

6
WORLD



8
NATION



- High Court refuses to ban ISKCON in Bangladesh
- Russian missile, drone attack targets Ukraine's energy infrastructure
- Priyanka Gandhi takes oath as Lok Sabha MP
- RS fails to transact any business for third day



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Joint Committee on the Waqf Amendment Bill gets extension

Adani, Sambhal issues rock Parliament for 3rd day

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Proceedings in Parliament were on Thursday washed out for the third day since the beginning of the Winter Session following disruptions by the opposition over the Adani issue and violence in Manipur and Sambhal.

Both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha were adjourned within minutes of convening.

The Houses were first adjourned shortly after they met on Thursday and were later adjourned for the day soon after reconvening at 12 noon amid the opposition parties' protests.

Before being adjourned, the Lok Sabha adopted a resolution granting extension to the Joint Committee on the Waqf Amendment Bill till the last day of the Budget Session next year.

The Lok Sabha witnessed disruptions during Question Hour, shortly after Congress leaders Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Ravindra Chavan took oath as members of the Lower House.

Opposition members gathered in the Well, raising slogans for action against the perpetrators of the violence in Sambhal during a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque.

Parliamentary Affairs minister Kiren Rijiju flayed the protests, saying, "I condemn the attempts by the Congress and its allies in disrupting the House proceedings."

As the opposition protests continued, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MP Krishna Prasad Tenneti, who was in the chair, adjourned the proceedings for the day.

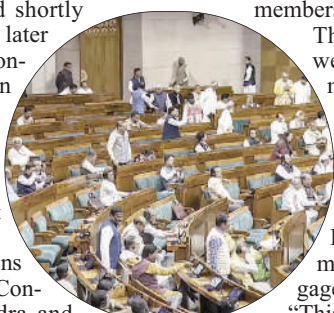
In the Rajya Sabha, chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar's appeals that Parliamentary disruption was not a remedy but a malady which weakened the foundation of India's democracy went unheeded as the opposition members protested.

The proceedings of the Upper House were adjourned within minutes after it met at 12 noon, following one adjournment shortly after 11 am.

Recalling that Wednesday marked a historic milestone -- the beginning of the final quarter-century before India's Constitution turned 100 -- Dhankhar lamented that the House members missed the opportunity to engage in productive dialogue.

"This was a moment for our House of Elders, guided by the spirit of nationalism, to send a powerful message of hope to 1.4 billion Indians, reaffirming our commitment to their dreams and journey towards Viksit Bharat at 2047," he said.

"Yet, with deep regret, I must say we missed this historic opportunity. Where there should have been productive dialogue echoing the collective aspirations of our nation, we fell short of our people's expectations," he lamented. Dhankhar said the chamber was more than just a house of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



Himanta: CID to file chargesheet shortly

ONLINE TRADING SCAM: Victims question accused getting bail

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 28: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said that no accused in the multi-crore online stock trading scam can walk out of the jail as there are several cases pending against them.

Due to the Central Bureau of India (CBI)'s inability to submit a chargesheet within 60 days of their detention, two of the main suspects in the multi-crore online stock trading scam, Bishal Phukan and Swapnil Das, along with six other people, were granted bail in the Gauhati High Court a few days ago.

"There was a technical problem in the matter," Sarma stated in response to the development.

"After an accused individual is arrested, the CBI typically prepares a chargesheet within 90 days; however, the Gauhati High Court noted



that the chargesheet had to be filed within 60 days. A few accused individuals were granted bail by the court on this basis, but they are unable to leave the jail since the central investigation agency would appeal the bail decision to the highest court," he added.

"Moreover, there are several

cases filed against the accused persons in the online trading scam and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has been investigating them apart from the cases given under CBI," he said.

The chief minister further said that the CID is going to file a chargesheet very soon.

Meanwhile, as the two key accused—Bishal Phukan and Swapnil Das got bail as the investigation agency failed to submit a chargesheet, anger was witnessed among the investors who have been duped lakhs of rupees by the fraudsters.

On the condition of anonymity, a medical professional, who invested a handsome amount in the trading through Swapnil Das's company, said, "We thought that the investigation agency will punish the fraudsters and we may get back our money; however, now the chances are looking slim as the police and central probe agency failed to submit even a chargesheet within stipulated time."

Another investor said, "Merely after two months of the arrest, the kingpins of the huge scam are walking out of the jail. This is unfortunate."

HT BRIEFS

Cannabis smuggling

GUWAHATI: In a major breakthrough in the ongoing crackdown on drug-related offenses, the Competent Authority, Kolkata, has frozen assets worth ₹ 1.44 crore belonging to Bijit Nath alias Bonguti, who is under investigation for involvement in cannabis smuggling, the Golaghat Police informed on Thursday. The action followed the investigation into Golaghat Police Station Case No. 128/2024, registered under Sections 20(b)(ii)(B) and 29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. Taking to the micro-blogging site X, the Golaghat Police stated, "In investigation of Golaghat PS case no 128/2024, U/S- 20(b) (ii) B/29 NDPS Act." According to the Golaghat Police, two properties in Tiriwal Gaon under Athgaon Mouza, owned by Bijit Nath and his wife Pallabi Nath, have been frozen. These include: Plot No. 1 (2 Kathas 16 Lechas), valued at ₹ 2,80,000; and a three-storied under-construction building (193.20 Sq.m.), valued at ₹ 1,41,97,971.

Young Leaders

GUWAHATI: In a significant move to engage and empower the youth, the Government of Assam has announced the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue as part of the National Youth Festival 2025, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) announced on Thursday. The initiative invites individuals aged 15 to 29 from across the nation to participate in a four-stage competition designed to shape future leaders and visionaries. Taking to the micro-blogging site X, the CMO stated, "The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue, part of the National Youth Festival 2025, invites young leaders aged 15-29 to participate in a transformative four-stage competition."

No land pattas for Bangladeshi immigrants: Tuliram Ronghang

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 28: Tuliram Ronghang, the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), has firmly stated that the council will not grant land pattas to Bangladeshi immigrants, regardless of their religious affiliation.

He also made it clear that recent migrants from Bihar and West Bengal will not be accommodated in Karbi Anglong.

Ronghang's comments came on the sidelines of the Death Anniversary observance of Khorsing Terang, the first CEM, and were in response to allegations made by JI Kathar, president of the All People's Leaders Conference (APLHC).

Kathar had criticised the KAAC



for its perceived failure to address the issue of Bengali settlements in Uttar Borbil and encroachment on PGR/VGR lands, while simultaneously attempting to displace Kuki migrants from Manipur.

In a press conference on November 27, Kathar had suggested

that Karbi Anglong could provide shelter to the Kuki refugees. However, Ronghang rejected this proposal, stating that recent migrants, including Kukis from Manipur, Bodos, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

In first cabinet meeting, Jharkhand CM forms panel to study tea tribes' plight in Assam

RANCHI, Nov 28: Hours after JMM leader Hemant Soren was sworn in as the 14th chief minister of Jharkhand, his government on Thursday approved the formation of an all-party panel to study the plight of the "marginalised" tea tribes in Assam.

The decision taken in the first cabinet meeting of the Soren government came against the backdrop of the poll battle between the JMM-led coalition and NDA, in which Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma repeatedly raised the issue of the "predicament" of Jharkhand's tribal community due to alleged large-scale infiltration of Muslims from

Bangladesh. Sarma was the BJP's election co-in-charge for Jharkhand.

"In Assam, tribes from Jharkhand are being marginalised. A large number of original inhabitants of Jharkhand are residing there. We have decided that an all-party panel will study the ground situation there. The panel will submit its report to the Jharkhand government," Soren said while briefing the media on the decisions of his first Cabinet meeting.

Though the CM said the decision was taken at the 'Cabinet meeting', no minister took oath during the day. A statement issued by the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Assam Police growing as preferred training Organisation'

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 28: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday claimed that Assam Police is emerging as a preferred training organisation in the country, with security professionals from various states undergoing training here.

"Assam Police is growing as a preferred training organisation in the country with many State law enforcement agencies actively undergoing courses in Assam. In yet another affirmation for @assampolice's training capabilities, 46 State Forest Service officers from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are undergoing arms handling training in the State," Sarma wrote on micro-blogging site X.

Sarma further said the state will scale up our capabilities further in the coming days.

According to him, at least 2,700 security officers from different states have received training at the Assamese police academy.

"In a first, Dergaon's Lachit Barphukan Police Academy is training 2700 police personnel from other states, the most recent one being from Goa Police. As I have often said, we want to build an Assam that will be in a position to provide leadership in governance to other States. From Policing to Women Centric DBT, we are trying to set a path which can be used by others in our collective endeavour to build a Viksit Bharat," he added. Sarma also asserted that during the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assamese academic wins 2024 Research Leadership Award

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Nov 28: Dr Udoy Saikia, a distinguished Assamese academic and professor at Flinders University, Australia, has brought immense pride to Assam by receiving the Award for Excellence in Research Leadership for 2024 from Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia.

This prestigious award is one of the highest honours in any Australian university, celebrating exceptional contributions to research and leadership.

Originally from Jorhat, Assam, Dr Saikia has been teaching in Australia for the past 23 years.

Dr Saikia's groundbreaking work focuses on translating research into actionable policies that drive meaningful social change. One of his notable achievements is the Human Well-being Index (HWI), a pioneering tool that goes beyond income-based metrics to provide a holistic measure of development.

His leadership in developing the HWI earned international recognition, including its first inclusion in the United Nations Human Development Report for Timor-Leste in 2018, marking a historic shift in global development measurement.

His research has since expanded to other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Kiribati.

Moreover, Dr Saikia's expertise has also been recognised



by the International Science Council (ISC), where he served as a global expert on sustainable development. He was one of three Australian experts appointed to the International Review Committee for evaluating the United Nations Global Report on Sustainable (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam bags 3rd position for thematic presentation at IITF

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: The Assam Pavilion, which featured an impressive array of items including handloom, water hyacinth and perfumes, secured the third place for excellence in display for thematic presentation in the 43rd India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2024 at Bharat Mandapam here.

The director of the Assam Pavilion, Debajit Phukan, received the award from Pradeep Singh Kharola, Chairman and Managing Director of the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), an Assam government release said on Thursday. "It augurs well that the Assam Pavilion bagged the 3rd for Excellence in Display for thematic presentation with a bronze medal (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Clarification on Misleading News Report

Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL) wishes to address the misleading and baseless allegations published in a news article titled "আমেৰিকাত অভিযুক্ত এজিউৰ পাবাৰে অসমতে আৰম্ভ কৰিছে সৌৰশক্তি প্ৰকল্প", which appeared in the 22nd November 2024 Guwahati edition of Asomiya Pratidin.

It is categorically stated that the prosecution mentioned in the US court proceedings has no connection whatsoever with the solar power projects in Assam or with the power procurement sources of Assam Discom (APDCL). The references cited from the court order in the news report are irrelevant to Assam, and there is no mention of Assam in the US court order. The allegations made, linking the court judgment to power projects in Assam, are entirely baseless and misleading.

The solar power projects executed by Azure Power in Assam were awarded in 2018. The tariff from these projects were also much lower than the average price. It is further emphasized that the tariff for these projects will remain fixed for the entire tenure of 25 years without any escalation.

It is also important to clarify that the solar power projects developed by Azure Power in Assam have no link or association with any other entity, including Adani Green. Any such insinuations are factually incorrect and misleading.

For the benefit of public understanding and in the interest of transparency, we are issuing this clarification.

Issued By:

Public Relations Officer, APDCL

Janasanyog/DF/1524/24/29-Nov-24

‘Accordingly, students can earn fewer credits in each semester’

UG students to soon get option to shorten, extend duration of degree courses: UGC chief

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Higher Education Institutions will soon be able to offer an option to undergraduate students to shorten or extend their study durations instead of the standard duration of their degree programmes, according to UGC chairman Jagadeesh Kumar.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved the SOPs for HEIs to offer the Accelerated Degree Programme (ADP) and Extended Degree Programme (EDP) in a meeting this week. The draft norms will now be put in the public domain for feedback from stakeholders.

While the degrees will mention a self-contained note that the academic requirements required in a standard



duration have been completed in a shortened or extended duration, they

will be treated at par with standard duration degrees for academic and recruitment purposes.

"Students can use this option to shorten or extend their study durations based on their learning abilities. ADP allows students to complete a three-year or four-year degree in reduced time by earning additional credits per semester, while EDP enables an extended timeline with fewer credits per semester," Kumar told PTI.

"Under ADP and EDP, students earn the same total credits as in the standard-duration programme. The higher education institutions will establish committees to evaluate students' eligibility for these programmes. These de-

grees will be equivalent to standard duration degrees for all employment and academic purposes," he added.

According to the SOPs, the institutions may earmark up to 10 per cent of the sanctioned intake for ADP. The HEIs may constitute a committee to scrutinize applications received at the end of the first or the second semester under EDP and ADP and select students accordingly.

In the ADP, students will follow the same curriculum content and total credits prescribed for the programme for a standard duration. "The only change will be in the duration of the programme. Students shall have the option to choose (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Nifty drops 360 pts as heavyweights drag Sensex tumbles nearly 1,200 pts to slip below 80k

MUMBAI, Nov 28: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surrendered early gains to plunge nearly 1.50 per cent on Thursday, weighed down by intense selling in market heavyweights Infosys, RIL and HDFC Bank amid a mixed trend in global equities.

Besides, deep losses in IT, auto and consumer durable stocks amid escalating geopolitical tensions also added to the weak investors' sentiment, analysts said.

The BSE benchmark Sensex slumped 1,190.34 points or 1.48 per cent to settle at 79,043.74. During the day, it tanked 1,315.16 points or 1.63 per cent to 78,918.92.

Investors' wealth fell by ₹ 1,50,265.63 crore to ₹ 4,42,98,083.42 crore (USD 5.24 trillion).

The NSE Nifty tumbled 360.75 points or 1.49 per cent to 23,914.15.

Shares of five of the 11 listed Adani Group firms ended higher on Thursday, with Adani Total Gas soaring nearly 16 per cent.

Stocks of Adani Energy Solutions zoomed 10 per cent, Adani Green Energy soared 10 per cent, and Adani Enterprises climbed



1.63 per cent. Meanwhile, Adani Ports declined 2.73 per cent.

"Domestic markets took a breather after a strong start to the week. The overnight sell-off in the US market, driven by renewed uncertainty about the rate cut trajectory and rising geopolitical tension, led to a correction in heavyweight IT and consumer discretionary stocks," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Adani Ports, Bajaj Finance, Tech Mahindra,

Titan, Tata Consultancy Services, Reliance Industries and Power Grid were among the laggards.

On the other hand, State Bank of India was the only gainer.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.41 per cent while the midcap index dipped 0.06 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, the BSE Focused IT tumbled 2.35 per cent, IT lost 2.26 per cent, tech (2.12 per cent), auto (1.39 per cent), consumer durables (1.20 per cent), bankex (0.81 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.70 per cent).

In contrast, BSE utilities, oil & gas and realty were the gainers.

"Nifty closed sharply lower at 23,914, down 1.49 per cent, weighed by monthly F&O expiry and weak global cues. Escalation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and uncertainties over the US interest rate trajectory post mixed economic data releases dented sentiment," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo settled in the green, while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower.

European markets were trading higher. The US markets ended lower on Wednesday. The decline in tech companies dragged major American indices lower.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹ 7.78 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.49 per cent to USD 73.18 a barrel.

On Wednesday, the BSE benchmark climbed 230.02 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at 80,234.08. The Nifty rose 80.40 points or 0.33 per cent to 24,274.90. (PTI)

ShareMarket introduces Sheets to simplify trading experience



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 28: ShareMarket, a PhonePe product on Thursday, announced the launch of Sheets, an industry-first in the discount broking landscape, which is designed to empower market participants and elevate their trading experience, an official release stated.

Available on the web platform trade.share.market, Sheets helps traders by importing market data directly into a spreadsheet and creating their own trading models and strategies seamlessly.

ShareMarket has redefined the industry with the groundbreaking launch of Sheets, becoming the only discount broker in the country to offer this innovative feature. This cutting-edge tool empowers market participants with the infrastructure they need to harness their

own intelligence and uncover actionable market insights, the release further stated.

Traders and investors, with limited or no programming background, manually manage and analyze hundreds of stocks to match specific strategies and criteria which is time-consuming and cumbersome. Sheets can address this challenge and enable the trader community to build option strategies, create buy and sell signals and analyse trends effectively on a real-time basis, it claimed.

"ShareMarket constantly strives to elevate the broking experience for market participants and empower them with intelligent infrastructure to make informed decisions", Ujjwal Jain, CEO, ShareMarket said.

Talking about the launch of Sheets, he further said, "Sheets is

a one-of-a-kind tool in the discount broking ecosystem, that will automate the process of keeping track of multiple stocks without the need for human intervention. This will allow traders to quickly make investment strategies and reduce the risk of errors. These tools enable the precise identification of market signals, trends, and momentum shifts".

"With these powerful new features, ShareMarket is helping traders and investors optimize their strategies, allowing them to focus on what truly matters—making smart, informed market decisions, he concluded".

In the upcoming quarters, Sheets will introduce advanced features to enhance its capabilities for both emerging and experienced traders. These would include Custom Strategy Builder allowing traders to predict profit and loss, determine breakeven points and view live charts, the release stated.

Traders will also gain access to pre-built strategies, such as condors, spreads, ladders, amongst others, which can be easily integrated into their existing templates and plan their investment moves.

To encourage new investors to start their investment journey as well as attract experienced investors to trade with ShareMarket, the platform is extending its offer of Zero brokerage till March 31, 2025, it concluded.

Royal Enfield launches Goan Classic 350

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 28: Royal Enfield on Thursday, launched the Goan Classic 350 — a bobber-inspired motorcycle. The Goan Classic 350 is a tribute to the kaleidoscope of self-expression that formed India's unique Goan moto-culture.

With every curve and contour, the Goan Classic is inspired by the stripped-down and 'tripped-up' creations of Goa's custom builders, blending the spirit of a bobber and Goan free-spirited lifestyle. The chopped fenders, mid-aape handlebars, ergonomically placed low-slung seats and the rear silhouette echo the days when riders stripped their machines down to the bare essentials, turning them into reflections of their personality, a release stated.

Speaking about the new Goan Classic 350, Siddhartha Lal, MD, Eicher Motors Ltd said, "The Goan Classic is a heartfelt tribute to the spirit of freedom and individuality that Royal Enfield has championed for decades. To me, this motorcycle is an embodiment of the cool, laid-back Goan moto-culture, and Royal Enfield's passion to build motorcycles that are more than just machines, and are a means to self-discovery and expression".

"This motorcycle feels right at home, not just on the streets of Goa, but brings the relaxed, and easy Goan vibe to free-spirited and freewheeling riders everywhere," he further stated.

realme unveils India's first Snapdragon 8 Elite Flagship

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 28: realme unveiled the much anticipated realme GT 7 Pro with India's First Snapdragon 8 Elite Flagship chipset, on Thursday.

Each generation of GT is designed with the motto "Born to Exceed", striving to deliver unrivalled performance and push the boundaries of what's possible. It is the first in India to feature the Snapdragon 8 Elite Flagship chipset, setting new standards for performance and stands out with

an impressive Antutu score of 3 million, an official statement stated.

For photography enthusiasts, the realme GT 7 Pro comes with Sony IMX882 periscope camera and introduces the industry's first AI Underwater Photography mode, enabling users to capture stunning images beneath the surface.

With its industry-leading performance and groundbreaking features including Dolby Vision, the realme GT 7 Pro pushes the

boundaries of what a flagship smartphone can achieve. The Dolby Vision feature enables users to capture and watch stunning videos with dazzling array of colors, sharper contrast, and richer details, it further stated.

Commenting on the launch, a realme spokesperson said, "We are thrilled to introduce the latest addition to our renowned GT series - the realme GT 7 Pro. The realme GT series has always been about pushing boundaries and setting new standards, and the GT 7

Pro truly explores the unexplored."

Further he said that, this innovative smartphone is India's first 8 Elite Flagship, powered by the advanced Snapdragon 8 Elite chipset that brings the best performance in the segment.

"We're excited to bring this exceptional technology to our customers, reaffirming our commitment to exceed expectations and redefine boundaries in the premium smartphone industry", he further said.

Abu Dhabi's IHC, Sri Lanka Port Authority, Tanzania reaffirm support for Adani Group

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Abu Dhabi's International Holding Company (IHC), one of the largest sovereign funds that manages assets close to USD 100 billion, has reaffirmed its support to the Adani Group, saying its outlook on investments in the group remains unchanged despite the US indictment of the conglomerate's founder chairman Gautam Adani.

"Our partnership with the Adani Group reflects our confidence in their contributions to the green energy and sustainability sectors," IHC, one of Adani group's key foreign investors, said in a statement.

"As with all our investments, our team continues to evaluate relevant information and developments. At this time, our outlook on these investments remains unchanged."

IHC had, in April 2022, invested about USD 500 million each in the renewables arm Adani Green Energy and power company Adani Transmission and a further USD 1 billion in the group's flagship Adani Enterprises. Later, it sold its 1.26 per cent stake in AGEL and 1.41 per cent in ATL, now called Adani Energy Solutions Ltd, but hiked its stake in Adani Enterprises Ltd to over 5 per cent.

The IHC statement comes soon after Adani group emphasised that its chairman and his aides have not been charged under the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act but faced three other charges, including securities and wire fraud that are punishable with monetary fines.



The US Department of Justice's (US DOJ) indictment filed in a New York Court last week does not mention Gautam Adani, founder chairman of the ports-to-energy conglomerate, his nephew Sagar or Vneet Jaain in any count related to conspiracy to violate the FCPA, AGEL - the firm at the heart of allegation of USD 265 million bribes allegedly being paid to Indian officials to secure solar power sale contracts that could benefit bring in USD 2 billion of profits over 20 year period to the firm, had said in a filing to the stock exchange.

The three, who are executives at AGEL, have only been charged with securities fraud conspiracy, wire fraud conspiracy, and securities fraud, the company said. In general, the penalties for such charges are less severe than bribery.

Gautam and Sagar also face a civil complaint over violation of sections of the Securities Act and aiding and abetting Adani Green to violate

the Act, the company had said.

Adani Group last week denied all allegations as baseless and said it would seek legal recourse to defend itself.

Meanwhile, other international partners have also expressed their continued support. The Sri Lanka Ports Authority has expressed its ongoing confidence in its partnership with Adani, as the Indian group plays a vital role in expanding the country's port infrastructure.

With USD 1 billion investment in the Colombo terminal, the project is poised to be the largest foreign direct investment in Sri Lanka's port sector.

Sri Lanka Ports Authority chairman Admiral Sirimewan Ranasinghe (Retd) has reportedly stated that there are no discussions regarding the project's cancellation. The project will be operational in the next couple of months.

Also, the Tanzanian government has reaffirmed its commitment to its agreements with Adani Ports, as it feels that there are no concerns regarding the ongoing projects and that all contracts fully comply with Tanzanian law.

In May 2024, Tanzania and Adani Ports finalised a 30-year concession agreement to operate Container Terminal 2 at Dar es Salaam port.

Additionally, Adani Ports acquired a 95 per cent stake in Tanzania International Container Terminal Services, a state-owned entity, for USD 95 million. (PTI)

Donald Trump 'friend of India': Minister Goyal



NEW DELHI, Nov 28: President-elect Donald Trump is a "friend of India" and India-US friendship will only continue to blossom and grow further, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday.

Trump, during his election campaign, had alleged that India, among all major countries, imposes the highest tariffs on foreign products and he had vowed to introduce a reciprocal tax if elected to power.

Addressing a media briefing here, Goyal also said he is looking forward to working with his

counterpart in the United States once the official processes are over and the new government takes charge.

When asked about how India is placed as the new Trump administration is set to assume charge in the US, said, the minister said: "I think we need not jump the gun. We should let the new government (in the US) come and take charge and express their formal and official views but to the best of my understanding of the situation and my own experience in working with the Trump administration ...

I do not foresee any problem whatsoever".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the world's most popular leader today, has managed India's international relationships better than ever in the past, Goyal added.

The minister emphasised Prime Minister Modi has worked with three administrations in the US, the Obama administration, the Trump administration, the Biden administration and "we will again work with the Trump administration". Goyal said India's relations with the US have got better and better every year.

"As Mr Trump is himself on record to say my good friend Mr Modi and the confidence he (Trump) has on the India relationship, India partnership have been expressed on many occasions," he said.

The Commerce and Industry Minister further said, "Mr Trump is a friend of India, a friend of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and I am sure this friendship will only continue to blossom and grow further as is evident from the various comments he has made so far". (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Adani, Sambhal issues rock

debate. "It is from where our national spirit has to echo." "Parliamentary disruption is not a remedy but a malady that weakens the very foundation of our democracy. It slides Parliament into irrelevance. The sanctity of this House demands debate, not discord; dialogue, not disruption," he said amid slogan shouting by the opposition members. Dhankhar said, "We must continue to have our relevance. When we engage in this kind of conduct, we deviate from constitutional ordainment and we turn our back to our duties."

The chairman said deviating from constructive discussion was a failure to honour the trust of millions who looked to them as guardians of their democratic aspirations.

"I urge you all to embrace the spirit of meaningful dialogue. Let us return to our tradition of thoughtful discussion and deliberation. In this spirit, I request your cooperation in proceeding with today's agenda," Dhankhar said, urging the protesting opposition members to embrace the spirit of meaningful dialogue.

Noting that he could not allow the House to sink to irrelevance, he said, "We should not dishonour the spirit of those who gave us this Constitution."

However, as the protests continued, the chairman adjourned the House for the day. The Upper House will reconvene at 11 am on Friday.

When the Upper House convened at the start of the day, proceedings were adjourned for nearly 50 minutes till 12 noon as opposition MPs protested against the rejection of adjournment notices for a discussion on the allegations against the Adani Group in the US, and violence in Manipur and Sambhal.

Shortly after the laying of listed papers in the morning session, Dhankhar said he had received 16 notices for adjournment of scheduled business under Rule 267 of the House.

The chairman said he was rejecting all the notices.

The notices were for discussions on the allegations of corruption against the Adani Group, communal violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal and ethnic clashes in Manipur.

While Sanjay Singh (AAP), Randeep Singh Surjewala, Syed Naseer Hussain, Pramod Tiwari, Akhilesh Prasad Singh, Ranjeet Ranjan and Anil Kumar Yadav Mandadi (all Congress) had given notices for discussing the Adani issue, Tiruchi Siva (DMK), Sandosh Kumar P and PP Suneer (both CPI) had given notices to discuss the violence in Manipur. John Brittas and AA Rahim (both CPI M), Ram Gopal Yadav and Ramji Lal Suman (both Samajwadi Party), Abdul Wahab (Indian Union Muslim League) and Hussain (Congress) had given notices for discussing the violence in Sambhal.

With several opposition members still on their feet, the chairman adjourned the proceedings till 12 noon. Dhankhar had earlier extended birthday greetings to MPs Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharyya, Wanweiroy Kharlukhi and Dharmshila Gupta after the House met for the day.

The opposition has been pressing for discussions on allegations of irregularities against the Adani Group and Sambhal violence. The Adani Group has denied the allegations. (PTI)

No land pattas for Bangladeshi

Chakmas from Mizoram, and Hmars, would not be granted land or shelter, even if they are tribals. He also emphasised that tribal women who marry non-tribal men would not be eligible for tribal benefits. Ronghang further challenged Kathar's claims about the encroachment on Professional Grazing Reserve/Village Grazing Reserve lands, stating that he was not in power at the time of the initial encroachments, as he was not even born then.

He also pointed out that Kathar himself had served as a secretary in the KAAC during Bidya Sing Engng's tenure as CEM and had been relieved of his duties, not transferred.

The KAAC's stance on immigration and land rights has sparked debate, with concerns raised about the potential impact on the region's demographic composition and social fabric.

Assam bags 3rd position for

buyers," Phukan said. Products from initiatives like One District, One Product (ODOP) and MSMEs were particularly well-received by buyers in the fair, which concluded on Wednesday. (PTI)

Assamese academic wins 2024

Development in 2019 and 2022. In addition to his research, Dr Saikia has made significant contributions as an educator and mentor, supervising 25 PhD students from 15 countries. His recent collaborative research in South India, focusing on empowering marginalised women in remote villages, was published in the book Empowering Marginalised Women in Remote Indian Villages.

Dr Saikia's illustrious career includes numerous accolades, such as the Vice Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence in 2011 and the Australian Government Teaching Award in 2012.

His academic journey began with postgraduate studies at prestigious institutions like the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (India) and the London School of Economics (UK).

Dr Saikia's achievements carry forward the legacy of his father, the late Dr Padma Dhar Saikia, a renowned Assamese economist and former Director of the Agro-Economic Research Centre for Northeast India.

Through his exceptional contributions to research, teaching, and policy development, Professor Uday Saikia continues to inspire both the Assamese and global academic communities.

'Assam Police growing as preferred

investigating officer in the police department which has come down to just 7.39 cases in June 2024. The chief minister had praised the drastic reduction in average cases handled by every officer.

"Due to our modernisation efforts, the average number of cases an Investigating Officer of @assampolice looks after has significantly come down, reducing their burden and improving quality of investigation", Sarma had said. "This has resulted in a drastic reduction in case pendency, benefiting a large section of society," he claimed.

Conclave on various challenges

as knowledge partners. The conclave, part of the three-day FolkTea Festival, will celebrate Assam's rich tea heritage while tackling the challenges threatening its future. The event will feature an inaugural session followed by four technical sessions focused on climate change, pest management, marketing and quality management, financial solutions for small tea growers, and income diversification strategies through intercropping during the non-plucking season to ensure economic sustainability.

Talukdar highlighted that the conclave would emphasise sustainable farming practices, income diversification, and pest management strategies to help build a more resilient future for Assam's tea industry. (PTI)

UG students to soon get option to

prescribed for the programme for a standard duration. "The only change will be in the duration of the programme. Students shall have the option to choose ADP either at the end of the first semester or the second semester and not beyond that. Students opting for the ADP will earn additional credits per semester starting from the second or third semester, depending on when they transition to the ADP," Kumar said.

"If they join the ADP after the first semester, they will begin earning extra credits from the second semester onward. Similarly, if they join the ADP after the second semester, the additional credit load will start from the third semester onward," he added. In a three-year or four-year undergraduate programme, the duration may be extended up to a maximum of two semesters.

"Accordingly, students can earn fewer credits in each semester. Based on the credit structure in the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes, the committee shall decide the minimum number of credits a student must earn in a semester in EDP," he said. The commission has noted that the HELs may issue degrees for students on completion of the programme in the opted duration (shortened or extended duration) and need not wait to complete the standard duration for the award of the formal degree.

"For the accelerated and extended degrees, a self-contained note should be added in the degree stating that the academic requirements required in a standard duration have been completed in a shortened or extended duration.

"For an ADP of a four-year undergraduate programme, the note should specify that the student completed the academic requirements of a four-year programme in six or seven semesters, as the case may be," Kumar said. (PTI)

MLA Rabiram Narzary inspects bridge projects in Gossaigaon

HT Correspondent

GOSSAIGAON, Nov 28: MLA Rabiram Narzary of the 29th Kokrajhar (ST) constituency of the Assam Legislative Assembly on Wednesday visited six proposed bridge construction sites in the Gossaigaon sub-division of his constituency.

These bridges, to be funded by the World Bank, are aimed at addressing long-standing connectivity issues, he said.

During his visit to the construction site of the Mora Jayma River bridge at Guwahati-Gossaigaon, MLA Narzary stated that the support and cooperation of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma have been instrumental in implementing numerous development projects, including roads and bridges, across the constituency.

He further mentioned that, apart from the Mora Jayma River bridge, bridges over the Madati River (connecting Babubil and Lalu Basti), Gurufela River (connecting Ahmedpur and Hangsabil), and others at Bhunka Rabha Basti, Phulkumari, Gendabil, and Tajpur-Banglabari, will soon be constructed.

These bridges will significantly ease transportation for students, patients, traders, and the general public, resolving long-standing issues in these areas.

He urged departmental engineers to complete the initial surveys promptly and start the construction work as soon as possible.

MLA Narzary was accompanied by BTC Guma constituency MCLA Rohindra Brahma, BPF leader from Guma constituency Bokwar Ali, and several party leaders and workers.

Silchar's four-lane highway project nears completion

Road expansion from Rangirkhari to Birbal Bazar promises improved connectivity, reduced congestion & better access to emergency services

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 28: A major milestone in the city's infrastructure development has been achieved with the widening of the two-lane road to a four-lane highway from Rangirkhari Point to Birbal Bazar.

This crucial project is expected to significantly enhance connectivity and ease traffic flow in one of Silchar's busiest stretches.

In a hands-on inspection, Cachar district commissioner Mridul Yadav personally assessed the project's progress and strategised for upcoming phases.

Demonstrating his commitment to sustainable urban development, DC Yadav evaluated the alignment of the proposed expansion, which affects several government office boundaries.

These boundaries were meticulously marked during a joint field survey conducted by the Land Ac-



4.790064, Long: 92.793481
Nov 24, 10:50 am, Thursday
DC visit Rangirkhari
IC Point

quisition team from the Settlement Office.

To ensure the project meets high standards of safety and efficiency, DC Yadav also emphasised the need for robust road safety measures and practical

drainage solutions.

Acknowledging the city's vulnerability to waterlogging during heavy rains, he directed engineers to construct roadside drains with appropriate gradients.

Additionally, he instructed the

careful integration of utility service shifting costs into the overall project budget, alongside civil construction expenses.

This ambitious initiative is set to extend up to Silchar Medical College, promising a monumental reduction in traffic congestion.

Beyond benefiting daily commuters, the project is expected to provide smoother access for emergency medical services, underscoring its critical importance for the region.

DC Mridul Yadav's dynamic leadership and meticulous approach have been instrumental in driving this infrastructure upgrade, which is poised to enhance connectivity, safety, and the quality of life for Silchar's residents.

As this project progresses, it signals a brighter, more efficient future for the city, laying the groundwork for continued development and modernisation.

Himanta reviews progress of Guwahati-North Guwahati bridge



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 28: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who inspected the progress of the construction work of the Guwahati-North Guwahati bridge over the Brahmaputra on Thursday, said that the construction of the bridge is progressing well as the government plans to dedicate it to the people after July 2025.

Chief minister Sarma, boarding a ship, inspected the entire length of the bridge, including its pillars, and took stock of its construction. During the inspection, CM Sarma also discussed various aspects of the construction with the engineers of the construction company and those of the PWD. He said that the bridge, once opened for traffic, will add a new dimension to connectivity between the North and South banks of the Brahmaputra.

Chief secretary Dr Ravi Kota, special secretary PWD (R) Chandan Sarma, police commissioner of Guwahati city Diganta Barah, and other senior government officers accompanied the chief minister during the inspection.

Fire destroys home in Khatkhathi

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, Nov 28: A devastating house fire occurred on Wednesday, at Khatkhathi Gotom Basti under Khatkhathi Police Station in Karbi Anglong district. The unfortunate incident resulted in the complete destruction of a house belonging to Arup Das.

The fire was first noticed around 4:00 pm on Wednesday. Local residents immediately responded to the fire and attempted to contain the blaze. Fire brigades were summoned from Bokajan and Dimapur, Nagaland.

Despite the efforts of the community, the fire escalated rapidly, leading to the complete destruction of the house and its contents.

The fire caused significant losses for Arup Das, including the complete destruction of his house, the loss of important documents, and the devastation of domestic household goods and essential items. Additionally, a Mahindra pick-up truck parked near the house sustained damage in the fire.

Local authorities are investigating the cause of the fire to determine whether it was accidental or intentional. Further details regarding the investigation will be released as they become available.

The local community has expressed sympathy for Arup Das and his family and is working to provide immediate relief and support to the affected family.

NSO hosts camp in Dibrugarh to boost self-compilation for ASI

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 28: The National Statistics Office (NSO), Field Operations Division (FOD), Regional Office-Dibrugarh, successfully organised a camp focused on the self-compilation of schedules for the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) 2023-24 on Thursday.

Altogether, 38 participants from 29 industries attended the event.

The camp was held at the RO Dibrugarh office and aimed to sensitise and encourage industry partners to engage in the self-compilation of schedules via a user-friendly portal developed by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI).

During the opening session, Subrata Das, assistant director, warmly welcomed the participating industry partners and commended their enthusiastic engagement, reflecting a shared commitment to improving the quality of industrial data in India.

The camp was inaugurated by RN Soreithem, joint director at NSO (FOD), Dibrugarh, who highlighted the critical role of ASI data in determining the manufacturing sector's contribution to

the nation's economy.

He emphasised that the self-compilation of schedules significantly enhances data quality and fosters a sense of data ownership among industry stakeholders, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the information collected.

Soreithem expressed appreciation for the active involvement of industry partners and underscored the importance of cultivating strong relationships between the NSO and the industries. He urged the partners to leverage accurate data for the growth and development of the national economy.

The camp was specifically designed to engage industry representatives, providing guidance on using the self-compilation portal while stressing the importance of accurate data submission for the benefit of India's industrial landscape. Experts from NSO (FOD) conducted detailed demonstrations on effectively completing schedules through the digital portal.

Attendees were guided through the nuances of the online filing process, with a particular focus on correctly interpreting various terminologies and accurately filling out specific sections of the schedules.

In addition to addressing procedural aspects, the workshop emphasised the significance of accurate data reporting for enhancing India's industrial statistics.

The initiative aims to alleviate the administrative burden on businesses while ensuring a more efficient and streamlined data collection process, which is vital for economic planning and policy formulation.

Feedback from industry participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing gratitude for the clarity and insights provided by NSO experts.

Attendees demonstrated their commitment to utilising the portal for timely and accurate submissions moving forward.

The NSO extends its heartfelt thanks to all participants and looks forward to their continued support in improving the quality of data collection, ultimately strengthening the economic framework of the country.

The camp served not only as an informative session but also as a collaborative platform for industry and government to work together toward a more robust industrial data system in India.

Karbi Anglong marks 70th death anniv of Khorsing Terang

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 28: The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) observed the 70th death anniversary of its first chief executive member, Khorsing Terang, on Thursday. The event was marked by a series of commemorative activities, including a garlanding ceremony at the memorial park near Karbi Anglong Sports Association Stadium and the New Memorial Park near the residence of current KAAC chief executive member (CEM) Tuliram Ronghang.

Interfaith prayers were offered by leaders from various religious communities, including Christian, Sikh, Hindu, Islam, Karbi traditional belief, Lokhimon sect, and Karbi Bhaktitom Trust. Padmashree Dhaneswar Engti also paid tribute to Terang by reciting a commemorative poem. Khorsing Terang, born in

1906, was a visionary leader who played a pivotal role in the formation of the Karbi Anglong district in 1951. He served as an MLC in the Assam Legislative Council during the pre-independence era and was elected as an MLA in the first Assam Assembly elections in 1951.

KAAC CEM Tuliram Ronghang praised Terang's contributions and urged the community to emulate his unity-driven approach. He acknowledged the challenges faced by the Karbi Anglong district, including border disputes and the ongoing pursuit of Autonomous State. Ronghang emphasised the need for unity and cooperation to address these issues and fulfill the dreams envisioned by Khorsing Terang. The event was attended by several dignitaries, including MLAs Bidyaseng Engleng and Darsing Ronghang, and KAAC chairman Raju Tisso.

Journalist Bulan Kumar Saikia passes away

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 28: Senior journalist, writer, and poet Bulan Kumar Saikia passed away at his residence in Naharkatia in Dibrugarh on Thursday after suffering from liver cirrhosis. Saikia breathed his last at around 3:45 am at his residence on Thursday. Saikia was born on January 1, 1976, and started his journalism career in the 1990s, working with several esteemed news organisations such as NE TV, Adinor Sombad, etc. Apart

from journalism, Saikia authored several books, including 'Ajon Bikhur Janma', 'Asom Bharat', and 'The Arakan Intel'. He extensively wrote about indigenous food and culture. At the time of his demise, he was working on a book titled 'C-N-C', which remains unfinished. The Dibrugarh Press Club, Greater Dibrugarh Press Club, Naharkatia Press Club, Dibrugarh Journalist Association, and several social organisations condoled the death of the journalist.

Child protection awareness campaign launched

HT Correspondent

MORIGAOON, Nov 28: To focus on the vital issues of child protection, the District Child Welfare and Protection Committee organised a meeting in the conference hall of the District Commissioner's Office on Thursday.

The meeting discussed child protection, prevention of child marriage, and the effective implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. Representatives of the child protection office and its convergence departments commented on the concerted efforts to ensure the safety and welfare of children in the district. In conjunction with the meeting, the district commissioner launched a mobile van awareness campaign on child marriage and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. The campaign aims to spread awareness throughout the Morigaon district. A mobile van, equipped with banners and a public address system, will travel to various locations to educate the community about the Child Protection Act and the consequences of child marriage.

In an inspiring moment of the programme, Rashidul Islam, a resident of Morigaon Child Care Institute, was felicitated for his outstanding achievement in passing the high school examination. This recognition highlights the district's commitment to nurturing and supporting children in institutional care to achieve their aspirations.

The meeting was attended by superintendent of police Hemant Kumar Das, additional district commissioner Sulakshana Borgohai, DSWO, CPOs, and other representatives of various departments.

Rampaging elephant herd destroys crops across Nagaon villages

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 28: A herd of over 100 wild elephants has been creating havoc in large areas of Kamrup and Barkola in the district, destroying several hectares of paddy fields and crops over the past couple of days.

According to sources, the herd of wild elephants has been spotted in the Telatisara, Teliati, Palasha, and Kacharikhandra areas near Kamrup, leaving a trail of destruction. The farmers, who had cultivated paddy in the fields, are now too afraid to enter their fields.

It was reported that some farmers who went to their crop fields early on Thursday morning to harvest their crops confronted the herd of wild elephants and luckily managed to escape.

Similarly, the herd of wild elephants has also been spotted in Barkola's Palengtali area, causing widespread damage to crops. Despite the forest department's efforts to drive the elephants away, they continue to roam the area, leaving the farmers in a state of panic.

The farmers have urged the forest department to take strong action to protect their crops from the wild elephants, sources added.

Two-day livestock rearing training concludes

HT Correspondent

MORIGAOON, Nov 28: A two-day-long training programme on 'Rearing of Livestock', organised by Morigaon Inter-Agency Group (IAG) in collaboration with Guwahati Gana Sewa Samiti (GGSS), concluded on Thursday at Niz Gerua, Laharighat Block.

The programme, which commenced on Wednesday, aimed to provide economic support to residents of Niz Gerua, who lack sustainable livelihoods and rely on raising livestock and birds alongside agriculture.

The organisers are focusing on economic development through livestock breeding to benefit the inhabitants.

With the goal of improving animal husbandry as an alternative source of livelihood for farmers, the training focused on scientific and commercial methods of livestock rearing.

The training programme was inaugu-

rated by Bhuragaon revenue circle officer Priyanka Bania. The CO, who expressed a desire to support the welfare of farmers by promoting veterinary education, expressed satisfaction at inaugurating the training and praised the organisers.

Dr Pranjal Hazarika, veterinary officer of Bhuragaon, served as the resource person, providing training and encouragement to the farmers. The programme was attended by Martin Maya Mochahari, director of Guwahati Gana Sewa Samiti, and Baladev Nath, secretary of the Inter-Agency Group and Morigaon Zila Gramya Puthibharal Santha, as chief guests.

The inaugural meeting was attended by village leader Pradip Chandra Deka, local social worker Mridul Shaikia, and Narayan Biswas. More than 100 farmers participated in the training, which focused on pig, chicken, and duck farming.

Feasibility study highlights potential for sustainable goat farming in Dimakuchi

Cooperative-driven model aims to transform traditional practices into an economically viable livelihood for rural households

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 28: A feasibility study conducted in Dimakuchi, Udalguri district, on Wednesday has revealed promising opportunities for sustainable goat farming in the region. Under the guidance of Jayanta Kherkatary, CHD Cooperation, BTC, and with support from fellows of the BTR Development Fellowship Program, the study aims to elevate goat farming from traditional backyard practices to a structured, cooperative-driven enterprise.

The pilot project focused on Sekhar SS Ltd., a cooperative society with around 3,700 shareholders, to explore the viability of goat farming as a sustainable livelihood option. The findings indicate that the region's climate and natural resources are ideal for breeds such as Black Bengal and Beetal. While



Black Bengal is highly sought after in local markets, Beetal shows excellent potential for export. The availability of lush green fodder and access to a well-equipped veterinary hospital further strengthens

the prospects for successful goat farming in Dimakuchi.

The study emphasises that if implemented effectively, this initiative could transform goat farming into a thriving, economically vi-

able sector, directly benefiting numerous households in the region. The cooperative model proposed in the study seeks to create a scalable framework, ensuring inclusivity and long-term growth. The study offers a roadmap for developing goat farming as a major livelihood source in Dimakuchi, paving the way for rural development and economic self-sufficiency in the BTR.

This initiative aligns with BTC chief Pramod Boro's vision of harnessing natural resources and promoting cooperative movements for sustainable development across the BTR. Speaking on the broader goals of such projects, CEM Boro has often stressed the importance of creating livelihood opportunities that empower rural communities and contribute to regional economic progress.

TU secures 35th spot in THE Interdisciplinary Science Rankings



HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Nov 28: In its inaugural edition of the Times Higher Education Interdisciplinary Science Rankings 2025, Tezpur University, the only ranked institute in north-eastern India, has been placed at the 35th position among Indian universities engaged in interdisciplinary science education and research.

Interdisciplinary science research holds the promise of unlocking insights from multiple academic disciplines to address global challenges. This ranking is

the first of its kind to measure universities' contributions and commitment to interdisciplinary science.

According to the Times Higher Education Interdisciplinary Science Rankings 2025 (THE-ISR), 749 higher education institutes from 92 countries/territories were ranked based on their contributions and commitment to interdisciplinary science.

THE-ISR uses eleven carefully calibrated performance indicators to assess institutions across key

areas, including interdisciplinary science research expenditure, the success of such research, facilities for interdisciplinary science research, and administrative support, including promotional policies.

THE-ISR evaluates data from 157 million citations, 18 million research publications, and survey responses from more than 20,000 scholars globally.

Prof DC Baruah, director of the Centre for Multidisciplinary Research, who also leads the Internal Quality Assurance Team of the university, stated that the THE-ISR global recognition will further enhance the interdisciplinary culture of education at the university.

Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, vice-chancellor of the university, congratulated the TU fraternity engaged in interdisciplinary research for the global recognition of their work.

He expressed hope that the efforts of TU researchers would excel even further in the future. He also assured all necessary support for the promotion of interdisciplinary education and research, which are key aspects of NEP 2020.

What lies ahead: Understanding Trump's return to power

By: Manoj Joshi

Donald Trump's victory will lead to major changes in almost all policy areas in the United States (US), from tariffs and immigration to the Ukraine war. How they will be prioritised is another matter. Characteristically, Trump also appears to grapple with personal challenges, including a strong inclination to address perceived or actual slights and instances of perceived persecution. The coming Trump era could well be the most unpredictable and disruptive in our times. His appointments indicate that he intends to fulfil his election pledges, especially on immigration.

Beyond policy and personal foibles, the US elections hold immense significance. Till now, the first Trump presidency has often been viewed as an aberration and the Biden term as the norm. Now, however, it is the latter which seems to be a discontinuity. The second Trump term, which has been an all-round victory for the "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) forces, will now be the norm for the US in the near future.

The Trump win was not a defeat of liberalism, with its emphasis on individual rights, the rule of law, and constitutional checks on the state. It was one for neoliberalism, which pushed globalism, abandoned the working class, and emphasised money-making over everything else. The American working class was wiped out as manufacturing relocated to Asia. Instead of their plight, neoliberal Democrats focused on narrower strands of the deprived—racial minorities, the LGBTQ community, immigrants, and so on. As deprived people, they were often given a leg up, even as the original working class sank and be-

came increasingly susceptible to the appeal of MAGA politics. While this originally attracted the white working class, Trump succeeded in getting the support of the Black and Latino working class as well.

Many people think that Trumpism will be a self-limiting disease. That the impossibility of achieving the contradictory set of objectives it has set for itself will temper Trump's impact.

For instance, take the issue of tariffs. Trump said last month, "tariff is the most beautiful word in the dictionary." Most economists agreed that 10-20 percent tariffs on all imports and 60 percent on Chinese imports will raise prices in the US. There is a school of thought which believes that enacting tariffs will be a negotiating tactic, and nothing more. If this is so, there are two possible outcomes—other countries will lower their trade barriers, or, the more likely outcome, retaliate with their own tariffs. This will lead to an inflationary situation, something that Trump should know proved to be poison for the Democrats in this election.

The big target is Mexico. Trump has declared that he will raise tariffs 200 or 500 percent: "I don't care, I'll put a number where they can't sell one car" (in the US). Currently, Mexico is the US' biggest trade partner and has sold 2.55 million cars in the US in 2023. Tariffs would hit companies like Honda, Toyota, and Volkswagen, but it would also affect American companies like Ford, General Motors (GM), and Stellantis, whose supply chains extend to Mexico, while also using the country as a manufacturing base.

For Mexico, it will be a double whammy, since the largest number of undocumented migrants to be de-

ported are from the same country.

With regards to immigration, Trump wants to close the border and begin the process of deporting up to 11 million undocumented migrants. He has appointed hard-liners Stephen Miller and Thomas Homan to undertake this task, signalling his intention of fulfilling his campaign promises.

This is no ordinary task as this community is now woven into the US' social and economic fabric. Vice President J. D. Vance has said that the target is to deport some 1 million illegal immigrants per year. Prising them out, setting up detention centres, overcoming legal challenges and encouraging them to return to their homelands could take years. It will also affect the economy since migrants are the backbone of agriculture and construction industries, and their presence has helped keep wages in check. A deportation process is likely to lead to inflation.

In many of these areas, the real question is what Trump will decide to focus on. Apparently, there are no less than 40 agendas he has promised to begin pursuing from his first day in office. Definitely, avenging himself against those he says have persecuted him in the Biden administration will be a priority. Among the targeted persons could be Jack Smith, former Attorney General Merrick Garland, as well as Trump's friends-turned-enemies such as John Kelly, former Joint Chief of Staff, Chairman General Mark Milley, and Liz Cheney. Another strand of his policy will be a change in the rules to allow the firing of any federal official. There could be large-scale firings, accompanied by the appointment of MAGA supporters in their positions.

Foreign policy is an area that will experience a big change. The likely appoint-

ment of Senator Marco Rubio as Secretary of State signals a hardline approach. Rubio is known for his hawkish positions on Iran, China, and Venezuela, as well as his support for Israel's campaign in Gaza.

Ukraine is likely to be a big loser, though the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) could also find itself in crosshairs. Both the US and European Union (EU) short-changed the Ukrainians in the last two years through their nagging weapons supply policies. Now Ukraine may be forced to cede territory to achieve peace, even while NATO's status hangs in the air. JD Vance has suggested that the aim would be to have Russia and Ukraine ceasefire along the current frontlines, which means a loss of around 18 percent of Ukrainian territory that Russia has occupied since 2022. The Vance plan would also guarantee Ukrainian neutrality towards Russia.

As for Israel, Trump will be more supportive of Israeli military activities and would not, like the Biden Administration, use US military assistance as leverage to push Israeli policy in any specific direction. According to the Times of Israel, Trump has told Netanyahu that he wants an end to the Gaza war by the time he takes office on 20 January 2025.

But there are other issues where the US position will benefit Israel as well—particularly, destroying Hezbollah in Lebanon and dealing with Iran. Trump had walked away from the nuclear deal with Tehran and begun a campaign of "maximum pressure," with harsh sanctions to push Iran to end its nuclear programme and its policy of arming regional proxies like Hezbollah and Hamas. There is a lot of talk about Trump's headline views on China. But people often forget that in January 2020, he willingly signed a trade

deal with China. There is no reason to believe that another such deal could not take place and also include the status of Taiwan also in it. America is in trouble. Its polarisation has deepened with this election and Trump's attacks on the government have weakened the important infrastructure of American power.

There is little doubt that the West-led multilateral world order that was put in place after World War II is headed for a change. It has been showing strain for some time now, but the MAGA victory could have sounded the death knell.

The UN Security Council (SC) is more or less frozen with the divisions between Russia, China, and the West. As for the World Trade Organization (WTO), Trump has ensured that its appellate function was torpedoed in 2016, and now, with a tariff war around the corner, there is little chance that it will be able to do anything about that.

The Biden administration had strongly backed NATO and America's East Asian allies—Japan, South Korea, Philippines and Australia. In the case of NATO, Trump has questioned whether the US would honour the alliance's mutual defence clause and has actually suggested that he would encourage Russia to "to do whatever the hell they want" to any NATO country that doesn't pay enough.

All this is not necessarily bad. Countries of the Global South could benefit from the US' retreat from its dominant role in world affairs. The new multilateralism fostered by organisations like BRICS could reshape the world to better serve Indian interests. But this is no ordinary task, this new multilateralism will have to go beyond its penchant for declarations and deliver results on the ground. (Courtesy: ORF)

Why Bangladesh is pushing back at India on spate of border killings

By: Rokibuz Zaman

On the night of September 1, Swarna Das, a 14-year-old student from Bangladesh, was waiting to cross the border and enter Tripura.

She and her 40-year-old mother had paid 5,000 Bangladeshi taka, approximately Rs 3,500, to agents who said they would help them cross over, the teenager's brother, Pintu Das, told Scroll.

"They wanted to meet our uncle who lives across the border in Tripura's Dharmanagar town," said Pintu Das. The family lived in Kalnigarh village in Bangladesh's Moulvibazar district—60 km from Tripura.

His mother did not want to cross the border under cover of darkness. "But the agents insisted that they cross the border at night," he said. "When they approached the barbed wire fence, my mother and sister shouted and asked the people on the other side not to fire. However, the BSF [Border Security Force] personnel may not have understood their language and opened fire."

A bullet hit Swarna and her body was taken away by the Border Security Force personnel. "My mother was rescued by the agents, but she does not remember how she was saved," recounted Pintu Das.

Several media reports, quoting unidentified Indian officials, said that the 14-year-old was shot dead by the Border Guard Bangladesh while trying to enter India without documents. However, Swarna Das's family members said she was hit by a bullet from the Indian side. "Maa told me that she saw the bullets coming from across the border. The BSF did not give any warning. It was total darkness," Pintu Das told Scroll.

Eight days later, another 14-year-old, Jayanta Kumar Singh, was allegedly shot by BSF personnel while trying to cross the border into West Bengal with his father.

According to Dhaka-based human rights organisation Ain O Salish Kendra, at least 18 Bangladeshi citizens have been killed by the BSF till September this year. The number was 28 in 2023, 23 in 2022 and 16 in 2021.

Since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in August, eight people have been killed on the border while allegedly trying to enter India, according to human rights organisations in Bangladesh and India. The dead included two Hindus, though none of them were reported to be fleeing persecution.

Several Bangladeshi citizens, including supporters of Sheikh Hasina's party Awami League, have reportedly tried to cross over to India fearing reprisal after her flight from Dhaka.

The situation on the border has become riskier, said activists. "If anyone tries to cross the border, they are being shot," said Kirity Roy, secretary of a Calcutta-based organisation that has investigated alleged excesses by the BSF in the border areas in West Bengal. "If they wear lungi [a garment worn by several Muslim men], the probability [of getting shot] is higher. This is becoming the norm."

While border killings have always been a point of contention between the two countries, the new government in Bangladesh appears to be pushing back more strongly.

It has formally lodged three protests with New Delhi since August 5, protesting against the indiscriminate killings and asking for action against those responsible.

The ministry of external affairs has not responded officially to the protests over the border killings. Separately, India has been calling upon the Bangladesh government to ensure the safety of minorities and their places of worship.

A former Indian high commissioner to Dhaka, who declined to be identified, told Scroll that the protests were another reflection of "an anti-Indian sentiment" in the administration led by Nobel laureate Mohammad Yunus.

Significantly, on September 23, Bangladesh had also lodged a "strong protest" against the remarks by Union Home Minister Amit Shah against so-called "Bangladeshi infiltrators" during his visit to Jharkhand.

Dhaka talks tough
The first protest came from Dhaka on September 5 after the killing of Swarna Das.

In the protest note sent to the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, Bangladesh strongly condemned such "ruthless acts". It said that border killings were in violation of the provisions of the Joint Indo-Bangladesh Guidelines for Border Authorities, 1975.

"Any national of either country entering each other's territory without valid documents may be dealt with in accordance with the laws of the respective country [but] under no circumstances should they be subjected to torture and death," the statement read.

Five days later, Dhaka shot off another note to the Indian High Commission asking India to investigate all border-related killings, identify those responsible and bring them to justice.

A third note was sent on October 9 after the killing of a Cumilla resident on the border. The Border Security Force had called the deceased an armed "drug smuggler", who was shot while trying to push contraband goods into India.

Diplomatic relationships between India and Bangladesh have been rocky since August 5, as India is perceived to be a

long-time backer of the ousted Sheikh Hasina government. The former prime minister fled to New Delhi from Dhaka as protests swept the country—and continues to remain in the national capital.

"The relationship is under some strain because both at the level of public and the Bangladesh government, fingers have been pointed at Indians for supporting Sheikh Hasina," the former Indian high commissioner to Dhaka said.

India's position over the years on the border killings has been to assure Bangladesh that they will not recur, and urging the BSF to be more careful. "We have been defensive and despite the promises, the killings continue," the former high commissioner said.

He pointed out that the issue is complicated—there are occasions when smugglers attack the BSF with lethal weapons. "At that moment, they have to defend themselves. But you can't justify the killings of 12-13-year-old children."

Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty, another former high commissioner to Bangladesh, however, said the BSF action was directed against a cartel of smugglers, who have political clout in Bangladesh. He also attributed the killings to greater vigilance on the border after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government.

"Security was heightened and when people tried to cross over, they must have been challenged and shot," Chakravarty said. "Shooting them acts as a deterrent. It conveys a warning to potential smugglers and infiltrators."

A BSF official posted in Meghalaya also told Scroll that the border was on a higher alert. "We have become more vigilant since the unrest and change in political situation in Bangladesh."

Over the months, many Bangladeshis have tried to cross after they escaped from unrest and killings, the official said. He referred to the discovery of a decomposed body of an Awami League leader from Bangladesh on August 26 in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district.

BSF officials told Scroll that they resort to firing "only in cases of self-defence."

"The incidents of shooting occur when a large number of people come with agents and attempt to infiltrate the border, sometimes attacking our personnel," said Ravi Gandhi, additional director-general of BSF's eastern command. "At that time, in self-defence, our personnel open fire."

A long border

The India-Bangladesh border is one of the longest borders in the world, with five Indian states—Assam, West Bengal, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Tripura—sharing a boundary with the neighbour.

The residents living along both sides of the border share close ties, stemming from similar languages, cultural lineages, and family connections. However, this close relationship has also facilitated both legal and illegal trade between communities on either side.

For decades, the border has made headlines for smuggling—of cows, counterfeit notes and even cough syrup—illegal immigration, cross-border terrorism, and human rights violations.

"Citizens from both sides are involved in illegal trade, especially of essential commodities," said Abu Ahmed Faijul Kabir, senior coordinator at Ain O Salish Kendra, in an interview with Scroll. "The Indian government has tried to control this illegal trespass, and since then, the shootings have started."

According to Roy, from the Calcutta-based organisation that has investigated alleged excesses by BSF in the border areas in West Bengal, "the killings have increased under the Narendra Modi government".

In 2019, Roy's Banglar Manabdhikar Suraksha Mancha helped the Human Rights Watch to publish a 81-page report on the border situation. The report alleged that over 900 Bangladeshi nationals had been killed by the BSF between 2000 and 2010, many of them when they crossed into Indian territory for cattle rustling or other smuggling activities.

Activists from both sides of the border alleged that the BSF and Border Guard Bangladesh are "corrupt forces". "People from both sides—security officials and civilians—are involved in the smuggling," said Roy. "Political leaders irrespective of parties, the state police, BSF and excise officials, and smugglers are all part of a nexus."

A resident of a border village in Nao-gaon District of northern Bangladesh, which shares a border with West Bengal's Dinajpur, agreed.

"We have seen over the years that the illegal crossing and trade occurred with the help of both sides," the border resident said. "It is an open secret."

Roy claimed that the number of meetings between the border forces to defuse tensions has come down since the change of government in Bangladesh. "India trusted the Hasina government more."

Kabir, the activist from Bangladesh, said that those who have been killed over the years often belong to poor and marginalised groups. "They are not caught with weapons and pose no threat to security, as they primarily enter India for trade," he said.

He argued for less use of force by the BSF. "Indian authorities should apprehend and arrest those who illegally enter India under existing laws, and punish them through the courts. This would at least save their lives." (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

Trump 2.0: Stark challenges for the climate and global stability

By: B K Singh

Donald Trump will take over as US President on January, 20 2025 and his pre-election promises would have economic and environmental consequences. On the economic front, countries worldwide would face still stronger dollars sucking money out of emerging markets, high protectionist tariffs imposed and consequent trade war slowing the growth and increasing inflation globally. His regime is not only committed to sacking thousands of bureaucrats and replaced by his supporters but has also announced a new department named the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to be headed by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy to slash the bureaucracy.

No doubt it would disrupt the continuity of the functioning of government, and it would also lead to job losses. Nationwide federal government employs nearly 3 million people. Trump says Musk and Ramaswamy would dismantle government bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditure and restructure federal agencies. While Musk has announced to cut \$2 trillion from the federal budget, Ramaswamy has proposed to eliminate the education department and FBI.

Internal Revenue Service as well as cutting the federal workforce by 75 per cent in a mass lay-off. Trump has consistently maintained to levy a 10 per cent tariff on all imports in the US, 60 per cent on imports from China and 100 per cent on cars imported from China. This would mean cutting imports from many countries which may even result in trade wars. Capacities created in countries like China would be rendered unutilised. With limited domestic consumption in China, the country would face a backlash.

If all countries take action to cut on imports, it certainly boomerangs somewhere and exports would be adversely impacted in most cases. A 10 per cent tariff on imports would increase US prices of goods by at

least 3 per cent and a continued trade war may even further raise the prices.

While domestic producers in the US would welcome it, the consumers will have to pay more. Tariff is not the solution to all problems. Trump's idea to shift manufacturing back to the US may be hit by supply chain disruption on account of higher tariffs.

The job creation in the US may be impacted. In his first term, Trump increased tariffs on Aluminium and Steel to bring its manufacturing back to the US, but the goal was not achieved. His acceptance of higher prices to be paid by consumers, while protecting producers had also made consumers pay 18 per cent extra on Washing machines in 2018. Later some of Trump's tariff was increased by Biden too. It went up to 100 per cent on electric vehicles, 50 per cent on solar cells and 25 per cent on batteries from China.

It had its impact on climate action too—the transition to cleaner energy was slowed down. Herbert Hoover, a Republican, US President nearly a century ago had similarly announced the imposition of tariffs, which ultimately culminated in the adoption of the Smoot-Hawley Act, of 1930 and increased tariffs by 40 to 60 per cent.

It led to a trade war and the US faced retaliation from its trade partners too. It triggered the great depression and the worst economic crisis humankind has ever experienced. Presently global economy is already facing considerable headwinds, any trade war can have disastrous consequences. US's technological advancement for decades has placed it as the leading powerhouse in the world.

Its investment in research and development has been quite rewarding as evident from the fact that there have been more Nobel laureates in the last five or six years than the rest of the world put together have produced.

With its technological superiority, the rest of the world is dependent on it economically too and the tariff policy would leave them behind in the trade war. So far

China's growth has been manufacturing followed by exports. With the slowdown in exports, it is dealing with the problem of overcapacity of its industries and making efforts to boost domestic consumption. There has been budget constraint in Europe—money is spent on subsidies in several countries, causing growth retardation. Germany, to continue producing in the country has to match the US subsidy offering 900 million euros to Swedish battery makers Northvolt, which is experiencing sluggish growth of the economy. Subsidies continue to slow the growth globally.

As the growth suffers, climate action also suffers. For instance, countries in the African subcontinent have vast potential for solar and wind energy, which has remained untapped so far.

China's interest in Africa is going up through its belt and Road initiatives; it has an eye on the natural resources of the continent. It is to be seen whether Trump 2.0 can counter China in Africa.

In his election speeches, Trump has already sought to restore US manufacturing and has targeted to end the Chinese dominance in sectors like advanced information technology, high-end numerical control machinery, robotics, aviation equipment, maritime engineering technology, sophisticated rail equipment, energy-saving vehicles, electrical equipment, medical devices and agriculture machinery etc.

European business finds it now difficult to continue investing in China and India should try to leverage the churn to its advantage. President-elect has already announced Immigration hardliner Tom Homan for the deposition of illegal immigrants. He said that there is nobody better in policing and controlling US borders and there is no doubt that Homan will do a fantastic job which has been long awaited.

Homan also spoke to the press supporting the deportation of even US-born children of undocumented immigrants. Another Immigration hardliner Stephen Miller has been announced to be

deputy Chief of Policy in the new administration. Unprecedented deportation is around the corner, which is bound to impact the labour force.

What will happen to manufacturing? Also, his tax cut promise would lead to a fiscal deficit; the US has one of the highest fiscal deficits 22 per cent of GDP, more than four times as high as India.

The country is already under heavy debt and indebtedness would further increase the deficit. Despite a good chemistry between Trump and Modi, India may not be spared of 10 per cent tariff, which may impact our imports. By 2028, when Trump's term ends, not only the US, but many other countries will be reeling under high inflation and poor growth. UN is also reconciled to accept a cut in US funding in Trump 2.0. A US retreat at the UN is likely to open the door for China, which has been building influence in global diplomacy.

The best part of Trump's promises is that he would stop funding war. The end of war in West Asia and Ukraine is expected soon. The re-election of Trump has cast a shadow on the ongoing world climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan. His withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in his first term and halting climate funding has slowed down the progress globally.

Trump in his election campaign has vowed to ignore any climate emergency. He has been categorical in his election speeches—abandon climate, drill, baby, drill. He has also joked in speeches that if the sea level rises, we will have more properties facing the sea. In some other speeches, he said that why should we be concerned if the sea level rises by a thousandth of an inch after thousands of years?

Global leaders at Baku perceive the inaction and obstructions from the US and debate whether they can afford such inaction for four more years. They must work out the strategy and pursue advanced climate actions and goals. Barbados PM has invited Trump for a face-to-face meeting on climate. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

High Court refuses to ban ISKCON in Bangladesh

Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das, who was arrested this week, was earlier expelled from ISKCON

DHAKA, Nov 28: The High Court on Thursday refused to ban ISKCON's activities in Bangladesh, a local newspaper reported days after a lawyer was killed in a clash between security personnel and supporters of a Hindu leader arrested on sedition charges.

The lawyer had sought a ban from the high court on the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) after placing some newspaper reports related to the organisation on Wednesday.

The court had asked the attorney general to inform it about the steps taken by the government regarding ISKCON's recent activities, according to The Daily Star.

Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das, who was arrested this week, was earlier expelled from ISKCON. His arrest triggered clashes on Tuesday during which Advocate Saiful Islam, an assistant public prosecutor, was killed.

When the High Court proceedings started on Thursday, the attorney general's office placed the information sought by the court before the bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury, The Daily Star said.

Additional Attorney General Aneek R Haque and Deputy Attorney General Asad Uddin informed



the HC bench that three separate cases have been filed in connection with the murder of lawyer Saiful Islam Alif and ISKCON's activities, and 33 accused have been arrested in these cases.

The bench then hoped that the government would remain cautious about protecting the law and order situation and lives and properties of the people of Bangladesh, the newspaper added.

India on Tuesday noted with "deep concern" Das' arrest and denial of bail, and urged Dhaka to ensure the safety and security of Hindus and all other minority groups.

Separately, a group of Supreme Court lawyers sent a legal notice to Bangladesh government on Wednesday seeking a ban on

ISKCON describing it as a "radical organisation."

The notice, sent by Al Mamun Russell on behalf of 10 lawyers, also demanded prosecution of those responsible for Advocate Islam's murder, The Dhaka Tribune newspaper said quoting the notice.

"ISKCON has been operating in Bangladesh as a radical organisation, engaging in activities designed to provoke communal unrest," the notice alleged.

Citing a book by former Bangladeshi intelligence officials, the notice alleges that ISKCON has been promoting religious events "with the intent of inciting sectarian violence," "imposing its beliefs on traditional Hindu communities," and forcibly recruiting

members from lower Hindu castes, the newspaper said.

Russel's notice was addressed to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Law and Justice, and the Inspector General of Police and called for an immediate ban on ISKCON in Bangladesh under relevant section of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009.

Earlier, the ISKCON had urged the Bangladesh authorities to promote "peaceful coexistence" for Hindus in the country as it "strongly" denounced Das' arrest.

Das, the spokesperson for Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote, was arrested from Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Monday as he was about to fly to Chattogram to join a rally.

He was denied bail and sent to jail by the Chattogram's Sixth Metropolitan Magistrate court in a sedition case on Tuesday.

In a statement on Tuesday, ISKCON Bangladesh General Secretary Charu Chandra Das Brahmachari said, "We express our serious concern and strongly denounce the recent arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das ...

We also condemn the subsequent violence and attacks against Sanatanis in various regions of Bangladesh." (PTI)

12 dead in Sri Lanka following extreme weather conditions

COLOMBO, Nov 28: At least 12 people are reported dead and over 3.30 lakh people affected in Sri Lanka due to extreme weather conditions following a massive rain system in southwest Bay of Bengal, officials said on Thursday. Eight of the dead were reported from the eastern district of Ampara.

The inclement weather is a result of a Deep Depression (extremely heavy rainfall causing system) in the Bay of Bengal, the officials said, it has mainly affected the eastern province. By 8 am local time on Thursday, over 3,30,000 people from over 98,000 families in 21 districts have been affected, Disaster Management Centre (DMC) officials said. The meteorological centre has forecast further heavy rains till Friday while the National Building Research Institute (NBRI) had on Wednesday issued landslide warnings covering four of the nine provinces. More than 80 houses were completely damaged due to floods and landslides. Over 25,000 people have been relocated to 260-plus shelters at safe locations, the officials added.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake ordered the deployment of military personnel to provide relief to the affected. Earlier on Wednesday, at least six Colombo-bound flights were diverted to other airports due to heavy rain - 75 mm in 24 hours ending at 8:00 am - and high winds experienced in most parts of the island.

The Irrigation Department had issued flood warning for several low-lying areas of Kelani River Basin and Kala Oya Basin effective until Friday morning. (PTI)

Another massive Russian missile, drone attack targets Ukraine's energy infrastructure

KYIV, Nov 28: Russia conducted a "massive" attack against Ukraine's energy infrastructure on Thursday, firing nearly 200 missiles and drones and leaving more than a million households without power, Ukrainian officials said.

Russia's second major aerial attack on Ukraine's power grid in less than two weeks amplified fears that the Kremlin aims to cripple the country's power generation capacity before winter.

"Attacks on energy facilities are happening all over Ukraine," Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko said in a post on Facebook. He added that emergency power outages were implemented nationwide.

In some regions, Kalibr cruise missiles with cluster munitions smashed into civilian targets, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, calling it "an insidious escalation." Cluster munitions release numerous small bombs over a wide area, making them dangerous to civilians both during and after an attack.

Ukrainian officials have warned recently that Russia was stockpiling cruise and ballistic missiles, presumably for another pre-winter aerial campaign against Ukraine's power grid. Ukrainian officials have in the past accused Russia of "weaponising winter."

Around half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been destroyed during the almost three years of war with Russia, and rolling electricity blackouts are common. Kyiv's Western allies have sought to help Ukraine protect power generation with air defence systems and funds for rebuilding.

Russia in previous years has targeted Ukraine's electricity generation, aiming to deny civilians critical heating and drinking water supplies during the bitter winter months and break Ukrainian spirits.

The attacks also seek to



hobble Ukraine's defense industry that is now producing missiles, drones and armoured vehicles, among other military assets.

The war has been going in Russia's favour in recent months as its bigger army uses its advantages in manpower and equipment to push Ukrainian forces backward in eastern areas, though its offensive has been slow and costly.

Explosions were reported in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Rivne, Kholmynskyi, Lutsk, and many other cities in central and western Ukraine.

Zelenskyy urged Western countries to accelerate delivery of promised air defence weaponry. Ukrainian officials in the past have grumbled that military aid is slow to arrive.

"Each such attack proves that air defense systems are needed now in Ukraine, where they save lives, and not at storage bases," Zelenskyy said on the Telegram messaging app.

The head of Ukraine's presidential office, Andrii Yermak, said in a Telegram post that Russia had stockpiled missiles to strike Ukrainian infrastructure and wage war against civilians during the cold season. "They were helped by their crazy allies, including from North Korea," he wrote.

Western governments and South Korea say North Korea in recent months has intensified its military

support for Russia.

The head of the Lviv region in western Ukraine, Maksym Kozyskyi, said the attack left more than half a million households without electricity.

Over 280,000 households in the northwestern Rivne region were without electricity because of the attack, according to regional Gov. Oleksandr Koval. Running water supplies were also patchy in affected areas. Some schools in Rivne city switched to online classes.

There were also strikes on the bordering Volyn region, where 215,000 households had no electricity, regional head Ivan Rudnytskyi said. All critical infrastructure that lost power was switched to generators.

Energy infrastructure was also targeted in the western Ivano-Frankivsk region, local officials said. Air defences were activated there, and emergency power outages were introduced.

Local officials ordered the opening of "points of invincibility" — shelter-type places where people can charge their phones and other electrical devices and get refreshments during blackouts.

In Kyiv, where the air raid alert lasted over nine hours, missile debris fell in one neighbourhood, local officials said. No casualties were reported. (AP)

Senior Pakistani journalist Matiullah Jan 'arrested' after altercation at security checkpoint: Police

ZSLAMABAD, Nov 28: Senior Pakistani journalist and YouTuber Matiullah Jan was arrested after an altercation at a security checkpoint in the capital, police said on Thursday.

However, Jan's son alleged that his father was "abducted" by unknown people along with his cameraman Saqib Bashir late Wednesday night from the parking lot of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences where he went to report on the people injured during the clashes between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf workers and police.

According to an FIR, Jan, initially not known to the police, was arrested after he tried to run his car over the police at a security checkpoint in Sector E-9 and injured a constable in the incident.

The FIR said when the police forcibly stopped the vehicle by throwing a barrier in front of it, the driver after getting down snatched the police weapon and assaulted the officials present.

It further said the police then arrested the accused and found out he was a man named Matiullah Jan.

Upon searching his car, the police claimed it recovered 246 grams of a drug called "ice".

"The unknown individuals, unknown vehicles — the real heirs to Pakistan — picked him up based on this issue," Jan's son Abdul Razzaq alleged in a video posted on his father's X account.

However, Bashir was later released and informed the family of Jan about the incident.

He demanded the immediate release of his father.



Razzaq alleged his father was arrested for his devotion to reporting on the ongoing political developments in Pakistan even at 3 am to keep the public "informed".

Anchorperson Munizae Jahangir said Jan was "reporting from hospitals on those injured and killed from bullet wounds at the PTI protest and [it] seems that's why he has been arrested for his journalistic work".

Another post on Jan's X account, apparently posted by his son, read: "Matiullah Jan has been abducted from the parking of Pims tonight (Wednesday night) around 11 pm by unmarked abductors in an unmarked vehicle."

"This follows [Jan's] courageous coverage of the protests in Islamabad," the post said.

Senior anchor and Dawn columnist Arifa Noor said on X that Jan was detained at Islamabad's Margalla Police Station.

Human rights lawyer Imaan Mazari-Hazir, however, said she visited the police station but the journalist was not there.

"After pleading with police at Margalla Police Station to allow us access to our client Matiullah Jan, we were finally allowed in," Imaan said on X.

The lawyer said she checked the lock-up herself and the "people locked up inside confirmed to me that right before we came, the police took Matiullah Jan. He is missing."

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) also expressed alarm over "reports of the abduction" of Jan, noting it followed his coverage of protests by imprisoned former prime minister Imran Khan's supporters.

"Authorities must ensure Jan's safety and immediate release," the CPJ asserted in a post on X.

"We call for a swift and impartial investigation into the incident and accountability for all perpetrators," it said.

Jan is known for his aggressive reporting on political issues and went missing in 2020 when Khan, 72, was the prime minister but was later released unharmed. (PTI)

Hindu American groups seek sanctions against Bangladesh over attacks on minorities

WASHINGTON, Nov 28: Condemning attacks on minorities in Bangladesh, several Hindu American groups have sought that US aid for the South Asian country be made contingent on its government taking measurable action to protect these populations.

Bangladesh's minority Hindus, which constitute only about 8 per cent of the 170 million population, have faced over 200 attacks in 50-odd districts since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government on August 5.

Things took a turn for the worse this week after Hindu spiritual leader Chinmoy Krishna Das was arrested in a sedition case. He was later denied bail by a court, triggering protests by community members in various locations, including the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chattogram.

Das was a member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and was recently expelled.

Vishva Hindu Parishad America

(VHPA) president Ajay Shah said the news of Das' arrest, vandalism of Kali Mandir in Chittagong and the rising attacks on Hindus across Bangladesh are disconcerting.

"Is this the human rights legacy the Biden administration wants to be remembered for," he asked.

VHPA general secretary Amitabh Mittal said, "The silence of global media regarding the ongoing atrocities against minorities in Bangladesh is deafening. The recent arrest of an ISKCON priest and the violent attacks on Hindu temples underscore the alarming rise in religious intolerance."

These incidents are part of a "broader pattern of discrimination," he alleged.

"The lack of international condemnation only further emboldens the perpetrators and threatens the safety and freedom of minority communities in Bangladesh," Mittal said.

In an open letter to President-elect Donald Trump, Hindus for America First (HFAF) recom-

mended halting US funding for projects in Bangladesh tied to Beijing's ambitions and prioritising initiatives that benefit America and its allies directly.

"Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian communities in Bangladesh have faced systemic violence and discrimination. We humbly ask that your administration make US aid contingent on the Bangladeshi government taking measurable action to protect these populations. Taxpayer dollars should never support governments that fail to safeguard their most vulnerable citizens," said HFAF Founder and Chairman Utsav Sanduja.

He claimed certain Bangladeshi officials have ties to extremist groups like Jamaat-e-Islami and Hefazat-e-Islam, and these connections pose a threat to US security.

"We respectfully recommend visa restrictions and tighter oversight to prevent these ideologies from taking root on American soil," Sanduja said in his letter. (PTI)

Trump claims win on immigration after call with Mexico's President, but she suggests no change

WEST PALM BEACH (US), Nov 28: President-elect Donald Trump declared a win on stopping illegal immigration through Mexico on Wednesday after talking with that country's leader. But Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum suggested Mexico was already doing its part and had no interest in closing its borders. The two spoke just days after Trump threatened to impose sweeping new tariffs on Canada and Mexico as part of his effort to crack down on illegal immigration and drugs.

Trump said Sheinbaum "agreed to stop Migration through Mexico." Sheinbaum indicated separately on social media that she told Trump that Mexico is already "taking care of" migrant caravans, calling it an "excellent conversation."

"We reiterate that Mexico's position is not to close borders but to build bridges between governments and between peoples," Sheinbaum added. While the state of the proposed tariffs remained unclear, Trump said in a post on his Truth Social account that this was "effectively closing our Southern Border." He called it a "very productive conversation."

The exchange between the two leaders appeared to confirm for Trump the value of threatening to disrupt trade with import taxes. His initial social media post moved financial markets and gave him a response he was quick to describe as a win. Even if the proposed tariffs fail to materialise, Trump can tell



supporters that the mere possibility of them is an effective policy tool and continue to rely on tariff threats.

Sheinbaum wrote on social media that the leaders "discussed Mexico's strategy on migration issues, and I told him the caravans are not reaching the northern (US) border, because Mexico is taking care of them."

"We also talked about reinforcing cooperation on security issues, within the framework of our sovereignty, and the campaign we are carrying out to prevententanyl consumption," she said.

Illegal migration across the Mexico border is down in part because the Biden administration secured some stepped-up cooperation from Mexico — the sort Trump seems to be celebrating. Arrivals at the US-Mexico border have dropped 40 per cent from an all-time high in December. US officials mostly credit Mexican vigilance around rail yards and highway checkpoints.

Driven by mounting pressure from the US to block migrants going north, in the past few years Mexican authorities have turned to rounding them up across the country and sending them to southern Mexico, in a strategy seen by experts as an attempt to wear migrants out until they give up. Neither side clarified the status of the tariffs. But their implementation could fuel higher prices and slow economic growth, potentially blowing up the trade agreement among the US, Canada and Mexico that was finalised in 2020 during Trump's previous time in the White House.

Trump on Monday said he would impose a 25 per cent tax on all products entering the country from Canada and Mexico as one of his first executive orders upon taking office on January 20. He also proposed an additional 10 per cent tariff on China tied to its exporting of materials used in the production ofentanyl. (AP)

The Australian Senate debates the world's first social media ban for children under 16

'The ... government is on the side of supporting parents and protecting young people'

MELBOURNE, Nov 28: The Australian Senate was debating a ban on children younger than 16 years old from social media Thursday after the House of Representatives overwhelmingly supported the age restriction.

The bill that would make platforms including TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit, X and Instagram liable for fines of up to A\$ 50 million (USD 33 million) for systemic failures to prevent young children from holding accounts.

It is likely to be passed by the Senate on Thursday, the Parliament's final session for the year and potentially the last before elections, which are due within months.

The major parties' support for the ban all but guarantees the legislation will become law. But many child welfare and mental health advocates are concerned about unintended consequences.

Unaligned Sen Jacqui Lambie complained about the limited amount of time the government gave the Senate to debate the age restriction, which she described as "undercooked."

"I thought this was a good idea. A lot of people out there thought it was a good idea until we looked at the detail and, let's be honest, there's no detail," Lambie told the



Senate. Opposition Sen Maria Kovacic said the bill was not radical but necessary.

"The core focus of this legislation is simple: It demands that social media companies take reasonable steps to identify and remove underage users from their platforms," Kovacic told the Senate.

"This is a responsibility these companies should have been fulfilling long ago, but for too long they have shirked these responsibilities in favour of profit," she added.

Sen David Shoebridge, from the minor Greens party, said mental health experts agreed that the ban could dangerously isolate many

children who used social media to find support.

"This policy will hurt vulnerable young people the most, especially in regional communities and especially the LGBTQI community, by cutting them off," Shoebridge told the Senate.

The House of Representatives on Wednesday overwhelmingly carried the bill 102 votes to 13.

Communications Minister Michelle Rowland urged senators to pass the bill which she said reflected the Australian community's view.

"The ... government is on the side of supporting parents and protecting young people," Rowland told the House. Once the legisla-

tion becomes law, the platforms would have one year to work out how they could implement the ban before penalties are enforced.

The platforms complained that the law would be unworkable, and urged the Senate to delay the vote until at least June next year when a government-commissioned evaluation of age assurance technologies made its report on how young children could be excluded.

Critics argue the government is attempting to convince parents it is protecting their children ahead of general elections due by May. The government hopes that voters will reward it for responding to parents' concerns about their children's addiction to social media. Some argue the legislation could cause more harm than it prevents.

Critics include that the legislation was rushed through Parliament without adequate scrutiny, is ineffective, poses privacy risks for all users, and undermines parental authority to make decisions for their children.

Opponents of the bill also argue the ban would isolate children, deprive them of the positive aspects of social media, drive them to the dark web, discourage children too young for social media to report harm and reduce incentives for platforms to improve online safety. (AP)

Tripura CM, CPI(M) condemn attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh

Alleges anti-minority actions, urges secular movement

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 28: In line with the Centre, Tripura chief minister Manik Saha on Thursday issued a warning against attacking minority Hindus in Bangladesh and emphasised the need to protect minorities.

The warning came following attacks on minority Hindus in Bangladesh.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always said that without the unity of youths, the development of the country is not possible, and the country cannot become powerful. Today's rally was great. I attended the rally, rode a bike, and encouraged the Yuva Shakti. Everyone is happy. We believe in Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. We have raised the slogan of making Tripura drug-free, and we will fulfill it," CM Saha stated after attending the conclusion of the 7-day-long 'Namo Yuva Yatra' at Rabindra Shatabarshiki Bhawan here on Thursday.

CM Saha also emphasised the importance of securing Sanatan Dharma.

"The Bangladesh matter is an international issue. Our central leadership has communicated and sent their message on this. Similarly, we must also urge restraint and asking the protection of minority Hindus in Bangladesh. We are monitoring the situation closely, and I have already spoken to the DGP to keep a close watch on the borders to ensure no intruders cross over," he explained.



He criticised opposition parties for their silence on the Bangladesh issue.

Meanwhile, the opposition CPI(M) in Tripura has appealed to secular-minded forces in Bangladesh to raise their voices against the alleged attacks on minorities and to launch a movement to oust the interim government in the neighbouring country.

CPI(M) state unit secretary Jitendra Chowdhury claimed that the present government in Bangladesh has "taken a stand as if Pakistan is its big friend" and is "against the spirit of liberation war" in the neighbouring country.

"The situation in Bangladesh is now not normal. An interim government has taken over the reins there, which

has launched attacks on minorities. I would appeal to the people who are secular to launch a movement to change the present government in Bangladesh," the CPI (M) leader told reporters.

Notably, former Bangladesh foreign minister Hasan Mahmud, in an interview with PTI, accused the interim government headed by chief advisor Muhammad Yunus of allowing "mobocracy" to replace democracy.

Mahmud, who was one of the senior-most members of Sheikh Hasina's ministry till it was ousted on August 5 following a student uprising, underscored that the increase in violence against Hindus and attacks on temples appears strongly correlated with the

uptick in anti-India rhetoric.

"The interim government in Bangladesh has taken a stand as if Pakistan is its big friend...This government is against the spirit of the liberation war," Chowdhury said.

"When an autocracy develops attacks on the minorities become inevitable. Bangladesh is experiencing the same...the BJP captured power in Tripura by reducing the elections into a farce," Chowdhury alleged.

Asked to comment on the arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das, who advocates minority rights in Bangladesh, Chowdhury said, "I am talking about the attacks on the minorities and that should be stopped."

India had recently noted with "deep concern" the arrest and denial of bail to Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das in Bangladesh, and urged authorities in the neighbouring country to ensure the safety and security of Hindus and all other minority groups.

In a statement, the MEA said it has noted with "deep concern the arrest and denial of bail" to Das, who is also the spokesperson of the Bangladesh Sammilit Sanatan Jagran Jote.

Reacting sharply to the MEA's statement on the arrest of Das, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Dhaka said it was "unfounded" and stood contrary to the spirit of friendship between the two countries. (With inputs from PTI)

Body of NFR security officer recovered from Lohit river after 4 days

ITANAGAR, Nov 28: The body of the chief principal security officer of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), Suwendu Choudhary, was recovered from Lohit River in Arunachal Pradesh on Wednesday evening, four days after he went missing, officials said.

"The body was found around 8 km downstream from where he was swept away at Parashuram Kund, a Hindu pilgrimage site in Lohit district, on Sunday," NFR chief public relations officer Kapinjal Kishore Sharma told PTI on Thursday.

He said, "Senior NFR officials, including the divisional railway manager from Tinsukia, were present at the location to oversee recovery operations."

"Choudhary visited Parashuram Kund with his family members and NFR officials. He slipped into the river while at the pilgrimage site and was carried away by the strong currents," the official said.



A joint search and rescue operation involving the national and state disaster response forces, the Army, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, and local police was launched immediately after the incident, he added. (PTI)

Schools, colleges in Imphal Valley, Jiribam to reopen from today

IMPHAL, Nov 28: The Manipur government on Thursday announced that classes in schools and colleges in Imphal Valley districts and Jiribam would resume from November 29, after a hiatus of 13 days.

Educational institutes in these districts have remained closed since November 16 after the dead bodies of three women and three children in Jiribam were recovered from the Jiri and Barak rivers in Manipur and Assam respectively.

An order issued by the Directorate of Education-Schools said, "Normal classes will resume for all schools of

the state, government, government aided, private and central schools from November 29."

The government educational institutions or government-aided colleges under the Higher and Technical Education Department, including state universities, will resume classes with effect from Friday, a separate order said.

Violence escalated in Manipur after three women and three children belonging to the Meitei community had gone missing from a relief camp in Jiribam after a gunfight between security forces and suspected Kuki-Zo militants resulted in the deaths of

10 insurgents on November 11.

Bodies of those six were later found.

Prohibitory orders have been in place till Thursday in the Imphal Valley districts and Jiribam, another official said.

"It is not clear as of now whether curfew will be relaxed from Friday or will continue. No fresh order has been issued so far," he said.

More than 250 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year. (PTI)

Mizoram's main opposition party demands resignation of Manipur CM



AIZAWL, Nov 28: Mizoram's main opposition party Mizo National Front (MNF) on Thursday demanded the resignation of Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh for allegedly failing to curb the ongoing ethnic violence in his state.

The Centre must take action to end the crisis which claimed more than 250 lives since May last year, MNF general secretary V L Kroshehzhova said in a press conference.

He alleged that Singh's leadership has not only failed to resolve the crisis but also perpetuated the suffering of innocents.

"We demand that chief Minister Biren Singh step down immediately. Further-

more, the Central Government must take urgent, decisive action to end this crisis once and for all, ensuring that the people of Manipur reclaim their democratic rights and dignity," Kroshehzhova said.

The MNF media cell general secretary claimed that Singh's inaction and misuse of power have only worsened the situation, making his continuation in the CM's office "untenable and shameful".

The suffering inflicted upon ethnic Zo people or Mizos (Zofate) has reached intolerable levels, the MNF leader claimed.

According to the MNF leader, the ethnic violence has so far left 219 Zo people

dead and 41,425 people displaced, who were compelled to take shelter in neighbouring states.

A large number of churches and villages have been destroyed in the violence in Manipur, he claimed.

"Such atrocities demand not just leadership but an unrelenting pursuit of justice and restoration. In a nation celebrated as the world's largest democracy, the continued erosion of human rights and attacks on religious sanctuaries betray the foundational values of justice and secularism," he said.

The MNF leader also called on all ethnic Zo tribes to unite and safeguard the lives and livelihood of the community members.

He urged both the Mizoram government and the people of the state to continue with their efforts in extending support and humanitarian assistance to the displaced people from Manipur and Bangladesh. The Kuki-Zo people of Manipur share ethnic ties with the Mizos of Mizoram. (PTI)

Tiprasa accord talks to resume on December 3



HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 28: The second round of talks on Tiprasa Accord is all set to take place on December 3 in Delhi where two issues including charter of demands submitted by Tipra Motha Party and presentation on Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).

A meeting notice from Ministry of Home Affairs, North East Division said that in continuation of the meeting notice of even October 30, 2024 and its postponement notice of even November 8 it is informed that the next meeting of the Joint Working Group or Committee constituted in pursuance of Tripartite Agreement among Government of India, Government of Tripura and the "Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance" signed on March 02 of 2024 is now scheduled to be held on December 3 at 12:00 noon in New

Delhi. "The agenda of the meeting will be to discuss the demands submitted by Tipra Motha Party and presentation on Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC)", said the memo.

Later, the founder of Tipra Motha and royal scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma said that the future of Tripura cannot be compromised.

"Been informed that the second round of talks on the tiprasa accord will take place on the 3rd of December. I am happy to inform that this is the second official meeting in the last half months. The future of our tiprasa cannot be compromised and I will continue to put our communities agenda first and not look at any political favours. We have to realise that growth of our region and people has to be more important than rehabilitation of a few leaders", he said.

Protest on demanding release of missing Manipur man

IMPHAL, Nov 28: Hundreds of people continued their sit-in for the second consecutive day on Thursday in Manipur's Imphal West district, demanding that the authorities take steps to trace a 56-year-old man who has been missing since November 25.

The Joint Action Committee (JAC), formed in response to the disappearance of Laishram Kamalbabu Singh, started the demonstration on Wednesday in Kanto Sabal area.

They demanded that the missing man be handed over to them within three days, police said. JAC convenor Ratanku-



mar Singh said the committee will intensify its protest if the missing person is not handed over to them by November 29.

Kamalbabu had gone missing while en route to Leimakhong army camp on Monday, and an FIR has been

lodged with the Sekmai Police Station over his disappearance.

Family members claimed that Kamalbabu might have been abducted by Kuki militants. Chief minister N Biren Singh had said that Kamalbabu was engaged in making

furniture for army officers.

"Police and the army have joined hands to conduct search operations. However, Kamalbabu is yet to be traced," an official said.

Meanwhile, two security personnel and a person were injured after a clash broke out between police and protesters in Kakching on Wednesday night, a senior officer said.

The protesters were demonstrating against the arrest of four people in connection with an alleged clash at the residence of Kakching constituency MLA M Rameshwor on November 16 night. (PTI)

Talks on Manipur district issue today

SENAPATI, Nov 28: The tripartite talks on the contentious Manipur new district creation issue will take place on November 29, at 10 am in Senapati district headquarters.

The discussions involve the United Naga Council (UNC), the Government of Manipur, and the Central government.

Initially scheduled for November 13, the meeting was rescheduled following a request from the UNC. Advisor (North East), AK Mishra, facilitated the adjustment.

The issue stems from the Manipur government's creation of seven new districts on December 8, 2016, which led to a 139-day economic blockade by the UNC. Talks first commenced on March 19, 2017, and resumed in New Delhi on October 11, 2024, after a prolonged gap. UNC members have already convened in Senapati to prepare for the discussions. (NNN)

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Nov 28: The Rengma Naga tribe celebrated the Ngada festival-cum-Mini Hornbill festival with a two-day programme at Tsemnyu RSA ground, performing rituals seeking protection from misfortunes such as fire and evil spirits and ensuring peace and prosperity in their villages on the concluding day on Thursday.

MLA Ar Jwenga Seb, who was the special guest of the culmination programme, said the Ngada celebrated by the Rengma tribe towards the end of November is an eight-day festival of thanksgiving, merry making and cultural unity.

He said the festival is ob-



served after the year-long hard work in the fields and the harvested crops are gathered from fields to granaries, where the community gets together in gratitude for the harvest and in remembrance of departed souls, marking the conclusion of the agricultural year.

Seb added that the festival

is officially announced by the village priest and thereafter preparation begins for the festivities.

He also said Ngada is a heartfelt celebration of life, gratitude and cultural identity, keeping the traditions of Rengma Nagas alive and vibrant for generations.

Women vital to Nagaland's growth: Governor

Governor urges support for women in unorganised sector

KOHIMA, Nov 28: Nagaland Governor La Ganesan on Thursday said women make vital contributions to the socio-economic development of the country.

"Women play vital roles in the socio-economic development of our country but are usually the unsung heroines," said Ganesan while addressing a one-day seminar on "Women Working in the Unorganised Sector in Nagaland: Challenges and Opportunities".

The event was organised by the Entrepreneurs Associates (tEA) in partnership with the National Commission for Women with an aim to raise awareness about the struggles and opportunities faced by women in Nagaland's unorganised sector, primarily focusing on street vendors and nano-entrepreneurs.

The Governor emphasised the importance of empowering these women and recognising their invaluable role in shaping the socio-economic landscape of the state.

According to the e-Shram portal report of 2021, women make up over half of Nagaland's informal workforce, with many being the primary breadwinners for their families, he said.

Highlighting the significant challenges faced by women in the unorganised sec-



tor, such as irregular income, lack of infrastructure, and limited access to financial services, he stressed the importance of raising awareness about government welfare schemes designed to support these women, calling the seminar a crucial step toward empowering them and contributing to India's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Expressing gratitude to the Entrepreneurs Associates for their continued commitment to entrepreneurship and

sustainable development, Governor Ganesan praised their efforts in organising seminars, business training, environmental protection programmes, and providing financial support to aspiring entrepreneurs.

The Governor also urged all stakeholders to continue supporting initiatives that ensure women in the unorganised sector receive the recognition and opportunities they deserve, thus contributing to a flourishing and inclusive society. (PTI)

No.EE (Agri.)/Koj/BTC/e-Tender/2024-25/2165
CORRIGENDUM NO.01
It is for general information to all concerned with reference to the notice inviting tender for the work "Construction of covered threshing floor in BTAD area under RKVY-RAFTAR for the year 2024-25." Vide Tender Notice No. EE (Agri.)/Koj/BTC/e-Tender/2024-25/2132, Dated 26/11/2024 from the registered contractors of class-I, II & III category of Agriculture Department of Assam instead of Agriculture Department BTC.
Sd/- R. KAKATI
Executive Engineer (Agriculture),
Kokrajhar Division, BTC, Kokrajhar.
IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/967

No. KDB/BTC/15thFC/147/2024-25/703
SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Sealed tender affixing a non-refundable Court Fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paise) only with a validity period of 180 days which will subsequently be converted to be converted and drawn up in the printed of F-2 form are invited from the registered contractors of Class-I (A, B & C), Class-II & Class-III category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the works under the Award of 15th FC, for the year 2024-25 BTC Kokrajhar as started below. The tenders will be received by undersigned up to 2.00 PM on 19/12/2024 and will be opened on the next date (as on 21/12/24) & place at 2.30 PM.

Sl. No.	Name of activity	Est'd. Value (In Lakhs) Rs.	Tender Value Rs.	EMD/Bid Security (In Rs.)	Cost of Tender paper (In Rs.)	Pre-bid date and Time	Last date & time of bid submission	Date & Time of bid opening	Time of completion of Work
15	FC, BTC, - 2024-25								
1	Const. of Community Toilet at Khoirabari Town near BPHC Hospital	10,47,960/-	10,47,960/-	(For Rs.10,480/- ST/SC and OBC) Rs. 20,960/- (for General)	314/-	29/11/24	19/12/24	21/12/24	6 month

Detail N.I.T. may be seen in all working days during office hours In the office of the undersigned. Tender papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agents from 29/11/24 to 19/12/24 up to 1.30 PM. in the office of the undersigned on payment in the form of demand draft/ bankers cheque from any Nationalized Bank, duly pledged in favor of the Principal Secretary, BTC Kokrajhar payable at Kokrajhar.
Sd/- Block Development Officer,
Khoirabari Dev. Block, Khoirabari
IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/969

Priyanka Gandhi takes oath as LS MP

Confident that Priyanka Gandhi will become a strong voice of the people of the country: Kharge

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Holding up a copy of the Constitution, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday took oath as a Lok Sabha MP to begin her journey as an elected representative of the people five years after she joined active politics.

The debutant MP, whose entry into Parliament has long been a subject of speculation, said her priority would be to raise important issues concerning the nation and fight for the country and her party.

The 52-year-old, who joins her mother Sonia and brother Rahul as an MP in what is a rare instance of three members of a family together in Parliament, took affirmation in Hindi.

The MP from Wayanad in Kerala held up a red and black copy of the Constitution, which Rahul Gandhi has been displaying at his public meetings, as she took her oath.

Dressed in a cream Kasavu saree from Kerala, Priyanka Gandhi rose to take oath amid cheers of 'Jodo Jodo, Bharat Jodo' from the Congress benches. She took oath with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, her mother and Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chief Sonia Gandhi, husband Robert Vadra, son Rihan and daughter Miraya watching from the galleries. Congress MPs earlier met at the CPP office in the Parliament premises where Priyanka Gandhi was greeted and congratulated by leaders.

After taking oath, Priyanka Gandhi completed the formalities and then shared a warm hug with her brother and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi. She then went and sat in



the fourth row with fellow Congress MPs. Ravindra Chavan (Congress), who won the Nanded bypoll also took oath in Marathi in the name of god.

The House was adjourned after the oaths as opposition members came to the Well of the House and raised slogans, demanding a discussion on the Adani issue and the Sambhal violence.

As MPs exited the House, leaders made a beeline to congratulate Priyanka Gandhi and on the steps of the Makar Dwar. Congress MPs gathered as Rahul Gandhi clicked a photograph of Priyanka Gandhi with the Samvidhan Sadan in the background.

"It will strengthen Rahul Gandhi, the party and the principles of the Constitution because we are fighting for that," she told reporters when asked about the impact of her entering Parliament.

Asked about taking the oath holding up the Constitution, Priyanka Gandhi said it signifies that "nothing is above

the Constitution for us and we will continue to fight for it".

Priyanka Gandhi also met the Congress president after taking oath and took his blessings.

Posting pictures of him blessing Priyanka Gandhi, Kharge said on X, "I am confident that Priyanka Gandhi will become a strong voice of the people of the country, especially women, in Parliament."

"Her able leadership, compassion, courage, decency and determination, and her firm commitment to the principles of the Constitution will benefit the people of the country," he said.

Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi also expressed happiness over Priyanka Gandhi taking oath as an MP, saying "we are all proud".

Sharing a photograph with his mother Sonia and Priyanka Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi posted in Hindi on his WhatsApp channel, "Of the people, by the

people, for the people - Jai Hind."

Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khara said, "Since childhood, we have all seen on television the members of the Gandhi family displaying amazing dignity during the assassination of Indira Ji or Rajiv Ji. The entire country would break into tears, but the Gandhi family, a symbol of the unique tradition of sacrificing everything for the country, always considered the country bigger than their personal grief."

When Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi took oath as a Member of Parliament for the first time with a copy of the Constitution in her hand, all those scenes came back in front of the eyes, he said.

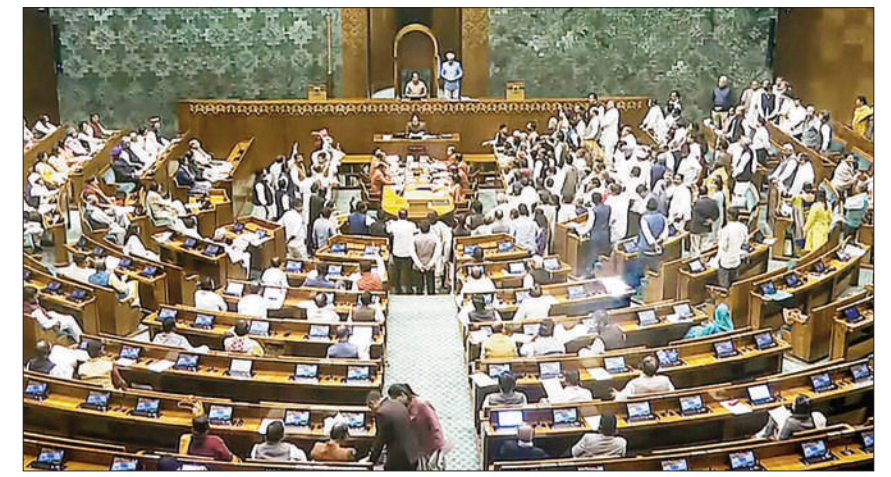
"Today's moment is an emotional moment of pride and inspiration not only for the Congress family but for the entire country," Khara said in a post in Hindi on X.

Priyanka Gandhi took the plunge into active politics in 2019 and was later appointed Congress general secretary. Five years after that, Priyanka Gandhi begins her journey as an elected representative of the people.

With a winning margin of more than 4.1 lakh votes, she surpassed the tally of her brother Rahul Gandhi from Wayanad in Kerala.

Priyanka Gandhi's entry into Parliament comes at a difficult time for the party, which has been jolted by electoral defeats in Haryana and Maharashtra. It would be interesting to see if she is able to give a much-needed fillip to the grand old party and help put it back on the electoral track. (PTI)

RS fails to transact any business for third day amid opposition uproar over Adani, Sambhal issues



NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Rajya Sabha proceedings were washed out for the third consecutive day on Thursday after uproar by opposition MPs over the Adani issue and violence in Manipur and Sambhal.

Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar's appeals that Parliamentary disruption was not a remedy but a malady which weakened the foundation of India's democracy went unheeded as the opposition members continued to protest. The proceedings of the Upper House were adjourned within minutes after it met at 12 noon, following one adjournment shortly after 11 am.

Recalling that Wednesday marked a historic milestone -- the beginning of the final quarter-century before India's Constitution turned 100 -- Dhankhar lamented that the House members missed the opportunity to engage in productive dialogue.

"This was a moment for our House of Elders, guided by the spirit of nationalism, to send a powerful message of hope to 1.4 billion Indians, reaffirming our commitment to their dreams and journey towards Viksit Bharat at 2047," he said.

"Yet, with deep regret, I must say we missed this historic opportunity. Where there should have been productive dialogue echoing the collective aspirations of our nation, we fell short of our people's expectations," he lamented.

Dhankhar said the chamber was more than just a house of debate. "It is from where our national spirit has to echo."

"Parliamentary disruption is not a remedy but a malady that weakens the very foundation of our democracy. It slides Parliament into irrelevance. The sanctity of this House demands debate, not discord; dialogue, not disruption," he said as the opposition members continued to shout slogans.

Dhankhar said, "We must continue to have our relevance. When we engage in this kind of conduct, we deviate from constitutional ordainment and we turn our back to our duties."

The chairman said deviating from constructive discussion was a failure to honour the trust of millions who looked to them as guardians of their democratic aspirations.

"I urge you all to embrace the spirit of meaningful dialogue. Let us return to our tradition of thoughtful discussion and deliberation. In this spirit, I request your cooperation in proceeding with today's agenda," Dhankhar said, urging the protesting opposition members to embrace the spirit of meaningful dialogue.

Noting that he could not allow the House to sink to irrelevance, he said, "We should not dishonour the spirit of those who gave us

this Constitution."

However, as the protests continued, the chairman adjourned the House for the day. The Upper House will reconvene at 11 am on Friday.

When the House convened at the start of the day, proceedings were adjourned for nearly 50 minutes till 12 noon as opposition MPs protested against the rejection of adjournment notices for a discussion on the allegations against the Adani Group in the US, and violence in Manipur and Sambhal.

Shortly after the laying of listed papers in the morning session, Dhankhar said he had received 16 notices for adjournment of scheduled business under Rule 267 of the House. The chairman said he was rejecting all the notices.

"If you look at the journey of this House with reference to Rule 267, even for the last 30 years where we have had various political dispensations in authority, in governance, the number was never beyond single digit and the background every time reflected a consensual approach, a dialogue between the parties," he said.

The notices were for discussions on the allegations of corruption against the Adani Group, communal violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal and ethnic clashes in Manipur. While Sanjay Singh (AAP), Randeep Singh Surjewala, Syed Naseer Hussain, Pramod Tiwari, Akhilesh Prasad Singh, Ranjeet Ranjan and Anil Kumar Yadav Mandadi (all Congress) had given notices for discussing the Adani issue, Tiruchi Siva (DMK), Sandosh Kumar P and PP Suneer (both CPI) had given notices to discuss the violence in Manipur.

John Brittas and AA Rahim (both CPI M), Ram Gopal Yadav and Ramji Lal Suman (both Samajwadi Party), Abdul Wahab (Indian Union Muslim League) and Hussain (Congress) had given notices for discussing the violence in Sambhal.

The Congress' Tiwari also raised a "point of order" on the rejection of his notice.

Responding to a query by Congress MP Jairam Ramesh on "how to persuade the chair" to allow their notices, the chairman said, "We persuade the chair historically only by exhibiting the highest standard of conformance to the rules. And as I indicated yesterday, the ruling of the chair must evoke deference and not a challenge."

"If we start having our practice 'my way or no way', that is not only not democratic, that will pose a great challenge to the very existence of this sacred theatre. I have no doubt any deviation from the rules is virtual sacrilege to this temple," Dhankhar said. (PTI)

Hemant Soren takes oath as 14th CM of Jharkhand

RANCHI, Nov 28: JMM leader Hemant Soren took oath as the 14th chief minister of Jharkhand in a grand ceremony here on Thursday, amid the presence of a galaxy of INDIA bloc leaders.

The 49-year-old tribal leader was sworn in as the chief minister by Jharkhand Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar.

The governor administered the oath of office and secrecy to Soren at a function held in Morabadi ground in Ranchi, where Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal were present.

Prior to taking the oath, Soren, donning a white kurta, pyjama and 'Nehru jacket', met JMM president and his father Shibu Soren.

This is the fourth stint of the JMM leader as the chief minister of Jharkhand.

Hemant Soren retained the Barhait seat by defeating BJP's Gamliyel Hembrom by a margin of 39,791 votes in the recent assembly polls.

The JMM-led alliance stormed to victory, securing 56 seats in the 81-member Jharkhand assembly, while the BJP-led NDA managed 24 constituencies.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann, CPI(M)Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Bihar's Leader of Opposition Tejashwi Yadav were among the political leaders who attended the swearing-in ceremony.

Tribal troupes, attired in traditional dresses, danced to the tune

of 'dhol and nagara' at the venue, amid tight security arrangements.

Schools in Ranchi city remained closed on Thursday in view of the swearing-in of the Hemant Soren government.

Hours before taking the oath, Soren took to X, asserting that unity is the biggest weapon of people of the state, who can "neither be divided nor silenced".

In an apparent attack on the BJP-led central government, Soren also said whenever "they try to silence us", the revolution grows louder.

"Let there be no doubt about it - our unity is our biggest weapon. We can neither be divided nor silenced. Whenever they push us back, we move forward. Whenever they try to silence us, our voice of rebellion and revolution grows louder because we are Jharkhandis, and Jharkhandis do not bow down," Soren posted on X in Hindi.

"Our fight is firm and unceasing. The struggle continues and will continue till the last breath," he asserted.

Terming the day as historic, he said it would further strengthen "our collective struggle", the "spirit of love and brotherhood" and the commitment of Jharkhandis towards justice.

When "deep cracks" are emerging in the social structure, there is a need to resolve for unity, the CM said.

"It's heartening to have such esteemed leaders join us for this important occasion," Soren had said on Wednesday, as he paid a visit to the Morabadi ground to take stock of the arrangements. (PTI)

Shinde, Fadnavis, Ajit Pawar to meet Amit Shah in Delhi

MUMBAI, Nov 28: The process of government formation in Maharashtra is expected to get a boost after a crucial meeting between caretaker CM Eknath Shinde, Devendra Fadnavis, Ajit Pawar and Union minister Amit Shah in Delhi on Thursday night, sources said. The meeting assumes significance amid reports that the BJP leadership may be mulling over names of a few of its Maratha leaders, despite the perception that Fadnavis becoming the CM for a third time is a foregone conclusion, the sources said.

Caste dynamics have assumed a greater role in the choice of the CM as an overwhelming number of the 288 MLAs from all the parties are from the Maratha community.

Fadnavis is a Brahmin and first became the CM in 2014 and again for a brief while in 2019. "If the writ of RSS prevails, the chances of Fadnavis becoming the CM are bright," the sources said.

Despite vociferous demands from Shiv Sena leaders that Shinde should have a go at another term at the top post, the caretaker CM on Wednesday made it clear that he has told PM Modi and Shah that he abide by the BJP's choice for the post.

A close aide of Shinde said on Thursday that the caretaker CM is unlikely to accept the post of deputy CM in the new dispensation.

Sanjay Shirsat, an MLA and spokesperson of the Shiv Sena, however, said Shinde would be a part of the cabinet.

"He is unlikely to be a deputy chief minis-

ter. It does not befit a person who has already served as chief minister," Shirsat told PTI.

The Shiv Sena led by Shinde will nominate another leader for the deputy CM's post, he added. Shinde's MP son Shrikant Shinde expressed pride in his father for exemplifying "alliance dharma" by prioritising collective governance over personal ambition.

In a post on X, Shrikant highlighted his father's deep connection with the people of Maharashtra, emphasising his relentless dedication to serving all segments of society.

"I am proud of my father and chief leader of the Shiv Sena. He kept faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah and set an example of the alliance dharma, keeping his personal ambition aside," he said.

The BJP-led Mahayuti alliance scripted a stunning victory in the recent state assembly elections by winning 230 seats in the 288-member House.

Recovering from its Lok Sabha elections losses, the BJP bagged 132 constituencies, highest among all constituents of the Mahayuti. Shinde's Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar's NCP also performed well. Sena won 57 while NCP won 41 seats.

Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) suffered a setback. The grand old party registered one of its worst performances in the state assembly polls after it won only 16 seats. Sharad Pawar's NCP(SP) won just 10 seats, whereas Uddhav Thackeray's (UBT) won 20 seats. (PTI)

ECI must clarify: Patole

MUMBAI, Nov 28: Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole on Thursday demanded that the ECI clarify the rise in voter turnout by over 7 per cent after polling for the assembly elections ended on November 20 evening. Addressing a press conference here, Patole said the "discrepancies" in polling figures put a question mark on the functioning of the Election Commission of India.

Patole claimed that the voting percentage was 58.22

at 5 pm but rose by 7.83 percentage points at 11.30 pm.

The ECI must clarify this "discrepancy" as it puts a question mark on transparency, he said.

"This is theft of people's vote. We will seek legal recourse and hit the streets to make people aware," Patole said. After its crushing defeat in the assembly elections, many leaders from the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) have cast aspersions on ECI's voting process. (PTI)

NODC row: Majhi says govt to respect sentiment of Sundergarh people



BHUBANESWAR, Nov 28: Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday said that the state government would not take any decision against the wishes of the people of Sundergarh regarding the proposal of including the mineral-rich district under the proposed North Odisha Development Council (NODC).

Earlier, during a visit to Sundergarh district, Majhi said that Sundergarh district in the western part of the state should be included in the NODC. Majhi made this announcement through his social media X post hours after Sundergarh MLA Jogesh Singh raised the issue in the Assembly. BJD lawmaker from Bhadrak district Byamakesh Ray also said that there are differences between the culture, language and tradition of western and northern Odisha.

In an X post, Majhi said, "The people of Sundergarh have been blessing us for many years and we respect the sentiments of the people of Sundergarh. Therefore, the government will not take any action against the wishes of the people of Sundergarh. The state government is committed to the overall development of Sundergarh district."

BJD MLA from Sundergarh, Jogesh Singh during the Zero Hour in

Assembly said despite being the constitutional head of the state, the chief minister has made an irresponsible statement.

"We condemn the announcement and urge the CM to withdraw the statement," he said.

Singh also said that the language, cultural practices, tradition, way of life and geographical features of Sundergarh people have no similarities with north Odisha districts. The government should not create division in the unity of Western Odisha. Ray, who hails from north Odisha, said the chief minister should refrain from making such statements that create division among the people.

Meanwhile, protests were reported from Sundergarh district over the chief minister's statement. Sundergarh District Congress Committee held a demonstration at DRDA Chowk in Sundergarh town and condemned the CM's statement.

Majhi had earlier said that according to the election promises made by the BJP, his government has been working to set up the NODC to expedite development of the region at a fast pace. Majhi has said that he wished Sundergarh to be included under the NODC for speedy development. (PTI)

Dynastic candidates were fielded across Maharashtra in assembly elections

MUMBAI, Nov 28: Dynastic candidates -- those with family ties to established political families -- were fielded across party lines in the recent Maharashtra assembly elections, with more than 80 per cent of constituencies featuring such contestants.

But political connections did not guarantee success as a modest 30 per cent of such candidates won, noted a report compiled by activist and political observer Heramb Kulkarni.

Even the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which routinely targets the Opposition over dynastic politics, had over 30 per cent of its contestants with ties to political families.

Of the total 288 constituencies, 237 (82 per cent) saw candidates from political families. They included the children, spouses, siblings or other relatives of former and sitting MLAs, MPs and ministers, said the report released on Wednesday.

The Nationalist Congress Party (SP) led by veteran Sharad Pawar had the highest proportion of dynastic leaders in its candidate list. Of the 86 candidates it fielded, 39 or 45 per cent were related to established politicians.

Of 59 candidates fielded by the rival Ajit Pawar-led NCP, 26 or 44 per cent had 'family connections'.

The Congress followed closely with 41.5 per cent such candidates (42 of 101).



Of the 149 nominees fielded by the BJP (which contested the highest number of seats among all parties), 49 or 32 per cent were related to political leaders.

The two Shiv Sena factions had comparatively less dynastic representation in their lists.

The Uddhav Thackeray led Shiv Sena (UBT) nominated 19 dynastic candidates in its list of 95 (20 per cent), while the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena too had 19 such nominees among its 81 contestants (23 per cent), the report said.

The region-wise distribution of dynastic candidates showed an interesting pattern. Western Maharashtra recorded the highest concentration, with 77 dynastic candidates, followed by Vidarbha with 49, Marathwada with 39, North Maharashtra with 38 and Mumbai-Konkan with 34 such contestants.

As many as 61 constituencies had more than one dynastic candidates. These included ten constituencies where there were three such contestants, and one constituency with four dynastic nominees in the fray.

In some places, family members faced off

against each other. The most high-profile of these contests unfolded in Baramati where NCP chief Ajit Pawar defeated his nephew Yugendra Pawar, a debutant fielded by the NCP (SP).

In Kannad constituency, Sanjana Jadhav of Shiv Sena -- daughter of BJP leader Raosaheb Danve -- defeated her estranged husband Harshvardhan Jadhav who contested as an independent.

In Aheri, Dharamrao Baba Atram of Ajit Pawar-led NCP defeated his daughter Bhagyashri Atram of NCP (SP).

Of 237 dynastic candidates, 89 were successful in winning the election. A large proportion of unsuccessful candidates were from the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance of the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) which generally faced a rout, the report noted.

The ruling Mahayuti alliance of the BJP, NCP and Shiv Sena won a landslide victory in the November 20 elections, bagging 230 of 288 seats.

While the Congress and undivided NCP had always seen dominance of dynastic politics, the BJP saw a rise in the number of such leaders after 2014 when it came to power in the state as well as at the Centre, the report noted, though it did not provide any figures for the purpose of comparison. (PTI)

'PAINFUL', 'WHAT'S THE PROBLEM'

Intense debate over court notice on Ajmer dargah plea

AJMER/NEW DELHI, Nov 28: 'Worrisome', 'painful', 'what is the problem'... the rift over a claim that the famed shrine of Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was built over a Shiva temple widened on Thursday with politicians, community leaders and others weighing in on the potentially volatile issue.

On Wednesday, a local court in Ajmer, known the world over as home of the dargah visited by thousands of devotees cutting across religious divides every day, issued notices to the dargah committee, the Ministry of Minority Affairs and the Archaeological Survey of India on the plea seeking to declare the shrine a temple.

The notice came just days after four people were killed in Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh in violence following a local court ordering survey of a Mughal-era shrine, the Shahi Jama Masjid, which petitioners said was built after destroying an old temple. And set off fears that Ajmer could become another communal tinderbox.

While dargah committee officials declined to comment, Syed Sarwar Chishti, secretary of the Anjuman Syed Zaidgan, a body representing the khadims (caretakers) of the Ajmer dargah, described the petition as a deliberate attempt to fracture society along communal lines.

He said the dargah which he described as a symbol of communal harmony and secularism comes under the Minority Affairs ministry and the ASI has nothing to do with it. "The community accepted the decision in the Babri Masjid case and we believed nothing will happen after that but unfortunately such



things are happening again and again. The example of Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh is in front of us. This must stop," he told PTL.

He added that the Anjuman be made party to the case.

The plea seeking directions to start worship in the temple was filed in September and the next hearing is on December 20.

"Our demand was that the Ajmer dargah be declared a Sankat Mochan Mahadev Temple and if the dargah has any kind of registration, it should be cancelled. Its survey should be done through ASI and Hindus should be given the right to worship there," plaintiff Vishnu Gupta told reporters.

The Hindu Sena president has referred to a book by academic Har Bilas Sarda to support his claim that there was a Shiv temple where the dargah was raised.

He claimed he had conducted research for two years and found that there was a Shiva temple which was destroyed by Muslim invaders and a dargah built.

As debate — and concerns — escalated, Union minister Giriraj Singh wondered why.

"A court has ordered survey in Ajmer. What is the problem if court has ordered a survey? This is a truth that when Mughals came to India, they demolished our temples. The Congress government has only done appeasement till now. If (Jawaharlal) Nehru would have stopped it in 1947 itself, there would have been no need to approach the court today," he said.

Muzaffar Bharti, president of the United Muslim Forum Rajasthan (UMFR), contended that the petition was a "sheer violation" of the Places of Worship Act 1991.

He also noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi offers a 'chadar' at the dargah during the annual Urs, a tradition started by Jawaharlal Nehru. AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi agreed.

"The Dargah Sharif has been there (Ajmer) for 800 years. Every prime minister of the country sends 'chadar' for the dargah during Urs.

Where will all this stop? What will happen to Place of Worship Act 1991? This is being done to destabilise the country... I am saying this repeatedly that these things are not in favour of the country. These people are related directly or indirectly with BJP, RSS..."

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) said in a statement that the civil court's decision to entertain the petition is unwarranted and has no legal standing.

"It goes against the provisions of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, which decrees that no legal dispute can be raised on a religious place that existed prior to August 15, 1947," it said.

"The violation of this Act has already resulted in the flawed decision with regard to the survey of the masjid in Sambhal..." the party added, asking the Supreme Court to immediately intervene.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti also cited the act.

"Thanks to a former Chief Justice of India a Pandora's box has been opened sparking a contentious debate about minority religious places. Despite a Supreme Court ruling that the status quo should be maintained as it existed in 1947, his judgement has paved the way for surveys of these sites potentially leading to increased tension between Hindus and Muslims," said PDP president Mehbooba Mufti.

She was apparently referring to an order by a bench led by then CJI D Y Chandrachud allowing the ASI to conduct a scientific survey of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi to determine if it was built on a pre-existing temple.

The Places of Worship (special provisions) Act, 1991 fixed August 15, 1947 as the cut-off date for status quo on the character of religious places.

The Supreme Court in August last year refused to stay Allahabad High Court order allowing an ASI survey at the Gyanvapi mosque complex, thereby opening the door to disputes such as the one in Sambhal and in Mathura. The bench comprising then CJI Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, however, asked the ASI to carry out the survey through "non-invasive methodology".

"Yet another shocker, supposedly hidden somewhere in the Ajmer Dargah Sharif," added People's Conference president Sajad Gani Lone on the developments in Ajmer. "Worrisome. The latest claim: Shiv Temple at Ajmer Dargah. Where are we taking this country? And why? For political dividends!" Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said in a post on X.

"These things are very painful. Some people have their cool after 2024 (Lok Sabha) election results as they didn't get the majority. These people want to target a particular community to please the majority," added Samajwadi Party MP Mohibbullah Nadvi.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was a Sufi saint from Persia who made Ajmer his home. The shrine in his honour was built by Mughal emperor Humayun.

During his reign, Mughal ruler Akbar made a pilgrimage to Ajmer every year. He, as well as Shah Jahan, built mosques inside the shrine complex. (PTI)

Hamirpur residents block Shimla-Dharamshala NH



HAMIRPUR/SHIMLA, Nov 28: Hundreds of Hamirpur residents on Thursday blocked the Shimla-Dharamshala National Highway for about three hours over the closure of a charitable hospital run by Radha Soami Satsang Beas here.

Protestors, who blocked the roads at Sulangan, Budhwin Chowk and Salauni at intervals, affecting vehicular movement on both sides of the road, said that a massive demonstration would be held at Bhota Chowk on Friday.

The demonstrations started on Monday after the sect put up a notice on the hospital's main gate informing people that it will not be able to give its services from December 1.

Demanding a written assurance or notification from the state government that the hospital would not be closed, the protestors have warned of road blockades daily from 10 am to 4 pm if their demands are not met.

The protestors were served lunch and tea on the spot by villagers. Senior revenue and police officers were also present at the spot to maintain law and order situation.

Located in the foothills of Himalayas, the 75-bed hospital on the Hamirpur-Shimla highway gives free medical facilities to patients and has been running since 2000.

The charitable hospital caters to lakhs of people from over 900 villages in its 15 km radius. It is spread over an area of about 64 acres, for which the land was donated by several locals.

The Radha Soami Satsang Beas wishes to transfer it to Maharaj Jagat Singh Medical Relief Society, which the sect terms as its sister organisation.

The sect had approached the state government to transfer the hospital's land to its sister organisation but is facing some issues under the land ceiling act. The request for the transfer was made to obtain GST exemption in the purchase of machinery and other

equipment to upgrade the hospital facilities.

Hospital administrator Colonel Jaggi (retired) had said that notice was put up on the gate following the orders of the sect management as so far no written assurance has been received from the state government.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had maintained that the state government is contemplating to bring an ordinance for making provision in the Himachal Pradesh Ceiling on Land Holding Act, 1972 to transfer the land.

"Legal aspects would be considered to make provision in this regard and the matter would be discussed in the winter session of assembly and if any changes have to be made in the law that will also be done," he had added.

However, legal experts opined that there is no merit in the submission made by the Radha Soami Satsang Beas has been allowed to hold land beyond permissible limit under Section 5 (i) of the ceiling act with a condition that the land cannot be transferred.

In regard to submission to sister organisation, the experts said, "All the organisations registered under the registration of Societies Act 1860 have independent identity and being different jurist persons, no benefit can be derived on this basis." Moreover, the transfer is being made to evade tax which is illegal and immoral and in case transfer is allowed, similar demands would come from others, they said.

The issue has taken a political turn as the BJP has extended its full support to the people.

Former chief minister P K Dhumal who was instrumental in opening of this hospital in 1999-2000 said that the state government should ensure smooth running of the hospital in the public interest as such charitable health institutes are beneficial for both the government and the public. (PTI)

Blast near PVR in Delhi's Prashant Vihar, 1 injured

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: A low-intensity blast occurred near PVR Prashant Vihar in Delhi's Rohini on Thursday, leaving one person injured, police said.

The explosion took place in front of a sweet shop near a park in the same area where a strong blast ripped through a wall of a CRPF school on October 20.

The Delhi Police said at 11:47 am, a call was received regarding an explosion in front of Banshi Wala sweet shop in Prashant Vihar. Chetan Kushwaha (28), the driver of a three-wheeler, which was parked nearby, sustained minor injuries. He was taken to a hospital and discharged after treatment, police said.

The entire area was cordoned off immediately after a bomb detection team, dog squad, police and Delhi Fire Services reached the spot.

White power was recovered from the spot. However, a probe is underway to ascertain more details about the explosion, officials said.

A senior police officer said film screenings were going on inside the multiplex at the time of the blast. Panic ensued among visitors and residents as smoke engulfed the area. A video showing a cloud of smoke around the multiplex emerged on social media following the incident. The distance between the PVR and blast site is a few meters.

Hours after the blast, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi accused the BJP-led central government of failing to maintain law and order in the national capital.

According to the police sources, the Thursday morning explosion is similar to the blast that occurred outside the CRPF school's boundary wall in Prashant Vihar last month. "A similar kind of thick smoke was seen in the air in the October 20 explosion near the CRPF school. The white power was again recovered from the spot," a police officer said.

The Delhi Police, in a statement, said, "It was found that a very mild intensity explosion occurred near the wall of a small park. One individual suffered minor abrasion. He was instantly taken to the BSA Hospital from where he was discharged after receiving first aid."

"It was a loud explosion," recalled Mahinder Singh, an eyewitness who operates a food stall in the area, while speaking to PTL.

"The smoke began to irritate my eyes and I felt a sharp stinging sensation in my throat. We are all feeling extremely unsafe," Singh said. (PTI)

ED team attacked in Delhi during raids in cyber crime case, one person detained

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: An Enforcement Directorate (ED) team undertaking searches in a cyber fraud linked money laundering case was allegedly attacked and one of its members was injured while raiding a farmhouse here on Thursday, officials said. The agency has registered an FIR about the incident which took place at a farmhouse that was raided by ED team led by Suraj Yadav in the Bijwasan area of the national capital. The farmhouse falls under the Kapashera police station in southwest Delhi.

The Enforcement Officer (EO), who suffered minor injuries during the attack, continued with the searches after he was given first aid, the officials said.

The probe pertains to a case against the PYYPL application (app).

The Delhi Police in its statement said an information was received regarding manhandling an ED team at Bijwasan area. Kapashera Station House Officer (SHO) along with other staff reached the spot where the raid was being carried out.

Two lady officers of the CRPF were also present in the raiding team of the ED.

According to the statement, Ashok Kumar Sharma, who is a chartered accountant (CA) by profession, owns the farmhouse.

"Yash, who is relative of Sharma, has been apprehended in connection with the attack and is being further interrogated," police in the statement said.

It has been alleged that Sharma and Yash were allegedly involved in attack on the ED team. Further investigations are on.

The search operations, according to sources, has been launched after the ED got inputs from the IAC and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) about cyber crimes like phishing, QR code cheating and part time job fraud leading to fraud with many people. It was found that money earned through this cyber fraud was being layered through as many as 15,000 'mule' accounts and withdrawn using debit and credit cards.

Using these cards, it was found, money was remitted to top up virtual accounts on UAE-based Pyypl payment aggregator and subsequently funds were used from Pyypl to buy crypto currency.

The network was being run by some chartered accountants (CAs), the sources claimed. (PTI)

Kerala government to intensify cleanliness drive

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Nov 28: A meeting convened by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday decided to mobilise the masses under the leadership of local self-government bodies to intensify the project of garbage-free 'New Kerala.'

The works of the Sanitation Mission, State Pollution Control Board and Kerala Solid Waste Management Project will be expedited to address the delay in obtaining technical approvals for using innovative technologies of private entrepreneurs in waste management, an official release here said.

The executive committees of each ward of local self-government bodies have been asked to lead the cleaning activities. The department of Local Self-Government has been directed to convene meetings of all local bodies to ensure that the committees function effectively.

Local self-government bodies will be allowed to facilitate the implementation of

public-private partnership for solid waste management. Any delay in obtaining government approvals for various projects related to waste management will be avoided, it said.

The meeting also resolved to give permission within two weeks after completion of procedures in such applications.

The preparations for 'Total Sanitation Declaration' were also discussed at the meeting. The declaration of 100 percent greening of neighbourhoods and tourism centres will be made by March 30 next year, it added.

All government offices will be declared as green offices on January 26 next year. On the same day, the cities in all local self-government bodies will also be declared fully clean and beautiful towns.

The meeting was attended by Local Self-Government Minister M B Rajesh, chief secretary Sarada Muralidharan and 'Navakerala' (New Kerala) action plan coordinator T N Seema, the release said. (PTI)

LeT member extradited from Rwanda

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Rwanda extradited to India on Thursday a member of Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) facing an Interpol Red Notice in an operation coordinated by the NIA and the CBI, officials said here.

Salman Rehman Khan, an alleged member of the internationally proscribed terrorist organisation, had assisted in providing arms, ammunition and explosives to further terrorist activities in Bengaluru, they said.

"The Global Operations Centre of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has closely coordinated with the NIA and Interpol National Central Bureau - Kigali for the return to India from Rwanda of Salman Rehman Khan, wanted by the NIA for terror-related offences," a CBI spokesperson said

in a statement.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) had lodged a case in 2023 related to criminal conspiracy to spread terror in Bengaluru, they said. An FIR was also registered at Hebbal Police Station, Bengaluru.

Khan, who was previously imprisoned in a POCSE case (2018-2022), had allegedly facilitated the collection and distribution of explosives for other terror accused after being radicalised and recruited during his incarceration by T Naseer, a life convict in a terror case, according to the NIA probe.

Naseer had allegedly orchestrated the radicalisation and subsequent criminal activities to further LeT operations in the country besides plotting his escape en route to the court from the prison, the agency said.

When the terror module was busted, Khan managed to give agencies a slip and escaped from the country, it said.

NIA chargesheeted him in stringent anti-terror law and Indian Penal Code and court declared him a fugitive," it said.

"The CBI on request of the NIA had got a Red Notice issued against the subject from Interpol on August 2, 2024. It was circulated to all law enforcement agencies globally for tracking of the wanted criminal," the CBI statement said.

Based on the Red Notice, he was apprehended by authorities in Kigali, Rwanda. The information was passed on to the CBI which is the designated agency for coordination of Interpol affairs in India and the NIA. After legal proceedings, he was extradited to India. (PTI)

Four Kerala doctors booked over birth of newborn with genetic disorders



ALAPPUZHA, (KERALA), Nov 28: Four doctors here have been booked for allegedly failing to detect genetic disorders in a newborn while it was in the mother's womb, the police said on Thursday.

The accused include two female doctors attached to the Kadappuram Government Women and Child Hospital in Alappuzha, along with two others from private diagnostic labs, according to the Alappuzha South police.

The police registered an FIR on Tuesday based on a complaint lodged by Anish and Surumi, a couple from Alappuzha.

The doctors were booked under different sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) that included endangering life or personal safety of others. Two of

the scan centers were run by two doctors accused in the matter.

The couple alleged the doctors failed to detect or disclose the genetic abnormalities during prenatal scans, instead assuring them that the reports were normal.

The couple also claimed that they were shown the baby only four days after delivery, according to the complaint.

The FIR stated that Surumi, 35, was undergoing treatment for her third pregnancy at Kadappuram Women and Child Hospital.

The scans were performed on July 11, September 28, October 22, and November 1.

On October 30, Surumi was admitted for delivery. However, she was referred to Government Medical College Hospital (MCH) in Vandanam, Alappuzha, citing the absence of fetal movement and heartbeat, the FIR said.

On November 8, the baby was delivered following surgery at MCH and was found to have severe internal and external deformities, the FIR stated.

Meanwhile, one of the accused doctors, responding to the allegations, said she had treated Surumi only during the initial months of her pregnancy.

"I provided care for three months at the beginning of her pregnancy. The reports shown to me indicated issues with the fetus's growth," she said.

The doctors associated with the diagnostic labs, however, maintained that there were no errors in the scan reports. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: As many as 136 Vande Bharat train services were operational with enhanced safety features and modern passenger amenities as on November 21, the government has informed the Lok Sabha.

In a written reply on Wednesday, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said these safety features and modern passenger amenities were automatic train protection system KAVACH, faster acceleration, fully-sealed gangway, automatic plug doors, better ride comfort, mini pantry with provision of hot case, bottle cooler, deep freezer and hot water boiler, among many others.

The minister was responding to questions raised by nine MPs from various political parties who wanted to know the rationale behind launching the Vande Bharat Express, their occupancy, amenities, passenger feedback and services in Maharashtra as well as on the New Delhi-Kathgodam route. Vaishnaw said, "Presently, 22



Vande Bharat services, on originating or terminating basis, are catering to the needs of stations located in the state of Maharashtra."

"...the Delhi-Kathgodam sector is served by three pairs of mail/express services, including the 12039/40 Kathgodam-New Delhi Shatabdi Express. Besides, introduction of new train services, in-

cluding Vande Bharat services and its variants, is an ongoing process on Indian Railways subject to traffic justification, operational feasibility, resource availability, etc," he added.

Vaishnaw said Vande Bharat services were being operated at the maximum permissible speed of section en route so as to ensure op-

timal utilisation of speed potential and there was no proposal to reduce the speed.

Responding to questions regarding occupancy, Vaishnaw said, "On Indian Railways, the demand pattern of reserved accommodation is not uniform throughout the year and it varies over lean and peak periods. Moreover, trains running on popular and convenient timings with lesser stoppage and running time are generally well patronised. During 2024-25 (up to October) the overall occupancy of Vande Bharat express trains is more than 100 per cent."

"On Indian Railways, statewide and trainwise average income generated is not maintained. Railway passengers share their feedback on the services offered by Railways through Rail Anubhav of the Rail-Madad portal. During the period from 03.07.2024 to 20.11.2024, a total of 51,346 feedback responses on Vande Bharat trains have been received through Rail Anubhav," the minister added. (PTI)

136 Vande Bharat train services operational across railways network: Govt

Tough reality for fans when ticket prices go into lakhs, balanced approach needed: Hariharan

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Renowned singer Hariharan says when tickets for music concerts sell for lakhs of rupees, it limits the options for the fans - a tough reality that needs to be addressed through a balanced approach by performers.

Talking to PTI ahead of his 50-year Legacy Concert on Saturday here at Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium, the "Raja" singer said expensive tickets "create a sense of exclusivity and grandeur" but they also raise questions about accessibility.

"When ticket prices go into lakhs, it inevitably limits who can attend, and that's a tough reality for fans who may deeply admire an artist but are priced out of the experience," Hariharan told PTI in an interview. The 69-year old said that the surge in musical concerts in India is a testament to the passion Indian audiences have for music, and to the artists - both domestic and international. In recent months, music concerts by British band Coldplay and Punjabi singer-actor Diljeet Dosanjh made headlines for their sold out shows and tickets that were sold for as much as ₹10 lakh through unofficial platforms.

Hariharan, who is celebrating 50 years in the music industry, suggested that a balanced approach was needed to manage this trend by organising both premium and affordable performances.

"There's room for premium, high-production concerts that offer a larger-than-life experience, but there should also be avenues for more affordable performances, so the magic of live music remains inclusive," he said. Just like streaming platforms and social media have made music accessible to all, he said, "perhaps it's time to bring that spirit into live performances too".

For his upcoming concert, the singer said that the "milestone concert is not just about me". "It's about the fans who've been with me through every song, every genre, and every chapter of my career," Hariharan said. (PTI)

BARRY KEOGHAN TO PORTRAY RINGO STARR IN SAM MENDES' BEATLES FILM

LOS ANGELES, Nov 28: British star Barry Keoghan will be essaying the role of Ringo Starr in filmmaker Sam Mendes' upcoming film, the 'Beatles' drummer has confirmed. Mendes has planned a four-film series chronicling the legendary band, with each movie told from the perspective of one of the Beatles' members.

Starr confirmed that Keoghan, the Oscar-nominated actor known for 'The Banshees of Inisherin' and 'Saltburn', will portray him during an interview with 'Entertainment Tonight'. "I think it's great. I believe he's somewhere taking drum lessons and I hope not too many," the 84-year-old musician said.

The films will intersect to "tell the astonishing story of the greatest band in history", leading up to their 1970 breakup. Mendes, the director of critical hits like 'American Beauty', 'Road to Perdition' and '1917', has described his latest project as a "challenge to the notion of what constitutes a trip to the movies".

Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and the families of the late John Lennon and George Harrison have given the filmmaker the full life story and music rights for the upcoming films.

It is also rumoured in American media that 'Gladiator II' stars Paul Mescal and Joseph Quinn are in negotiations for the roles of Paul McCartney and George Harrison, respectively, while Harris Dickinson is in talks to play John Lennon. Mendes will produce the movie through his 'Neal Street Productions', along with Pippa Harris and Julie Pastor. (PTI)



Shahid Kapoor's 'Deva' to release on Jan 31, 2025; Vicky Kaushal's 'Chhaava' to debut in Feb

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Bollywood star Shahid Kapoor's upcoming movie "Deva" will now be released in theatres two weeks early on January 31, 2025, the makers have announced.

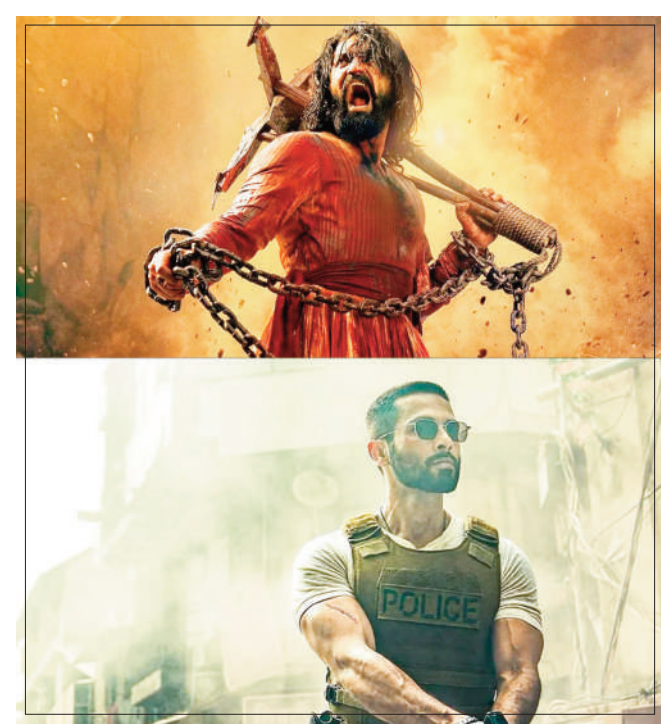
"Deva" was earlier slated to land in theatres on February 14 and the slot has been taken over by Vicky Kaushal's period action movie "Chhaava".

Co-starring Pooja Hegde, "Deva" is an action thriller film produced by Siddharth Roy Kapur's Roy Kapur Films in collaboration with Zee Studios.

"Sit tight, 'cause the wait just got shorter! Deva is coming your way sooner than you think—January 31st, 2025! The hype is real, the energy is through the roof, and we're beyond excited to bring you this action-packed thriller earlier than expected," Zee Studios posted on Instagram. Rossan Andrews, known for Malayalam blockbusters such as "Salute" and "Kayamkulam Kochunni", has directed "Deva". According to the makers, the movie promises to be an "action-packed roller-coaster ride full of thrill and drama".

In the film, Kapoor is essaying the role of a brilliant but defiant police officer, while Hegde is portraying a journalist. It also features actor Pavail Gulati in a pivotal role.

Kaushal's "Chhaava" will see him play the role of Maratha emperor Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. The movie was earlier scheduled for release on December 6. The upcoming film, also starring Rashmika Mandanna and Akshaye Khanna, is directed by Laxman Utekar and produced by Dinesh Vijan of Maddock Films. A R Rahman has composed the music for "Chhaava", written by Rishi Virmani. (PTI)



Ali Fazal completes shooting for Mani Ratnam-Kamal Haasan's 'Thug Life'



NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Actor Ali Fazal on Thursday said he has concluded shooting for critically-acclaimed filmmaker Mani Ratnam's upcoming movie "Thug Life". The "Mirzapur" is part of the ensemble cast of the movie, which is headlined by Tamil superstar Kamal Haasan. The film will be released in theatres on June 5, 2025. Fazal said it was an honour to collaborate with a visionary director like Ratnam and he is waiting for the audience to witness the magic he has created with the movie. "The opportunity to share the screen with icons like Kamal Haasan sir and the rest of this extraordinary cast is something I'll cherish forever. The last two months have been transformative for me as an actor - learning Tamil, immersing myself in a new cinematic culture, and pushing my creative boundaries," the 38-year-old actor said in a statement.

"Mani sir creates a world so immersive and rich, and I can confidently say this film will be a cinematic feast for audiences across India and beyond," he added.

"Thug Life" reunites Ratnam and Haasan after 35 years since they worked together on the 1987 critical hit Nayakan. The cast also includes Trisha Krishnan, Abhirami, Nasser, Joju George, Sanya Malhotra, Rohit Saraf and Aishwarya Lekshmi.

"Thug Life" will be jointly produced by Udhayanidhi Stalin's Red Giant Movies, Raaj Kamal Films International and Ratnam's Madras Talkies. It will feature music by AR Rahman. (PTI)

I was not what a hero is supposed to be and people loved that: Amol Palekar

MUMBAI, Nov 28: Veteran actor-filmmaker Amol Palekar says he has always lived life on his own terms and that reflected in his choice of regular guy roles in Hindi cinema at a time when larger-than-life heroes were popular.

Palekar, who turned 80 this month, is looking back at his life and artistic pursuits in a new memoir, which is titled "Aiwaz" in Marathi and "Viewfinder" in English. Both the books are published by Westland - "Aiwaz" in partnership with Madhushree Publications.

The book is a deep dive into his life including his unlikely journey in cinema that saw him emerge as the star of the middle-of-the-road cinema of frequent collaborators Basu Chatterjee and Hrishikesh Mukherjee in hits such as "Rajinigandha", "Chhoti Si Baat", "Chitchor", "Gol Maal", "Naram Garam" and others in 70s and 80s. "I was not what a hero is supposed to be and what people loved was precisely that. They loved that I was not a Dharmendra, He-man, I was not the Angry Young Man (Amitabh Bachchan) or the ro-

mantic hero Rajesh Khanna. I was also not somebody who could dance beautifully like Jeetendra. I was none of them. And my being none of them was something which people liked," Palekar told PTI in an interview.

"I could do it on my own terms is something which I don't know how it happened, but it happened. I am grateful to life for that," he added.

The actor said one of his dilemmas, which also comes through in his book, was how to run away from the image of the star.

"Because the moment you say a star, it comes with its baggage. I was a person who always wanted to try something new and different in which being a star is not allowed. It's a trap, in a way."

Asked if he was ever tempted to turn to commercial cinema, Palekar said he has never measured success by box office collection. "Today, getting into the ₹ 100 crore club is the minimum, and you talk only about going into ₹ 400 or ₹ 500 crore. Everything is being judged only by the commercial success. I've

always believed that whosoever has invested the money, if you have invested ₹ 5 rupees and if you make ₹ 15 out of that, you should be happy. "But the industry is not happy. Why only ₹ 15 why not ₹ 150 or ₹ 1500?" Palekar said he has always chosen the road less travelled whether taking a bank job to fund his creative side, choosing the fine arts stream instead of the more commercially viable applied arts at the JJ School of Arts or choosing theatre and then middle of the road movies.

"Something which will fetch money is applied arts but I didn't do that. That was a choice, a very conscious choice. I hadn't thought so much about it as I can do it today looking back but I certainly don't have any regrets about it."

"I worked out a very simple formula... I took up a job in a bank, which would help me not to worry about where the money would come from because I didn't want to have any compromise in my work... I thought this was the best way to do a 9 to 6 job, earn money and then even onwards, it would be about

my art. That's how I started my living. That was the starting point where I went on evolving."

The actor, who later turned director and made critically-acclaimed movies such as "Ankahee", "Thodasa Ruman Ho Jaye" and "Paheli", said he kept postponing the book for many years as he was busy with theatre and paintings but the break during Covid gave him the "time to introspect".

"And then I sat down and wrote it," he said, crediting wife Sandhya Gokhale, who has co-written many of his films, for helping him in the process. The English title of the book comes from a technology in films that's now extinct, he said.

"During our time, Viewfinder was an essential apparatus for a director to choose a frame, to choose what lens to use, what angle to use, he used to use the Viewfinder."

"So, that's what the Viewfinder is. It is from there. (In the book), I have chosen the frame, the angle and the look at my own life," he said.

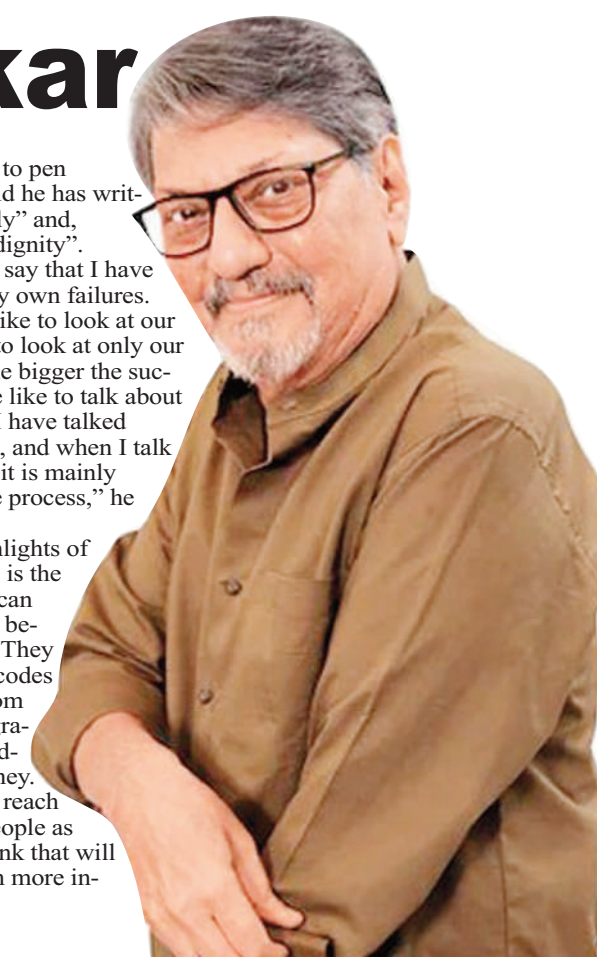
Asked whether there were portions that made him emotional or

were challenging to pen down, Palekar said he has written them "candidly" and, hopefully, "with dignity".

"I can honestly say that I have tried to look at my own failures. Mostly we don't like to look at our failures. We like to look at only our successes. And the bigger the success, the more we like to talk about it. (In the book), I have talked about my failures, and when I talk about the failure, it is mainly about the creative process," he said.

One of the highlights of the book, he said, is the QR codes which can help the reader to become the viewer. They can scan the QR codes to watch films from his storied filmography without spending any extra money.

"We are trying to reach out to as many people as possible. So, I think that will make it that much more interesting." (PTI)



MBAPPE NEEDS 'SUPPORT' REAL MADRID COACH ANCELOTTI SAYS AFTER 2-0 LOSS TO LIVERPOOL

LIVERPOOL, Nov 28: Kylian Mbappe hoped his move to Real Madrid would finally end his wait to win the Champions League.

That felt a long way off on Wednesday after a 2-0 defeat to Liverpool left the defending champion in danger of being eliminated from European club soccer's elite tournament at the first stage and in a fight just to make the playoffs for the next round.

If Madrid does make an early exit, Mbappe may look back on a miserable night at Anfield where he was humbled by a young defender and then missed a penalty that would have leveled the score.

Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said afterward the star forward was going through a "difficult moment" just months after he joined the record 15-time European champion.

"We've got to give him our support and love and he will soon be fine," Ancelotti said as he faced multiple questions from Spanish reporters about Mbappe's form. "It could be lack of confidence maybe. Sometimes when moments in the game and things are not working out, the idea is to keep things simple. Don't complicate things."

"He's going through that moment now. You get through them. Don't blame him for missing a penalty. People miss pen-

alties. We can't put too much grief on him for that."

World Cup winner Mbappe looked a shadow of himself against a Liverpool team that leads the way in the Premier League and the Champions League this season.

He was brought crashing down by a crunching tackle from 21-year-old right back Conor Bradley when threatening to burst through on goal in the first half — sparking a huge cheer from the home crowd.

And it got worse for Mbappe in the second half when he had the chance to make it 1-1 from the penalty spot after Alexis Mac Allister had given six-time European champion Liverpool the



lead. But with Caoimhin Kelleher to beat, he saw his effort pushed away by Liverpool's

back-up goalkeeper.

Mbappe has scored nine goals in 18 appearances for Madrid

since leaving Paris Saint-Germain as a free agent at the end of last season. But he has only one goal in the Champions League for his new club, which has lost three of its five games in the revamped competition.

"Things are not running for him. We've got to be patient. He is an extraordinary player — a fantastic player," Ancelotti said.

Madrid is 24th in the new-look 36-team league phase of the competition.

The top eight teams advance to the round of 16, while those ranked ninth to 24th go into a playoff.

Mbappe wasn't the only player to fail to score a penalty in the match, with Mohamed Salah

also missing a spot kick of his own. But substitute Cody Gakpo doubled Liverpool's advantage.

Victory saw new Liverpool head coach Arne Slot manage something his predecessor Jurgen Klopp never could by beating Real in the Champions League. Klopp lost five and drew once in six games against Madrid — including two defeats in the final.

Liverpool extended its perfect record in the Champions League this season and is top of the standings after five games.

Each team plays eight games in the opening phase.

Madrid plays Atalanta next month and Liverpool faces Girona. (AP)

East Bengal seek first win of season in clash against NorthEast United

KOLKATA, Nov 28: Bottom-placed East Bengal FC will make one more attempt to notch their first win of the season when they take on NorthEast United FC in their eighth match of the Indian Super League (ISL) season here on Friday.

After losing six straight matches, East Bengal opened their account with a goalless draw against Mohammedan Sporting on November 9 in a Kolkata Derby.

They will now want to take one step forward and clinch all three points in front of their home crowd at the Yuba Bharati Krirangan.

The Highlanders, on the other hand, have been in an impressive form this season, as they are currently placed at third with 15 points from nine games, thanks to four wins and three draws.

They have scored 21 goals, conceding only 15, and have lost merely once in their previous five matches.

They trail the top-placed Bengaluru FC (20) by five points — a gap they will be confident of bridging, given how they have been managing to put the pieces of their jigsaw together of late.

The two sides have faced each other eight times, with



NorthEast United and East Bengal FC emerging victorious in four and two matches respectively.

A couple of fixtures have resulted in a draw.

NorthEast United have been on an unbelievable run recently,

winning thrice and drawing once in their previous four encounters. Avoiding a defeat in Friday's clash will make it their

longest-ever unbeaten sequence since going 11 matches without a loss from January-March 2021.

East Bengal FC head coach Oscar Bruzon acknowledged that NorthEast United will play on the frontfoot in this fixture, but assured that the home team has done its homework properly.

"I don't think NorthEast United FC is going to come here to neutralise our attacking power, but they are coming to try and score more goals themselves," Bruzon said.

"That's what I know from what they have been doing in the last games with their front-line. We will try to play our best game, and win the match," he added.

NorthEast United head coach Juan Pedro Benali mentioned that maintaining a fine balance between their offensive instincts and defensive discipline will be critical in this match.

"Each game is a different story. We need to make big chances to score and at the same time make it equally difficult for them to do so. That's our objective, because we know we can score and that's a very important part (of our gameplay)," Benali said. (PTI)

Get him in: Healy calls for Webster to make Test debut in Adelaide

SYDNEY, Nov 28: Former Australian wicketkeeper batter Ian Healy has urged the team think tank to seriously consider handing Beau Webster a Test cap in the pink ball fixture against India at Adelaide next week.

The selectors on Thursday added the Tasmanian all-rounder to the squad for the second Test as a cover for Mitchell Marsh, who is managing an ankle injury.

But Healy doesn't want Webster to just be a "standby".

"I like that, but I don't reckon standby, get him in," Healy said on SEN Radio.

"I don't really like just adding him to the squad unless he's going to play, drop the 12th man." Marsh had pulled up sore after bowling the most overs he has in a Test match in three years during the Perth Test.

As a result, Australia had to rely on spin and medium-pace overs from Marnus Labuschagne, along with five overs of off-spin from Travis Head during their 295-run humbling in the series opener.

Webster, who is also a right-

arm pacer like Marsh, is expected to come into the equation if the Western Australian can't bowl the overs required of him.

"You drop Boland out ... and add Beau Webster. He's through his injury phases. He's massive, he's 2m tall and he's performed at every level — youth cricket, 2nd XI, Australia A and Shield level," Healy, a veteran of 119 Tests, said.

"He's an all-rounder, he's consistent, bat good under pressure and it might be time. That could be the way that we fill in a batting position, Mitch Marsh moves up if he is injury-free and then an all-rounder comes in."

"If Marsh moves up, he doesn't stay an all-rounder because he's injury prone, that might be the decision in the end," Healy opined. Webster has been the stand out performer in the Sheffield Shield over the past two years. He has collected 303 Shield runs this year at an average of 50.50 while also picking up nine wickets.

The Adelaide Test begins on December 6. (PTI)

Syed Modi Int'l: Sindhu survives scare before entering quarterfinals, Sen also in last-8

LUCKNOW, Nov 28: Star Indian shuttler PV Sindhu survived a scare before beating unheralded compatriot Ira Sharma in three games to enter the women's singles quarterfinals at the Syed Modi International Super 300 badminton tournament here on Thursday.

Sharma, ranked 147th in the world as against 18th of Sindhu, stretched the second-round match to the decider after winning the second game.

Top seed Sindhu, a two-time Olympic silver medallist, recovered in time to pocket the deciding game and win the match 21-10 12-21 21-15 in 49 minutes. The 29-year-old Sindhu has been struggling for some time and she last clinched a title at the Singapore Open in 2022.

She faces China's Dai Wang, ranked 118th in the world, in the

quarterfinals. Wang beat Devika Sihag of India 19-21 21-18 21-11 in another second-round match. Unlike Sindhu, top seed Lakshya Sen easily won his second-round men's singles match against Daniil Dubovenko of Israel 21-14 21-13 in just 35 minutes to also book a quarterfinal berth. Sen meets compatriot Meiraba Luwang in the quarterfinals. Meiraba was a 21-15 21-13 victor against sixth seed Nhat Nguyen of Ireland.

In other men's singles matches, Ayush Shetty beat Hoh Justin of Malaysia 21-12 21-19 to enter the quarterfinals while third seed Kiran George suffered a 21-19 20-22 11-21 defeat to Shogo Ogawa of Japan.

Second seed Priyanshu Rajawat of India also made it to the men's singles quarterfinals after beating Le Duc Phat of Vietnam 21-15 21-8. (PTI)

Psychological edge for Gukesh after three games

SINGAPORE, Nov 28: Ding Liren holds a psychological advantage over reigning champion Ding Liren of China, having demonstrated better preparation and claimed his first victory following the first three games of the World Chess Championship.

With a maximum of 11 games remaining under Classical time control, the scores are tied at 1.5-1.5. However, Gukesh has clearly shown better preparation, while Liren's calculation ability let him down in the third game, which he ultimately lost.

The match had started with Gukesh facing the Chinese confidence boost for the Chennai-based player. If he continues to surprise, particularly with the white pieces, he stands to reap the rewards in the coming games.

In the last world championship match that he won, Liren was trailing thrice but came back to even the scores against Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia. In fact, the only time he went ahead was on the final day when the tiebreaker decided the fate of the 2023 championship. Writing off Liren would surely not be on anyone's mind given his fighting qualities but it remains to be seen how he handles things against someone who is 14-years younger and very hungry for success. Overall, the match seems interestingly poised after Gukesh's victory and the chess buffs could not have asked for more in the first three games. (PTI)



Hockey was an escape route from studies but it shaped my career: India striker Abhishek

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Olympic bronze medal-winning forward Abhishek took up hockey as an escape route from studies, and he has never regretted the decision as the sport has given him recognition, stardom and all that he aspired to be in life.

Though Abhishek managed to complete his graduation through correspondence, he always knew that sports would give him a purpose. "I started hockey when I was 11 or 12 years old. There was no other option in Sonapat at that time. A friend used to travel a lot every month to play hockey," Abhishek, who was a vital part of India's Paris Olympics bronze medal-winning campaign told PTI in an interview.

"I never had the patience to sit and study and when I saw my friend hardly attending classes because of his hockey engagements,

I thought I too could do the same if I started playing the sport."

The 25-year-old, who was also a member of the Hangzhou Asian Games gold-winning side, is a big fan of Portuguese football great Cristiano Ronaldo and his work ethic. "I am a big fan of Ronaldo. His off-field routine, his discipline, food habits... I watch his videos and try to inculcate them (habits) in my routine,"

Abhishek's ultimate goal, however, is to win an Olympic gold. "My goal is to revive the golden era of Indian hockey. We have started the process of winning medals in the Olympics but the golden era is yet to be achieved. That's my target," he said.

Abhishek was the second-highest paid player in the revived Hockey India League auctions behind India captain Harmanpreet

Singh (Rs 78 lakh), fetching Rs 72 lakh from Shracchi Rarh Bengal Tigers. It will be his first HIL experience and expectedly he is excited about the tournament.

"It will be a different experience from international matches. HIL is also going to be a big thing for Indian hockey because we are going to get a lot of players from the league. The IPL has shown the way as it has become a supply line for Indian cricket. HIL is going to help the national team as well."

"It will make a lot of difference. There are some great Belgian and German players in our HIL team. Sharing the dressing room with them and getting insights during the HIL will be very important. We will get to learn the minutest details from them... how to prepare for a match, among other things." (PTI)

Liverpool shine in Champions League, dumping Real Madrid down the table

LIVERPOOL, Nov 28: Liverpool is 100% on top of the Champions League after dumping title holder Real Madrid into an almost unbelievable 24th place in the 36-team standings.

No one felt the embarrassment of Madrid's 2-0 loss at Anfield more than Kylian Mbappe, the superstar added in the offseason by the storied club that also was European champion against Liverpool in the finals of 2022 and 2018. Mbappe had a penalty saved in the second half and was earlier dumped on his behind by Conor Bradley's superb tackle in an instant viral moment.

Only Liverpool has started the new Champions League format with five wins and first-year coach Arne Slot's team is two points clear of Inter Milan. Barcelona is third, trailing Liver-

pool by three points.

Madrid is, remarkably, with three rounds left just one place above being eliminated. The top eight teams at the end of January go direct to the round of 16 in March, and teams placed from ninth to 24th enter a round of two-leg playoffs in February.

"(This) doesn't change much, because even with a win it was going to be tough to secure a top-eight finish," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "It was a fair result." Monaco missed a chance to go second in the table, giving up a lead playing with 10 men from the 58th minute in a 3-2 loss at home to Benfica. Swiss forward Zeki Amdouni scored the winning goal in the 88th.

Borussia Dortmund, the beaten finalist against Madrid in May, is up to fourth place after beating Di-

namo Zagreb 3-0. Champions League standout Jamie Gittens now has four goals in five games, curling a rising shot in the 41st to open the scoring in Croatia.

The best comeback was at PSV Eindhoven, where the home team trailed Shakhtar Donetsk by two goals in the 87th minute before a 3-2 win was sealed by United States forward Ricardo Pepi's goal deep in stoppage time.

US defender Cameron Carter-Vickers scored an embarrassing own goal for Celtic — playing a no-look pass far beyond goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel — in a 1-1 draw with Club Brugge.

"One of those things," Schmeichel said. "Cam gets pressed and he hasn't heard me shout that I'm not in (goal)." Congo teammates Ngal'Ayél Mukau and Silas impressed in wins for Lille and Red

Star Belgrade. Mukau scored twice in 12th-place Lille's 2-1 win at Bologna and Silas leveled for Red Star in a 5-1 rout of Stuttgart, though he barely celebrated his goal. Silas is on loan with the Serbian champion from Stuttgart.

Aston Villa's 0-0 draw with Juventus was preserved by an excellent save by Emiliano Martinez, the World Cup-winning Argentina goalkeeper, diving low to push away a header from Francisco Conceição. Liverpool's stand-in right back Bradley was a standout Wednesday, denying Mbappe at high speed in a signature defensive play in the 32nd.

The 21-year-old Northern Ireland defender, deputizing for fit-again Trent Alexander-Arnold, joined the attack in the 52nd to play a key pass returning the ball to Alexis Mac Allister who scored

the opening goal.

After Mbappe's penalty was pushed away by goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher in the 61st, Liverpool star Mo Salah missed with his spot-kick in the 70th, before substitute Cody Gakpo sealed the win with a header in the 77th.

Madrid now has lost three of five games after defeats at Lille and at home to AC Milan. The record 15-time European champion has another tough trip next, at fifth-place Atalanta on Dec. 10. On the same date, Liverpool is at 30th-place Girona and looks to be cruising into the round of 16.

"You know how special it is to play against a team that has won the Champions League so many times," Liverpool coach Slot said of Madrid. "They were a pain for Liverpool for many years too." (AP)

Discussion on 'Hybrid' model for hosting Champions Trophy set to dominate ICC meeting

DUBAI, Nov 28: The International Cricket Council finds itself in a spot of bother as its all-powerful board meets on Friday to thrash out the long-awaited schedule of next year's Champions Trophy with an unyielding Pakistan refusing to consider the 'Hybrid' model of hosting the event despite India's refusal to play there.

The meeting will be held virtually. India's decision not to send the team to Pakistan and the PCB's defiant stand in not acceding to the hybrid system have placed the future of the marquee event in balance.

"At this point, the hybrid format is the best option. We hope that all the parties involved will take a wise call for the sake of the tournament. It's not good for the tournament to have it without India and Pakistan," a source close to the development told PTI.

The ICC members are trying to sell the point to the PCB that without the blue riband India vs Pakistan fixture, the Champions Trophy will lose all its sheen and, more importantly, there will be massive financial implications.

The host broadcaster — Jio Star — has already contacted the ICC top brass to convey its dismay at the delay in arriving at a final decision regarding the schedule.

As per the contract between the ICC and the broadcaster, the governing body was expected to give it the schedule of the tournament at least 90 days in advance and



that deadline has already been breached.

So, will the members discuss the possibility of placing India and Pakistan in different groups in the league stage of the tournament to avoid Men in Blue's travel to the neighbouring country?

"I don't think the television rights holders will agree to that. They will demand an India vs Pakistan match in the group stage itself as an assured way to raise the profile and monetary income, and it will be a bonus if the teams then meet in the knockouts," the source said.

"Even otherwise, if India enters the knockout stage, it will have to be taken out of Pakistan as BCCI has already made its stand clear. So, the discussion will be around the hybrid model."

India have not toured Pakistan since the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, which killed more than 150 people. The latest refusal to travel has been blamed on security concerns and the ICC has stated more than once that it does not expect any member board to go against government advice.

The Sri Lanka A team's tour to Pakistan had to be cut short a couple

of days ago due to intense political protests in Islamabad.

The turmoil is because of a protest by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, which belongs to former captain and prime minister Imran Khan. There were incidents of clashes and violence reported between protestors and forces of law enforcement and security.

PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi, also the federal interior minister, had announced that the army was called in to quell the unrest.

But when it comes to the Champions Trophy, the PCB has remained firm on having the

Hybrid model for Champions Trophy not acceptable: PCB tells ICC

KARACHI, Nov 28: The Pakistan Cricket Board informed the International Cricket Council on Thursday that it will not accept the Hybrid model for the Champions Trophy, and asked the global governing body not to discuss the option in Friday's board meeting.

The ICC has convened a meeting of the executive members virtually to resolve the scheduling imbroglio surrounding the marquee event after India's refusal to send the team across the border.

"I can confirm that PCB has a few hours back told the ICC that a Hybrid Model is not acceptable to them," a source told PTI.

The PCB has been rigid in its opposition to the hybrid model and had advised the ICC to look at other options to stage the Champions Trophy.

The Pakistan board maintained that having a Hybrid model would mean giving preferential treatment to India.

"I can confirm initially the PCB had looked at the possibility of a Hybrid model on the condition that if India can't play in Pakistan, then in future there would be Hybrid models in all ICC events in India right until 2031 (ODI World Cup in India and Bangladesh) as Pakistan would not go and play in India," the source said.

Another source confirmed that PCB has also reminded the ICC to inform whether the BCCI had submitted a letter in writing from their government stating that clearance was not given to the Indian team to play in Pakistan.

"Under ICC regulations if any team says its government is not allowing it to play in another nation on whatever grounds that board has to submit their government's directives in writing which we have not seen so far," the source said.

He said the PCB had acknowledged the contribution of the BCCI and Indian market in ICC's income generation but reminded the ICC that as per numbers from the last few global events Pakistan also played a major part in ensuring the revenues through their matches against India. He said the ICC has yet to confirm the timing of the virtual meeting. (PTI)



India to send 68-member team for Asia-Pacific Deaf Games

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: A 68-member Indian team will take part in the Asia-Pacific Deaf Games to be held in Kuala Lumpur from December 1 to 8.

The tournament is at par with the Asian Games for individuals with speech and hearing impairment and also serves as a precursor to the Deaflympics, which will be held in Japan next year.

The India will have representation in seven disciplines including athletics, badminton, chess, judo, table tennis, taekwondo and wrestling. A send-off ceremony was organised for the touring party by the Sports Authority of India here at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium ahead of their departure on Friday. National camps were organised by SAI in Sonapat for wrestling and in the national capital for badminton and judo from November 15 to 30.

The camps for chess, athletics and table tennis were held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, while the SAI regional centre in Lucknow conducted the taekwondo camp on the same dates.

India's overall contingent is of 92 members including 24 coaches, support staff and officials and SAI has spent close to ₹ 3 crore for travel, accommodation, training, equipment and team kits etc. The Asia-Pacific Games were held last in 2015 at Taiwan where Indian athletes won three gold and two silver medals.

Among those who are expected to clinch medals include double Deaflympics gold medalist Abhinav Sharma, 2022 Deaflympics champion shuttler Jerlin Anika and Amit, who won the bronze in 86kg category wrestling. (PTI)

Australia add uncapped all-rounder Beau Webster to squad as cover for Mitchell Marsh

SYDNEY, Nov 28: Australia have added uncapped all-rounder Beau Webster to the squad for the second Test against India as cover for Mitchell Marsh, whose fitness remains a concern.

Marsh had pulled up "sore" following Australia's 295-run hammering in the series opener in Perth earlier this week.

Webster, also a right-hand pace all-rounder like Marsh, has been the stand out performer in the Sheffield Shield over the past two years.

The 30-year-old has collected 1788 runs including five hundreds and nine fifties.

He starred in Tasmania's Sheffield Shield match against New South Wales earlier this week, striking a 61 and 49 besides taking five wickets.

"To get a few runs and wickets (for Australia A) was pleasing against a strong Indian side," Webster was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au ahead of the announcement on Thursday.



"Any time you're playing 'A' cricket, it's the one step below Test level, so it does hold you in good stead. To get the call from 'Bails' (men's selection chair George Bailey) at the end of the NSW game was a really proud moment and I can't wait to get stuck in."

"There's a tight turnaround between the Adelaide and Gabba Test so I think (I'm there) just to have some cover there for that middle-order role, whichever way they go," he added.

Apart from his explosive batting, Webster has added seam-bowling to his abilities, a skill he added to his repertoire just four years ago.

He will join the squad in Adelaide next week having been named the Sheffield Shield player of the year last summer and continuing that form this season.

Despite the disappointing show in the series opener coach Andrew McDonald had asserted that there will be no changes in the home team for the pink ball Test in Adelaide, starting on December 6.

Jack Nisbett, meanwhile, has been brought in to replace Jem Ryan, who sustained a foot injury at the weekend, in the Prime Minister's XI to play India in Canberra this weekend.

Australia squad for second Test: Pat Cummins (c), Scott Boland, Alex Carey (wk), Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Marcus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitch Marsh, Nathan McSweeney, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Beau Webster. (PTI)

Kane Williamson scores 93 and New Zealand 319-8 on 1st day of 1st test against England

CHRISTCHURCH, Nov 28: Kane Williamson slipped seamlessly back into the New Zealand cricket team, top-scoring with 93 as the Black Caps reached 319-8 Thursday on the first day of the first cricket test against England.

At stumps, after 83 overs, Glenn Phillips was 41 not out and Tim Southee at the start of his last series before retirement was 10.

Williamson was injured and missed New Zealand's historic 3-0 series win over India in India last month. That meant he had played only two tests and a recent domestic first-class match since June.

But he was unimpeded by his recent lack of activity, coming within seven runs of his 33rd test century before falling midway through a final session in which New Zealand lost five wickets and some of the advantage it held earlier in the day.

New Zealand was in a strong position at 193-3 at tea with Williamson in full flight but England battled its way back into the match in the last session of a tiring day of warm conditions and blustery winds.

Shoaib Bashir took 4-69 in 20 overs, an unusually heavy workload for a spinner on the first day of a match at Hagley Oval.

Williamson shared partnerships of 58 with Tom Latham (47), 68 with Rachin Ravindra (34) and 69 with Daryl Mitchell (34) which bound together the New Zealand innings.

Williamson's command of pro-



ceedings on day one made light of the fact it was a minor gamble to play him in this match. He took the place of Will Young who was Player of the Series in India, scoring 244 runs at an average of 48.8.

This was a classic Williamson innings, mixing care and concentration for long periods with bursts of controlled aggression. He took 15 runs to get off the mark and played in Latham's shadow in the first session, contributing only seven runs to their 50 partnership.

But after a lull, he hit back-to-back boundaries — a sweet cover drive and ruthless pull — to bring up New Zealand's 100 in the 22nd.

He was in one of his watchful periods before his dismissal.

Seeking again to assert himself, he cut a ball from Gus Atkinson but didn't manage to get on top of the bounce and hit the ball directly to Zac Crawley at backward point.

"It was a challenge," Williamson said. "There were some really good partnerships there. The ball did a little bit throughout but as we know the wicket here is pretty good and generally pretty fair for ball and bat."

"It was a pretty balanced day of test cricket."

England would have been full of optimism when captain Ben Stokes won the toss in the city in which he was born and sent New Zealand in on a green pitch.

But England didn't embrace the

opportunity provided by the toss. The fast bowlers ran in with energy but didn't bowl well individually and didn't execute as a group in the first two sessions.

Stokes let the game wander and England captured only the fortuitous wicket of Ravindra while conceding 89 runs.

The moderate impact of the England quicks was shown by the fact Stokes went to his spinner Bashir after only 29 overs. The pitch hadn't performed quite as England expected.

England captured Latham's wicket after he had made 47 from only 54 balls and New Zealand came out on top after the first session. Brydon Carse bowled a good length ball from over the wicket which went across Latham and took the outside edge as he tried to turn the ball into the leg side.

Ollie Pope, behind the stumps, completed the catch. Pope inherited the job of keeping wicket when Jordan Cox, who was expected to make his test debut in Christchurch, suffered a broken thumb in a training accident. Instead, 31-year-old Jacob Bethell was handed a test debut. He will bat at No. 3 though he hasn't yet scored a first-class century.

Devon Conway fell in the second over of the innings, caught and bowled by Gus Atkinson.

Williamson was out with the total 227-5 and New Zealand slipped to 252-7 before Phillips and Matt Henry added 46 for the eighth wicket. (AP)

It's not possible for Pakistan to play in India, as they're not sending team here: Naqvi

LAHORE, Nov 28: The PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi has made it clear that it is not possible for Pakistan to travel to India for tournaments in future while India continue to refuse to send the team to the neighbouring nation, a situation he termed "unequal."

The fate of the Champions Trophy hangs in balance after BCCI conveyed to ICC its inability to send the team to Pakistan, and the global body has convened a virtual meeting of its executive board members on Friday to take a final decision.

"It is just not possible that while Pakistan keeps on going and playing in India all events the Indian authorities are not willing to send their team to play in Pakistan. We can't have such an unequal situation," Naqvi told reporters last night at the Gaddafi stadium during a visit to inspect the construction work.

Naqvi, however, played it safe regarding the 'Hybrid' model for the Champions Trophy, as earlier he had asserted that PCB would not accept the proposed format.

"All I can assure is whatever happens in the meeting we will come out with good news and decisions which will be accepted by our people," he said.

Naqvi hoped that Jay Shah, who will take over as the ICC Chairman December 5, would take decisions based in the interest of world cricket and all member boards.

"Jay Shah takes charge in December, and I'm sure once he moves from the BCCI to the ICC, he will think about the ICC's benefit, and that's what he should do. "Whenever anyone assumes such a role, he should only consider the interests of that organisation," he said.

There were reports of Pakistan being offered additional financial



incentives to accept the Hybrid model, but Naqvi remained non-committal.

Naqvi said all such decisions

and the outcome of the ICC meeting will be conveyed to the Pakistan government, which will take a final call. (PTI)

Jindal on Pant's departure from DC: 'We were on different wavelengths'

NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Delhi Capitals co-owner Parth Jindal revealed that the franchise did everything possible to retain Rishabh Pant ahead of the IPL mega auction but the star wicketkeeper batter was on "different wavelengths" on how to operate the team, leading to his departure.

The Capitals did not retain Pant and the left-hander was sold to Lucknow Super Giants in the recent mega auction for ₹ 27 crore, becoming the most expensive player in the history of the IPL.

"It was just a different philosophy of how he wanted the franchise to operate and how us - the owners - wanted the franchise to operate. That's what caused it (Pant's departure). There's nothing to do with money," Jindal told 'ESPNCricinfo'.

"Money's never been an issue for Rishabh. And money's never been an issue for us. I guess the three of us (Kiran Grandhi, Jindal and Pant) were on different wavelengths."

"He took a call at the end of it. We tried everything, but he decided eventually that it was time to move on," added Jindal.

So, what were those points of differences? "It means the way the franchise is to run, the decisions of the franchise, those kinds of things. There were certain expectations that he had and there were certain expectations we had. I can just say that we couldn't align on these things," he said.

Jindal also accepted that the expectations of the franchise on leadership role did not match with the idea, which was based on long-term ambition of captaining India, Pant had in his mind.

"We gave him some feedback regarding leadership. We told him ways in which he could improve on that, but we were quite clear that we know his ambitions, we know where he wants to go. (PTI)

Inter-Club Bodybuilding Competition on Nov 30

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Nov 28: The 40th Jorhat District Inter-Club Bodybuilding Competition will be held on November 30 at Charigaon Kola Mandir, here. The competition is being organised by the Association of Bodybuilders, Jorhat. The district team will also be selected from this competition to participate in the upcoming State Competition, scheduled for December 7 and 8 at Dhemaji. Interested clubs are requested to contact the mobile number 7896236166 for detailed information, general secretary of the Association of Bodybuilders, Susil Bordoloi informed in a release.