

In the second installment of the action franchise, Malayalam superstar Mohanlal reprise his role of Stephen Nedumpally aka Khureshi-Ab'raam

Sukumaran, who directed the movie from a script by Murali Gopy, also features in the movie alongside Manju Warrier, Tovino Thomas, Indrajith Sukumaran, Saniya Iyappan and Arjun Das.

#L2E #EMPURAAAN The 2nd installment of the #Lucifer franchise hits

cinemas world wide on 27th March 2025," the actor wrote on X alongside a poster of the movie.

"L2 Empuraan" will be released in theatres in five languages -- Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Hindi.

The film is produced under the banner of Lyca Productions and Aashirvad Cinemas.

"Lucifer", which follows Mohanlal's Stephen Nedumpally, an enigmatic political figure who becomes embroiled in a battle for power after the death of a political leader, was a major commercial and critical success.

The movie was praised for its action sequences, drama, and Mohanlal's performance. (PTI)

Tabu dazzles at New York premiere of 'Dune: Prophecy' in Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla outfit

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Actor Tabu, who plays the role of Sister Francesca in HBO series "Dune Prophecy", attended the New York premiere of the highly-anticipated series in a stunning black ensemble by fashion designers Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla.

Based on Frank Herbert's novel "Dune: The Sisterhood", the series will see the popular Indian actor in a recurring role. Tabu's outfit for the premiere night on Wednesday was the designer duo's unique spin on the traditional Angarkha outfit and showcased revival of their iconic 'Crushed Silk' collection, according to a note shared by the designers on their social media page.

Crafted from pure Khadi silk, it boasts a crushed texture achieved through a signature artisanal technique, perfected over thirty-eight years ago. "The garment has been hand-tailored with over fifty metres of silk that finds elegant expression in a mix of Indian heritage and Western style," they said in the note.

Tabu, known for her performance in both commercial as well as off-beat movies like "Maqbool", "Haider", "Andhadhun" and "Crew" in India, has previously worked with international directors like Ang Lee in "Life of Pi" and Mira Nair's "The Namesake".

Set 10,000 years before the ascension of Paul Atreides, "Dune: Prophecy" follows two Harkonnen sisters as they combat forces that threaten the future of humankind and establish the fabled sect that will become known as the Bene Gesserit.

Tabu shared her excitement about playing Sister Francesca in "Dune: Prophecy" in August, saying she accepted the role without batting an eyelid. In addition to Tabu, the ensemble cast of Dune: Prophecy includes Emily Watson, Olivia Williams, Travis Fimmel, Johdi May, Mark Strong, Sarah-Sofie Boussina, Josh Heuston, Chloe Lea, Jade Anouka, Faoleann Cunningham, Edward Davis, Aoife Hinds, Chris Mason and Shalom Brune-Franklin.

"Dune: Prophecy" will stream in November on JioCinema in India. (PTI)

'Santosh' a deeply political but accessible film, says director Sandhya Suri

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: British-Indian filmmaker Sandhya Suri says her debut feature "Santosh", which is the UK's official entry to the Oscars, is a deeply political film but she was careful that the story, woven around two female cops, doesn't become "didactic". Set in the interiors of north India, the movie revolves around a widow, played by Shahana Goswami, who gets her late husband's job of a police constable. She and her senior inspector (Sunita Rajwar) are soon sucked into a high profile investigation into the rape and murder of a Dalit teenager.

"My film is deeply political about the role of women and where we are," Suri told PTI in an interview, admitting that she often gets lost for words to talk about the movie in a "bigger way" because she funnelled everything she felt about the subject into her movie.

Suri said she knew from the beginning that her script was strong and hoped that as a director she makes the film "as good as the script".

"I'm happy that I did manage to do that... The key to the story is that it doesn't become didactic or it doesn't become a campaigning film or a militant film," she said. "Santosh" premiered in the Un Certain Regard category at the Cannes Film Festival in May and recently screened at the Mumbai MAMI film festival. It will travel to the Dharamshala International

Film Festival in November.

Suri, who has made critically acclaimed documentaries such as "I For India" and "Around India with a Movie Camera", said the violence perpetuated against women is not a new topic, but it always disturbed her. It was also the starting seed for her movie.

"There's been more media and outrage about some of these incidents in the last 10 years. But I remember reading daily reports about the casual daily violence and how almost depressingly normal it was for these things to happen even before 2012 (the Delhi gangrape and murder case). I was more outraged by the regularity of such incidents. So it was more like a cumulative effect about the violence as opposed to one particular event."

Asked whether not being based in India gave her the necessary distance to explore the caste, gender and political faultlines in her movie, Suri credited her training in documentary filmmaking for helping her approach the topic a certain way.

"For me, it is not about distance. It is about being a documentary maker and having a certain rigor about the level of observation and research, having a lot of respect for detail and putting them in the film... This film, in script and in shooting, elevated in its craft," she said.

While she didn't set out to make a commercial or genre film, Suri is hopeful that when the film



releases in India, "people would want to go and see it". "It just ended up that I made a film on the Indian police. Actually, it is a very accessible film and the actors are so great. I had an amazing run in the cinemas in France."

Suri said the film's release in India is of "supreme importance" to her.

"I did not make this film for viewers only outside of India... There are things which an Indian audience will definitely pick up that others might not." It was by design that her central protagonist is a housewife-turned-cop because the film-

maker wanted a lower middle class constable, who "does not move in higher circles".

"I just wanted that really normal average woman who goes on this crazy journey. I wanted that type of woman to be seen all over the world."

Suri does not want to make much of the fact that her film is the first Hindi film to represent the UK in the best international film category at the Oscars.

"Given that it is a largely British-funded film with support from France and Germany and that I'm a British filmmaker of

Indian origin, it sort of makes sense. In the beginning of this journey, financing myself out of the United Kingdom was difficult but with time, people have become a bit more used to that and I had great support here," she said.

Both "Santosh" and Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light" screened at Cannes at different times. The director said while she missed meeting Kapadia at the French movie gala where "All We Imagine As Light" won the Grand Prix award, they crossed paths at the Telluride Film Festival later. (PTI)

East Bengal beat Nejmeh 3-2 to enter AFC Challenge League quarter-finals



THIMPHU (BHUTAN), Nov 1: Dimitrios Diamantakos' brace fired East Bengal FC into the knockout stage of the AFC Challenge League 2024-25 as the ISL side edged past Nejmeh SC of Lebanon 3-2 in their final Group A match here Friday.

East Bengal finished as the Group A winners on seven

points to seal progression. The Red and Golds had won 4-0 against Bashundhara Kings (Bangladesh) and drawn 2-2 with Paro FC (Bhutan) in their first two fixtures.

East Bengal, who trailed Nejmeh by two points heading into this encounter, took the lead in the eighth minute when Madih

Talal's corner kick was inadvertently headed into his own net by Baba Musah at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu.

The Indian side took further advantage of Nejmeh's slow start to double their advantage in the 15th minute when Diamantakos scored for the third

consecutive match when he prodded home a low cross from Mahesh Naorem.

A shell-shocked Nejmeh, who had won their two earlier matches, fought back to quickly pull one back three minutes later when Rabih Ataya lobbed the ball for Collins Opare to stab home past Prabsukhan Gill.

The Lebanese side rediscovered its confidence and drew level two minutes before half-time when Hussein Monzer bent an unstoppable free-kick into the top corner to set up an enticing second half.

Knowing defeat could mean elimination, both the teams adopted a more cautious approach in the second half although Nejmeh were still able to create several good chances.

Hassan Kourani missed an open goal with a header in the 47th minute before further efforts from Mahdi Zein and Ataya were safely handled by Gill as things remained level heading into the final half an hour. Then came the defining point when Talal was brought down in the box by Ali Ismail with Thai referee Songkran Bunmeekeart pointing to the spot.

Diamantakos put away the spot-kick with ease to restore East Bengal's lead in the 77th minute. Nejmeh tried to mount another comeback and put the East Bengal defence under pressure for the remaining minutes but it was to no avail as the Indian Super League outfit held on to take the win and top spot.

East Bengal will now have to wait to find out their quarter-final opponents after all the AFC Challenge League group stage fixtures are over.

The two-legged quarter-finals will take place on March 5 and 12. (PTI)

Humbert knocks out Alcaraz to join Zverev and Tsitsipas in Paris Masters quarterfinals

PARIS, Nov 1: Frenchman Ugo Humbert harnessed the energy of the home crowd and produced one of his best career performances in beating Carlos Alcaraz 6-1, 3-6, 7-5 to reach the quarterfinals of the Paris Masters.

A flurry of forehand and backhand winners had Alcaraz 5-0 down in a first set so one-sided that Alcaraz — a four-time Grand Slam winner — ironically waved his racket and grinned to the crowd after holding in the sixth game. "There were some incredible points, I think I have just experienced one of my greatest moments on a tennis court," Humbert said. "I don't want it to end here." The second-seeded Alcaraz controlled the second set but, after missing chances during the third set, served to stay in the match. The crowd jeered a replayed point but Alcaraz was unperturbed and held comfortably for 5-5. Sensing a big upset, Humbert got the Bercy Arena crowd going in the next game. The 26-year-old left-hander looked like he was about to do a lap of honor after a brilliant forehand pass down the line at full stretch and earned ovations following a superb angled volley and a booming winner that flew past his Spanish opponent.

"I have to congratulate Ugo. His performance has been really high," Alcaraz said. "The way he hits the ball is unbelievable."

Alcaraz said Humbert deserved victory, but added that the unusually high speed of the court made it more difficult for him — especially with the low trajectory of Humbert's shots.

"The stats came out that this is the fastest court in the Masters 1000, probably on the tour," the 21-year-old Spaniard said. "For example, the Davis Cup indoor court (was) way slower."

A rattled-looking Alcaraz trailed 0-30 in the 12th game. Umpire Richard Haigh intervened to calm the crowd, urging them not to cheer when Alcaraz made a fault on serve and then said in English "Guys, you're affecting

both players."

Serving again to stay in the match at 15-40, Alcaraz saved one match point but returned long on the next as the 15th-seeded Humbert set up a last-eight contest with Australian Jordan Thompson.

Eighth-seeded Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov beat Arthur Rinderknech 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 (5) to have an outside chance of reaching the season-ending ATP Finals. Dimitrov, who served 17 aces, needs to reach Sunday's final and next faces 2018 champion Karen Khachanov.

Earlier, Alexander Zverev silenced the raucous home crowd, beating French prospect Arthur Fils 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

The third-seeded German compiled 16 aces compared to nine for the 20-year-old Fils in their first indoor meeting.

"I am happy I hung in there today," Zverev said. "He is a great player and has improved a lot this year. I am looking forward to the next few battles we are going to have." Zverev, the French Open runner-up, saved three break points in serving for the match at 5-3. "The atmosphere here is a lot louder than at Roland Garros," the 27-year-old Zverev said. "The crowd is on top of you."

He next plays 10th-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas in their 16th career meeting, with Tsitsipas 10-5 up. The big-serving Greek earlier rallied to beat Francisco Cerundolo 6-7 (1), 6-4, 6-2 to stay in contention to qualify for next month's Finals in Turin, the year-end tournament gathering the season's top eight players.

Although Tsitsipas hit nine aces and saved all three break points, he converted only three of his 11 break-point chances.

In other third-round matches, ninth-seeded Alex De Minaur kept up his chances of reaching the Finals with a 5-7, 6-2, 6-3 victory against Britain's Jack Draper, the U.S. Open semifinalist, and 2022 champion Holger Rune edged out lucky loser Arthur Cazaux 3-6, 6-3, 6-4. (AP)

India to compete in 16-team ITTF Mixed Team World Cup

LAUSANNE, Nov 1: India will compete in the second edition of the ITTF Mixed Team World Cup for the Guoliang-Sörling Trophy along with 15 other teams. The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) on Friday unveiled the elite 16-team lineup for the tournament scheduled to be held in Chengdu, China from December 1-8. The hosts China are the defending champions. The other 14 teams to compete are -- Australia, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Egypt, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan,

South Korea, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Sweden and the United States of America (USA). The tournament will have a three-stage format, with Stage 1 consisting of 16 teams divided into four groups of four.

The highest-ranked sides have been placed in different groups, whereas the remaining teams have been drawn two at a time in seeding order after a snake system. Every group will be competing in a complete round-robin format.

As for Stage 2, the top two sides from

every Stage 1 group will advance and form a single eight-team group, competing in another round-robin format.

However, there will be a strategic variation, as the sides that have already faced each other in Stage 1 won't clash in this round, while their previous results will get carried forward. In Stage 3, the top four teams after Stage 2's standings will make it to the knockout phase featuring the semifinals along with the placement matches.

The semi-finals will be decided via rank-

ing, with the first-placed team facing the fourth-placed side, while the second goes against the third. Each team's journey terminates with either the final or the bronze medal contest. "This comprehensive format, totalling 52 matches across all stages (24 in Stage 1, 24 in Stage 2, and 4 in Stage 3), guarantees that the eventual champions must demonstrate both consistency through the round-robin phases and excellence in the knockout stage," said ITTF in a release. (PTI)

Want to do everything possible to win: Nicholas Pooran post LSG retention

LUCKNOW, Nov 1: West Indies wicketkeeper-batter Nicholas Pooran has thanked Lucknow Super Giants for showing faith in him following his retention, and is eager to do everything possible to lift the Indian Premier League title next season.

After the IPL retention deadline ended on Thursday, the Trinidadian was one of the five players to be retained by the franchise.

The 29-year-old was retained by LSG for ₹21 crore, the joint second-highest retention price for the upcoming season, alongside Royal Challengers Bangalore's Virat Kohli.

The four other LSG retentions were Ravi Bishnoi, Mayank Yadav, Mohsin Khan and Ayush Badoni.

"I'm just thankful and grateful for another year, another opportunity. I'm really thankful that LSG has given me the required opportunity to represent them again," Pooran said in a video released by the franchise on its social media handles.

"In 2023, they took a risk on me, and they took a chance, and I'm just really happy that I could contribute to the franchise becoming better. Obviously, we're still searching that title.

"Two years after, I'm really happy that they retained me, and they've shown so much trust in me. It really means a lot to me. I want to do everything possible

to win. That's basically it."

Pooran joined the side last season, finishing as the second-highest run-scorer for the team after KL Rahul, scoring 499 runs in 14 outings at a strike rate of 178.21, including three fifties.

Besides thanking the LSG fans for their support, he admitted that he also tries to help the team by imparting his knowledge of the sport as and when required.

"Our fans really came out and supported us last year, and that was really special. I'm looking forward to more support from our fans because they're the 12th man, and we just want to entertain them and make them happy."

"What ever influence I do have, I try to impart my knowledge as well, especially when it comes to the game. The end result is all about winning, and it's all about coming up with the best decision for LSG and becoming successful in 2025 and just moving on from there," said Pooran.

With the five retentions, LSG possesses a purse of ₹69 crore heading into the IPL Mega Auction, potentially happening this month.

The franchise also holds the option to retain another capped player via the Right To Match card, with the likes of Rahul, Marcus Stoinis, Quinton de Kock, and Krunal Pandya set to go under the hammer. (PTI)

Kasparaov doesn't see Gukesh-Liren contest as World C'ship match

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Russian chess legend Garry Kasparov doesn't consider the upcoming World Championship match between India's D Gukesh and China's Ding Liren as a contest between the world's top two players in the absence of five-time champion Magnus Carlsen. Kasparov believes with Carlsen, who hails from Norway, opting out of defending his title last year, the long line of world champions has come to an end.

"My hottest take is that I don't treat this as a World Championship match. For me, a World Championship match was always a match for the title of the



best player in the world," Kasparov said on a YouTube show for the St Louis Chess Club.

"I think the history of the World Championship matches started here in St Louis when Steinitz faced Zukertort (when Wilhelm Steinitz faced Johannes Zukertort in the 1886 World Chess Championship match) and ended with Magnus Carlsen. "There were 16 World Championships. You could call them, at every given moment, the best players in the world. They took the title by beating the best players (in the world at that time)," Kasparov added.

Kasparov, however, feels Gukesh is clear favourite going

into the contest.

"With all due respect, Ding Liren playing Gukesh is an important event. It's a FIDE event. I think Gukesh is favourite, because the way Ding Liren has been playing lately, it's kind of a shadow of the old Ding Liren we all remember.

"If he can recover miraculously, then it will be an interesting fight. But, in any case, it's an event that has nothing to do with the main idea of the World Championship match, to decide, to find the best player on the planet," he said.

Kasparov, who held the record for being the youngest world championship contender

after Gukesh broke the record as a 17-year-old by winning this year's Candidates tournament, supported Carlsen's decision to forfeit his title.

"These days, with chess getting faster and faster, with our lives getting faster, to keep an antiquated system of qualification that takes 18 months or longer to select a challenger, it's not adequate. "I think Magnus' decision, though probably I would have acted differently was the correct one. You can see that he's enjoying himself now. He's playing better chess than before. It's a tough decision that he has made," the Russian legend said. (PTI)

IPL Auctions: Pant set to trigger bidding war; Rahul, Iyer also hot property

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: With stars like Rishabh Pant and K L Rahul up for grabs, many IPL team owners will be rubbing their hands in glad anticipation at the upcoming players' auction which promises to create all-time record deals given the available Indian talent in the pool.

Aside from Pant and Rahul, there will be Shreyas Iyer, Arshdeep Singh, Washington Sundar, Mohammed Siraj and Mohammed Shami also in the auction pool.

All of them can trigger bidding wars but let there be no confusion that Pant will be cynosure of all eyes at the two-day event supposed to be held in third week of December. The Rs 75 crore retention cap on international players coupled with Right To Match cards will certainly make it an intriguing auction as some teams, which have exhausted their retention quotas, will now have to recruit at least 15 more players for a lesser sum.

But a few others like Punjab

Kings (Rs 110.5 crore) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (Rs 83 crore) will be making some insane bids.

Never before in an auction has one witnessed three IPL captains back in the pool -- Pant of Delhi Capitals, defending champions KKR's Iyer and Lucknow Super Giants' KL Rahul.

In case of Pant, more than money, he was not happy about his powers being curbed by GMR, the co-owners, who will run the show for the next two years. He was also, it is learnt, not happy with Hemang Badani as head coach and Y Venugopal Rao as Team Director.

In case of Iyer, he felt that as an IPL-winning captain, he deserved way more than his Rs 12.25 crore existing salary, a belief that was not shared by the KKR bosses. As for Rahul, his approach towards T20 cricket didn't match with what the LSG owners wanted.

All three will definitely get deals but Pant could well emerge



as the highest paid player of Indian Premier League if Punjab Kings, known for breaking banks every two years while shopping for a new captain and 'X-factor', decide to go for him.

"Rishabh's real bidding will start from Rs 20 crore onwards. There will be three teams who can afford to bid big for him. One is Punjab Kings with Rs 110.5 crore in its kitty. They need a new captain and a brand. RCB has Rs

83 crore and LSG have Rs 69 crore and they also need a new captain," a top official of a franchise told PTI.

"Gujarat Titans don't need a captain but they also have Rs 69 crore. DC has Rs 73 crore but why would they go for someone, they released under acrimonious circumstances," he added.

While Suresh Raina might have raised hopes of CSK fans about Pant joining Dhoni but

with Rs 55 crore, they can hardly even get to a ballpark figure and N Srinivasan's team doesn't function on whims and fancies.

The industry insiders expect Pant to get anything between Rs 25 crore to Rs 30 crore.

Now Iyer is another candidate who could have multiple franchises interested. When he was bought for Rs 12.25 crore by KKR, it was a mini auction, the dynamics are very different from mega auction. At the mini-auction, it is a case of more demand and less supply and hence one finds Mitchell Starc attracting an insane bid of Rs 24 crore plus. But in the mega auctions when a team needs a minimum of 15 to 18 players to build a squad, there isn't place for such extravagance.

"GMR, one of the co-owners have great faith in Iyer. He has been promised captaincy and if need be, DC with their handsome auction purse of nearly Rs 75 crore, can go north of Rs 20 crore. (PTI)

India hand New Zealand control after batting flop show on Day 1 in 3rd Test

MUMBAI, Nov 1: India's batters lost the plot in a matter of 20 minutes, leaving the side at a jittery 86/4 after Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar gave the hosts the early bragging rights by dismissing New Zealand for 235 on an eventful day one of the third and final Test here on Friday.

Jadeja (5/65) and Sundar (4/81) did their job to perfection but India's batting continued to be a weak link as the side lost three wickets in the space of eight balls, starting with Yashasvi Jaiswal's (30) inexplicable reverse slog sweep.

With his 14th five-for in Tests, Jadeja also moved ahead of former pace bowling teammates Zaheer Khan and Ishant Sharma to climb to the fifth spot in the list of highest wicket-takers for India in the format.

With 314 wickets so far, Jadeja is now behind Harbhajan Singh (417 wickets) in the all-time list.

India, who lost by eight wickets in Bengaluru and by 113 runs in Pune, are in a desperate position to remain alive in the race to the World Test Championship final but the contest seems to be slipping away.

If Virat Kohli (4) missed an innocuous full toss to be cleaned up in first innings at Pune was an aberration, the batting maestro ran himself out in ending stages of the first day's play which left India staring at a mountain to climb.

India's rapid fall displayed their fast eroding confidence with the bat as Rohit Sharma (18) too was among those who fell without making a significant dent.

In between the loss of the team's batting pillars, Jaiswal and Shubman Gill (31 not out) forged a 53-run stand for the second



wicket before the closing stage collapse.

Rohit, playing only his second Test on his home turf of the Wankhede Stadium, dazzled with a few attractive strokes to get off the blocks quickly but failed to make the most of a reprieve.

William O'Rourke spilled a tough chance at fine leg off Henry when Rohit pulled one towards his left with the fielder also covering fair distance to get to the ball in the fifth over.

In the seventh, Rohit played awkwardly at a back of a length ball, looking to work it on the leg side, the Indian skipper was perhaps surprised with the bounce as he closed the face of the bat but the ball flew

to his counterpart Tom Latham in the second slip.

Rohit's fall had Gill joining Jaiswal and the two did try to rebuild before the latter's dismissal.

Earlier, spinners ruled the roost as Jadeja (5/65) and Washington (4/81) shared nine wickets between them to keep New Zealand to 235 after the visitors opted to bat.

Washington sparked with a crucial two-wicket burst claiming key wickets of New Zealand captain Tom Latham (28) and the in-form Rachin Ravindra (5).

Even though Will Young (71) and Daryl Mitchell (82) played outstanding knocks, on a spin-friendly track, humidity and heat

tested the Kiwis' resolve while they pushed full tilt to counter India's spin threat.

Young and Mitchell put New Zealand on track for a big first innings score but Jadeja played a decisive role in pegging them back and handing the advantage to India with his mastery over the pitch and the conditions, picking five wickets along the way.

R Ashwin, deployed first among the Indian spinners, remained wicket-less despite his variations but his bowling partners exploited the pitch perfectly, particularly left-arm Jadeja who bowled comparatively quicker and attacked the wickets.

New Zealand, who crumbled from 159 for three to 235 all out predominantly against Jadeja, did deserve credit for braving the conditions which had their highest scorer in the innings, Mitchell, really struggling in the middle.

The burly batting all-rounder consumed liquids frequently and kept dropping to his haunches and even lay flat on his back as he made a fighting 82 off 129 balls, laced with three fours and as many sixes.

Mitchell felt the heat more than anyone else also because he dealt a lot in singles and doubles until he brought up his maiden fifty of the tour. Each of his three sixes came towards the end.

Like Mitchell, Young too looked set for a century but Jadeja's brilliance ended his knock.

Getting one to turn away against Young's front-foot defence, Jadeja had the ball kissing the shoulder of the bat and Rohit did the rest at first slip, bringing an end to a fine knock in which Young scored 71 off 138 balls with four fours and two sixes. (PTI)

Sudharsan, Padikkal rebuild India A with unbeaten fifties after Mukesh rattles Australia A



MACKAY (AUSTRALIA) Nov 1: Rising youngsters Sai Sudharsan and Devdutt Padikkal struck fighting fifties after Mukesh Kumar's searing six-wicket haul to put India A in command with a 120-run lead against Australia A on day two of their first 'Unofficial Test' here on Friday. Mukesh stole the show, claiming 6/46 to help India A restrict Australia A to 195 in their first innings but despite the Bengal seamer's heroic efforts, the hosts secured a crucial 88-run lead. The visitors had scored 107 in their first essay.

India A once again suffered a jittery start in their second innings with skipper Rituraj Gaikwad and fellow opener Abhimanyu Easwaran getting out cheaply to have India down to 30/2 in 8.5 overs.

Gaikwad, who fell for a golden duck in the first innings, this time nicked Fergus O'Neill to second slip where Cameron Bancroft took a low catch. While Easwaran, who had notched up four consecutive first-class centuries to earn a spot in the senior team as cover for skipper Rohit Sharma for the upcoming Test series against Australia, once again recorded a single-digit score, this time getting run out while backing up for Sai Sudharsan.

But thereafter Sudharsan and Padikkal showed fine temperament and soaked the pressure on the bouncy pitch to produce an unbroken 178-run stand for the third wicket to help India seize control. Sudharsan hit nine boundaries in his 185-ball 96, while Padikkal was unbeaten on 80 from 167 balls, scoring five fours.

Padikkal played a patient yet composed knock, working the ball around for quick singles and capitalising on loose deliveries to reach his fifty. At the other end, Sudharsan exhibited his range of shots, particularly adept at dispatching anything short, cutting and pulling with precision. His well-timed boundaries, including a powerful pull past square leg and a fluent cover drive, allowed him to reach his own half-century as they took the team past 200.

India A now have an overall lead of 120 runs with two more days left in the four-day fixture. The second and final unofficial Test is scheduled in Melbourne from November 7. Earlier resuming at 99/4 on Day 2, overnight batters Nathan McSweeney and Cooper Connolly added 51 runs for the fifth wicket, the match's first fifty-run stand.

However, Mukesh who bagged two wickets on the opening day, once again broke the partnership by dismissing Connolly.

Josh Philippe became Mukesh's fourth victim, while Nitish Kumar Reddy dismissed captain McSweeney, leaving Australia A reeling at 136/7 in 47.4 overs. A frustrating 41-run stand for the eighth wicket between Todd Murphy and O'Neill was finally broken when Prasad Krishna claimed the latter en route to his third scalp.

Mukesh rounded off his superb performance by completing his five-wicket haul with Brendan Doggett's wicket and then adding Todd Murphy as his sixth, wrapping up Australia A's innings.

Brief Scores:
India A: 107 and 208/2; 64 overs.
Australia A: 195; 62.4 overs. (PTI)

Agartala may become KKR's second home ground next year



AGARTALA, Nov 1: The under-construction international cricket stadium at Narsingarh in Tripura could become Kolkata Knight Riders' second home ground for the 2025 IPL season since the iconic Eden Garden in Kolkata is set for a massive makeover next year, a Tripura Cricket Association (TCA) official said on Friday.

The construction at the international stadium at Narsingarh began way back in 2017 with an estimated cost of Rs. 185 crore but the stadium is not yet ready.

"IPL chairman Arun Kumar Dhumal recently visited the proposed international stadium at Narsingarh on the outskirts of the state capital. He said if the stadium's is ready before February next year, it could be made second home ground of KKR or some else other state will get the benefit," TCA secretary Subarta Dey told PTI.

"Since it is a golden chance to host IPL matches at the proposed stadium, we have summoned a reputed construction agency to expedite work and get it completed by February 2025.

"The TCA will review the construction work and if the agency fails to meet the deadline, we will terminate it and engage a new firm to complete the remaining work," he said.

The agency has so far completed 80 percent in the past seven years even as the deadline of the project was only 22 months.

Dey said the matter was discussed during the TCA's general body meeting held here on Thursday where it was decided to go for all-out to get the stadium works completed by the stipulated time.

"If we could complete the stadium's work by February next year, I am confident of hosting at least two IPL matches of KKR at Narsingarh international cricket stadium," he said. (PTI)

Lewis cuts loose as West Indies beat England by 8 wickets in the rain-affected 1st ODI

NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA), Nov 1: Evin Lewis hit four times as many sixes as the entire England team in a commanding innings of 94 which led the West Indies to an eight-wicket win in the rain-affected first one-day international.

First-time captain Liam Livingstone hit two sixes in a top score of 48 in his team's under-par total of 209. That was England's best performance as it was bowled out in 45.1 overs on a tricky pitch on which only Lewis flourished.

The left-handed Lewis hit eight sixes in his innings of only 69 balls but was out 13 runs before the West Indies reached their Duckworth-Lewis System revised total of 157 to lead the three-match ODI series. No overs were lost when rain extended the interval between innings but the West Indies innings was reduced by 15 overs after a lengthy rain break after the 15th over.

They already were in command, thanks to Lewis. He had reached his half century from 46 balls before the rain came and the West Indies were 81-0, 48 runs ahead of the Duckworth Lewis calculation though they had to face 20 overs for the result to count.

India cancel intra-squad match to prioritise net practice ahead of Border-Gavaskar Trophy



NEW DELHI, Nov 1: India have decided to cancel a planned three-day intra-squad match with the 'A' side during the upcoming Test tour of Australia as the team management wants to focus on additional net practice to prepare for the marquee five-match showdown starting November 22 in Perth. India were scheduled to begin their tour of Australia with a closed-door warm-up match against the Rituraj Gaikwad-led India A at the WACA in Perth from November 15 to 17. India A are currently in Australia for an unofficial Test series. However, PTI has learnt that head coach Gautam Gambhir and some senior players want more time in the nets instead.

Rohit Sharma and his men will head to Australia after

a shocking home series loss to New Zealand. Vying for a third straight Test series victory in Australia, the tourists will face added pressure, as a place in the World Test Championship final is also at stake.

It is understood that since the bounce of the WACA centre strip resembles that of the Perth Stadium track, all top order batters would prefer more time in the middle.

An intra squad match might not work in that scenario as if a batter gets out cheaply, then he might not immediately get a chance to bat again on the centre strip.

This marks a change from India's last two tours of Australia when the side played practice games ahead of the main series. In the lead-up to the 2018-19 series, the 'Men in Blue' played a four-day match against Cricket Australia XI. For the 2020-21 tour, they started the red-ball leg with a three-day game against Australia A.

India A and the senior team played an intra-squad match in Johannesburg prior to the first Test against South Africa in Centurion on Boxing Day last year.

Despite the match, the Indian batting came short in the Test. It's not known whether the outcome of this experiment influenced their decision-making for the Australia series. (PTI)

The track has bounce but no pace off the pitch if you don't use shoulder: Jadeja



MUMBAI, Nov 1: Ravindra Jadeja is happy with another five-wicket haul in Test cricket but conceded that in sultry conditions on a slow turner, bowling indeed was hardwork.

Jadeja's 14th five-wicket haul came after a brief period of lull as he looked menacing while mixing deliveries, pitching it on good length spots and letting the variable bounce and abrasive surface work in his favour.

However Jadeja's assessment of the track was also an indicator that possibly Ravichandran Ashwin has lost a bit of pace in his deliv-

eries as it required more shoulder effort to get the zip off the surface.

"I thought you need to mix and match (in terms of speed). The wicket has bounce but off the surface, the ball isn't taking off. Unless you put in a lot of shoulders and get the revs, it is difficult," Jadeja told Jio Cinema.

"It was a special effort as it wasn't easy to bowl in this heat. Even Washy (Washington Sundar) bowled well and everyone played their roles to perfection. Now our batters will need to perform collectively," Jadeja said.

When asked if he knew that he has got past Zaheer Khan and Ishant Sharma (both 311 wickets), the 35 year-old said that he only checks stats when a series is not on and he is at home.

About losing three wickets in a jiffy during the final half an hour, Jadeja said first target on Saturday would be to bat well enough get 150 runs which will give them first innings lead. (PTI)

I will prove my that my retention was right decision: Shashank



CHANDIGARH, Nov 1: Uncapped Shashank Singh, one of the two players retained by Punjab Kings, on Friday said he will prove the team owners' decision to keep him for the 2025 season right by putting up a stellar show in the next edition when they restart their quest for that elusive title.

Shashank established himself as a fine finisher for Punjab Kings in the last season where he was their top run-getter with 354 runs at a

strike rate of 164.65. He averaged 44.25.

"I am extremely grateful to the franchise as they have given me an opportunity again and shown their faith in me. Having been in the circuit for the last five years, this opportunity they have given me is something I'll be forever grateful for. Now, it's my time to prove them right," Shashank said after the retentions were announced.

At the IPL 2024 auction, Punjab Kings se-

cured the services of Shashank at his base price of ₹ 20 lakh, but then claimed it was a 'mistake'. They later clarified that the confusion arose due to another player sharing the same name being on the auction list.

The Chhattisgarh cricketer made headlines by hammering an unbeaten 61 off just 29 balls against a formidable Gujarat Titans bowling attack.

"As a professional, you have to give your 100%, and that's why you are there. The way Punjab Kings and the fans have shown trust in me, it's my responsibility to double up my performances and ensure we go for the championship," he emphasised.

The franchise who has brought in a new coach in Ricky Ponting will enter the mega IPL auction with the highest purse, having just retained uncapped Shashank and Prabhshimran Singh.

The duo also starred in their record chase of 262 against Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens last season.

Looking ahead to IPL 2025, Shashank is enthusiastic about working with Ponting.

"Working with Ricky Ponting Sir will be the best thing for me this year. He is a legend of this game, and I am eager to learn new things under his guidance," added Shashank, who grew up admiring Ponting's trademark pull shots. PBKS finished ninth last season and they have not qualified for the playoffs since 2014. (PTI)

Four senior players led IPL retention discussions: MI coach Jayawardene

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene has disclosed that the team's senior quartet - Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya, and Suryakumar Yadav - was actively involved in discussions about captaincy and retentions for the IPL's 2025 season.

The five-times champions have retained the quartet of Bumrah, Suryakumar, Pandya and Rohit along with youngster Tilak Verma.

"We had extensive discussions. These four senior guys led those discussions. Obviously, what happened last season, as well as how we collectively move forward that was crucial for us to align in that right direction," Jayawardene told Jio Cinema on Thursday.

"So coaching staff, owners, management and these four guys the direction came from them, what needs to be done, how it needs to go about."

MI have paid the top retention price of ₹ 18 crore to pace spearhead Bumrah while Suryakumar and Pandya have been retained for an equal retention price of ₹ 16.35 crore each. Jayawardene said Rohit (₹ 16.30 crore), who has retired from the format after leading India to the T20 World Cup in June, agreed to be the fourth retention. Verma (₹ 8



crore) was the former champions' final retention pick.

"And obviously Ro (hit) led the retention part, and everyone agreed that Booms (Bumrah), you know, being the best sport in the world, and it's been very consistent, and we need to recognise that at the top.

"And then he wanted the other young Indians to be recognised, and it was his call. So all in all, it was brilliant to see that you know them leading that conversation and agreeing to everything. So it was quite easy for us."

Pandya was named captain last season, replacing Rohit amid a lot of backlash from the fans. However, Jayawardene, who recently returned as the team's head coach, said the all-rounder will continue to lead the side.

"The leadership, as well Hardik being appointed captain, we had that conversation with them. So that was led by them." MI endured a disastrous season, finishing at the bottom of the 10-team league.

Asked what the discussions are going into the new season Jayawardene said, "It's about learnings for us, understanding what went right, what went wrong. We need to learn from that and that was part of the discussions that we had."

"We need to control things on the field and then off the field stuff will be handled quite easily. I think with it, it was tough for us to perform on the field, and everyone acknowledged that, you know, we underperformed as a group."

MI will head into the auction with a purse of ₹ 45 crore. (PTI)