

6 WORLD Arizona voters approve state-level immigration enforcement Boeing's machinists strike over but troubled aerospace giant still faces many challenges 8 NATION Examine facts before jumping to conclusions:BJP to Rahul Mahayuti faced consequences of oppn's fake narrative in LS polls: Ajit Pawar

'Unnecessary controversy over cutting trees for flyover' Sahityarathi statue issue: Himanta targets Hiren Gohain

GUWAHATI, Nov 6: Amidst the ongoing row over cutting century-old trees to give way for a flyover, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has claimed that a section of people have created "unnecessary controversy" to target the developmental works of the government.



the statue and shall remain where it is now. "I feel that these two controversies were created by a few people targeting the developmental works of the government. Those who created the unnecessary controversy that Dighalipukhuri trees would be chopped were not based on facts. We informed the Gauhati High Court accordingly," the CM alleged.

thinker, has been at loggerheads with Sarma and BJP for many years over the government's "communal and anti-people" policies. According to an RTI reply, the Public Works Department, which is looked after by the chief minister, stated that the authorities have decided to go ahead with uprooting the trees surrounding the historic Dighalipukhuri without carrying out any environmental impact assessment and public hearing.

Rakibul Hussain to be interrogated after bypolls

GUWAHATI, Nov 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on Congress MP and former minister Rakibul Hussain alleging that the latter gave government jobs through backdoor during his tenure as minister in the state.

US ELECTIONS Trump reclaims White House with historic win

WASHINGTON, Nov 6: Four years back, Donald J Trump was a sullen man after he lost the presidential race to Joe Biden. And when a violent mob, mostly his supporters, stormed the US Capitol weeks later, it appeared an end to the Republican leader's political career.



leader will return to the White House in January. "It is one of the biggest political comebacks in American history," said Capitol Hill veteran and communication strategist Anang Mittal.

Convention (RNC) in July after remaining in the political wilderness for months following several court cases. In effect, he became the first former President to get the nomination for the top office after being convicted of a felony.

Five civil servants suspended for refusing to join new postings



GUWAHATI, Nov 6: Five Assam Civil Services (ACS) officers have been suspended for refusing to join their new places of posting in the Election Department, according to official orders.

CM addresses by election campaign in Sidli LAC

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday addressed a mammoth gathering of the electioneering campaign at Bengtol playground in Chirang district in support of UPPL candidate, backed by the NDA alliance, Nirmal Kumar Brahma.

Vehicles of MLAs, NSUI chief damaged in Samaguri

NAGAON, Nov 6: At least three vehicles in which two Assam Congress MLAs and NSUI national president travelled were damaged in the bypoll-related violence at Samaguri in Nagaon district, police said on Wednesday.



cles and are investigating the matter. The situation is under control now," Dutta told PTT. Dhubri MP Rakibul Hussain, who was the Samaguri MLA before he was elected to Lok Sabha earlier this year, visited the site and demanded immediate action by the police to nab the culprits.

Court orders registration of FIR against IAS officer for harassing subordinate

NALBARI, Nov 6: A court in Assam's Nalbari district has ordered registration of an FIR against an IAS officer, who is a District Commissioner, for harassing a subordinate officer.



opinion that police have failed in their duty cast upon them by law. An FIR needs to be registered for the allegations filed by the complainant and

proper investigation of this case needs to be carried out as per law," Goswami said in her order. She directed the officer-in-charge of Nalbari police station to register a case, conduct an investigation and submit the final report expeditiously related to Sarma's complaint against Deka.

Meeting held in Karbi Anglong for Chhat Puja celebrations

DIPHU, Nov 6: The District Administration of Karbi Anglong held a meeting at Circuit House Conference Hall here on November 4 to ensure a safe and peaceful Chhat Puja celebration.

tate adequate preparations. Key decisions made in the meeting included arranging for proper lighting, CCTV cameras and fire extinguishers at Chhat Puja Ghats. Additionally, volunteers will be deployed and committees will be instructed to set up Public Announcement systems to guide devotees.

J&K Assembly passes resolution seeking restoration of Art 370

SRINAGAR, Nov 6: The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on Wednesday passed a resolution asking the Centre to hold dialogue with elected representatives for the restoration of the special status of the erstwhile state, prompting protests by BJP members who tore copies of the document and raised slogans against the speaker.

ported the resolution during the voice vote. While many political parties here welcomed the move, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said it was a "half-hearted" effort and the resolution could have been written "in a better way".

Misinformation and disinformation continue to pose serious risks India slams Pakistan for 'peddling lies' on Kashmir

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 6: Slamming Pakistan for "peddling lies and falsehood" and using the UN forum for its "divisive, political agenda" after it raised the Kashmir issue at the UN, India has said that no amount of disinformation and misinformation will change facts on the ground.



yardsticks," he said. Delivering a strong retort in the UN debate after Pakistan raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, Shukla said, "Let me be clear. Real democracies function differently. The people of Jammu and Kashmir turned out in record numbers in the recently concluded free and fair elections."

The Congress leader is part of a delegation of 12 MPs from India for diverse engagements at the UN. Shukla said that guided by the principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', which means the world is one family, India emphasises that information must transcend barriers of nationality, gender, religion or culture.

HT BRIEFS Poachers arrested

GUWAHATI: Four suspected rhino poachers were arrested along with arms and ammunition in Assam's Darrang district, a senior official said. In a post on X, DGP G P Singh said the four were planning to kill a rhino at Orang National Park when they were nabbed on Tuesday night.

Minor raped

GUWAHATI: A 11-year-old girl was repeatedly raped over several months by her neighbour in Guwahati, who has been arrested, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place in the Pandu area of the city.

Public holiday

GUWAHATI: The Assam government on Wednesday declared a public holiday in five assembly constituencies on November 13 when bypolls are scheduled in these seats, according to an official order.

India-US relations will be on a very firm footing with Trump's victory: Scindia

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: India and US relationship will be on "a very firm footing" with Donald Trump returning to the White House, as the cooperation between the two nations extends from environment to technology, space and defence, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said Wednesday.

As a candidate, Trump had spoken of revamping US foreign policy, focusing on 'America First' principles, and has also talked about imposing tariffs on foreign goods, raising concerns in New Delhi.

Scindia's comments, the first by a senior Indian government functionary after Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Trump on his victory, indicate that India remains optimistic that it will continue to have unhindered trade and economic ties with the world's largest economy and strongest military power. The United States is also India's largest trading partner with the total annual trade crossing USD 190 billion.

"I think that the US-India relationship under the stewardship of both Prime Minister Modi and President-Elect Donald Trump will be on a very, very firm footing forward," Scindia said in a video and text interview with PTI.



Scindia said that the India-US relationship in the last decade under Modi has led to huge amounts of trade, economic thrust as well as strategic relationship between the two countries on many global issues.

The election result makes Trump the only US president after Grover Cleveland to serve non-consecutive terms in more than 130 years. Cleveland was both the 22nd and 24th president, serving from 1885 to 1889 and then again from 1893 to 1897.

Noting that India is the world's largest democracy and the US is the world's oldest democracy, Scindia said, "There have been huge parts of intersection between

Indo-US relations".

"Those relationships have taken a much more concrete form in the last decade since Prime Minister Modi has forged an independent relationship with the US. It has resulted in not only a huge amount of trade and economic thrust coming to the fore but also led to a strategic relationship on many global issues," he noted.

Trump has during electioneering alleged that India imposes the highest tariffs on foreign products and vowed to introduce a reciprocal tax if elected to power. This, it was construed, may disrupt the ties between the two nations.

Scindia said that besides cooperation in the field of environment,

technology, and space to defence, India and the US have signed an agreement to set up a semiconductor manufacturing unit that will supply chips to US defence companies.

"We are going to be setting up a fab in India to even supply chips to US defence manufacturing companies. That's the first," he said.

The US State Department has entered into a partnership with India to diversify the global semiconductor ecosystem under the International Technology Security and Innovation (ITSI) fund.

The initial phase of the partnership includes a comprehensive assessment of India's existing semiconductor ecosystem and regulatory framework, as well as workforce and infrastructure needs.

Analysts say that Trump, who had blocked the dispute resolution process of the World Trade Organisation and removed duty-free access under the decade-old Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme in his second term could move more towards protectionism.

He has also threatened not to do business with those who are moving away from the US dollar. (PTI)

Rupee falls 21 paise to all-time low of 84.30 against US dollar

MUMBAI, Nov 6: The rupee depreciated 21 paise to an all-time low of 84.30 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, as the US Dollar index rallied with Donald Trump set to win the US Presidential elections.

A strong greenback against major rivals overseas and unabated foreign fund outflows dented market sentiment, forex traders said.

Market participants also expect the US Fed to announce a rate cut in a meeting scheduled later this week, with further easing by up to 100 basis points projected for 2025.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.23 against the US dollar. During the session, the local currency oscillated between a high of 84.15 and a low of 84.31. It finally settled at 84.30 (provisional), a loss of 21 paise against its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee settled 2 paise higher at 84.09 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on strength in the US Dollar and FII outflows. However, a rise in risk appetite in global markets and a decline in commodity prices may support the rupee at lower levels.

"Any intervention by the RBI may also support the rupee at lower levels. Investors may remain cautious ahead of the FOMC meeting outcome later this week. USD/INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 84.10 to 84.40," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 1.34 per cent higher at 104.80. The index rose after Trump was poised to become the next US President.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 1.43 per cent to USD 74.45 per barrel in futures trade.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex surged 901.50 points, or 1.13 per cent, to close at 80,378.13, while Nifty advanced 270.75 points, or 1.12 per cent, to settle at 24,484.05 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Tuesday, as they offloaded shares worth ₹ 2,569.41 crore, according to exchange data. (PTI)

Sensex rallies 901 pts, Nifty settles near 24,500 as Trump win stokes up IT, pharma shares

MUMBAI, Nov 6: Stock markets rallied more than 1 per cent on Wednesday with benchmark Sensex soaring 901 points on heavy buying in IT and pharma shares amid Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential polls.

Extending its gains to the second day, the BSE Sensex jumped 901.50 points or 1.13 per cent to settle at 80,378.13. During the day, it soared 1,093.1 points or 1.37 per cent to 80,569.73.

The NSE Nifty soared 270.75 points or 1.12 per cent to close at 24,484.05.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys jumped over 4 per cent each. HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Adani Ports, Larsen & Toubro, Maruti and Reliance Industries were also among big gainers.

Titan, IndusInd Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Axis Bank and HDFC Bank were the laggards.

"Global markets experienced a relief rally following the US election results, reducing political uncertainty with Trump securing a strong mandate. This has led to strong risk-on sentiments, driven by expectations of tax cuts and increased government spending,"

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said.

The domestic buying was broad-based, with IT leading the charge in anticipation of a rebound in IT spending in the US.

"BFSI spending in the US has improved as per the IT Q2 result which is positive for Indian players," Nair added.

The BSE midcap gauge jumped 2.28 per cent and smallcap index zoomed 1.96 per cent.

All sectoral indices ended higher. The BSE IT soared 4.04 per cent, while teck (3.37 per cent), realty (2.68 per cent), industrials (2.66 per cent), services (2.53 per cent) and utilities (2.44 per cent) were among the major gainers.

A total of 3,000 stocks advanced while 968 declined and 95 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, Tokyo settled higher while Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were quoting in the green. Wall Street ended sharply higher on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 2 per cent to USD 74.02 a barrel. (PTI)

CCEA approves infusion of ₹ 10,700 cr equity in state-owned FCI for working capital



NEW DELHI, Nov 6: The government on Wednesday approved infusion of ₹ 10,700 crore as equity in state-owned FCI for working capital requirement this fiscal.

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is the government's nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains.

"The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved infusion of equity of ₹ 10,700 crore for working capital in financial year 2024-25 in Food Corporation of India (FCI)," an official statement said.

The decision is aimed at bolstering the agricultural sector and en-

suring the welfare of farmers nationwide.

"This strategic move shows the government's steadfast commitment to supporting farmers and fortifying India's agrarian economy," it added.

The FCI started its journey in 1964 with authorised capital of Rs 100 crore and equity of ₹ 4 crore.

The operations of FCI increased manifolds resulting in increase of authorised capital from ₹ 11,000 crore to ₹ 21,000 crore in February 2023.

The equity of FCI was ₹ 4,496 crore in 2019-20 fiscal, which was increased to ₹ 10,157 crore in 2023-24.

Cyrus trying to break Tata Grp? Tata's no comments more thunderous than statement: Biography Author

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: Ratan Tata's 'no comments' was more 'thunderous' than any statement when asked if he shared the apprehensions of some Tata group veterans who felt that Cyrus Mistry was trying to break up the conglomerate, according to the author of biography of the late industrialist, Thomas Mathew.

Tata had fully supported late Mistry as his successor in 2012, despite having second thoughts over the suitability of the latter at the end of the first year of 'parallel running' as Chairman designate and his replacement as Chairman of Tata Sons in 2016 was due to "an ethical and a moral issue", coupled with performance issue, Mathew told PTI Video in an interview.

In the biography 'Ratan Tata A Life', some Tata group veterans have been quoted airing their apprehensions about Mistry trying to break up the salt-to-software conglomerate based on his style of functioning as the Chairman and the

past record of the Shapoorji Pallonji (SP) Group's acquisition of shares in Tata Sons. "There are two schools of thought. Some Tata veterans say the way SP Group accumulated the shares of Tata Sons did not forebode well," the former bureaucrat said when asked about the issue.

According to the Tata veterans, Mathew said, "The way they (SP Group) went about accumulating the shares was frowned upon by JRD, that is to put it mildly and he was very, very uncomfortable... (in a) clandestine manner, so to speak, SP Group acquired the shares exploiting, they say, the weak moments of the weak family members. It's not mine. This is all Tata veterans say."

As per the book, the SP Group had increased its stake in Tata Sons gradually to around 18 per cent acquiring shares of the company that JRD had given to his siblings.

Mathew, whose long association with Tata began in 1995, when he

was secretary to the then Industry Minister, said, "Now the other supporting narrative is that when Mr Tata was the chairman of Tata Sons, the directors in Tata Sons were also directors in the large companies of the Tatas. There were about 15-20 directorships in which these people were the link between the Tata Trusts, Tata sons and the Tata companies."

He further said, "That (practice of having Tata Sons directors as board members in other Tata companies) was largely absent during the time of Cyrus Mistry. In fact, he was almost exclusively, except for two people, in (the boards of) the largest (Tata) companies. So they said excluding the Tata veterans from the major companies (boards) also did not forebode well."

Attributing to the Tata veterans, Mathew said, "They say it (breaking up the Tata group) was not put to test but it could have been the motive." When asked if Tata shared the

same apprehensions of the Tata veterans, he said, "Mr Tata was a very reticent man, he was a very kind man. He would not comment on it. But to me, his absence of a comment is more thunderous than a comment... I said, 'Sir, do you think that is true? No comments (Tata responded)'. I think that's more thunderous than him making any statement."

Mathew, however, asserted that the 'replacement' of Mistry as Chairman of Tata Sons in 2016 was due to "an ethical and a moral issue, and second is a performance issue".

Late Mistry was chosen in 2011 after a global search by a selection committee to succeed Tata -- who retired as Chairman of Tata Sons in December 2012 -- with his full endorsement, despite apprehensions and reservations expressed by group veterans. For a year Mistry was the "Chairman designate" before he took over as Chairman of Tata Sons after Tata's retirement. (PTI)

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Sahityarathi statue issue

Lamb Road," Sarma said. He said that a team from Haryana had come to study if the trees can be translocated with plans to relocate them on the Brahmaputra bank near the DC Bungalow in the city, giving the woods a new lease of life.

"A section of the people love trees. Another section wants that the flyover remains incomplete halfway and election happens in the meantime," Sarma claimed.

The flyover is scheduled to be operational by 2026 when the next assembly polls in the state are due.

The chief minister defended the government's decision to cut trees in other areas to construct flyovers and other developmental projects.

"We have to cut some trees while carrying out developmental works. If we don't want that, then we have to issue strict orders that no trees will be allowed to cut. Then people will not be able to construct their houses also. Every house in Guwahati has been built by cutting trees. You (media) cannot run after each and every tree," he added. The CM said that in entire India, big highway projects are being implemented and if one tree is cut, 10 are planted, and that is the norm everywhere.

"One section of people will move everywhere to find out where trees have been cut. They don't want developmental works to take place," he claimed.

As per popular legend, the Dighalipukhuri was constructed by King Bhagadatta, who led the Kauravas in the Battle of Kurukshetra in the Mahabharata, during the 'swayamvar' of his daughter Bhanumati.

Historically, the pond was used by the Ahoms as a naval dockyard, especially during the 1671 'Battle of Saraighat' on Brahmaputra.

Its access to Brahmaputra was eventually closed during colonial times. The connecting portion was further filled, on which the Circuit House was built and later the Gauhati High Court came up.

Besides, several other landmark structures like the state museum, district library, Rabindra Bhawan, Reserve Bank of India, a part of Cotton University (first college of Northeast), Handique Girls' College (first women's college of NE), Nabin Chandra Bordoloi Hall and district courts. (PTI)

CM addresses by election

partners - BJP, UPPL, and AGP parties have been jointly working towards the welfare and developmental initiatives for the upliftment of the common people since they were voted to power.

"Today, people across the communities are coming forward to extend support to the UPPL candidate, backed by the NDA alliance, Nirmal Kumar Brahma in the Sidli LAC byelections," said Sarma while adding, "People have faith in UPPL and NDA alliance, and accordingly NDA candidate's winning is clear as a huge gathering is seen in Sidli LAC." CM stated that the government of Assam and the government of BTR have so far initiated and implemented various missions like Mission Vasundhara, and Mission Bwiswmuthi through which common people are benefitted across the region.

On being asked about the opposition's remarks, Sarma answered that the Congress and other opposition parties are now becoming irrelevant to the citizens in the region in today's juncture as common masses across the communities are coming forward to extend support to the NDA alliance candidates.

He clarified that the opposition can only create chaos amongst the citizens, but can't do any development and welfare of the people.

He firmly said that the UPPL and NDA alliance partners are united to render services for the well-being of society. CM Sarma was accompanied by CEM of BTR, Pramod Boro, state cabinet ministers, Urkhao Gwra Brahma, Nandita Gorlosa, Ashok Singhal, and Jogen Mahan.

CM also addressed an election campaign at Bongaigaon in support of the AGP candidate, backed by the NDA alliance, Deepimoyee Choudhury in the presence of AGP and NDA alliance leaders.

Vehicles of MLAs

workers at Bogamukh village in the Samaguri constituency. Earlier also, several incidents of clashes and scuffles took place between the workers of Congress and BJP after the bypoll schedule was announced in Samaguri. Bypoll will take place in Dholai (SC), Sidli (ST), Bongaigaon, Behali and Samaguri assembly constituencies as these seats fell vacant with the representatives of them winning the recent Lok Sabha elections.

The Congress named Tanzil Hussain, son of the Dhubri MP, as the party's candidate for the Samaguri seat against Dipul Ranjan Sarma of BJP.

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

Trump reclaims White House

lot of emotional support from his die-hard supporters. "He is a survivor," said Mittal.

As his victory appeared imminent, Trump addressed his supporters in Florida with a message: "We are going to help our country heal." As he eyed the White House, Trump carefully crafted his campaign messages promising to rebuild the economy and rid the US of illegal immigrants.

All along the campaign trail, Trump maintained an aggressive rhetoric against his Democratic challenger Harris that many political commentators believed found a lot of traction among middle-class voters.

The rising inflation and price rise were identified by experts as two of the key issues impacting the lives of a large number of Americans. During the 2016 primary, Trump defeated more than a dozen rivals to win the Republican nomination. While he lost the popular vote, Trump defeated former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the general election by winning a majority of Electoral College votes. His campaign slogan was "Make America Great Again". (PTI)

Rakibul Hussain to be

by-elections," he said. Byelections in five assembly constituencies—Dholai, Samaguri, Behali, Bongaigaon, and Sidli became due following the elections of five legislators in the lower house of the parliament in this year's Lok Sabha polls. Except in Samaguri, where Congress heavyweight Rakibul Hussain has been winning since 2001, the rest of the four seats are with the BJP-led alliance. According to pollsters, due to the dominance of Muslim voters in the Samaguri seat, Congress has an edge over the BJP in this seat.

The BJP fielded candidates for three seats—Dholai, Samaguri and Behali. Dipul Ranjan Sarma has been given ticket in Samaguri while Diganta Ghatowar and Nihar Ranjan Das will fight for the BJP in Behali and Dholai assembly segments respectively.

BJP's two allies—Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) are contesting polls in Bongaigaon and Sidli assembly constituencies.

CM Sarma claimed that the BJP and its allies will easily win in the four assembly constituencies that are heading for the bypolls; however, the ruling dispensation will face competition in one seat.

The chief minister kickstarted his campaign for the by-elections in Assam on Tuesday from the Dholai assembly constituency in the Cachar district of Barak valley region.

He said, "We will comfortably win four seats and there is a contest in one seat. However, there are possibilities that the BJP and our allies can win all five assembly seats in the upcoming by-elections."

Court orders registration

duty and left the EVM receiving venue midway. The court noted that Sarmah approached the Nalbari SP, followed by an email to the DGP, for registering the case, but her grievance was not addressed and left with no option, she approached the Gauhati High Court, which directed the jurisdictional court to take up the matter.

"On perusal of the complaint carefully and also, after detailed hearing, it appears to me that some incident took place on the night of the incident and there are some serious allegations against the accused person which are of cognizable nature," the order said. It further said that an FIR is the first step against any sort of criminal activity as it triggers the criminal justice machinery of the state into motion.

As such registration of an FIR is mandatory, and the police is duty bound to make a proper investigation and proceed as per the result of the investigation done, Goswami said.

"...it appears that though police has initiated one enquiry but even after expiry of 5 months, there is no result disclosed of the enquiry. This delay is totally unwarranted against the set principle of law and also, against the direction issued by Hon'ble Supreme Court," she added.

Stating that it is the right of the complainant to get her FIR registered, the judge said the officer concerned is duty-bound to register the case on the basis of information disclosing a cognizable offence.

Sarmah in her complaint to the police in May alleged that Deka "abused" her "verbally" when she had stated that unavailability of labour at 1 am to carry election materials was beyond her control. (PTI)

Meeting held in Karbi

ensure a peaceful celebration. The meeting concluded with a call for close cooperation between officials and Chhat Puja organisers to avoid any untoward incident.

J&K Assembly passes

aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir," the resolution added. BJP members, including the leader of opposition Sunil Sharma, opposed the resolution, saying it was not part of the listed business.

"We reject the resolution. The Business given to us was that the discussion is on the LG's address," he said.

The LoP said there is a rat race among parties here but they all know nothing is going to happen.

The Act has been passed by the biggest temple of democracy in the country (Parliament), he added. Sharma's comments agitated the treasury benches and noisy scenes were witnessed in the House with most of the NC and BJP members on their feet. BJP members tore copies of the resolution and threw the pieces into the well of the House. Amidst the din, MLA Langate, Sheikh Khurshed, tried to rush to the well but was prevented by the assembly marshals. NC members raised slogans that the resolution be passed, while Congress MLA from Bandipora, Nizamuddin Bhat, said the BJP members have done dishonour to the House and violated rules.

However, the BJP members continued to raise slogans against the resolution.

In Jammu, the local unit of the BJP staged a protest to denounce the passing of the resolution.

Led by party president Sat Paul Sharma, a group of BJP members set ablaze a joint effigy of the chief minister and his deputy amid slogan-shouting. (PTI)

India slams Pakistan

by digital fraud. Digital fraud encompasses a range of deceptive activities conducted online that exploit financial, personal or business information, posing significant threats to individuals, businesses and national security," he said, adding that to counter these challenges, India has made significant strides in expanding digital access and combating digital fraud.

On UN peacekeeping, Shukla said India is concerned about the safety of the UN peacekeepers in the field. "We underscore the importance of this critical issue, and urge the Department of Global Communications (DGC) to work together with field missions and tailor its communication strategies accordingly to address it," he said.

Maintaining the peacekeeping websites in local languages would be a useful step to further broaden the outreach of this information, he opined. (PTI)

The inaugural water festival is set to drive sustainability & community involvement

Jal Utsav campaign launched in Dima Hasao

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Nov 6: The Jal Utsav campaign was ceremonially launched on Wednesday in N Leikul village by Maitreyi Mishra, the state nodal officer of NITI Aayog. This event marks a significant milestone as it is Dima Hasao's first initiative of its kind, aimed at promoting sustainable water management and usage in rural areas.

Organised by the Public Health Engineering Department under the Jatinga Valley Aspirational Development Block, the launch highlighted the importance of water conservation and community engagement in sustainable practices.

In her address, Maitreyi Mishra, state nodal, ADP/ABP (Aspirational District Programme/Aspirational Block Programme) from Madhya Pradesh, NITI Aayog, spoke about the N Leikul tribal community, commending their resilience and unity. She expressed admiration for their way of life and emphasised the critical role that water plays in their development.

District commissioner Simanta Kr Das also addressed the gathering, encouraging the local community, especially women, to take the lead in demonstrating sustainable water practices. He highlighted the fortunate situation of access to natural water from a nearby stream and stressed the importance



of responsible usage through the 5R's of sustainable water practices – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Restore, and Respect.

The local Member of the Autonomous Council from Jatinga constituency, Flaming Rupsi, expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for designating N Leikul as the inaugural site for the Jal Utsav campaign. In his statement, Rupsi also thanked Assam's chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, and the local government for their continuous support and dedication to the district's development.

According to data from the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), there are

currently 34,536 functional household tap connections out of a total of 40,049 rural households in the region. This initiative aims to further increase access to safe drinking water while promoting conservation efforts.

The Jal Utsav campaign represents a comprehensive approach to water management in Assam, promoting community engagement and environmental stewardship. It is a beacon of hope for sustainable development, ensuring that future generations have access to one of life's most essential resources.

Jal Utsav is a festival dedicated to promoting water conservation and sustainability. Organised by NITI Aayog in partnership

with the National Jal Jeevan Mission and the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the festival spans 15 days and is celebrated across 20 states in India. The event aims to engage communities in preserving and protecting water resources through activities such as cleaning water assets, tree planting, student awareness campaigns, and community pledges.

The festival includes symbolic activities like 'Jal Bandhan', where local leaders tie a sacred thread on water assets to signify their commitment to water preservation. Participants also take the 'Jal Utsav Oath', committing to sustainable water practices.

Inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, Jal Utsav aims to foster collective responsibility towards water conservation, ensuring water security for future generations.

Present at the inaugural launch were Flaming Rupsi, MAC Jatinga constituency; Partho Johari, secretary, NCHAC; Prabhakar Pegu, project director DRDA cum nodal officer, JIM, NCHAC; Javin D Changan, additional director of Agriculture; Raghuvaraj Vaidhya, ACS, assistant commissioner; Riji Kachari, SDIPRO Maibang; Nabajyoti Saikia, executive engineer (PHED) Haflong; Dr L Ralte, senior medical & health officer i/c Mahur BPHC; Jacob Suchiang, BMC Education; Kim Hengna, DPM, ASRLM, and others.

BTC hosts consultative meeting on vision document

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 6: The 3-day consultative meeting on the vision document, titled 'Envisioning a Prosperous, Happy, and Peaceful Future for the Communities of BTR', took place from Monday to Wednesday, at the BTCLA Auditorium Hall, Kokrajhar. This significant programme marked a milestone in the BTC's efforts to outline a collective vision for peace, prosperity, and unity for all its communities.

Participating in the meeting, BTC CEM Pramod Boro reinforced the BTR government's commitment to creating a region where peace, happiness, and justice are accessible to all. He highlighted BTC's vision of inclusivity, ensuring that development initiatives are crafted to benefit every community in BTR. He also emphasised the council's commitment to governance that considers local needs and aspirations. BTC EM Dharmarayan Das echoed this sentiment, emphasising BTC's dedication to peacebuilding and ensuring that the vision document reflects the collective aspirations of the people of BTR.

The consultative meeting was inaugurated on Monday by the Speaker of BTCLA and chairperson of the Vision Document Committee, Khatoram Boro. In his opening address, Speaker Boro stressed the importance of envisioning a shared future for BTR. He acknowledged that each community might have distinct visions but assured participants that the BTC would strive to address these within its capacities. He also noted that the BTC would engage with central and state governments to support needs requiring external intervention.

On the final day, Wednesday, the meeting saw increased participation, with representatives from 31 organisations attending. BTC EM Wilson Hasda addressed the session, emphasising the significance of the vision document process. He underscored that the document is not just an administrative tool but a symbol of hope and aspiration for BTR's communities. He urged participants to stay engaged, as their contributions would help shape a future where all communities thrive together.

Over the three days, representatives from various student bodies and community organisations actively participated in discussions, sharing their perspectives and priorities. The meetings were chaired by joint secretary of BTC and member secretary of the Vision Document Committee, Rintu Ch Boro. The consultations aimed to involve community representatives, stakeholders, and leaders in meaningful dialogues on the aspirations and challenges faced by each community in the BTR.

NE Live Today marks 8th anniv with celebratory event



HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 6: NE Live Today, a prominent web media channel in state, celebrated its 8th anniversary at the Tribal Rest House in Sivasagar recently. Pranjal Pujari, editor-in-chief, welcomed the guests and anchored the programme.

Addressing the gathering, which was presided over by social worker Rama Gogoi, NE Live Today's managing director Dwipen Deka shared that he launched the web channel to inspire young reporters to gain a foothold in journalism. Deka felicitated reporters associated with the group from various parts of the state. In association with Samannay Bor Asom Sanskritik Gosthi, the channel also felicitated Ajit Borthakur, Abonti Borthakur, Bharati Chakrabarty, Manoj Kumar Borthakur, Santosh Dutta, Bonti Gohain Bhuyan, and

Brajen Phukan for their distinguished contributions to society.

Raju Gogoi and Abhyarthana Dutta, assistant legal counsellors of the Sivasagar District Legal Aid Service Authority, spoke on various aspects of criminal offenses under the POCSO Act 2012. Gogoi cautioned media representatives against revealing the names or photos of children who are victims of sexual offenses. They also shed light on provisions under Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita for protecting children from child marriage. Noted educationist Monica Saikia, writer Dipali Bhattacharjya Baruah, journalist Inamul Hazarika, and social worker Binita Saikia Dey praised the role played by the news media.

The event was attended by journalists Suresh Deka, Himangshu Neog, Munna Agarwal, Sahanara Begum, Moni Gogoi, and several others.

NAP to host Mahendra Kumar Baruah Memorial Lecture

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 6: New Art Players (NAP), a leading socio-cultural organisation of the state, will host the eleventh edition of the Mahendra Kumar Baruah Memorial Lecture on November 10, 2024, at its newly constructed cultural complex auditorium. This lecture series, held in memory of the late Mahendra Kumar Baruah, founding president of New Art Players, has been organised since 1988. Lieutenant General Rana Pratap Kalita (retired) will deliver a talk on the topic - How Safe Are We from a Fragile Neighbourhood?. The event will begin at 4:00 pm with a tribute to the dedicated late members of NAP, whose invaluable contributions have helped the organisation reach its current stature despite numerous challenges since 1954. General secretary Rathindra Narayan Bhattacharya has warmly invited the general public, as well as all members of the NAP family, to grace the event with their presence and make it a success.

Assam Rifles organises plantation drive

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 6: Assam Rifles organised a tree plantation drive on Tuesday at Lokra, stated a press release. The event saw enthusiastic participation from both civilians and personnel of Assam Rifles. Together, they planted an impressive 200 saplings, demonstrating their strong commitment to environmental conservation. A total of 175 people participated in the event. The tree plantation drive was conducted with the aim of generating awareness about the importance of environmental conservation to protect our habitat, its flora, and fauna. The event underscored the significance of collective efforts in combating climate change and preserving nature for future generations. Plantation drives by Assam Rifles are a testament to their ongoing commitment to ecological sustainability and their proactive role in fostering a greener and healthier environment.

Book on National Service Scheme released



HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 6: The vice chancellor of Gauhati University, Prof Nani Gopal Mahanta, on Tuesday inaugurated and released a book entitled 'National Service Scheme (NSS)' authored by Dr Bhuvan Ch Chutia, assistant professor & NSS programme officer of Nowgong College (Autonomous), and Dr Ranjan Kumar Kakati, director of Students Welfare & programme coordinator, NSS Cell of Gauhati University, at the closing ceremony of the Gauhati University Youth Festival. The book is designed and prepared as per NEP-2020 to meet the Skill Enhancement Course and Value Added Course curriculum, as noted by both authors. It will also aid NSS units and volunteers in carrying out their regular and special camping activities. The authors also highlighted that they have incorporated best practices and significant activities in line with NEP-2020 within the book. Prof Mahanta described the book as relevant, promising, and beautifully designed—a complete resource that will be valuable for students of both courses. He also extended his best wishes to both authors in his inaugural speech.

'Rashtra Bhakti Utsav' to be held across state from tomorrow

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 6: Shree Hari Satsang Samiti, Purbottar, is set to organise a grand series of 12 'Rashtra Bhakti Utsav' events across various districts of Assam, starting on November 8. The renowned international painter, musician, and multi-talented artist Baba Satyanarayan Maurya, along with his dedicated team, will lead these inspiring programs aimed at fostering a deep sense of patriotism and national pride among the people.

Shree Hari Satsang Samiti, Purbottar Margdarshak, Sri Arun Bajaj, said Baba Maurya's performances are renowned worldwide for their unique fusion of music, art, and motivational speech. His multifaceted talents—as a painter, poet, singer, writer, cartoonist, graphic artist, and eloquent speaker—have captivated audiences across the globe. Through this special 'Rashtra



Bhakti Utsav' series, Baba Maurya will bring his vibrant and evocative musical art to the people of Assam, leaving them deeply moved by his tribute to India's glory and the collective power of patriotism.

Shree Hari Satsang Samiti, Purbottar, an organisation committed to promoting national dedication, the preservation of cultural traditions, and unity among tribal communities, has been organising such

uplifting programs across the region. This initiative also seeks to encourage strong participation in nation-building activities, engaging both urban and rural communities in a collective effort to advance India's growth and unity.

The central objective of the 'Rashtra Bhakti Utsav' is to reignite and intensify the spirit of patriotism in villagers and citizens alike, highlighting the importance of collective involvement in the

country's progress. Baba Maurya's internationally acclaimed performances will offer a unique experience that blends music and painting, creating an immersive artistic celebration of India's rich heritage, said Ajit Jana, president of Shree Hari Satsang Samiti, Purbottar.

In addition to Baba Maurya's artistic displays, each program will feature motivational bhajans and talks on patriotism by the Kathakars (spiritual speakers) of Sri Hari Satsang Samiti, inspiring attendees to feel a renewed sense of pride in their nation.

The 'Rashtra Bhakti Utsav' series will take place in several districts across Assam, including Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Dhemajai, Jorhat, Nagaon, Baksa, Udhulguri, and Tezpur, from November 8 to November 24. A major event will also be held at the ITA Auditorium in Guwahati on November 20.

BTC declares Nov 16 as local holiday for Bodo Literary Day

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 6: The government of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) has declared a local holiday on November 16, 2024 on account of 'Bodo Thunlai Saan' (Bodo Literary Day) across all BTR districts.

A notification from the BTC government has been issued, highlighting the local holiday on the foundation day of Bodo Thunlai Saan.

Notably, the Bodo Thunlai Saan was founded on November 16 in 1952, and since then, the Bodo Thunlai Afad and various Bodo social organisations have observed Bodo Thunlai Saan every year on November 16.

All educational institutions and government offices under en-

trusted departments in BTR shall remain closed on November 16, 2024. All educational institutions in BTR are requested to observe Literary Day within their institutions or attend public functions organised for the observance of Bodo Thunlai Saan (Bodo Literary Day) on that day.

Meanwhile, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), in association with the government of Bodoland Territorial Region, are observing the Bodoland Mohotsav in New Delhi with a two-day program starting on November 15.

Necessary arrangements and preparations are in full swing to host the grand Bodoland Mohotsav event. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, will grace

the event as the chief guest, alongside several union ministers, state ministers, and MPs.

The Mohotsav will showcase cultural demonstrations and traditional Bodo musical instruments, in addition to hosting seminars on various aspects and visions of the Bodo community.

President of Boro Sahitya Sabha, Surath Narzary, stated that preparations and arrangements are well underway for hosting the Bodoland Mohotsav in the national capital, New Delhi. He informed that more than five thousand people are expected to participate in the national event. He has appealed to all sections of society to join the grand celebration of Bodoland Mohotsav.

New principal joins Charing SMD College

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 6: Dr Bidyandana Borkakoty joined Swahid Maniram Dewan College, Charing, as the new permanent principal on Monday after a gap of 12 years. Dr Borkakoty, previously an associate professor at Gargaon College, took over from the principal (in-charge) Dr RK Jha and later held a session with the Governing Body members, teaching, and non-teaching staff. He sought cooperation from all associated with the college, which is named after Charing's great son, freedom fighter Maniram Dewan, who was hanged by the British in 1858.

Biswanath College celebrates Bhasha Gaurav Saptah

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 6: Following the directive of the state government, Biswanath College observed Bhasha Gaurav Saptah on Wednesday at the Arts Building 1, featuring a series of programs. The day-long event, convened by the IQAC cell in collaboration with the magazine department of the students' union, witnessed a strong turnout and enthusiastic participation from the student community.

The college authorities organised a workshop on spelling. Additionally, competitions such as letter writing and essay writing were held among the students. Balin Bhuyan, an assistant professor in the Assamese department, delivered a lecture on 'Assamese Language: Past, Present, and Future', with Leena Hazarika presiding over the session.

Earlier, Dr Chinta Mani Sharma, principal of the college, inaugurated the session, with Dr Naresh Thakur, coordinator of IQAC, conducting the proceedings.

Sudhakantha Divas observed

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, Nov 6: Under the patronage of the Demow Press Club, the 12th Sudhakantha Divas was organised at the Demow Jyoti Bishnu Cultural Building (Demow Public Hall) on Monday and Tuesday. On Monday, the event commenced with the hoisting of the Demow Press Club flag by Umesh Chetia, president of Demow Press Club. Following this, the third annual All-Assam Bhupendra Sangeet Competition took place at the same venue, divided into two groups, with participants coming from various places across Assam.

On Tuesday, the program continued with a drawing competition held in the afternoon at the Demow Jyoti Bishnu Cultural Building. Students from different schools in Demow participated in this event.

Cachar DC advocates for clean water access in JJM project visit

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 6: In a progressive step toward achieving universal access to safe drinking water, Cachar district commissioner Mridul Yadav recently visited the Jal Jeevan Mission project site in Ambicapur Pt. XI village, Silchar block. Accompanied by assistant commissioner Anjali Kumari, DC Yadav assessed the ongoing work at the Rabidaspara Water Supply Scheme, which aims to provide sustainable, purified water to 138 local households.

During his visit, DC Yadav highlighted the need for a reliable, clean water supply, underscoring the health benefits and improved quality of life that the Jal Jeevan Mission promises. He urged project officials to uphold

rigorous standards to ensure a consistent and safe water supply for every household within the scheme.

Further demonstrating his commitment, DC Yadav announced an ambitious initiative to transform the project's Water User's Committee (WUC) into a '5-Star Model'—setting a standard for other WUCs in the district. This model emphasises efficiency, proper maintenance, and operational excellence, promoting long-term sustainability for the benefit of the local community.

DC Yadav's proactive measures and dedication to the Jal Jeevan Mission reflect a strong commitment to safeguarding public health and enhancing water security in Cachar.

Northeast Frontier Railway to train 5,647 apprentices

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 6: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has announced an extensive training initiative for 5,647 apprentice slots across its various divisions and workshops. Under the Apprentices Act 1961, this initiative aims to provide hands-on training in designated trades and, in doing so, is expected to enhance employment opportunities for the youth within the regions under its jurisdiction. This centralised apprentice notification outlines a detailed schedule, with online applications opening on November 4, 2024 and closing on December 3, 2024.

Through this apprenticeship program, NFR aims to provide skill development and practical experience to aspiring professionals in trades such as fitter, welder, electrician, mechanic, and many other technical categories. With the intake of such a large number of apprentices, NFR underscores its commitment to fostering economic growth and empowering individuals with job-



ready skills. During the training process, individuals will benefit from a work stipend throughout the period.

The selection process will be based on a merit system evaluating candidates' academic qualifications, including marks obtained in matriculation and ITI courses. Following a docu-

ment verification stage, successful candidates will join the apprenticeship program, enabling them to build technical skills that meet industry standards and are relevant to today's job market.

The divisions offering training slots include Katihar, Alipurduar, Rangiya, Lumding, and Tinsukia, with each division providing apprenticeships in multiple trades. This initiative reflects NFR's dedication to creating a skilled talent pool that not only meets societal demands but also supports sustainable economic development.

Interested candidates are urged to submit their applications early to avoid last-minute technical issues. Candidates are invited to apply through the official website of NFR's Railway Recruitment Cell (RRC) at www.nfr.indianrailways.gov.in. For more details on the application process, eligibility criteria, and training slots, candidates are advised to visit the official website of the Railway Recruitment Cell, NFR.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The ballot is stronger than the bullet
— Abraham Lincoln

Triumphant Trump

Finally, the U.S. election results are out. The Republican candidate Donald Trump has swept the polls by winning convincingly in the presidential contest as also leading the Republican Party to majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. There is no grey area. It is apparent that the majority of the American voters have shown confidence in this political maverick who has promised to 'Make America Great Again'. For the Democratic Party, the 2024 elections results have brought some uneasy questions to the fore. The party leadership has to go into it after full results come out. Now what is going to be the global impact of the second presidency of Donald Trump? To start with, it has to be mentioned that Donald Trump will take over officially the president's position on January 20, 2025 and so there are 75 days left between now and January 20 next year. During this intervening period, the Biden government will be having a lame duck character, the president will not be able to take any major decision.

In a normal circumstance, there is no problem in such transition. But right now, two major wars are going on in West Asia and Ukraine. The USA is very much involved with both. Its decisions matter. Trump said in his election speech that, if elected, he would stop Ukraine war in 24 hours by talking to Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. This was a rhetoric in an election campaign speech but it will not be surprising if Trump makes some major move on both Israel-Hamas war as also in Ukraine. Even before his takeover officially as the President on January 20, he can informally convey his views to the secretary of state and ask him to proceed accordingly. Good or bad, some change will take place on the two war fronts, possibly even before January 20, 2025. It is apparent that the allies of USA, especially NATO and European Union are panicky.

What about India? To start with, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reasons to be pleased for political reasons but the impact on the Indian economy will be adverse. Modi has some commonality with Trump. They both share same streak of authoritarianism and Islamophobia. But Narendra Modi is a cool person and not a maverick like Trump. India will get some relief in the latest diplomatic tangle with Canada and US agencies. Trump's personal help to Narendra Modi will be of big value at this moment. Then there is the issue of Bangladesh. The head of interim government of Bangladesh Dr. Muhammad Yunus was desperate to meet the Indian PM at UN assembly session in New York in September this year, but Modi avoided. Modi also was waiting for the US elections. The US is India's largest export destination, and received 18 per cent of Indian exports in 2023-24, up from 12 per cent a decade ago. For India maintaining the export growth to USA and even increasing the level are of crucial importance for the domestic industry.

Midday meals and school attendance in Assam

The Midday Meal Scheme, one of India's most prominent social initiatives, was introduced with the goal of improving the nutritional standards of school children and increasing school enrollment and attendance. In Assam, as in many other states, the program plays a crucial role in addressing two major concerns: child malnutrition and low school attendance. Assam, with its predominantly rural population and socio-economic challenges, benefits greatly from such schemes, but the execution of the program is not without its problems. Understanding the link between midday meals and school attendance in Assam requires an exploration of the program's origins, its impact on children and families, and the various obstacles that still hinder its success.

Assam, like much of India, faces high levels of malnutrition among children, particularly in rural areas. Many families live below the poverty line, making it difficult for them to provide sufficient food for their children. For these families, the Midday Meal Scheme serves a dual purpose: it not only provides much-needed nutrition but also reduces the financial burden of feeding their children. In theory, the prospect of receiving a free, nutritious meal should serve as a significant incentive for parents to send their children to school regularly.

For many families, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the midday meal is often the only substantial meal their children receive throughout the day. The nutritional benefits of the scheme are essential for children's physical and cognitive development, directly influencing their ability to learn and perform in school. Improved nutrition leads to better concentration, higher energy levels, and fewer absences due to illness, which theoretically should contribute to better educational outcomes.

The connection between food and education is well documented, and the Midday Meal Scheme in Assam has had a noticeable impact on school attendance, particularly in rural and impoverished communities. In areas where families struggle to meet basic needs, the promise of a free meal can be a powerful motivator for parents to send their children to school.

Studies and reports suggest that the introduction of the scheme has led to an increase in school enrollment and attendance, especially among younger children and girls, who are traditionally more likely to be kept at home for domestic work or to care for siblings. The midday meal offers a tangible benefit to parents, making it easier for them to justify the short-term economic loss of sending their children to school rather than keeping them at home for work.

However, while the program has undeniably contributed to improving attendance, it faces significant challenges that impact its overall effectiveness. One of the key issues is the inconsistent quality and delivery of meals. In many schools across Assam, especially in remote or rural areas, the food provided under the scheme is often of poor quality.

Reports of substandard meals, improper hygiene, and insufficient quantities are not uncommon. This undermines the credibility of the program and may even discourage parents from sending their children to school. When parents perceive that the meals are inadequate or unsafe, they are less likely to see the value in the scheme, and the potential gains in attendance are lost.

There have been instances where food poisoning and related health issues have been reported, creating mistrust among families and communities. Infrastructure also plays a significant role in the success of the midday meal program. Many schools in Assam lack proper kitchens, clean cooking areas, and access to safe drinking water, which further complicates the provision of quality meals. Inadequate storage facilities mean that food often spoils before it can be used, and in some cases, schools are forced to rely on local suppliers who may not adhere to proper hygiene and safety standards.

These infrastructural deficiencies have a direct impact on both the quality of the food provided and the consistency with which meals are served. In areas where these issues are particularly pronounced, the midday meal program may be sporadic, with meals not being provided every day, further reducing its appeal as an incentive for regular school attendance.

The administrative challenges in the implementation of the scheme also pose significant barriers to its success. Corruption, mismanagement, and delays in the disbursement of funds are recurring problems. There are frequent reports of funds being siphoned off or not reaching the schools on time, which leads to delays or cancellations of the meals.

Teachers and school administrators, already overburdened with their primary responsibilities, are often tasked with managing the midday meal program, which can lead to inefficiencies and mismanagement. In some schools, teachers are forced to supervise meal preparation and distribution, diverting their attention from teaching. This added responsibility can negatively impact the quality of education, as teachers struggle to balance their dual roles.

In some cases, caste-based discrimination has also been reported in the implementation of the midday meal scheme in Assam. In certain schools, children from lower-caste or tribal communities are reportedly served meals separately or given poorer quality food compared to their upper-caste counterparts. Such practices not only defeat the purpose of the program but also perpetuate social divisions, discouraging some families from sending their children to school.

While these instances may not be widespread, they represent a significant challenge in ensuring the equitable distribution of resources and benefits under the scheme.

The geography and climate of Assam also present unique challenges to the success of the Midday Meal Scheme. Assam is prone to frequent flooding, particularly in the Brahmaputra Valley, which disrupts school attendance for large parts of the year. During flood seasons, many schools are closed or converted into relief camps, making it impossible for the midday meal program to function effectively.

The infrastructure that supports the program, such as roads for transporting food supplies, is often damaged by floods, leading to delays and interruptions in meal distribution. For families affected by these disasters, sending children to school becomes less of a priority as they focus on rebuilding their homes and livelihoods, further contributing to irregular attendance.

Despite these challenges, the midday meal scheme remains a vital tool in addressing the dual issues of malnutrition and school attendance in Assam. Its potential to improve the lives of children is clear, but for it to reach its full effectiveness, several reforms are necessary.

Improving the quality and consistency of meals must be a top priority. This includes ensuring that all schools have the necessary infrastructure—such as kitchens, clean water, and storage facilities—to prepare and serve nutritious meals safely. Regular inspections and monitoring can help ensure that the meals provided meet the required nutritional standards and are prepared in hygienic conditions.

Training and support for those involved in the preparation and distribution of meals are also crucial. Hiring dedicated staff to manage the midday meal program, rather than relying on teachers, can help alleviate the burden on schools and ensure that the program is run efficiently. Addressing the underlying socio-cultural issues that affect the scheme's implementation is equally important. Efforts must be made to eliminate caste-based discrimination and ensure that all children, regardless of their background, receive equal treatment and benefits under the scheme.

Engaging with local communities to raise awareness about the benefits of the program and dispel any misconceptions can help increase participation and trust in the scheme. In flood-prone areas, contingency plans should be developed to ensure that children continue to receive meals even when schools are closed due to natural disasters. This could involve setting up alternative distribution centers or providing food packets to affected families. Moreover, improving the overall resilience of the region's infrastructure, such as building flood-resistant schools and roads, could help mitigate the impact of natural disasters on the education system and the midday meal program.

In conclusion, the Midday Meal Scheme in Assam has made significant strides in improving school attendance and addressing child malnutrition, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged communities. However, its success is hampered by a range of challenges, including poor infrastructure, administrative inefficiencies, and socio-cultural barriers. To fully realize the potential of the program, these issues must be addressed through better planning, oversight, and community engagement. Only then can the scheme truly fulfill its mission of providing both nourishment and education to Assam's children, helping to break the cycle of poverty and educational deprivation in the state. (The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-Magazine SAM-PROTIK. He can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com)

Awami League believes a victorious Trump will bring back Hasina

By: Saleem Samad

With very little or no chances of Sheikh Hasina returning back to power, the Awami League is now pinning hopes on Donald Trump. Sheikh Hasina's supporters have even started warning those backing the Yunus administration that they will soon face the consequences. However, Bangladesh doesn't enjoy a spot in the US priority list which could produce a sudden policy shift.

Most Awami League leaders, sympathizers, sycophants, cheerleaders, and partisan journalists who fled abroad or kept a low profile are upbeat about the US presidential election.

It would surprise many what and why an election held in another continent has to do with Bangladesh or who will be the winner—the Democrats or the Republicans!

Republicans have no stake in Bangladesh, but the Democrats, indeed, have some in the interim government and especially a very friendly relationship with Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus.

The Biden administration was able to take over some offshore oil and gas exploration in the Bay of Bengal after the Yunus administration took charge of the "Naya Sarkar" (new government).

Trump in a post shared on X wrote: "I strongly condemn the barbaric violence against Hindus, Christians, and other minorities who are getting attacked and looted by mobs in Bangladesh."

Yunus' journey with the Democrats began when Hillary Clinton met him through his former American wife in the United States. Both Bill Clinton and Hillary were spellbound to hear the microcredit program of Yunus for the poor. He was convinced that the poor could be trusted for repayment of cash loans. Yunus affirmed the Clintons that "they [the poor] are good borrowers".

When Clinton became Arkansas governor for the second time, banks for the poor were launched and proved successful with jobless Black communities in certain areas. Now there are hundreds of organizations in the United States, which extend microcredit to the poor, thus benefitting millions of them.

Since then, Yunus has become a 'blue-eyed boy' of the Democrats. He was ordained with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President

Barack Obama. Later, he was awarded the prestigious Congressional Gold Medal.

On Friday (November 1), US presidential candidate Donald Trump in a post shared on X wrote: "I strongly condemn the barbaric violence against Hindus, Christians, and other minorities who are getting attacked and looted by mobs in Bangladesh, which remains in a total state of chaos."

He reiterated that the Republicans will "protect Hindu Americans against the anti-religion agenda of the radical left" and "we will also strengthen our great partnership with India and my good friend, Prime Minister Modi".

This message squarely embarrassed the Yunus administration. Soon after a series of violent incidents, he swung into action which reduced the racial tension between the radicalized Muslims and the Hindus. The Hindu community leaders in collaboration with the civil and police administration have successfully held the largest Durga Puja festival all over the country, largely without further hindrances.

However, Trump's statement on X, formerly known as Twitter, seems to have given fresh impetus to the Awami League leaders and sympathizers who have openly lent their support to Trump in the world's most talked about presidential race.

Trump in his message has raised two key crucial issues: the persecution of the Hindus in Bangladesh and an all-out praise of his "good friend Prime Minister Modi".

If Trump enters the coveted Oval Office again, the Awami League supporters believe there is a hope that Yunus will no more be running the affairs of Bangladesh by the end of this year. Amid this wishful thinking, the Awami League sycophants think that Modi, who is walking on a tight rope, will help the exiled Sheikh Hasina return to Bangladesh and retake her kingdom.

But it doesn't stop there, as their wish list also says that all the leaders and protesters of the Monsoon Revolution will either flee for their safety or land in prison to be prosecuted for treason. Of course, Yunus will also face treason charges, with his old cases (which the present government has quashed) also reopened. He would certainly be awarded capital punishment and publicly hanged at the Padma Bridge.

The Awami League sympathizers living abroad and others who have

been keeping a low profile have taken to social media and threatening those they feel as enemies of the Awami League and Hasina, warning them to face the consequences of supporting the Yunus administration.

What will happen if Kamal Harris wins? There is a common belief that the fate of Awami Leaguers will be sealed forever. Meanwhile, the Bangladeshi diaspora and those living in the country as a whole are divided over the support for Kamala and Trump.

Two things have to be remembered. Usually, the US foreign policy does not change overnight, like in South Asian countries, unless the issue in question is a challenge to national security and a threat to American citizens, said Ambassador Humayun Kabir who was in Bangladesh's mission (2007-2009) in Washington DC.

Amid the humanitarian crisis in Gaza or Russia's invasion of Ukraine and other global issues, Bangladesh is not on the priority agenda to be discussed at the US State Department and policies fine-tuned, Kabir concluded his argument.

Whoever wins on the November 5 US presidential election, Washington DC will continue to hold its patience for a transition to democracy in the event of a free, fair and inclusive polls being held in Bangladesh. Until then, the impatient Awami League's leaders and cheerleaders will have to hold their breath to return to power through a third-party intervention.

There is no possibility of Awami League launching a nationwide anti-government movement. The leaders and their sycophants are busy protecting their looted stash of cash, said political historian and writer Mohiuddin Ahmad.

The Awami League and Chhatra League are demoralized political forces and have lost steam for organizing an effective anti-government movement. They will not be able to stand in a face-off with the tens of thousands of student activists who toppled their 15 years of kleptocratic regime, remarked Ahmad. (The author is an award-winning independent journalist based in Bangladesh. A media rights defender with the Reporters Without Borders (@RSF_inter). Recipient of Ashoka Fellowship and Hellman-Hammett Award. He could be reached at saleemamad@hotmail.com; Twitter (X): @saleemamad)

RSS leaders keenness to discuss national issues with Rahul Gandhi, has no basis

By: Arun Srivastava

Saffron ecosystem apparently has been pursuing two sets of parallel strategies towards Rahul Gandhi. While proponent of one intent is as usual Narendra Modi who has revived his old style of accusation against him and is not tired of saying that ghost of hatred has entered today's Congress; spirit of patriotism has died in today's Congress; Congress is run by the people of Tukde Tukde Gang and Congress means lies, deception and dishonesty; on the other, the top leaders of RSS are desperate to meet Rahul Gandhi and discuss the prevailing political situation with him.

These two strategies however have one common element. The fear of resurgence of Congress. The BJP leaders may describe Rahul as serial vacationer, the fact cannot be denied that they are quite nervous. The leadership might have won the Haryana election and tried to send the message that Modi miracle still works, but in their hearts they know that, the BJP would have been officially the looser. If some last minute malpractices were not resorted by the BJP.

Nevertheless the design of the RSS is more treacherous. RSS leaders pretending to be upset with Rahul Gandhi not inclined to meet them, is part of their well planned scheme to malign their critics. It is a known fact how they maligned the image of almost all the national leaders and tried to usurp their credibility for the promotion of their fundamentalist right-wing politics and philosophy. The people of India are yet to forget their conspiracy to malign and use Jay Prakash Narayan for their gains in earlier years.

On the pretext of extending support to JP's fight against Indira Gandhi's autocratic rule, they did not hesitate in describing him as supporter of their principles and politics. In 1974, Jayaprakash Narayan too had given up his initial stand towards RSS and joined hands with it to topple Indira Gandhi.

RSS leadership only for the sake of exploiting his political stature and credibility had promised to give up its communalism and welcome Muslims into its fold for the time being. The then RSS chief Deoras had committed but in 1977 RSS reneged on this promise and they even went up to breaking Janata Party on the issue of double membership later.

Adopting a public posture that it wanted to meet Rahul, but he was not willing, is simply a facade to gain people's sympathy and malign Rahul. RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale's statement has not come as a surprise. For RSS leaders who have mastered the art of speaking lies and distort the facts, this is



not a big issue. If Hosabale or his boss Mohan Bhagwat were really serious about meeting him, they should have approached him.

Will Hosabale place in public domain whether at any stage the RSS leadership expressed officially any desire to meet Gandhi? Have they asked for an appointment with him? Will Hosabale put the fact that Rahul has ever refused their invitation?

RSS is built on the foundation of fascist ideas on the lines of Musolini and Hitler. Obviously it would be naive to believe that they have moral conviction to speak truth. Why the hell Rahul should express its desire to meet the RSS leaders when he strongly feels that the RSS is the fountain head of all the ills and vices the country? He had already declared RSS as his enemy number one.

Hosabale and his team of RSS leaders have been ridiculing his slogan of Mohabbat Ki Dukan. They will certainly resort to mocking him, as their launching of politics of killings and lynching of innocent Muslims have exposed them and their claim of being nationalist.

The RSS leadership is scared of losing support in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. Well placed sources maintain only recently a group of state level cadres have posed a serious question to Bhagwat and Hosabale: why are they reluctant to face and discuss the economic issues the people were facing? Will only the slogan of Hindutva prove to be panacea to all the basic problems the people were facing?

Nonetheless the primary reason that forced Bhagwat and Hosabale to indulge in the game of blaming Rahul, is the feedback from the ground level that even trusted cadres were deserting the organization while new faces were reluctant to join it? It is also said that the RSS and BJP have been manipulating and feeding fake membership number.

Unable to find dedicated cadres, it has started appealing the new entrants by offering coveted posts and financial assis-

sources and benefits under the scheme.

The geography and climate of Assam also present unique challenges to the success of the Midday Meal Scheme. Assam is prone to frequent flooding, particularly in the Brahmaputra Valley, which disrupts school attendance for large parts of the year. During flood seasons, many schools are closed or converted into relief camps, making it impossible for the midday meal program to function effectively.

The infrastructure that supports the program, such as roads for transporting food supplies, is often damaged by floods, leading to delays and interruptions in meal distribution. For families affected by these disasters, sending children to school becomes less of a priority as they focus on rebuilding their homes and livelihoods, further contributing to irregular attendance.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT
Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Despite these challenges, the midday meal scheme remains a vital tool in addressing the dual issues of malnutrition and school attendance in Assam. Its potential to improve the lives of children is clear, but for it to reach its full effectiveness, several reforms are necessary.

Improving the quality and consistency of meals must be a top priority. This includes ensuring that all schools have the necessary infrastructure—such as kitchens, clean water, and storage facilities—to prepare and serve nutritious meals safely. Regular inspections and monitoring can help ensure that the meals provided meet the required nutritional standards and are prepared in hygienic conditions.

Training and support for those involved in the preparation and distribution of meals are also crucial. Hiring dedicated staff to manage the midday meal program, rather than relying on teachers, can help alleviate the burden on schools and ensure that the program is run efficiently. Addressing the underlying socio-cultural issues that affect the scheme's implementation is equally important. Efforts must be made to eliminate caste-based discrimination and ensure that all children, regardless of their background, receive equal treatment and benefits under the scheme.

Engaging with local communities to raise awareness about the benefits of the program and dispel any misconceptions can help increase participation and trust in the scheme. In flood-prone areas, contingency plans should be developed to ensure that children continue to receive meals even when schools are closed due to natural disasters. This could involve setting up alternative distribution centers or providing food packets to affected families. Moreover, improving the overall resilience of the region's infrastructure, such as building flood-resistant schools and roads, could help mitigate the impact of natural disasters on the education system and the midday meal program.

In conclusion, the Midday Meal Scheme in Assam has made significant strides in improving school attendance and addressing child malnutrition, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged communities. However, its success is hampered by a range of challenges, including poor infrastructure, administrative inefficiencies, and socio-cultural barriers. To fully realize the potential of the program, these issues must be addressed through better planning, oversight, and community engagement. Only then can the scheme truly fulfill its mission of providing both nourishment and education to Assam's children, helping to break the cycle of poverty and educational deprivation in the state. (The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-Magazine SAM-PROTIK. He can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com)

Nursery and soil management practices for raising rabi vegetable crops

By: Dr. Manjurma Gogoi & Dr. Neethi Baruah

A vegetable nursery is a place for raising or handling of young vegetable seedlings until they are ready for more permanent planting. At vegetable nursery vegetable seedlings are grown before transplanting them in the main plots. Some vegetable plants cannot grow directly by sowing the seed into the plot. For example, for vegetable plants such as tomato, eggplant, knolkhol, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower etc. seedling first needs to be raised and then transplanted in the plot.

Vegetables such as Tomato, Brinjal, Chillies, Capsicum, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Knolkhol (kohlrabi), Chinese cabbage, Onions, Tomatoes, Eggplant, Cabbage, Brussels sprouts, Sprouting broccoli, Endive, Chicory (red and green), Celery etc. are best vegetables raised in the nursery bed. The nursery must be near the main garden to avoid damage to seedlings during transplanting. The water source should also be near for irrigation. The nursery bed must be protected from strong winds and should never be located on a slope to avoid erosion of seeds and nutrients; it should face east-west direction and never be put in a waterlogged area.

Care must be taken during the early stages of growth of vegetables. They have to be protected from adverse temperatures, heavy rain, drought, wind and varieties of pests and disease. If small seeds of vegetables are sown directly in the field, germination is poor and the young plant grows very slowly and requires lots of time to mature. Also, there can be less time in terms of the available season for full development in the field. To overcome these problems, vegetable plants are grown in a nursery before being transplanted in the main field.

Site Selection is an important consideration for nursery management. The area selected must be well-drained, and free from waterlogging. There should be proper sunlight. The nursery must be near the water supply so that irrigation can be easy. The area must be well protected from pet and wild animals.

Raising of vegetable seedlings needs fertile and

healthy soil. For nursery the soil must be loam to sandy loam, loose and friable, rich in organic matter content, and well-drained.

For raising vegetable seedling the soil should be neither acidic nor basic. Soil pH should be near 7.0. Soil preparation needs deep cultivation of nursery land either by soil turning, plowing by spade, and subsequent 2 to 3 hoeing with a cultivator. Remove all the clods, stones, and weeds from the field and level the land. Mix 2kg well rotten and fine FYM and about 500 gm vermicompost per square meter of soil.

Soil solarization for about 4 to 5 weeks on the ploughed soil covered with the plastic tunnel is better. Drenching of the soil should be done 15-20 days earlier of sowing by 4 to 5 liter of water with a concentration of 1.5 to 2% of formalin solution per square meter and should be covered with plastic sheet. Application of the fungicide such as Captan and Thiram 5-6 gm of per square meter of nursery area is necessary.

Furadan, Heptachlor are some insecticides that are mixed in the dry soil by 4-5 grams per square meter and should be mixed up to the depth of 15 to 20 cm for nursery preparation. Supply of hot steam at least 4 hours continuously under the covered polythene sheet and allow the soil as such for one day for the vegetable seedbed preparation. Buy certified vegetable seeds from reputable seed companies. If you are using your seeds make sure you choose seeds with ideal and preferred qualities. To avoid seed wastage, conduct a seed germination test.

A germination test will help you to know if the seed will germinate after sowing and how many will germinate. So, you will know how many you require for a nursery. This must be done a couple of days before you sow the seeds on your seedbeds.

Make seedbeds 1.0m – 1.2m wide x 2m or longer. This standard size makes it easy and then convenient to work around the seedbed. Water the seedbeds, and cover with 4cm thick dry grass, sawdust or rice straw. Leave for 2 to 3 days to reactivate spores of disease pathogens then burn to sterilize the soil. You may also

cover seedbed with transparent plastic sheets for 5 to 8 weeks to sterilize the soil.

Seeds must be planted at a spacing of 15cm between rows, cover the seeds lightly with soil and mulch the bed with dry grass. The bed should be watered thoroughly on the day before sowing and mulching the bed soon after sowing seeds is a must.

Mulch the seedbed after sowing until seed germination. Provide enough shade to the crop after germination one metre above the bed. Thin the crops properly, remove weak or diseased vegetable seedlings and keep the bed weed-free.

Transplant seedlings after 21 to 30 days. Harden the vegetable crop by removing the shade a day before transplanting as this gives the seedling chance to get used to the direct sun. Reduce water at this stage and transplant at recommended spacing per crop early in the morning or late in the evening time (from 6:00 am to 10:00 am or 4:00 to 6:00 pm) and water the plants as soon as transplanting is done.

Nursery beds should be prepared according to the season and selection of crops. In the rainy season raised beds are prepared but in the winter and summer season flatbeds must be prepared. Onion in the rabi season requires flatbeds. For uniform and high percentage of seed germination, the soil must be fine and moist enough.

If the seedlings are to be raised in boxes during unfavorable weather conditions, the flower pots, polythene bags, potting plugs, wooden trays, and earthen pots, etc. may be used. Prepare soil mixture in the ratio of about 1:1:1 of soil, sand, and well rotten FYM/leaf mold and fill the mixture in these seedling raising structures.

Raised seedbeds of 1 meter wide where no eggplant, potato, or tomato has been grown for at least 3 years should be constructed. Incorporate 5 kg/m² of good compost into the bed and if possible solarize the planting bed to kill diseases. Dig shallow furrows with a stick. One hectare of tomato will require 150 to 200 g of good seed. Sow the seeds and then cover lightly with soil. Pat firmly with a rake, mulch and then water. Do not use fresh manure on a seedbed as it burns seedlings and after



seedlings emerge push mulch off the seedlings to allow sunlight. Young seedlings need sufficient water. One week before transplanting, reduce water to harden seedlings. Tomato seedlings will be ready to transplant with 3 to 5 true leaves or 15-25 cm height. Onion seedlings are ready to transplant with 3 to 5 well-formed leaves. Transplanting should be done on a cloudy day or in the late afternoon.

Before you sow, treat seeds with recommended seed dressing or hot water before planting. Drill thinly in rows about 10cm apart and cover with a thin layer of soil. For seed-trays sow 1 seed per cell and cover with newsprint. Cover bed with dry grass (non-seeded), transplant plastic sheets, and water. Seeds emerge within 5 to 7 days.

After the seedbed is prepared then the vegetable seed is sown in the nursery bed differently. In Broadcast methods seeds are broadcasted in the prepared nursery bed and later on, the seeds are covered with well rotten fine sieved and then treated FYM or compost. The major disadvantage of the Broadcast method is there is an uneven distribution of seeds in the nursery that becomes dense but this method is commonly used and practiced.

Line sowing is the best method of seed sowing in the nursery. Lines are made 0.5 to 1 cm deep parallel to the width at the distance of 5 cm from the line. The seeds are sown or placed singly at the distance of about 1cm apart. Cover the seeds with the fine mixture of soil, sand, and FYM in the ratio of about 1:1:1. After covering light irrigation should be given with the fine rose can.

The successful establishment of quality seedling and propagules depends upon the proper planning and timely ex-

ecution of nursery activities. Preparation of species-level nursery activity calendar will facilitate the vegetable seedling production. The mature pod has to be collected just before it falls and subsequently seed should be extracted without damage to the seeds.

Sowing of seed/propagules must be carried out during early morning (7 to 9 am) or evening (3 to 5 pm) hours. Transplanting, watering, weeding and shifting operations in the nursery needs to be done at a fixed interval. Hardening of vegetative propagules and dispatch of grown-up seedlings must be in proper time. Engage only the skilled and trained labour in nursery activities to assure the success.

Water storage for lean available period, mother plant maintenance for seasonal collection of material is important resource management activities.

Timely availability of nursery inputs such as soil, sand, Farm Yard Manure, bio-fertilizer, chemicals, water, etc. and their collection in cheap cost period can reduce the production of seedling cost. Each plant species has its season of establishment and therefore, sowing, transplanting, and distribution of each species should be scheduled accordingly.

For raised nursery bed management for vegetable crops the length of the bed can be kept 3 to 5 meters; however, width is restricted to 1 meter which facilitates intercultural operations. The beds are raised about 15 to 20 cm high from the ground level. A space of 30 to 40 cm is left in between two beds. The space between 2 beds helps in weeding, nursery care against diseases and insect pests, and also for draining out the excess rainwater

from the nursery beds.

The number of beds mainly depends on the particular crop, season, and growing area of crop. The beds must be prepared in the east and west direction and the line should be made from north to south direction on the beds.

The nursery beds need light irrigation with the help of rose can till the seeds get germinated. Excess rainwater or irrigated water must be drained out from the field as and when it is required otherwise plants may die due to excess of water.

Timely weeding in the nursery is important to get the healthy seedling therefore manually removing them or pre-emergence herbicides such as stomp by 3ml per liter water must be sprayed on the nursery bed after the seed sowing and seed covering with the mixture.

Damping-off of seedling, light blight disease, and leaf minor and the borer infect the seedling in the nursery. The plant care for controlling them in time is essential. The seedling stress symptoms such as damping off wilt, root rot, rust, and powdery mildew are caused by pathogen infection and result in stunted growth of seedlings.

These pathogens can be soil, seed, or airborne. Nurseries established in the recently cleaned land hardly invite parasitic organisms and stunted growth of seedlings indicates the loss of soil fertility, excess watering, and dumping of seedlings in shady areas. As a preventive measure sterilization of nursery mixture, pre-treatment of vegetable seeds with a fungicide such as Captan can control the disease. If the disease occurs, the causal pathogen can be identified by expression of symptoms and accordingly fungicide may be applied.

Integrated disease management in nursery vegetable crops involves selection of apparently healthy vegetable seeds/propagules for seedling production. Seed dressing with 0.2% Carbendazim/Methyl thiophanate/Benomyl/Thiram and sowing of seeds in sterilized/fumigated, clean beds, transplanting seedling after root dip for 3 to 5 min in 0.02% Carbendazim solution and adequate watering helps to reduce the disease severity.

Using sterilized budding knife, and scissors during bud-

ding and grafting practices reduces disease inoculum considerably.

Healthy planting material maintenance by keeping them under proper sunlight, watering and clean environment along with frequent examination of vegetable seedling health and removal of diseased stocks gives rise to healthy nursery. Foliar spray of about 0.2% Carbendazim/Dithane M-45 at regular intervals to check the progress of fungal disease incidences.

A major injury to nursery stock is caused by several groups of insects. These insect pests have been divided into three categories that are major nursery pests (white grubs, cutworms, termites and crickets), minor nursery pests (defoliators, sap suckers, grasshoppers) and non-insect pests (nematodes and vertebrate pests). Generally, the damage caused by the insects can be controlled by maintaining better sanitation of the nursery area, adoption of suitable cultural practices, and need-based application of chemical and biological pesticides.

Advantages of nursery management of vegetable crops

- It is possible to provide favourable growth conditions i.e. seed germination as well as growth

- Better care of younger plants as it is very easy to look after nursery in a small area against pathogenic infection, pests, and weeds.

- Crop grown by nursery rising is quite early and fetch a higher price in the market, and so economically more profitable.

- There is a saving of land and labour as the main fields will be occupied by the plants after 1 month. More intensive crop rotations can be followed.

- More time is obtainable for the preparation of the main field because the nursery is grown separately.

- As vegetable seeds are expensive particularly hybrids, so we can economize the seed by sowing them in the nursery.

- Nursery helps in making more efficient use of land and helps to reduce field management cost, it helps to improve crop uniformity in the field. (The authors are Soil Science and Plant Pathology scientists in the Assam Agricultural University - Zonal Research Station, Diphu)

Air pollution problem in Indian cities



By: Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

21 out of the 30 cities with the worst air pollution in the world are in India. The capital New Delhi has the worst air quality among capital cities around the world. The concentration of particulate matter (PM 2.5) in New Delhi is nearly 10 times higher than the World Health Organization guidelines. The heavy pollution in these cities is also seriously affecting the health of the people living here, making them sicker with each passing day.

In terms of life expectancy, pollution in Indian cities is a major threat to people's health, taking away an average of 5.3 years of life from every Indian. The relationship between the problem of air pollution in Indian cities rests on the idea of sustainable preservation and the use of urban heritage for economic development. By focusing on environmental protection through sustainable practices, cities can simultaneously address air pollution.

For example, adaptive reuse of historic buildings can reduce the need for new construction, thereby reducing dust and related air pollutants. In addition,

promoting local economic development in historic urban areas can shift economic activity away from pollution-intensive industries towards more sustainable practices such as tourism. Developing nations like India, where urbanization continues, are suffering from increasing air pollution problems due to a lack of services such as adequate transport management, suitable roads, and unplanned distribution of industries.

Congested roads in cities reduce the average speed of vehicles, resulting in higher vehicle emissions, which increases the level of air pollution. Unplanned urbanization, combined with industrialization and population growth, is posing a threat to human health by increasing the level of air pollution, causing many health problems.

Additionally, complex and intense human activities in these urban areas are aggravating the problem by increasing the emission of pollutants. Efforts to tackle pollution and smog are often limited to urban areas. To prevent them, measures such as promoting public transport or controlling pollution from industries and construction sites are focused on.

At the same time, rural

sources are usually ignored in these measures. This is the reason why in this study, the researchers have suggested efforts at the regional level to deal with the problem of pollution. Encouraging the conservation of privately owned historic buildings can reduce urban sprawl that contributes to air pollution while maintaining the existing urban landscape. Policies for sustainable urbanization are imperative to tackle air pollution. Financial instruments such as microcredit and loans can be made available in greater quantities to support small businesses and artisans in Indian cities, which will encourage a shift away from polluting activities. In addition, financial incentives for the use of clean technologies can be implemented at both national and municipal levels.

Environmental policies should integrate urban planning with heritage conservation, as highlighted by successful cases such as the ancient city of Ping Yao in China. Managing urban sprawl through such integrated policies can directly impact air pollution reduction. Encouraging the adaptive reuse of historic buildings for social housing or SMEs can contribute to reducing construction-related air pollution that is prominent in Indian urban centers.

Pursuing financial policies to support local economic development within historic urban areas can reduce dependence on heavy industries and promote less polluting sectors such as cultural enterprises and sustainable tourism.

The use of advanced technologies such as satellite

data along with geospatial techniques can be very helpful in monitoring and mapping the spatio-temporal distribution patterns of air pollution and climate change and the associated health impacts. Therefore, while focusing on building smart cities in developing countries like India, proper urban planning and sustainable measures should be taken for a sustainable urban environment to avoid adverse health impacts.

Policy coherence and coordination between the national and local levels are crucial to ensure that innovative strategies for financing urban heritage conservation are effectively implemented, thereby indirectly impacting air quality by promoting sustainable development.

A holistic approach to urban development is needed that integrates the conservation of our historic urban heritage with innovative financial instruments to promote sustainable livelihoods. Indian cities can learn from international best practices and adopt policies that combine conservation efforts with economic incentives to foster an urban environment that not only preserves its past but also secures a healthier, less polluted future for its citizens.

As urban India stands at the crossroads of heritage conservation and the need for sustainable development, innovative financing mechanisms, and policies are required that will enable its cities to transform into resilient, inclusive, and pollution-free habitats for all. (The author is a poet, freelance journalist and columnist, All India Radio and TV panelist)

Delayed winter in Assam: Climate change and seasonal shifts

By: Mowsam Hazarika

As November unfolds, residents of Assam are left wondering where winter has gone. By this time, the chill is usually in the air, and morning mists lend an ethereal beauty to Assam's landscapes. But this year, winter's anticipated arrival seems delayed, prompting questions about the causes and consequences of this unusual shift.

Assam's typical subtropical monsoon climate follows a predictable seasonal pattern, with winter usually setting in by late October or early November. Temperatures generally drop gradually, marking the awaited seasonal change. However, in 2024, temperatures remain higher than usual, and winter's familiar cool breezes have yet to appear.

This late arrival of winter is likely due to a range of factors, including global climate change, regional variations, and specific weather patterns. Meteorologists explain that shifting global climate patterns are affecting Assam's seasonal cycles, which were once much more predictable. Irregular temperature changes, erratic rainfall, and changing weather patterns now challenge the state's traditional climate norms.

Global climate change plays a crucial role in delaying winter, as greenhouse gas emissions warm the atmosphere and disrupt established climate patterns. Around the world, seasonal distinctions are fading, with winters arriving later and ending earlier than in past decades. Assam, with its unique geographical location and sensitive ecosystem, is particularly vulnerable to these shifts.

Another contributing factor is the El Niño effect, which causes periodic warming of the Pacific Ocean's surface temperatures and influences global climate. This phenomenon disrupts India's usual monsoon and winter cycles, and in 2024, it has likely contributed to Assam's warmer-than-usual conditions.

This winter delay also has ecological implications. Assam's environment, known for its biodiversity and agricultural practices, is sensitive to

weather shifts. Crops requiring specific temperatures and seasonal rains may be affected, disrupting Assam's tea industry, as well as rice and mustard growth cycles, potentially impacting the local agricultural economy.

Assam's residents also feel the effects of the delayed winter in their daily lives. In rural areas, people depend on predictable seasons to plan agriculture and traditional events. Colder months are typically reserved for winter crop preparations. This year, however, warmer weather may

force changes in crop planting and yields, particularly for climate-sensitive crops.

Health-wise, Assam's usual drop in temperature in winter months helps limit the spread of certain illnesses. Extended warm weather could lead to higher rates of respiratory issues, allergies, and other conditions, especially for the elderly and children who are more vulnerable.

Seasonal shifts also affect Assam's wildlife and biodiversity. Migratory birds, for instance, time their migrations according to seasonal temperatures and food availability.

With winter's delay, migratory birds may face warmer temperatures and altered food sources, which could impact migration cycles. The warmer weather also affects local flora and fauna, potentially disrupting breeding and hibernation patterns.

The tourism sector, too, faces challenges from the delayed winter. Winter is a peak season, drawing visitors for cultural festivals and scenic landscapes. Extended warmth may dampen tourist expectations and experiences, which could affect the local economy.

The changing seasonal patterns highlight the need for adaptive strate-

gies to address Assam's climate realities. While tackling climate change is a global challenge, local efforts are essential. Awareness campaigns and government initiatives can help farmers, health workers, and tourism operators adapt to these emerging climate patterns. Agricultural experts are exploring resilient crop varieties, and health agencies are preparing for possible increases in illnesses due to warmer weather.

Protecting Assam's natural resources, reducing deforestation, and promoting sustainable practices are crucial for moderating the region's climate. Community-led conservation initiatives, particularly in rural areas, can foster practices that reduce environmental harm.

The delayed winter in Assam reminds us of the broader impact of climate change on traditional seasonal cycles. While it may appear isolated, this delay reflects a larger climate trend with deep impacts on daily life. Assam's climate-sensitive ecosystem, agricultural foundation, and cultural heritage emphasize the need for proactive adaptation.

As Assam waits for winter to arrive, this delay serves as a reminder of the urgent need for sustainable practices that protect the environment and preserve Assam's way of life. The state must prepare for a future where climate variability could indeed become the new normal. (The writer is a poet, freelance science journalist and people's science activist. He is also a former Director, Assam Seed and Organic Certification Agency & Former Joint Director of Agriculture (Pulse), Department of Agriculture, Assam. He can be reached at mowsam2000@yahoo.co.in)



Troubled by illegal border crossings, Arizona voters approve state-level immigration enforcement

PHOENIX, Nov 6: Arizona voters have approved letting local police arrest migrants suspected of illegally entering the state from Mexico, an authority that would encroach on the federal government's power over immigration enforcement but would not take effect immediately, if ever.

With the approval of Proposition 314, Arizona becomes the latest state to test the limits of what local authorities can do to curb illegal immigration. Within the past year, GOP lawmakers in Texas, Iowa and Oklahoma have passed immigration laws. In each case, federal courts have halted the states' efforts to enforce them.

The only presidential battleground state that borders Mexico, Arizona is no stranger to a bitter divide on the politics of immigration. Since the early 2000s, frustration over federal enforcement of Arizona's border with Mexico has inspired a movement to draw local police departments, which had traditionally left border duties to the federal government, into immigration enforcement.

The state Legislature approved an immigrant smuggling ban in 2005 that let then-Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio conduct immigration crackdowns, a 2007 prohibition on employers knowingly hiring people in the country illegally, and a landmark 2010 immigration law that required police, while enforcing other laws, to question the legal status of people suspected of being in the country



without authorisation.

Arizona voters have been asked to decide matters related to immigration before. They approved a 2004 law denying some government benefits to people in the country illegally and a 2006 law declaring English to be Arizona's official language. They also rejected a 2008 proposal that would have made business-friendly revisions to the state law barring employers from hiring people who are in the country without authorisation.

Arizona GOP lawmakers say the proposal was necessary to help secure the border, as they blamed the Biden administration for an unprecedented surge of illegal immigration. Record levels of illegal crossings have plummeted in recent months, following moves by the White House to tighten asylum restrictions.

Opponents of Proposition 314 argue it would harm Arizona's economy and reputation, as well as

lead to the racial profiling of Latinos. They cite the profiling Latinos endured when Arpaio led the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. In 2013, a federal judge ruled Latinos had been racially profiled in Arpaio's traffic patrols that targeted immigrants, leading to a court-ordered overhaul of the agency that's expected to cost taxpayers \$314 million in legal and compliance costs by mid-summer 2025.

Kelli Hykes, who works in health policy and volunteers for Greg Whitten, the Democratic nominee in the race for Arizona's 8th Congressional District, said she thought carefully about how to vote on the immigration measure but declined to share her choice.

"It's so polarising, and there are folks in my family that are going to be voting one way and I'm voting another," Hykes said.

Proposition 314 makes it a state crime for people to illegally enter Arizona from Mexico outside official ports of entry, permitting local

and state law enforcement officers to arrest them and state judges to order their deportations. Those who enforce the law would be shielded from civil lawsuits.

These provisions, however, wouldn't be enforceable immediately. A violator couldn't be prosecuted until a similar law in Texas or another state has been in effect for 60 consecutive days.

The Arizona GOP lawmakers who voted to put the measure on the ballot were referring to Texas Senate Bill 4. The bill, signed into law by Texas Governor Greg Abbott in December, was supposed to allow local and state law enforcement to arrest people accused of entering Texas illegally from Mexico.

A federal appeals court put it on hold in March. The following month, a panel of federal judges heard from a Texas attorney defending the law and Justice Department attorneys arguing it encroached on the federal government's authority over enforcing immigration law. The panel has yet to release its decision.

Other provisions of Proposition 314 aren't contingent upon similar laws outside Arizona. The approval of the measure immediately makes selling fentanyl that results in a person's death a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison, and a crime for non-citizens to submit false documentation when applying for employment or attempting to receive benefits from local, state and federal programmes. (AP)

Boeing's machinists strike is over but troubled aerospace giant still faces many challenges

SEATTLE, Nov 6: Factory workers at Boeing have voted to accept a contract offer and end their strike after more than seven weeks, clearing the way for the company to restart idled Pacific Northwest assembly lines.

But the strike was just one of many challenges the troubled US aerospace giant faces as it works to return to profitability and regain public confidence.

Boeing's 33,000 striking machinists disbanded their picket lines late Monday after leaders of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers district in Seattle said 59 per cent of union members who cast ballots agreed to approve the company's fourth formal offer, which included a 38 per cent wage increase over four years.

Union machinists assemble the 737 Max, Boeing's bestselling airliner, along with the 777 or "triple-seven" jet and the 767 cargo plane at factories in Renton and Everett, Washington. Resuming production will allow Boeing to generate much-needed cash, which it has been bleeding.

"Even for a company the size of Boeing, it is a life-threatening problem," said Gautam Mukunda, lecturer at the Yale School of Management.

The union said its workers can return to work as soon as Wednesday or as late as November 12. Boeing CEO Kelly Ortberg has said it might take "a couple of weeks" to resume production in part because some workers might need retraining.

As the machinists get back to work, management will have to address a host of other problems. The company needs to get on better financial footing. But while doing so, it also needs to prioritize the quality of its workmanship and its relationships with employees and suppliers, analysts said.

Boeing has been managing itself to meet short-term profit goals and "squeezing every stakeholder, squeezing every employee, every supplier to the point of failure in order to maximize their short-term financial performance," Mukunda said. "That is bad enough if you run a clothing company. It is unacceptable when you are building the most complex mass-produced machines human beings have ever built."

Above all, Boeing needs to produce more planes. When workers are back and production resumes, the company will be producing about 30 737s a month, and "they must get that number over 50. They have to do it. And the people who are going to do that are the workers on the factory floor," Mukunda said.

Another challenge will be get-



ting the company's fragile supply chain running again, said Cai von Rumohr, an aviation analyst at financial services firm TD Cowen. Suppliers that were working ahead of Boeing's schedule when the strike began may have had to lay workers off or finance operations on their own.

"There are lots of nasty questions in terms of complexities that go into revamping the supply chain," he said.

One way Boeing could generate cash would be to sell companies that don't fit directly in the business, such as flight information provider Jeppesen Sanderson, which it bought in 2000 for USD 1.5 billion, von Rumohr said.

"They'd lose some earnings but they'd get a lot of cash to reduce their debt," he added. "They really need to get to a more stable position where they have a solid credit rating."

Ortberg acknowledged the challenges ahead in a message to employees after they voted to end the walkout.

"There is much work ahead to return to the excellence that made Boeing an iconic company," he said.

The average annual pay of Boeing machinists is currently USD 75,608 and eventually will rise to USD 119,309 under the new contract, according to the company. The union said the compounded value of the promised pay raise would amount to an increase of more than 43 per cent over the life of the agreement.

Reactions were mixed even among union members who voted to accept the contract.

Although she voted "yes," Seattle-based calibration specialist Eep Bolaño said the outcome was "most certainly not a victory." Bolaño said she and her fellow workers made a wise but infuriating choice to accept the offer.

"We were threatened by a company that was crippled, dying, bleeding on the ground, and us as one of the biggest unions in the country couldn't even extract two-thirds of our demands from them. This is humiliating," she said.

Week after Spain's floods, families hope that missing are alive with 89 unaccounted for

SEDAVI, Nov 6: Francisco Murgui went out to try to salvage his motorbike when the water started to rise. He never came back.

One week after catastrophic flooding devastated eastern Spain, María Murgui still holds out hope that her missing father is alive.

"He was like many people in town who went out to get their car or motorbike to safety," the 27-year-old told The Associated Press. "The flash flood caught him outside, and he had to cling to a tree in order to escape drowning. He called us to tell us he was fine, that we shouldn't worry."

But when María set out into the streets of Sedaví to try to rescue him from the water washing away everything in its path, he was nowhere to be found.

"He held up until 1 in the morning," she said. "By 2, I went outside with a neighbour and a rope to try to locate him. But we couldn't find him. And since then, we

haven't heard anything about him."

Spanish authorities issued their first tally of the missing on Tuesday when a Valencia court said that 89 people are confirmed to be unaccounted for.

The number only corresponds to the eastern Valencia region, where 211 of the 217 confirmed deaths took place when entire communities were swamped by tsunami-like floods on October 29-30. Most people were caught off guard by the deluge. Regional authorities have been heavily criticised for having issued alerts to mobile phones some two hours after the disaster had started.

The Superior Court of Valencia said that the figure was based on those cases whereby families had provided information and biological samples of their unlocated loved ones. It added that there could easily be more missing people whose families have not officially reported to authorities. (PTI)

European leaders seek to chart common future at summit but all eyes are glued on Washington

BUDAPEST, Nov 6: Dozens of European leaders will be gingerly seeking to chart a more common future during a one-day summit in Hungary's capital on Thursday. Yet despite myriad economic challenges and two wars in the neighbourhood, all eyes will be glued on Washington to see whether the pivotal U.S. election will cause a political rift throughout the continent.

The transatlantic relationship will doubtless change after the vote, leaders and experts have said. But the question is whether that change will be gradual under Kamala Harris or possibly seismic under Donald Trump. The impact of the U.S. results could be felt for years to come, on issues including the war in Ukraine, the European Union's trade relations with the rest of the world, migration, the Middle East conflict and climate change.

"All this is putting peace, stability and prosperity at risk in our region," said the invitation letter to the leaders of the European Political Community, which unites almost 50 nations in Europe and its near abroad, bar Russia and Belarus.

Among the leaders likely to at-

tend on Thursday is Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who is expected to make another plea for more aid as his country fends off Moscow's invasion. The timing is laden with significance as Trump has vowed to end the war "within 24 hours" of being elected — something leaders in Kyiv interpret as an impending evaporation of U.S. support should Trump win.

Orbán makes plain his support for Trump

Not so long ago, such a meeting — which is also expected to include leaders from non-EU countries like Turkey, Serbia and the United Kingdom — would end with praise for European unity and a common political direction. Yet with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán as the host of the summit, friction is as good as assured.

Orbán, who has openly thrown his weight behind Trump and argued the former president is a "man of peace," has predicted a Trump victory and suggested that civil and criminal cases against him were the result of a politically motivated Department of Justice — a common Trump refrain. (AP)

Israeli strike kills 20 in north Gaza, where Palestinians say they've had little food for weeks

DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), Nov 6: An Israeli airstrike in northern Gaza killed at least 20 people, mostly women and children, Palestinian officials said Tuesday, as Palestinians fled Israel's assault. Some said they had hardly eaten, with aid cut off for weeks to the most isolated and heavily destroyed part of the territory.

Israel has been waging an offensive in Gaza's northernmost end for weeks, saying it is targeting Hamas militants who regrouped in the area.

The UN has said Israel hasn't allowed food and other supplies into the area north of Gaza City since the assault began, even as tens of thousands of people remain there. That has drawn rebukes from the Biden administration, which has warned that US laws might force it to curb military aid to Israel if more aid is not allowed in.

The strike late Monday hit a home where several displaced families were sheltering in the town of Beit Lahiya, near the border with Israel, according to Hossam Abu Safiya, the director of the recently raided and barely functioning Kamal Adwan Hospital, which received the casualties.

The Israeli military said it targeted a weapons storage facility from which a militant had operated, and that "numerous steps were taken to mitigate the risk of harming civilians."

The dead included eight women and six children, according to a list provided by the Gaza Health Ministry's emergency service. Separate strikes elsewhere in Gaza early Tuesday killed another 10 people, according to health officials.

Dozens of Palestinians trickled out of Beit Lahiya on Tuesday — mostly women and children — dragging rucksacks and satchels with belongings. They entered Gaza City on a street where every building had been completely flattened or heavily damaged.

"We came barefoot. We have no sandals, no clothes, nothing. We have no money. There is no food or drink," said Huda Abu Laila.

"We are hungry. Hunger has killed us. We were under siege for one month without water or food," the gaunt elderly woman continued, before erupting in tears.

Um Nidal Abu Laila, another woman fleeing



Beit Lahiya, said there were bodies of Palestinians killed in the assault lying in the streets. "No one is able to retrieve them," she said.

Gaza's civil defence agency said it had received reports of people trapped alive under the rubble of buildings destroyed by Israeli troops in Beit Lahiya, but it was unable to send teams to rescue them. It said the military has prevented its teams from operating in the area for the past two weeks. The Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza said there are no ambulances currently operating north of Gaza City.

Two elderly patients, one who was battling cancer, died as they tried to leave Beit Lahiya as they waited to cross an Israeli military checkpoint, the Palestinian Red Crescent said.

The military has ordered the complete evacuation of Beit Lahiya, the nearby town of Beit Hanoun and the urban Jabalya refugee camp. Still, the UN estimated last week that around 100,000 people remain there even after tens of thousands fled the past month, the latest wave of displacement within the besieged territory. Around 90 per cent of the population of 2.3 million have fled during the 13-month-old war, often multiple times.

The army has returned to several areas of Gaza multiple times after previous operations, as Hamas continues to carry out hit-and-run attacks on troops and fire occasional rockets into

Israel. The three hospitals serving the area have been largely inaccessible because of the fighting, and ambulances have stopped operating. Israeli troops raided Kamal Adwan Hospital last month, saying Hamas militants were sheltering there, allegations denied by Palestinian health officials.

The offensive has raised fears among Palestinians that Israel is implementing a surrender-or-starve plan for northern Gaza proposed by former generals, in which civilians would be ordered out, aid would be cut off and anyone remaining would be considered a fighter.

The Israeli military has denied receiving such orders, but the government has not said whether it is adopting part or all of the plan.

Early Tuesday, an Israeli strike hit a house in the Tufah neighbourhood in Gaza City, killing two children and their parents, according to the Health Ministry's emergency service. Two other children were wounded, it said.

In the central town of Zuweida, a strike hit a tent where a displaced family was sheltering, killing four people, including a mother and her two children, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the nearby city of Deir al-Balah. Another strike hit a house in Deir al-Balah, killing two people, the hospital said. An Associated Press journalist counted the bodies at the hospital morgue. (AP)

Middle East latest: Rescue workers pull 30 bodies from apartments in Lebanon after Israeli strike

JERUSALEM, Nov 6: Lebanon's Civil Defence service says they have pulled 30 bodies from the rubble of an apartment building that Israel struck the night before. Search efforts were ongoing on Wednesday, and it was unclear how many survivors or bodies were still trapped under the rubble.

The airstrike on Tuesday night came without warning. There was no statement from the Israeli military on the strike, and it was not immediately clear what the intended target was.

On Tuesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismissed Defence Minister Yoav Gallant in a surprise announcement that sparked protests across the country. Gallant's replacement is Foreign Minister Israel Katz, a longtime Netanyahu loyalist and veteran Cabinet minister.

While Netanyahu has called for continued military pressure on Hamas, Gallant said military force created the necessary conditions



for at least a temporary diplomatic deal that could bring home hostages held by the militant group.

The Israel-Hamas war began after Palestinian militants stormed into Israel on October 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting 250 others. Israel's military re-

sponse in Gaza has killed more than 43,000 people, Palestinian health officials say. They do not distinguish between civilians and combatants, but say more than half of those killed were women and children. Since the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah erupted in 2023, at least 3,000 people have been killed and some 13,500

wounded in Lebanon, the Health Ministry reported. A report by Lebanon's crisis response unit said 361,300 Syrians and over 177,800 Lebanese crossed into Syria between September 23 and November 1.

Here's the latest:

30 bodies are pulled from the rubble of a Lebanon apartment building struck by Israel

BEIRUT — Lebanon's Civil Defence service said on Wednesday they have pulled 30 bodies and remains out of the rubble of an apartment building in the town of Barja that Israel struck the night before. Search efforts were ongoing. The airstrike on Tuesday hit an area that had not been regularly targeted by Israeli military operations. It came without warning. There was no statement from the Israeli military on the strike, and it was not immediately clear what the intended target was.

Civil defence official Mostafa Danaj said it was unclear how

many survivors or bodies were still trapped under the rubble.

"We hope that there isn't anyone else, but the neighbours have said that there are still people (missing)," he said.

Israeli forces and the Hezbollah militant group have been clashing for more than a year, since Hezbollah started firing rockets across the border on October 8, 2023 — a day after the deadly Hamas-led incursion into southern Israel sparked the war in Gaza.

The war on the Lebanese front has substantially escalated since mid-September, with Israel launching a massive aerial bombardment of much of Lebanon and a ground invasion.

More than 3,000 people have been killed by Israeli strikes in Lebanon, the vast majority of them since September 23. Israel has said it targets Hezbollah militants and weapons caches, but hundreds of civilians have also been killed. (AP)

Manipur CM hails Thadou support for NRC

Biren Singh pledges to protect indigenous rights, launches coaching scheme

IMPHAL, Nov 6: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Wednesday expressed his satisfaction over the recent resolution passed at the Thadou Convention, which voiced support for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the state's 'War on Drugs' campaign.

Singh, however, emphasised that the government would not compromise its policies in the name of bringing peace by accommodating outsiders.

At a convention in Guwahati last week, the Thadou tribe pledged its support for NRC and also backed the state government's 'war on drugs'.

Thadou is the largest tribe within the Kuki community. However, during the recent convention, the community asserted that "it is a distinct ethnic group of people, with own distinct language, culture, traditions and great history and Thadou is not Kuki, or underneath Kuki, or part of Kuki, but a separate, independent entity from



Kuki." Speaking at the launch of the Chief Minister's Coaching Scheme for Entrance Examinations to Professional Courses, Singh said, "Peace will definitely come. Thadou is one of the oldest tribes in the state. Following the Thadou Convention's support for the NRC and the War on Drugs campaign, several civil society organisations in the state have welcomed and appreciated this stance."

He added, "We cannot compromise on our policies in the name of peace. Under the guise of inclusiveness, we cannot accommodate every outsider. We must protect the distinctiveness of our indigenous communities and the rights of old settlers. We have faced numerous challenges because of this objective. We should also not forget that we are Indians."

Regarding the coaching scheme,

Singh said it aimed to empower students in Manipur to compete at the national level for professional courses like JEE (Main/Advanced) and NEET.

He added, "People with knowledge and education are less likely to get involved in conflict and will maintain decorum in their speech and actions. Defending the unity and integrity of India is our collective duty, and we must understand the rights guaranteed under our Constitution."

Singh said there would be an examination at the end of the coaching course, which would be held in March or April. He added that the government would bear the expenses of students who successfully pass the exam.

Additionally, Singh urged the selected students to plant a tree under the Prime Minister's initiative 'Maa Ke Naam Ek Per' (One Tree in the Name of Mother), encouraging environmental responsibility alongside their academic pursuits. (PTI)

16th Finance Commission urges states to boost self-reliance in revenue

KOHIMA, Nov 6: Chairman of 16th Finance Commission, Arvind Panagariya, encouraged the states to raise as much of their own revenue as possible to be fiscal self-reliant.

This statement was released on Tuesday where he asserted the usual devolution of grants that is done to the state will continue.

"The Commission generally does encourage states to raise as much of their own revenue as possible. Ultimately this revenue itself is a function of the GSDP of the state, and more revenue means that the GSDP is larger, and a larger GSDP is desirable in its own right, because that's what leads to higher capital incomes," Panagariya told a press conference. On the Commission's recommendation to bring resource-crunch Nagaland, which depends mostly on central funding, at par with the rest of the states, Panagariya said the special category status was related to the grants that were given by the erstwhile Planning Commission. Since the Planning Commission no longer gives any grant, the special category status is not a factor, although there is some special treatment, he said.

In many schemes where other states get only a 60 per cent contribution from the central government, it is 90 per cent in Nagaland's case, Panagariya said.

"Not as much as one would like it to, but it (Nagaland) is raising some of its own revenue as well while a significant part is through the devolution and the grants-in-aid,

etc," he said.

While the Commission is still in the information-gathering phase, the Chairman refrained from making detailed comments on Nagaland's specific proposals, emphasizing that recommendations would only be finalized after consulting all 28 states and would be submitted by October 2025.

The Commission chairman said that the state government proposed several critical recommendations including inclusion of certain cesses and surcharges in the divisible pool, which are fully retained by the central government, depriving states of potential revenue.

The state also proposed introducing a "disability index" to consider geographical and economic challenges specific to Nagaland and introduction of "capital deficit grants" alongside the traditional revenue deficit grants, he said.

The project-specific grants requested by the state funding for a new airport, Foothill Road project, renewable energy infrastructure, hydropower generation, mineral exploration, and advancements in drone technology, Panagariya said.

Meanwhile, Panagariya said that Commission's delegation met Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and other ministers as well as senior bureaucrats.

During the day, the Finance Commission also met representatives of trade, industries and commerce, rural and urban local bodies and political parties. (PTI)

Arms, ammunition recovered in Manipur



IMPHAL, Nov 6: Security forces recovered arms and ammunition in Manipur's Tengnoupal district during search operations, police said on Wednesday. The recovered items, which were seized from Samukom area, include two pistols, three locally made cannons (pompis), eight 7.62 mm live rounds, two pistol rounds, nine IEDs, eight grenades, 36 hand grenades and two walkie-talkie sets, a statement said.

Tengnoupal district, which shares a porous border with Myanmar, is believed by security agencies to be a key route for illegal arms trafficking and drug smuggling, with its thick forests often serving as hiding spots for such activities. (PTI)

NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from Mohammed Kamal Hussain Laskar to Kamal Hussain Laskar by swearing a notarial affidavit at Sankardevnagar Hojai (Assam)

Arunachal deputy CM inspects riverfront development site at Parshuram Kund

ITANAGAR, Nov 6: Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein inspected the riverfront development site at Parshuram Kund in Lohit district, an initiative aimed at making it one of northeast India's premier pilgrimage destinations. During the inspection on Tuesday, Mein assessed various ongoing infrastructure projects, including a guest house and a pilgrims' lodge, a press statement from the deputy CM's office said.

Mein announced that the state government will allocate ₹ 50 crore for infrastructure development,

supplementing the ₹ 50 crore already granted by the DoNER Ministry for the project.

Additionally, Mein convened a meeting to prepare for the upcoming Parshuram Kund Mela 2025. Tezu-Sunpura MLA Dr Mohesh Chai, Wakro additional deputy commissioner A J Lungphi, Modonso Tayang of Parshuram Seva Samithi and others attended the meeting.

The deputy chief minister highlighted the importance of organising the 'mela' effectively to ensure a seamless experience for thousands of

pilgrims expected to attend.

He directed the Lohit district administration and the Parshuram Kund Development Trust to arrange accommodation for at least 2,000 people per night during the festivities. A fund of ₹ 50 lakh will be allocated to the trust for the purpose, he added.

The Parshuram Kund Mela, celebrated annually in January to coincide with Makar Sankranti, attracts a large number of pilgrims seeking blessings from Lord Parshuram. (PTI)

Meghalaya to form anti-narcotics police force

SHILLONG, Nov 6: The Meghalaya state government has decided to make the anti-narcotic task force (ANTF), a dedicated police force to fight against drug trafficking.

This was informed on Tuesday by Social Welfare minister Paul Lyngdoh after holding a meeting with a delegation of the Hynniewtrep Youth Council (HYC).

Addressing media persons, Lyngdoh informed that the issues including the ones raised by the particular NGO and other civil society organizations will be taken up in the upcoming meeting of the Drug Reduction Elimination and Action Mission (DREAM) to be chaired by the deputy chief minister incharge home (police) Prestone Tynsong on November 14.

He said that the meeting would discuss strategies which are of a short-term basis, there are those which are medium and there are those which are for long term basis.

Stating that the government is committed to containing and eradicating the menace of drug trafficking, the minister said that the importance of the meeting on November 14 is that there will be a fresh look at the strategy of tackling the problem.

Lyngdoh announced that the government has decided to make the ANTF, a dedicated police force for fighting against the drug menace on a war footing.

"There will be more focus on policing and the need to strengthen the ANTF. We will also be focusing and working out on making the ANTF a dedicated police force, which will not be tightened down by normal policing activities, which is what is happening as of date," he said.



The HYC had submitted a memorandum to the minister, which highlighted the need for treatment and rehabilitation facilities, the need to increase spaces and number of such centres, free detoxification, OST and day care centres, establishment of fast track courts/special courts, investigation and prosecution of cases under NDPS Act, prevention of illicit trafficking that is PITNDPS Act, 1988, strengthening of drug supply reduction strategy and establishment of the office of narcotic control board (NCB) in Shillong. (NNN)

Mizoram: Opposition MNF sweeps Sinlung Hills Council polls

AIZAWL, Nov 6: The ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) and Hmar People's Convention (HPC) combine suffered a defeat against the main opposition Mizo National Front (MNF) and Hmar People's Convention (Reformed) in the 12-member Sinlung Hills Council (SHC) elections.

According to the results announced by the State Election Commission on Tuesday night, the MNF-HPC(R) combine secured a majority with seven seats, while the ZPM won three out of the eight seats it contested.



The HPC failed to secure any seats out of the four it contested. The Congress won one seat out of the 12 it contested, while the BJP, which

member (CEM) Lalvenhima Hmar of ZPM retained his Suangpuiawn seat, while chairman HC Lalmalsawm lost to MNF nominee Benjamin Lalrawnlina from Zohmnu constituency.

A total of 49 candidates, including a woman, were in the fray for the polls.

The SHC was set up on July 9, 2018, following a peace accord between the Mizoram government and the erstwhile underground Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) on April 2 that year. The council has 12 elected members and two nominated seats. (PTI)

Endangered orchid 'Gastrodia Lohitensis' found in Arunachal Pradesh

Leafless orchid thrives without sunlight, showcasing India's biodiversity

ITANAGAR, Nov 6: A team of scientists from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) here recently discovered a new species of orchid in Arunachal Pradesh's Lohit district.

Gastrodia Lohitensis, the leafless orchid, was found by Krishna Chowli and the BSI team here, sources said.

The rare orchid flourishes without sunlight, relying on fungi in leaf litter for nutrients, they said.

Found only in bamboo canopies near Tezu, the headquarters of Lohit district, Gastrodia Lohitensis has unique features like linear calli and ridged lower lips, distinguishing it from similar species in Southeast Asia.

Named after its home district, the orchid highlights India's incredible biodiversity, the sources added.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu has expressed delight over the new discovery. "A new mycotrophic species of the genus Gastrodia (Orchidaceae), Gastrodia lohitensis, has been discovered in the pristine landscapes of Arunachal Pradesh! This remarkable species, distinguished by its unique white flowers and parallelly arranged oblong-linear calli along the labellum, has been classified as "Endan-



gered" according to IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List criteria," Khandu posted on X. Named after Lohit district, where it was found, this discovery adds to the rich biodiversity of our region and highlights the

importance of conservation, the chief minister said in the micro-blogging site. Congratulations to Dr Krishna Chowli and the entire team at the Botanical Survey of India, Arunachal, for this incredible achievement! Khandu added. (PTI)

BJP enrolls 10 lakh members in Tripura

AGARTALA, Nov 6: The BJP has enrolled over 10 lakh people as its members during an ongoing membership drive, a senior party leader said on Wednesday. A total of 8.51 lakh people have enrolled their names online as members of the ruling party, while another 2 lakh have registered in the offline mode, the party's Tripura in-charge Rajdeep Roy said.

"The Tripura BJP had set a target to have 10 lakh members in the state which has a population of 40 lakh and we have achieved it," he told reporters at Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport. Roy said of the 2 lakh applications for membership through the offline mode, around 1.50 lakh names have already been uploaded on the membership drive web portal.

The drive commenced on September 3 and is scheduled to continue till November 15. The total enrolment includes both fresh members as well as renewal of membership. "This is yet another big achievement for the party's state unit under the leadership of Chief Minister Manik Saha and BJP state president and MP Rajib Bhattacharjee. They did a remarkable job to achieve the target," he said. (PTI)

No. SSUHS/32/2022/6702

ACADEMIC NOTIFICATION

(Extension of last date for submission of application form for admission into two years fellowship programme under SSUHS)

In continuation of our earlier Notification vide No.SSUHS/32/2022/5677, dated 19-09-2024 and No.SSUHS/32/2022/5971, dated 05-10-2024 for admission into two years fellowship programme under SSUHS for academic session 2024-26, it is further notified that the last date of submission of application form through google form link and submission of hard copy has been extended up to 30th November, 2024 and the counselling / interview for the selection of candidate will be held after completion of admission process of PG Degree in the Medical Colleges of Assam.

Sd/-
Registrar (Academic),
Srimanta Sankaradeva University
of Health Sciences

Janasanyog /C/4056/24/7-Nov-24

No.KED/NIT-66/P1-I/2024-25/2356

DETAILS TENDER NOTICE

Dated Kokrajhar, the 05/11/2024

Sealed tender in proscribed form affixing non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight & paise twenty five) only subsequently to be drawn up in printed "F-2" form with validity period of '90 (Ninety)' days from the date of receipt of tenders are invited from the Registered Class-I (A, B, C) & Class-II P.W.D. Electrical Contractor under P.W.D. Guwahati Electrical Circle, Guwahati-1 and the Registered Class-III P.W.D. Kokrajhar Electrical Division of 2024-25 and having valid Electrical Contractor licence for the following electrical works and will be received in the Office of the undersigned up to 2.00 P.M of 14/11/2024 and will be opened at 3.00 P.M. of the same date. The Contractors or their authorized agents may be present at the time of opening tender.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Approx Estimated Value	Time of Completion	Earnest Money
1	Providing and Installation of Fire Safety Facility System in the Boys Hostel Building, Girl's Hostel Building, Workshop Building, Principal Quarter and Supdt. Quarter at the Goalpara Polytechnic, Goalpara under SOPD-G during the year 2024-25. (Boys Hostel Building & Girl's Hostel Building, (Ground Floor), Group-A.	Rs. 19,91,071.00	90 (Ninety) Days	General 2% (Two)P.C. of Tender value (1% of Tender value in case of OBC/SC/ST)
2	Providing and Installation of Fire Safety Facility System in the Boys Hostel Building, Girl's Hostel Building, Workshop Building, Principal Quarter and Supdt. Quarter at the Goalpara Polytechnic, Goalpara under SOPD-G during the year 2024-25. (Workshop Building, Principal Qtr. and Supdt. Qtr.) Group-B.	Rs. 12,53,199.00		

Tender forms can be had from the Office of the undersigned and Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Kokrajhar Electrical Division, Kokrajhar during working hours and up to 2.00 P.M. 13/11/2024 on application mentioned registration No. etc. on payment of S.L. No. (1) Rs. 1000.00 (Rupees One thousand) only and S.L. No. (2) Rs. 500.00 (Rupees Five hundred) only per set by Indian crossed postal order payable to the Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Kokrajhar Electrical Division, Kokrajhar.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.W.D.,
Kokrajhar Electrical Division, Kokrajhar

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/824

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR OF SERICULTURE

DIPHU::: KARBI ANGLONG

NOTIFICATION

It is hereby informed to all the eligible candidate applied for the post of Sericulture Demonstrator (Grade-III) that the office of the Additional Director of Sericulture, Diphu, Karbi Anglong will hold Interview/Viva Voce as per programme given below :-

Name of Post	Grade	Roll No. of eligible candidate	Date of Interview	Time of Interview	Venue
Sericulture Demonstrator	III	01,02,03 & 04	20/11/2024	10 AM to 3 PM	New KAAC Secretariat Building KAAC, Diphu

Note :

- The candidate are requested to collect the Admit Card from the Office of the Additional Director of Sericulture, Diphu (RESHOM BHAWAN) from 07/11/2024 to 14/11/2024 during office hours. They are requested to bring their Admit Card and original documents for the interview without fail.

- No TA/DA will provided by the department.

Sd/-
i/c Additional Director of Sericulture,
Diphu, Karbi Anglong.

Memo No.Addl.DSDE.213/2013-2014/56-(A),

Dated Diphu the 05/11/2024.

Examine facts before jumping to conclusions: BJP to Rahul over Cong leader's article

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: The BJP on Wednesday slammed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for making "baseless accusations" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and asked him to examine facts before jumping to conclusions.

The reaction of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came after Gandhi, in an opinion piece in "The Indian Express", said the original East India Company wound up its operations more than 150 years ago but the raw fear it then generated is back now, with a new breed of monopolists having taken its place.

Hitting back at the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, the BJP wrote on X: "Another baseless accusation against the Modi government through the so-called 'match-fixing monopoly groups versus fair-play businesses' is simply misleading."

"Dear Baalak Buddha, do not jump to conclusions without examining facts," the saffron party said in a veiled reference to Gandhi.

It also shared on X video clips



of the top executives of nine companies, including Zomato, Haidiram, Tynor, Larsen & Toubro and Moglix, named by Gandhi in his article, and asked the Congress leader to listen to their views on Modi's leadership and economic policies.

"Listen to what these companies have to say about the support they've received from PM Modi," the party said.

In his article, Gandhi said India

was silenced by the East India Company and it was silenced not by the company's business prowess, but by its chokehold.

The company choked India by partnering with, bribing and threatening more pliant maharajas and nawabs, the Congress leader said.

"It controlled our banking, bureaucratic and information networks. We did not lose our freedom to another nation; we lost it to a monopolistic corporation

that ran a coercive apparatus," he said.

The original East India Company wound up its operations more than 150 years ago, but the raw fear it used to generate then is back now, he claimed.

A new breed of monopolists has taken its place, amassing colossal wealth, even as India has become far more unequal and unfair for everyone else, Gandhi said.

"Our institutions no longer belong to our people, they do the bidding of monopolists. Lakhs of businesses have been decimated and India is unable to generate jobs for her youth," the former Congress president said.

Sharing the article on X, he said, "Choose your India: Play-Fair or Monopoly? Jobs or Oligarchies? Competence or Connections? Innovation or Intimidation? Wealth for many or the few?"

"I write on why a New Deal for Business isn't just an option. It is India's future," Gandhi said, sharing his opinion piece on the microblogging platform. (PTI)

'Answered all questions, told them truth', says Siddaramaiah after deposing before Lokayukta police

MYSURU, Nov 6: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said he has answered all questions posed to him by Lokayukta police in the MUDA case and he has told them the "truth".

The CM, who has been named as accused number 1 in the FIR lodged by the Lokayukta police, is facing allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife Parvathi B M by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

The Lokayukta police questioned Siddaramaiah for about two hours.

"Everything has happened legally, BJP and JD(S) are making false allegations...I have answered all questions posed to me by Lokayukta Police, they have recorded it...they will proceed with further investigation," Siddaramaiah said.

Speaking to reporters after appearing before Lokayukta police, he said: "...a false case was made against me, I was questioned, I have told the truth."

"Until it is decided by the court (about any wrongdoing) there is no black spot on my image. What is against me are just allegations. False allegations are made against me. I will respond to such allegations in the court and to the police during the probe," he said in response to a question.

Siddaramaiah appeared before the Lokayukta police in response to the summons issued to him and responded to questions put to him by a team led by Lokayukta Superintendent of Police (SP) T J Udes, official sources said.

They had on October 25 questioned his wife, who has been named as accused number 2.



Siddaramaiah, his wife, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy and Devaraju -- from whom Swamy had purchased a land and gifted it to Parvathi -- and others have been named in the FIR registered by the Mysuru-located Lokayukta police establishment on September 27.

Swamy and Devaraju have already deposed before the Lokayukta police.

Asked about BJP's "Go back Siddaramaiah" protest, the CM said, "What was Snehamayi Krishna (RTI activist) plea? What the Governor has said? -- to investigate. If they say -- Go back Siddaramaiah -- are they (BJP) against the investigation? This makes it clear that they have made false allegations."

To a question on BJP demanding a CBI probe into the MUDA 'scam', expressing doubts about the Lokayukta investigation, he asked, "CBI is under whom? Has the BJP given any case to CBI (While in power in the state)?"

When told about the opposition alleging that the Lokayukta seems to be conducting the probe in a

pre-planned way to help the CM, Siddaramaiah said the Lokayukta is an independent agency.

"They say CBI is independent, similarly Lokayukta is also an independent agency in the state. They (BJP) don't have respect for law...have they -- the BJP given any case to CBI?" he asked.

Responding to RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna's petition in the High Court seeking direction to transfer the case to CBI, the CM said, "We will fight it in the High Court, that's a different matter..."

The activist said they will take a call in due course on whom they want to defeat as there are still some days left before the election.

"We will give the draft (in support of Maratha reservation) to those who are seeking support from us. We will sit again and decide whom we should support. We have the capacity to change the (political) environment in the last phase. We will check who is a strong candidate and then decide to whom we should give the draft and support," he said. Jarange said the Maratha community has already been targeted. (PTI)

'Had we contested Maha polls, Marathas would've been divided'

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, Nov 6: Quota activist Manoj Jarange on Wednesday said Marathas would have been divided had they jumped into the poll fray, and claimed they can change the political landscape just ahead of the upcoming Maharashtra assembly elections.

Jarange also said that by opting to stay away from the elections, he has kept the fight for Maratha reservation alive.

A decision on supporting candidates for the November 20 state polls will be taken in due course, he told a Marathi news channel in Jalna district.

Jarange had earlier identified certain constituencies where he intended to support or oppose some candidates. But, on Monday, the activist said he will not be fielding or supporting any contestant in the state.

Asked about his future strategy, Jarange on Wednesday said, "A few poll aspirants may have been disgruntled due to the decision of not contesting elections. But with this decision, I have kept the fight for reservation alive. Elections is happiness for a short period which we should avoid."

The activist said they will take a call in due course on whom they want to defeat as there are still some days left before the election.

"We will give the draft (in support of Maratha reservation) to those who are seeking support from us. We will sit again and decide whom we should support. We have the capacity to change the (political) environment in the last phase. We will check who is a strong candidate and then decide to whom we should give the draft and support," he said. Jarange said the Maratha community has already been targeted. (PTI)

Mahayuti faced consequences of oppn's fake narrative in LS polls: Ajit Pawar

BARAMATI, Nov 6: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Wednesday said the Mahayuti allies faced the consequences of the fake narrative surrounding the Constitution created by the opposition during the Lok Sabha polls.

But the atmosphere is now conducive for the Mahayuti to continue in power in Maharashtra thanks to the government's people-centric schemes, while the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) is giving promises that it cannot execute, he said.

Pawar also expressed confidence that he would retain the Baramati assembly seat from where he is contesting the election.

The deputy CM was speaking in his home turf Baramati after unveiling his party the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)'s manifesto for the November 20 state elections for 288 assembly seats. His party is contesting 52 seats as part of the Mahayuti alliance with the Shiv Sena and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The party also unveiled constituency-specific manifestos for all the seats it is contesting.

Pawar is seeking his re-election from Baramati, while the NCP (SP) led by his uncle Sharad Pawar has fielded Yugendra Pawar from the seat, making it a Pawar vs Pawar battle. Yugendra is Ajit Pawar's nephew.

"During the Lok Sabha polls, a fake narrative was spread by the opposition that the Constitution will be changed, which is not possible and will never be. The opposition managed to create a fake narrative about the Constitution, and we (Mahayuti) had to pay for it in the Lok Sabha polls," he said in a press conference in Baramati.

The blindfold around the eyes of the Lady of Justice at the Supreme Court was removed and the sword was replaced by the Constitution, which shows the respect the government has towards the Constitution, he said.

Asked about whether the promises made by the Mahayuti are sustainable, he said the majority of the promises can be implemented.

"We will have to increase the revenue and resources of the state. When we present the budget, we strive to see where we can save without affecting the poor and



marginalised class. If we save money, the schemes will get funds," he said.

"I heard the speeches made by the opposition parties, in which they cast doubts on the promises made by the Mahayuti stating that the state will face a financial crisis. But at the same time, they are giving more promises than the Mahayuti," the state finance minister said.

According to Pawar, the opposition presented some schemes which can create additional financial burden on the state.

"If they are voted to power, they won't be able to execute these schemes. The other thing is that since the BJP which rules the Centre does not share their ideology, they won't be able to get support. Contrary to that, we will get massive support. Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are two examples of that and we will be able to run the schemes smoothly," he said.

Asked that elderly voters in Baramati are drifting towards the senior Pawar, Ajit Pawar said that trend was there in this year's Lok Sabha polls. "But for the state assembly polls, the trend of Baramatikars has changed and everyone will see it on November 23 (on poll results day)," he said.

Replying to a question on a challenge he has been facing within the family, he said that the entire Baramati was his family and it will make him victorious.

"I am confident of the win as I have reached out to more than 50 villages and established a dialogue with people," he said.

On a question related to the development of Baramati, which is being as the development done by the entire Pawar family and not just by Ajit Pawar, he said he is not

refuting that but added that he also had a small share as compared to the big share by others.

"The atmosphere is conducive for Mahayuti because of the people's driven schemes of the government."

Asked that party leader Ramraje Naik-Nimbalkar from Phaltan in Satara is not seen in the poll campaign of the NCP, he said he would issue a notice to him, asking why he was not campaigning.

In the manifesto for Baramati, the party made several promises, including the establishment of a sports academy, a logistics park and a food processing unit.

"As a Baramati candidate, I am proud to announce the manifesto for the constituency. Today, all the (NCP) candidates are releasing the manifesto for their respective constituencies. I am very happy to see the transformation of Baramati in the last 30 to 35 years," Pawar said, adding that he was committed to making Baramati the most developed tehsil in the country.

In order to provide a state-of-the-art sports facility to sports persons, an international-standard sports academy on the lines of academies in Punjab and Haryana, will be set up, he said.

"For farmers, we have decided to set up a food processing unit which will create job opportunities in the region, and a logistics park will also be set up in Baramati," he said.

Pawar said the party eyes to make Baramati as the first solar energy town in the country.

"As the menace of cancer is increasing, we are planning to set up a cancer hospital in Baramati, so that patients from the rural areas need not go to Pune or Mumbai for treatment," he said. (PTI)

Jharkhand polls: I am contesting against 'Pariwarvad', says Independent candidate

JAMSHEDPUR, Nov 6: Shiv Shankar Singh, who recently resigned from the BJP's primary membership in protest against the party's decision to field a candidate from an influential family in Jamshedpur East, on Wednesday said he would contest as an Independent candidate in the upcoming assembly elections.

He also criticised the saffron party for its "Pariwarvad" (dynastic politics) and claimed that his presence in the race would impact the prospects of national parties, including the Congress.

Singh, one of the four BJP members suspended by the party on Tuesday for violating party guidelines and contesting against the official candidate, Purnima Das Sahu (daughter-in-law of former Jharkhand CM Raghuraj Das), argued that his decision would affect both the BJP and Congress in the contest.

The 55-year-old Singh, who has an RSS background and has been active in politics for nearly three decades, voiced strong opposition to the BJP's decision to field

Purnima from Jamshedpur East. He alleged while the BJP leadership frequently criticised "Pariwarvad" in its public addresses, it engaged in dynastic politics itself.

Singh pointed to several family members of influential figures who had been given tickets in the state, such as Meera Munda (wife of former Union Minister and Jharkhand CM Arjun Munda) from Potka and Babul Soren (son of ex-CM Champai Soren) from Ghatsila.

"How can the BJP criticise 'Pariwarvad' when they are practicing it themselves?" Singh asked, adding that the party had no right to speak against it.

Though 24 candidates, including 15 Independents, are contesting from the seat, Singh described the contest as a three-way race between BJP, Congress, and himself.

He argued that both Purnima Sahu and Congress candidate Dr. Ajoy Kumar were "parachuted candidates" who lacked a deep connection to the people of Jamshedpur East. (PTI)

BJP bastion Nagpur South-West won't be cakewalk for Fadnavis: Political experts

NAGPUR, Nov 6: The Nagpur South-West assembly seat in Maharashtra is considered a stronghold of the BJP, but this time its MLA and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is expected to get a good fight from his Congress opponent, say political observers.

While Fadnavis has a strong chance of winning the seat in the November 20 state polls, it could be a close contest between him and his Congress rival Prafulla Gudhade Patil, whom the BJP leader trounced in 2014, they said.

The flooding in some areas of the constituency after heavy rains last year and inflation are among the most discussed topics among the electorate in the high-profile seat, comprising 4,08,149 voters.

The BJP is hoping to blunt the opposition's campaign by highlighting Ladki Bahin Yojana, a financial aid scheme for the poor women, and other welfare measures for different sections of the society, political analysts said.

Some prominent establishments like the Multi Modal international Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN), AIIMS, IIM Nagpur are located in the constituency and Fadnavis, who is seeking a sixth term, is expected to score over his opponent on the development plank, they said.

"Nagpur South-West is BJP's stronghold but for the first time, it



would be anything but a cakewalk. While it still looks like going the BJP's way due to the formidable presence of Fadnavis, his Congress rival is no minnow," political analyst Vivek Deshpande told PTI. Patil, an ex-corporator, has been a familiar name and is banking on anti-incumbency and public displeasure against unemployment and price rise, he said.

"Unlike Fadnavis, who has acquired a halo around himself in the last 10 years - first as CM and later as Deputy CM, Patil, a Kunbi, maintains a low profile and works silently to do networking in the public," he said.

"This time, Fadnavis faces a tough challenge to keep afloat, looking at his massive campaign

rollout through hoardings which have sprung up in every nook and corner of the constituency," Deshpande said.

The constituency comprises about one lakh Dalits, 70,000 kunbis, 60,000 Brahmins, 30,000 Telis and 20,000 Mali voters that might serve Patil better this time than previously, when the Constitution issue was not raised, he opined. "All in all, Fadnavis can't rest as much assured this time as on the previous two occasions," Deshpande said.

Local resident Dr Archana Deshpande said she and some other people were disappointed by the response of local authorities and the government after flooding when the Ambazari lake over-

flooded following heavy rains in the area in September 2023.

"We could not get timely help and the flood water entered our homes, causing damage. Our roads are not proper, there is no cleanliness and no proper intervention was done to stop the spread of Chikangunya in our area, which was preventable," said the resident of Shankar Nagar in the constituency.

Listing other problems, including inflation, the doctor claimed though electors are not happy, maximum votes would go to the BJP and Fadnavis as the people have no better alternative.

Joseph John, resident of Ajni in the constituency, said he feels Fadnavis will win, but there will be a tough fight.

"Being the former CM and present deputy chief minister, Fadnavis has an edge. He has never lost from this constituency. All these factors seem to be going Fadnavis' way," John said.

A resident of Ambazari in the constituency, who did not wish to be identified, said a section of locals would like to see a change in power this time.

He raised concerns over the alleged illegal constructions around Ambazari. He said many people like him voted for the BJP last time, but the party midway took along NCP (of Ajit Pawar) which

was "not right".

Political analyst Pradip Kumar Maitra said Prafulla Gudhade Patil's father Vinod Gudhade Patil was the first BJP MLA from Nagpur district in 1990.

The senior Patil was a two-term MLA from Nagpur-West before he left the BJP and joined Congress.

He fought as Congress candidate in the 1999 assembly polls and lost to Fadnavis, who was then contesting his first state election. The Nagpur South-West constituency is home to many big ticket establishments. Also, the Nagpur Metro came up during Fadnavis' rule and the credit goes to him as well as Union minister Nitin Gadkari, Maitra said.

Nearly one lakh direct job avenues have been created in MIHAN and other establishments, which will give electoral dividends to Fadnavis and the opposition will find it tough to dent his credibility, he said.

"Prafulla Gudhade Patil is good youth leader. He does not have that stature to counter Fadnavis, but will give a strong fight to Fadnavis, whose winning margin may come down," the analyst said.

The Congress candidate has claimed that the seat will throw up an upset in the polls because his opponent Fadnavis has lost his "ground connect". (PTI)

J-K Assembly proceedings adjourned for the day amid uproar over resolution on special status

SRINAGAR, Nov 6: Jammu and Kashmir Assembly proceedings were adjourned for the day on Wednesday amidst uproar after the House passed a resolution seeking a dialogue between the Centre and elected representatives for restoration of special status of the erstwhile state.

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather adjourned the House till Thursday as ruckus continued in the assembly over the resolution. After the House passed the resolution through voice vote, the assembly witnessed noisy scenes as the BJP members stormed its well to protest the resolution.

The Speaker had first adjourned the proceedings for 15 minutes.

However, as soon as the House met again, the BJP members continued with their protest and raised slogans against the Speaker.

BJP MLA and Leader of the Opposition, Sunil Sharma, said, "We have reports that you (Speaker) called a meeting of ministers yesterday and drafted the resolution yourself". However, Rather told the protesting BJP members to take their seats, saying "enough is enough". Amidst the din, the Speaker then adjourned the proceedings again for an hour.

Even as the House met again at 12:20 pm, the ruckus continued, with the BJP members raising slogans "Go back Go back, Speaker go back", and "take back illegal resolution". The Speaker repeatedly

asked the BJP MLAs to take their seats, saying, "this does not behave you". The NC members also took to their feet and both the sides hurled barbs at each other. "If you don't have confidence in me, bring a no confidence motion," the Speaker dared the BJP members, and adjourned the House till Thursday.

Earlier, amidst an uproar, the assembly passed the resolution through voice vote, prompting protests by BJP members.

J-K Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary moved the resolution for restoring the special status of J-K, which was revoked by the Centre on August 5, 2019.

"That This Legislative Assembly reaffirms the importance of the special status and constitutional guarantees, which safeguarded the identity, culture, and rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and expresses concern over their unilateral removal," the resolution moved by Choudhary said. It said this Assembly calls upon the Government of India to initiate dialogue with elected representatives of people of Jammu and Kashmir for restoration of special status, constitutional guarantees and to workout constitutional mechanisms for restoring these provisions. "This Assembly emphasises that any process for restoration must safeguard both national unity and the legitimate aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir," the resolution added. (PTI)

'Can't bulldoze overnight': SC slams UP, issues directions to all states



NEW DELHI, Nov 6: The Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the Uttar Pradesh (UP) government for an "illegal" demolition in 2019 while issuing directions to all states and union territories (UT) on the procedure to be followed during road widening and removal of encroachments.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra also directed the UP government to pay ₹25 lakh compensation to the man whose house was razed in 2019 for a road widening project. "You can't come with bulldozers and demolish the constructions overnight. You don't give the family, time to vacate. What about the household articles inside the house?" the bench asked the counsel representing the UP government.

Further, the apex court directed the UP chief secretary to conduct an inquiry into the matter pertaining to a house in Maharajganj district and take suitable action.

The bench elaborated on the steps that a state or its instrumentality must undertake before taking action in pursuance to a road-widening project.

The top court accordingly asked the states to ascertain the existing width of the road in terms of records or maps and carry out a survey, which would allow ascertaining the encroachments, if any, on the road.

In case an encroachment was found, the top court said, the state must issue a notice to the encroacher to remove it and if the correctness and validity of the notice was objected to, the state would issue a "speaking order" keeping in mind the principles of natural justice.

In a scenario of the objection being rejected, a reasonable notice would be furnished to the person against whom the adverse action was proposed, to remove the encroachment, it added.

The bench further underlined if the person concerned failed to comply with it, the competent authority would take steps to remove the encroachment unless restrained by an order of the competent authority or the court.

In a case where the existing

width of the road, including the state land adjoining it, was not sufficient to accommodate the road widening, the state would take steps to acquire its land in accordance with law before undertaking the exercise.

While hearing the matter of the petitioner, represented by senior advocate Siddharth Bhatnagar and advocate Shubham Kulshreshtha, the court had remarked, "... it is clear that the demolition was completely high-handed and without the authority of law."

The bench, therefore, concluded that the "entire process" followed during the demolition of the house in 2019 was "high-handed".

During the hearing, the bench was informed about 123 demolitions in the area concerned.

It also came on top court's record that the encroachment in question was of 3.7 square metre.

"But how can you start demolishing people's houses like that? Isn't this complete lawlessness?" it asked.

The top court further remarked, "You just walk in and demolish somebody's house. No notice, nothing."

Observing that somebody's property was destroyed without any demarcation or without any acquisition, the bench enquired with the state's counsel on the due process followed by the state authorities before taking such an action.

"You say you have only issued 'munadi', which is a beat of the drum," it observed, adding that no notice was issued to the individual before the house was razed, according to court records.

The top court further enquired with the state counsel about the basis on which the construction was held to be unauthorised.

When the state's counsel informed the bench about the road-widening project, the bench said, "Widening was just as excuse. It does not seem to be a genuine reason for undertaking this entire exercise."

It noted, "You can't just on the beat of a drum tell someone that vacate the house and we are here to demolish." (PTI)

Don't trust caller ID info; can be spoofed easily: Cyber advisory to govt officials

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: A cyber security advisory has cautioned government officials against trusting the caller ID information that pops up while receiving a phone call, following a spurt in "vishing" attacks aimed at compromising confidential personal information and gaining unauthorised access to official systems.

"Attackers may impersonate trusted entities, such as senior government officials, law enforcement agencies, or technical support personnel," the advisory issued recently by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) says.

The severity of the communication has been categorised as "high". It has specified that attackers "manipulate" caller ID information to make a call appear as if it is coming from a "legitimate government number".

The communication sent to multiple government departments and ministries has been accessed by PTI. It says it was issued as "in recent months, there has been an increase in vishing attacks targeting government officials to compromise confidential information and gain unauthorised access to official systems".

"Vishing" or voice-phishing is a social engineering attack where scammers use phone calls or voice messages to manipulate individuals to share sensitive information, such as log-in credentials, personal information and financial details.

The attackers also deploy the tactic of conveying a "sense of urgency", "coercing" targets into revealing information by implying severe consequences for non-compliance and using "complex technical language" to confuse or intimidate targets, making them more likely to comply, the advisory has said.

It has asked government officials to be cautious against such techniques as it has underlined that caller ID information can be "easily spoofed".

"Do not trust the legitimacy of the caller based solely on the displayed number. Cross-check any caller claiming to represent an official agency with official records," the communication has advised.

It has also asked officials to mandatorily verify the caller's identity through government channels before sharing sensitive information.

The advisory has asked them to call back the organisation or individual using publicly available contact information.

Officials, according to the advisory, should always "be suspicious of any unsolicited calls asking for personal or confidential information, especially when the caller is creating urgency or panic to pressure compliance".

"Take time to verify the information provided by a suspect caller," the advisory has said. It has also asked government staffers to practise all established protocols for ensuring safe cyber interaction during work and otherwise. (PTI)

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL, OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER: KARBI ANGLONG EAST DIVISION DIPHU

Dated:...../...../2024

TENDER NOTICE FOR THE SALE OF NHIDCL FOUR LANE (Sec-5) TIMBER LOTS AT PATRADISA ACCOUNT BEAT AND LANGMILI STOCK DEPOT

1. (a) Under the Provision made in the Assam Sale of Forest produce timber lots by tender system Rule 1977 (Amended upto date) sealed tenders in the prescribed form affixing Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council Money receipt worth of Rs. 10/- (Rupees Ten) only, are inviting for the NHIDCL Four Lane timber lots Sec-5 as shown in the prescribed schedule.
 - (b) The tenderers are requested to drop their tender papers in the tender box which will be kept opened in the Divisional Forest Office, Karbi Anglong East Division, Diphu during the office working hours from the date of issue of this sale notice on **06/11/2024 to 16/11/2024 from 10.30 a.m. (I.S.T.) to 3.30 p.m. (I.S.T.)**
 - (c) The last date for submission of tender papers is fixed on **16/11/2024**.
 - (d) The tender box will be **opened on the 18/11/2024** in presence of the interested bidders. If the office is closed on the last date of receiving tender for any reason, the next working day will be considered as the last date of tender submission. No tender delivered by post or hand after this date shall be considered under any circumstance.
 - (e) The successful tenderers shall have to deposit the bid value along with Dragging Cost, G.S.T. etc as shown in the statement order by the undersigned. The settlement is liable to be cancelled and shall be forfeited if the highest bidder fails to deposit the tender value and the tender shall be settled with the second highest bidder subject to fulfilment of terms and condition of the sale value.
2. (a) The tender must be accompanied by earnest money draft, "as call deposit pleased to Divisional Forest Officer, Karbi Anglong East Division, Diphu" of Rs. 250/- for ST and General Class Rs. 500/- for each timber lot. Cash or money order will not be accepted as Earnest money under any circumstance.
 - (b) Upto date GST, Caste Certificate, P Tax, Trading License & I.Tax must be enclosed alongwith the tender and without these documents no tender will be considered.
 - (c) The intending tenderer should inspect the timber lots at the place shown in the attached schedule before submitting tender and no claim shall be considered after any circumstances afterwards.
 - (d) The intending tenderers are requested to contact the office of the undersigned or the office of the concerned range office during office hours on any working days for further details of the sale notice and collect the sale notice and tender form etc on payment of Rs. 100/- (Rupees One hundred) only per copy.

Enclosed:- **Statement**

Lots Statement of NHIDCL Four Lane Section-5 under Karbi Anglong East Division, Diphu for the year 2024-25.

Sl. No.	Lots no. & Year	Species	No. of Logs	Volume	Royalty	D/Cost	Stacking	Hammer Impression	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	PD/01 of 2024-25	Teak	29 pieces	6.037 M ³	47,551.00	5000.00	Patradisa A/c Beat	FD-11	
2	PD/02 of 2024-25	Teak	134 pieces	27.376 M ³	2,07,058.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
3	PD/03 of 2024-25	Teak	107 pieces	23.727 M ³	1,88,869.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
4	PD/04 of 2024-25	Teak	31 pieces	5.004 M ³	34,491.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
5	PD/05 of 2024-25	Teak	15 pieces	2.414 M ³	17,215.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
6	PD/06 of 2024-25	Teak	31 pieces	10.122 M ³	96,451.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
7	PD/07 of 2024-25	Teak	27 pieces	6.842 M ³	58,184.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
8	PD/08 of 2024-25	Teak	21 pieces	6.219 M ³	56,701.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
9	PD/09 of 2024-25	Teak	29 pieces	6.679 M ³	58,845.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
10	PD/10 of 2024-25	Teak	38 pieces	7.498 M ³	56,378.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
11	PD/11 of 2024-25	Teak	98 pieces	10.443 M ³	70,768.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
12	PD/12 of 2024-25	Teak	106 pieces	12.493 M ³	82,359.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
13	PD/13 of 2024-25	Teak	94 pieces	7.315 M ³	46,976.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
14	PD/14 of 2024-25	Teak	142 pieces	14.608 M ³	94,305.00	5000.00	-do-	-do-	
15	PD/15 of 2024-25	Teak	81 pieces	9.267 M ³	58,398.00	8000.00	-do-	-do-	
16	PD/16 of 2024-25	Teak	177 pieces	20.42 M ³	1,33,745.00	10,000.00	-do-	-do-	
17	LN/01 of 2024-25	Teak	225 pieces	32.310 M ³	2,38,211.00	-	Langmili Stock Depot	FD-54	
18	LN/02 of 2024-25	Teak	181 pieces	19.060 M ³	1,31,559.00	-	-do-	-do-	
19	LN/03 of 2024-25	Teak	134 pieces	93.16 M ³	5,76,904.00	-	-do-	-do-	
20	LN/04 of 2024-25	Teak	191 pieces	11.340 M ³	70,134.00	-	-do-	-do-	
21	LN/05 of 2024-25	Non-Sal B-1	295 pieces	42.290 M ³	1,26,919.00	-	-do-	-do-	
22	LN/06 of 2024-25	Non-Sal B-1	201 pieces	25.360 M ³	76,762.00	-	-do-	-do-	
23	LN/07 of 2024-25	Non-Sal B-1	173 pieces	28.05 M ³	85,523.00	-	-do-	-do-	
24	LN/08 of 2024-25	Teak	214 pieces	27.64 M ³	1,82,364.00	-	Langmili Stock Depot	FD-54	
25	LN/09 of 2024-25	Teak	86 pieces	16.20 M ³	1,34,196.00	-	-do-	-do-	
26	LN/10 of 2024-25	Teak	84 pieces	10.95 M ³	34,522.00	-	-do-	-do-	
27	LN/11 of 2024-25	Teak	67 pieces	9.22 M ³	62,300.00	-	-do-	-do-	
28	LN/12 of 2024-25	Teak	57 pieces	7.06 M ³	49,352.00	-	-do-	-do-	
29	LN/14 of 2024-25	Teak	96 pieces	9.120 M ³	60,775.00	-	-do-	-do-	
30	LN/15 of 2024-25	Teak	61 pieces	7.860 M ³	54,851.00	-	-do-	-do-	
31	LN/16 of 2024-25	Teak	26 pieces	4.16 M ³	31,521.00	-	-do-	-do-	
32	LN/17 of 2024-25	Teak	39 pieces	3.96 M ³	26,940.00	-	-do-	-do-	
33	LN/18 of 2024-25	Non-Sal B-1	44 pieces	6.490 M ³	21,433.00	-	-do-	-do-	
34	LN/20 of 2024-25	Teak	45 pieces	6.130 M ³	44,996.00	-	-do-	-do-	
35	LN/21 of 2024-25	Teak	35 pieces	3.700 M ³	22,222.00	-	-do-	-do-	
36	LN/22 of 2024-25	Teak	41 pieces	4.700 M ³	33,388.00	-	-do-	-do-	
37	LN/23 of 2024-25	Teak	66 pieces	4.310 M ³	38,427.00	-	-do-	-do-	
38	LN/24 of 2024-25	Teak	63 pieces	2.970 M ³	20,033.00	-	-do-	-do-	
39	LN/25 of 2024-25	Teak	74 pieces	5.06 M ³	30,390.00	-	-do-	-do-	
40	LN/26 of 2024-25	Teak	33 pieces	2.580 M ³	17,674.00	-	-do-	-do-	
41	LN/27 of 2024-25	Teak	88 pieces	5.830 M ³	16,625.00	-	-do-	-do-	
42	LN/28 of 2024-25	Teak	30 pieces	5.470 M ³	41,376.00	-	-do-	-do-	
43	LN/29 of 2024-25	Teak	50 pieces	3.730 M ³	22,402.00	-	-do-	-do-	
44	LN/30 of 2024-25	Teak	86 pieces	6.130 M ³	36,817.00	-	-do-	-do-	
45	LN/31 of 2024-25	Teak	14 pieces	1.290 M ³	7,748.00	-	-do-	-do-	
46	LN/32 of 2024-25	Teak	11 pieces	2.490 M ³	14,955.00	-	-do-	-do-	
47	LN/33 of 2024-25	Teak	51 pieces	2.752 M ³	2,752.00	-	-do-	-do-	
48	LN/34 of 2024-25	Teak	48 pieces	3.110 M ³	18,676.00	-	-do-	-do-	
49	LN/35 of 2024-25	Teak	50 pieces	2.290 M ³	13,754.00	-	Langmili Stock Depot	FD-54	
50	LN/37 of 2024-25	Teak	66 pieces	4.310 M ³	38,427.00	-	-do-	-do-	
51	LN/38 of 2024-25	Teak	82 pieces	3.720 M ³	22,342.00	-	-do-	-do-	
52	LN/39 of 2024-25	Teak	45 pieces	1.770 M ³	10,631.00	-	-do-	-do-	
53	LN/40 of 2024-25	Teak	44 pieces	1.780 M ³	10,691.00	-	-do-	-do-	
54	LN/41 of 2024-25	Teak	45 pieces	2.110 M ³	12,678.00	-	-do-	-do-	
55	LN/42 of 2024-25	Teak	83 pieces	5.400 M ³	33,273.00	-	-do-	-do-	
56	LN/43 of 2024-25	Teak	64 pieces	3.660 M ³	21,983.00	-	-do-	-do-	
57	LN/44 of 2024-25	Teak	46 pieces	2.250 M ³	13,514.00	-	-do-	-do-	
58	LN/45 of 2024-25	Teak	42 pieces	2.390 M ³	14,354.00	-	-do-	-do-	
59	LN/46 of 2024-25	Teak	48 pieces	3.520 M ³	15,135.00	-	-do-	-do-	
60	LN/47 of 2024-25	Teak	73 pieces	3.850 M ³	23,123.00	-	-do-	-do-	
61	LN/48 of 2024-25	Teak	55 pieces	4.910 M ³	33,694.00	-	-do-	-do-	
62	LN/49 of 2024-25	Teak	34 pieces	4.38 M ³	29,746.00	-	-do-	-do-	
63	LN/50 of 2024-25	Teak	95 pieces	6.600 M ³	39,640.00	-	-do-	-do-	
64	LN/51 of 2024-25	Teak	106 pieces	7.220 M ³	43,363.00	-	-do-	-do-	
65	LN/52 of 2024-25	Teak	74 pieces	5.22 M ³	31,351.00	-	-do-	-do-	
66	LN/53 of 2024-25	Teak	101 pieces	7.330 M ³	51,040.00	-	-do-	-do-	

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Divisional Forest Officer,
Karbi Anglong East Division, Diphu.

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Dated 2/11/2024

YRF TO RE-RELEASE 'VEER-ZAARA' IN THEATRES TO MARK ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY



NEW DELHI, Nov 6: Veer-Zaara, starring Shah Rukh Khan and Preity Zinta, will re-release on Thursday, days ahead of its 20th anniversary. Production house Yash Raj Films will re-release the movie internationally in 600 screens, with first-time premieres in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar. It originally released in cinema halls around the world on November 12, 2004. Veteran filmmaker Yash Chopra directed Veer-Zaara from a screenplay written by his son Aditya Chopra. Spanning two decades, the film is a cross-border love story between Veer Pratap Singh, an Indian Air Force officer, and Zaara Hayaat Khan, the daughter of a Pakistani politician. One of the most iconic Indian films of all time, Veer-Zaara was the highest grossing Indian movie of the year both in India and worldwide, the banner said in a press release. Nelson D'Souza, Vice President, International Distribution of YRF, said Veer-Zaara has a cult following across the globe and on the occasion of its 20th anniversary, they wanted to re-release this iconic love story for the fans to savour the world over. "As we entered the 20th year of this unanimously loved film, we could sense that the fans wanted to see this love story worldwide. "From the chatter on social media, to fan requests to our offices globally, we could sense that people were waiting for us and wanting us to take this decision. So, this move by YRF is our hat-tip to the fans of the film," D'Souza said in a statement. It also starred Rani Mukerji, Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini, Divya Dutta, Boman Irani, Kirron Kher, Anupam Kher, Manoj Bajpayee, and Zohra Sehgal. The film is still remembered for its melodious soundtrack which boasts of songs like "Tere Liye", "Main Yahaan Hoon", "Do Pal", "Aaya Tere Dar Par Deewana", and "Aisa Des Hai Mera" with music based on old and untouched compositions by late music director Madan Mohan, as revised by his son Sanjeev Kohli. Javed Akhtar penned the songs, which were sung by Lata Mangeshkar, Jagjit Singh, Udit Narayan, Sonu Nigam, Gurdas Mann, Roop Kumar Rathod, Ahmed and Mohammed Hussain and Pritha Mazumder. "Veer-Zaara" will re-release in global markets like the USA, Canada, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, the UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria, France, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Singapore, Malaysia and South Africa, according to the makers. The re-release prints of the film will include the deleted song "Yeh Hum Aa Gaye Hain Kahaan", sung by Mangeshkar and Narayan, they added. (PTI)

Bad guys have all the fun until the end: Denzel Washington on 'Gladiator II' role

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: Bad guys have all the fun, says Denzel Washington who turns antagonist for Ridley Scott's "Gladiator II" and took the conscious decision to not watch the first Russel Crowe starrer because he didn't want to be connected to it. The veteran Hollywood star plays Macrinus, a former slave turned wealthy, conniving arms dealer, in the sequel to the blockbuster 2000 original. "I didn't go back to watch the first film. I didn't want to be connected to that. I watched the first film years ago. So I didn't want to look at it," Washington told PTI in a virtual interview from London.

In "Gladiator II", Scott brings back the epic gladiatorial battles made famous in "Gladiator", the classic that bagged five Oscars, including for best picture and best actor for Crowe.

Washington, 69, had earlier worked with Scott on the director's 2007 "American Gangster", also co-starring Crowe.

"Ridley Scott first, last and always," Washington said. "He called and I said yes. He's one of my favourite if not my favourite directors that I work with... he and his brother. But when he called, I said yes. It's as simple as that," the actor said.

Asked if he had fun playing a bad guy again after his Oscar-winning role in "Training Day", where he plays a corrupt narcotics officer, Washington said, "Absolutely. You know bad guys have all the fun, until the end."

"Gladiator II" features an ensemble cast also including Paul Mescal, Pedro Pascal, Joseph Quinn, Fred Hechinger as well as Connie Nielsen and Derek Jacobi, who reprise their roles from the first part.

While "Gladiator" focused on Maximus, the sequel takes place many years later and centres around Mescal's Lucius, the son of Maximus and Lucilla.

Exiled at a young age, Lucius' home is invaded by the Roman empire and he turns gladiator at the Colosseum with hopes that he will one day avenge his family's death. Washington's role as Macrinus sees him playing a gladiator 'owner' who views Lucius as a key instrument in his plans to overthrow Rome's young emperor twins Caracalla and Geta.

Washington, who won his first Oscar, a best supporting actor trophy, for playing an American Civil War soldier in the war drama "Glory", said he didn't discuss the character much with Scott before working on the movie.

"He leaves me alone and I kind of do my own thing. This film was so huge. He's got 10-15 million things going on at the same time. So, he kind of left me alone to my own devices and that was that," Washington said.

He was a frequent collaborator of the late Tony Scott on films such as "Crimson Tide", "Man on Fire", "The Taking of Pelham 123" and "Unstoppable".

Washington had fulsome words of praise for Mescal, who took a huge leap in his career with "Gladiator II" after his breakout role in the series "Normal People" and the Oscar-nominated role in the independent movie "After-sun".

"He, Fred, those guys are the future. That's a tough pair of shoes or sandals to put on. And, obviously Russell did a brilliant job years ago. And this young boy, really, he pulls it off. So I'm happy for him and proud of him," Washington said.

Washington, one of the most celebrated actors of his generation, has

delivered noteworthy performances in movies such as "Cry Freedom", "Philadelphia", "Remember the Titans" and "The Tragedy of Macbeth" as well as the three "Equalizer" movies.

He said, however, that he wouldn't describe himself as a "big movie person" at this point in his life. Washington also remembers fondly his time working on Mira Nair's 1991 romance drama movie "Mississippi Masala".

"We had a great time together... that was a while ago. I don't remember everything, but we had a great time together," he said about the movie, which explored the interracial romance between an Indian American girl, played by Sarita Choudhury, and an African American man. Asked what his criteria is

for choosing a project at this stage in life,

Washington said, "Filmmaker and script. Had some really interesting conversations with some great filmmakers. Can't talk about it right now, but there's some good opportunities for me in the next couple of years."

"Gladiator II" will be released in India by Paramount Pictures India on November 15 in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu in 4DX and IMAX. (PTI)



MANOJ BAJPAYEE ON 25 YEARS OF 'SHOOL':

A journey born out of pure passion, grit and unwavering faith

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: Actor Manoj Bajpayee on Tuesday marked the 25th anniversary of his cult classic movie "Shool" and said he owes it to filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma who trusted him to shoulder the movie.

Written and produced by Varma with dialogues by Anurag Kashyap, "Shool" was directed by Eshwar Nivas. It was released in theatres on November 5, 1999, and received praise for its story and performances of the lead cast, including Bajpayee, Raveena Tandon and Sayaji Shinde.

"25 years of 'Shool', a journey born out of pure passion, grit, and unwavering faith. Working with the visionary @RGVzoomin was nothing short of inspiring. His belief in me to carry this story on my shoulders meant everything, especially at a time when few would take that chance. Thank you,

RGV, for trusting me, guiding us, and creating a film that would resonate across generations," Bajpayee posted on X.

Set in Bihar, "Shool" featured Bajpayee as an upright cop who goes against a corrupt politician, a battle that takes an immense toll on his personal and professional life. Varma, who gave Bajpayee his career's breakthrough role as Bhiku Mahtra in "Satya", released a year before "Shool", praised the actor, saying it was his "ultra intense performance" which carried the movie.

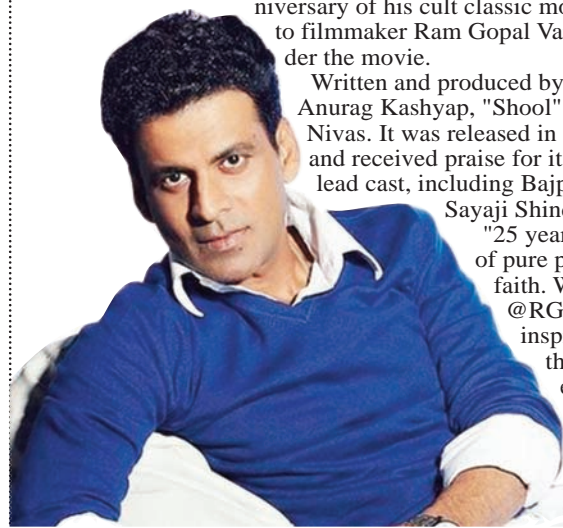
"Everyone else's contribution, including mine, was just marginal. What you did in that film is a textbook example of what a SERIOUS ACTOR can do to a ROLE (sic)," the filmmaker tweeted.

Bajpayee also expressed his gratitude to "Shool" director Nivas for bringing "intensity to every scene", Kashyap for his raw and powerful writing as well as the rest of the cast, including Tandon, Shinde, Shilpa Shetty, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Vineet Kumar, Virendra Saxena, Yashpal Sharma and Rajpal Yadav.

"Shool" wouldn't be the same without each of you. Special cheers to @ShankarEhsanLoy for their unforgettable music and to my friend Sandeep Chowtha for a background score that brought so much heart to every scene.

"To everyone who's embraced 'Shool' as a cult classic, this milestone is as much yours as it is ours. Here's to timeless cinema. #Shool25," said the actor.

Bajpayee is currently awaiting the release of his latest movie "Despatch", directed by Kanu Behl, and "The Fable" by Raam Reddy. (PTI)



'GANGS OF WASSEYPU' TEAM, SONU NIGAM, KAVITA SETH PAY RICH TRIBUTES TO SHARDA SINHA

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: Anurag Kashyap, Manoj Bajpayee, Richa Chadha, Huma Qureshi, and Sonu Nigam were among the prominent cinema personalities who condoled the death of popular folk singer Sharda Sinha, fondly called 'Bihar Kokila' by her fans.

Sharda, who was undergoing treatment at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi following a health complication due to multiple myeloma, died on Tuesday night. She was 72. The Padma Bhushan recipient lent her voice to songs prominently in Maithili, Bhojpuri and Magahi languages such as 'Chhathi Maiya Aayi Na Duariya', 'Ho Deenanth', 'Dwar Chekai', and 'Patna Se', but had also sung Hindi film songs like 'Taar Bijli' (Gangs of Wasseypur), 'Kahe Toh Se Sajna (Maine Pyar Kiya), and 'Babul (Hum Aapke Hain Koun...!). Anurag, who directed Gangs of Wasseypur, shared Sharda's photo on his Instagram Stories with the lyrics of 'Taar Bijli'.

"Sharda Sinha," he captioned the post with a broken heart emoji.

Bihar-born Manoj, who played the role of Sardar Khan in the 2012 film, said he was saddened by the news of the singer's death.

"I pay my respects to the great singer Sharda ji who took Bhojpuri music and singing to the national and international level with her singing! May God give peace to her soul," he wrote on X.

In revenge drama, "Taar Bijli" plays out as part of the pre-wedding celebrations of Faizal Khan (Nawazuddin Siddiqui) and Mohsina Hamid (Huma Qureshi) with the Khan family matriarch Nagma Khatoun (Richa Chadha) singing the song. Richa said the news of Sharda's death has come as a shock. "The world of folk songs and music will miss a natural and trained singer like Sharda ji... We are grateful to her. My respects," she wrote on her Instagram Stories. Varun Grover, who penned "Taar Bijli", in his tribute recalled how Sharda came into the lives of non-Biharis like him as the voice of 'Kahe Tohse Sajna', the song from 1989's Maine Pyar Kiya, and then stayed here.

"When we developed an understanding of folk

music, her true status was revealed to us. It was a great fortune that I got the opportunity to create a song with her. Rounds of tea, laughter, stories and paan continued and the song kept being created," the lyricist wrote on X.

"My respects. Your voice is and will always be the background music of every Chhath festival," he added, sharing the link to Sinha's Maithili song 'Mohi Lekhin Sajni Mor Manwa'.

In a video about the making of the music of Wasseypur, composer Sneha Khanwalkar described Sharda's voice as "pure wine" and recalled how they first met.

"Anurag suggested, 'Do you want to try Sharda ji?' So I went to her house and I sang a few lines to her. She brought out her harmonium and sang those lines so I thought this is the best...," Sneha recalled. Sharda also sang the song 'Nirmohiya' for the second season of the Bihar-set web series Maharan, fronted by Huma.

The actor, who plays the lead role of Rani Bharti in the Sony LIV show, shared a clip of the song on Instagram. "RIP@shardasinha_official ma'am," Huma wrote.

Born in Supaul in Bihar, Sinha became famous not only in her home state but also in parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh. (PTI)



Amorim heading into Man United job on back of huge win over Man City

LISBON (PORTUGAL), Nov 6: Call him the new Alex Ferguson. Ruben Amorim endeared himself to fans of Manchester United, the team where he'll soon be coach, by leading current club Sporting Lisbon to a 4-1 victory over Manchester City in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Ahead of his final home game in charge of Sporting after more than four years, Amorim quipped that United fans "will think that the new Alex Ferguson has arrived" if he was able to lead Sporting to victory over City — one of the favorites for the European title.

While that might be too strong — after all, Ferguson is regarded as one of soccer's greatest managers after his trophy-laden spell at Old Trafford from 1986-2013 — United supporters might be thinking they finally have a coach who can bring the good times back to a club that has lost its way since Ferguson's departure more than a decade ago.

Someone who can take on — and beat — City's esteemed manager Pep Guardiola, too.

"He's so much better than me at the moment," Amorim said, "but I believe a lot in my new club. We will start from a low level, and we will improve the team, the club."

Especially if Amorim eventually



brings Viktor Gyokeres with him to Manchester.

The Sweden striker led Sporting's fightback from a goal down at Estadio Jose Alvalade by netting a hat trick — including two penalties — in a stunning result in the fourth round of league games in the fourth round of competition. That's 23 goals in 17 games for Gyokeres this sea-

son. Amorim has already said he wouldn't look to sign Gyokeres in January but expects the striker to be heading to a bigger team at the end of the season. "Viktor has to stay until the end of the season," Amorim said, "and then his life maybe is going somewhere else."

Sporting fans unfurled a huge banner ahead of kickoff bearing the

message "Obrigado (thank you) Ruben Amorim," five days after the 39-year-old coach signed to become the new United manager. He will take charge of United from Monday, allowing him to complete his commitments with Sporting, which included the match against City and concludes with a trip to Braga on Sunday.

Amorim was thrown in the air by Sporting's players after the game and walked around the field with the team in a farewell to fans.

"Of course we will miss him a lot, we have done amazing things together," Gyokeres said of Amorim, who has led Sporting to two Portuguese league titles in his four full seasons at the club.

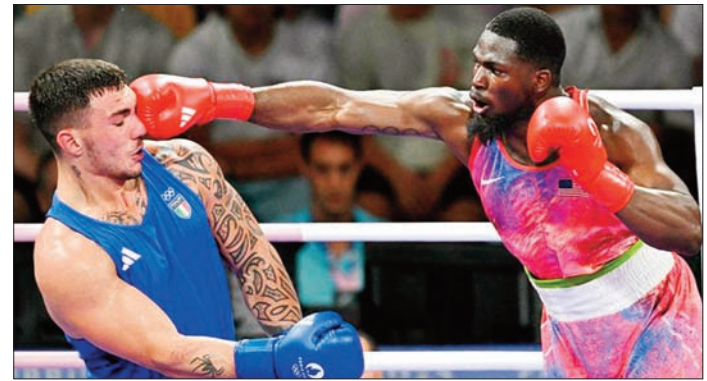
"We have to look forward to the next challenge ahead of us, but first of all we have another game in Sunday." In ending City's record 26-game unbeaten run in the Champions League, Sporting also consigned the Premier League champions to a third straight loss in all competitions — and that hasn't happened since April 2018.

City was defeated by Tottenham in the English League Cup on Wednesday and by Bournemouth in the Premier League on Saturday.

Erling Haaland missed a penalty in the 69th minute for City when the score was 3-1. City had taken the lead through Phil Foden in the fourth minute.

"It was written, because the first half was very tough on us," Amorim said. "We were very lucky, but then the second half we scored twice in the first minutes and the environment, everything, helped us. It was an amazing night." (AP)

Standout boxing nation at Paris Olympics joins new body aiming to keep the sport at 2028 Games



LAUSANNE, Nov 6: The most successful boxing nation at the Paris Olympics has joined the new governing body that aims to keep the sport in the 2028 Los Angeles Games after years of turmoil outside the ring.

The boxing federation of Uzbekistan, whose fighters won five of the 13 gold medals in Paris this year, is among four new members of World Boxing, said the Switzerland-based body that is trying to win formal recognition by the International Olympic Committee.

The IOC has set a deadline of "early 2025" to work with a new governing body replacing the Russian-led International Boxing Association, which was banished from the Olympic movement last year.

In a years-long dispute with the IBA over finance and integrity concerns, the IOC has overseen boxing tournaments at the past two Olympics in Paris and Tokyo but does not want to organize for a third time in Los Angeles. The dispute in-

tensified in 2018 when boxing officials defied IOC warnings and elected Uzbek businessman Gafur Rakhimov as their leader.

The IOC recently warned boxing federations that stay loyal to the IBA, now led by Russian Umar Kremlev, they will be cut off from funding and liaison with their national Olympic committee — effectively blocking their path to the 2028 Summer Games.

"The addition of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which are two of the world's leading boxing nations, is a major coup for World Boxing," the emerging governing body said, which also added Guatemala and Laos to a roster of 55 members.

World Boxing president Boris van der Vorst said the recruits "recognize it is the only way to keep the Olympic dreams of their boxers alive." The new members joined at a meeting in Pueblo, Colorado which hosted World Boxing's first global championships, at under-19 level. (AP)

Gauff defeats Swiatek to reach the semifinals at the WTA Finals

RIYADH, Nov 6: Coco Gauff earned her second victory over Iga Swiatek in 13 career matchups, winning 6-3, 6-4 at the WTA Finals to reach the semifinals of the season-ending tournament. The result means that Swiatek can't move up from No. 2 in the rankings this week, so Aryna Sabalenka will finish the year at No. 1 for the first time. It was Gauff's first victory over Swiatek since the 2023 Cincinnati Open, snapping a four-match losing skid head-to-head. Gauff, the 2023 U.S. Open champion, also put an end to five-time Grand Slam champ Swiatek's six-match unbeaten run at the WTA Finals, an event the Polish star won a year ago.

The win moved Gauff to 2-0 in the Orange Group, while Swiatek fell to 1-1. Swiatek had rallied to beat Barbora Krejickova in three sets on Sunday in her first match in two months.

Krejickova, the Wimbledon champion, kept her chances of advancing alive with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Jessica Pegula. That eliminated Pegula, who lost in straight sets to Gauff in their opening match in Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Ancelotti 'worried' after another poor performance by Real Madrid

MADRID, Nov 6: There were plenty of jeers at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. Before the match, when the Champions League anthem was played. And after the match, when Real Madrid saw its 15-game unbeaten run at home in the Champions League come to an end.

Madrid fans still appeared upset by Vinicius Junior not winning the Ballon d'Or ceremony, and also with yet another poor performance by the team. Madrid followed up its 4-0 loss to Barcelona in the Spanish league "clasico" with a 3-1 defeat against AC Milan in the Champions League, and coach Carlo Ancelotti didn't hide his concerns. "We need to be worried, we are not showing the best version of ourselves," Ancelotti said. "We are not compact as a team and we need to change that. We lack order in the team and, as a result, we're conceding too many goals."

Madrid, the European powerhouse that has a record 15 Champions League titles, has now conceded seven goals in four matches in the competition, with its other loss coming in a 1-0 defeat at Lille. It has trailed in its last three games in the competition, though it rallied to beat Borussia Dortmund 5-2 in its other home game after conceding first.

"It's normal to be worried in this situation," Ancelotti said. "We'll endure long nights, but we have to work on improving things and find that solidity that we've have for so long and that now we don't have it."

The result left Madrid in 17th place in the 36-team league phase of the Champions League.

"We need to stick together and try to correct what we are doing badly," Madrid midfielder Luka Modric said.

"It's not a crisis, that's not a word I like to talk about. I've been here 12 years and it's not the first time I've seen this situation. Quality is not enough, we need to work more as a team, then it's easier for us. I'm sure we'll rise up again."

The defense has been a problem for Madrid, which has conceded 10 goals in its last four matches.

"It's too much for a team like ours," Ancelotti said. "Our strength was that we were a solid team."

The attack also faltered, with Kylian Mbappé again failing to click with teammates Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo up front. (AP)

Erigaisi beats Gujrathi in marathon 5-hour opening match



CHENNAI, Nov 6: World No. 4 Indian Arjun Erigaisi beat compatriot Vidit Gujrathi after five hours of end-to-end action in the opening round of the Chennai Chess Grand Masters 2024 here on Monday.

Playing for the first time in India after crossing the historic 2800 ELO ranking mark, Erigaisi had a tough fight with Gujrathi before emerging victorious.

Playing with white pieces, Gujrathi launched his onslaught with a King's Pawn Opening, before Erigaisi countered with the French Variation of the Sicilian Defense.

The two Grandmasters, who were part of the historic gold-winning Indian team at the recent Chess Olympiad, battled on, exchanging blows at frequent intervals, before engaging in a gritty finish to the game as Erigaisi came out on top.

Erigaisi would be aiming to replicate the achievements of last year's winner Gukesh Dommaraju, who used the triumph at this competition to propel himself into the Candidates, and eventually to the World Championship.

Gukesh will miss this year's competition as he is preparing for the World Championships title match against Ding Liren of China.

Rising Indian talent Aravindh Chithambaram, currently ranked 29th in the world, faced Amin Tabatabaee on board 1, managing to secure a hard-fought draw against the Iranian Grandmaster.

On board 4, USA's Levon Aronian, who is the tournament's second-highest-ranked player, also drew his match with Serbia's Alexey Sarana. Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, starting his run in the competition with the black pieces, and triumphed over Parham Magsoodloo, propelling himself to the top of the Masters leaderboard.

The Challengers segment of the Chennai Grand Masters 2024 featured exciting matches and stand-out performances.

The 18-year-old Raunak Sadhwani, the leading player in this inaugural category, demonstrated his prowess with a commanding win against Karthikeyan Murali.

Leon Mendonca showcased strategic skill in his match against Vaishali R, ultimately emerging victorious. V Pranav claimed victory over Harika Dronavalli, while Abhimanyu Puranik secured a win against M Pranesh in another gripping contest.

Organised by MGD1 with ChessBase India, and sponsored by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu, the tournament features two categories -- Masters & Challengers.

With a rating average of 2729, the Masters presents a more competitive field this time around.

The debuting Challengers, meanwhile, is designed to provide emerging Indian talent the chance to compete in a top-class tournament. (PTI)

Real Madrid and AC Milan pay tribute to victims of deadly Valencia floods in Champions League match

MADRID, Nov 6: Real Madrid and AC Milan honored the victims of the deadly floods in Valencia before their Champions League match. Players from both teams entered the field wearing shirts with the words "We are all Valencia," written in Spanish on Madrid's kits and in Italian on AC Milan's.

A huge banner of the Valencia region was displayed in the stands at midfield, covering several sitting sections at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium while a moment of silence was observed before kickoff. Madrid's organized fan group also displayed a "We are all Valencia" banner behind one of the goals at the Bernabeu.

Spain international Álvaro Morata, who scored one of the

goals for Milan in the team's 3-1 win against Madrid, said soccer has become secondary after the tragedy.

"What's happening in Valencia is the most important thing," he said. "Hopefully the situation will improve, because we can't enjoy a soccer match with a situation like that happening in our country."

More than 200 people were killed when flash floods caused by heavy downpours in eastern Spain devastated the Valencia region last week, destroying almost everything in their path and leaving people trapped in vehicles, homes and businesses.

Real Madrid had donated 1 million euros to help the victims affected by the unprecedented floods. Madrid hadn't played a match since

its 4-0 loss to Barcelona in the Spanish league "clasico" on Oct. 26. Its weekend game at Valencia in the league was postponed because of the floods. Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said in his news conference on Monday that he didn't "feel like talking about soccer" with everything that was happening in Valencia. Several other sporting events across Spain were affected by the deadly floods.

Before the match, Madrid fans at the Bernabeu loudly jeered when UEFA's Champions League anthem was played. That came after the club decided not to attend the Ballon d'Or awards ceremony last week when its forward Vinicius Junior did not win the prestigious prize. (AP)

Southern rivals strive to strike back after recent defeats as Kerala Blasters host Hyderabad FC

KOCHI, Nov 6: Southern rivals Kerala Blasters FC and Hyderabad FC will seek a turnaround in their fortunes when they lock horns in the Indian Super League here on Thursday, having suffered reverses lately.

Kerala Blasters FC and Hyderabad FC currently stand at the 10th and 11th spots in the points table -- coming into this match on the back of defeats to Mumbai City FC and Mohun Bagan Super Giant respectively. This match gives them a chance to fix things up and get their respective seasons back on track.

The wind can be said to be swaying in the favour of the Kerala Blasters, as the Kochi-based outfit has won three out of their last four matches against Hyderabad FC. However, they have never won thrice in a row in front of the visitors, presenting this match as an unprecedented opportunity for them to do so.

Hyderabad FC will be eyeing points on the road to build upon one



win and draw each that they have accumulated in ISL 2024-25.

Kerala Blasters FC have found the back of the net in each of their previous 14 ISL matches at home. They have struck at least twice in eight of those games, and only Chennaiyin FC, Delhi Dynamos FC and Bengaluru FC (16 games each) have gone on longer such runs in the competition.

With the power-packed attacking

duo of Noah Sadaoui and Adrian Luna in their ranks, the Mikael Stahre-coached team is all set to delight the home fans further with their offensive firepower this term.

Simultaneously, Kerala Blasters FC have not kept a clean sheet in their previous 18 consecutive matches in the league. This is the joint second-longest such sequence in the ISL, along with FC Goa and Hyderabad FC, with only NorthEast

United FC having conceded goals in a longer stretch of matches.

It might prove out to be difficult for the team to climb up the league ladder unless they set their backline in order.

Hyderabad FC had snapped their four-game-long losing streak on the road by triumphing over Mohammedan SC by 4-0 in their previous away match.

That win must have infused greater belief in them to produce similar such performances in unfamiliar conditions, and the offensive cohesion displayed by Hyderabad FC will keep the Kerala Blasters FC defence in check as well.

Hyderabad FC have ended up conceding at least a goal each in seven out of their last nine away fixtures. They have been defeated in all those games, and in fact won the two matches when they kept a clean sheet, drawing a clear parallel between defensive discipline and a greater possibility of them capturing the three points. (PTI)

Manas Dhamne can become Mr Dependable of Indian tennis: Ashutosh Singh

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: Manas Dhamne could be the answer to Indian tennis' desperate search for "Mr Dependable", reckons new Davis Cup coach Ashutosh Singh, who is mighty impressed with the teenager's diligent approach and workmanlike attitude.

Ashutosh, who replaced Zeeshan Ali as coach, observed the youngster from Malegaon in Stockholm, where India competed in the Davis Cup Group I tie against Sweden.

Dhamne, 16, did not get to play a match but was part of the squad that travelled to Stockholm along with another youngster, Aryan Shah.

It was a clear sign that the team management and the selectors wanted Dhamne and Shah to have the Davis Cup experience, what it means to be with the national squad and what it takes to represent the country at the World Cup of tennis.

While India were bested 0-4 by the hosts, coach Ashutosh chose to see a silver lining in the forgettable outing in Sweden.

"Manas is a quintessential hard worker with a workman like attitude," said Ashutosh, who is son of former Davis Cupper Balram Singh.

"He just makes eye contact and nods



'ok' for any on-court work he's asked to do.

He has potential to become the Mr Dependable in singles that Indian tennis has long been searching for," remarked Ashutosh.

"Of course it's miles to go but the road he's taken looks possible with his diligent approach. One has to keep in mind that

Manas is only 16 and does need careful supervision in certain aspects of his workload management but it seems he's in experienced hands at his training base in Italy."

India have just one player in top-100 in Sumit Nagal (83) and the next best is Ramkumar Ramanathan, way behind at number 309, followed by Sasi Kumar

Mukund (365). All others are outside the top-500 bracket. Dhamne initially trained in Pune but left for Italy to train with renowned coach Riccardo Piatti at the Piatti Tennis Center in Bordighera.

Dhamne made a quick impression when he won the singles titles at the ITF Asia-Oceania Junior (Under-18) championships in 2022, becoming the youngest Indian to win the prestigious event at the age 14 years and nine months.

A year later, he was given a wild card by the MSLTA for the Tata Open Maharashtra, the ATP250 event, and again he impressed with his baseline game and range of strokes against American Mihale Mmoh, who was ranked 113 then.

In the season 2024, Dhamne has consistently competed on the ITF Men's Tour. He himself has not yet broken into top-1000 but already has wins over Nicholas David Ionel (378) Japanese veteran Tatsuma Ito (top-60 a few years back) and Romania's Vlad Dancu (ranked 565).

Ashutosh said India may have lost badly in Sweden but not everything was bleak.

"The main thing is to keep the main thing as the main thing. I want to bring to the forefront the excitement that the debuts of two young tennis players, which has largely gone unnoticed due to other

important discussions going on."

Talking about Aryan Shah, Ashutosh said he was a "skilful" player.

"Aryan is hard working and a quick learner with an enterprising head on his shoulders. Being inquisitive is a good indication of the eagerness of a young mind to learn, Aryan definitely checks that box."

"Alongside Manas, he brings much-needed unbridled energy of youth into the team. Having played all four junior grand slams in singles, he has foundation of top tier exposure to firmly understand the points of his game he needs to work on."

Ashutosh had an interesting take on how India's junior players approach the domestic tournaments.

He said it was worrying that many players, equipped with talent and the game, were not succeeding, simply because they were burning themselves out by playing more tournaments than necessary.

"Till U12, players shouldn't play more than 12 weeks. U14 also should be 15-16 weeks because each player plays two age groups, and they end playing almost 30-40 weeks per year. So, there is no time for working on the game and fitness.

"Over exposure to competition leads to early burnout. Low quality inconsequential matches are played throughout the year." (PTI)

Stokes missing as Draca, Netravalkar line up in long list for IPL mega auction

MUMBAI, Nov 6: England Test skipper Ben Stokes is missing from the list of 1,574 players while his former teammate James Anderson, Italian quick Thomas Draca and India-born USA medium pacer Saurabh Netravalkar have all registered for the IPL mega auction to be held in Jeddah on November 24 and 25.

The list, which will be shortened after the franchises provide their inputs, has all the marquee Indian players who were released from their teams including Rishabh Pant, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, R Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal.

Each of these five cricketers have listed themselves at a base price of ₹ 2 crore.

India quick Mohammed Shami, who has been sidelined from action due to various injuries since last November, was also released by his former team Gujarat Titans and has listed himself at ₹ 2 crore and so has left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh.

Among the other Indian players in the list with the maximum base price of ₹ 2 crore are Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Venkatesh Iyer, Avesh Khan, Deepak Chahar, Ishan Kishan and Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

This list also includes Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Siraj, Devdutt Padikkal, Krunal Pandya, Harshal Patel, Prasidh Krishna, T Natarajan, Washington Sundar and Umesh Yadav.

India batters Sarfaraz Khan and Prithvi Shaw, who were unsold in the last IPL auction, have registered themselves at the base price of ₹ 75 lakh each.

Stokes, who had decided to give the last season of the IPL a miss in order to manage his workload and focus on his fitness, has opted out for the 2025 edi-



tion as well.

The 42-year-Anderson, who retired from Test cricket earlier this year, has registered for the IPL for the first time. The veteran pacer last played a T20 10 years ago in 2014. He has never competed in a global franchise T20 league. He has a base price of ₹ 1.25 crore.

Netravalkar, who rose to prominence due to his stupendous performance for USA during the T20 World Cup earlier this year, has also lined up to go

under the hammer in Jeddah. The software engineer in Oracle has a base price of ₹ 30 lakh.

Ace Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon, who has gone unsold in previous auctions, has also entered the fray with the a base price of ₹ 2 crore.

Australian pacer Mitchell Starc, who was the most expensive buy in the IPL's last auction at a price of ₹ 24.50 crore, is back in the pool for this year's auction with a base price of ₹ 2 crore.

England quick Jofra Archer, who last played in the

2023 edition, is also listed for the same base price.

Medium pacer Thomas Draca has become the first player from Italy to register for the IPL. The 24-year has played four T20 Internationals since making his debut for Italy in June this year.

He impressed with his recent performance at the Global T20 Canada in August. Draca was the joint second-highest wicket-taker of the tournament with 11 wickets to his name from six innings at an average of 10.63 and an economy of 6.88.

The Italian pacer was recently signed by the Mumbai Indians owned MI Emirates for the upcoming season of the ILT20 in the UAE.

Draca has registered himself at base prices of ₹ 30 lakh in the all-rounders' category.

With up to six players permitted to be retained ahead of the mega auction, IPL teams can build a squad of 25 players each and there will be 204 slots available after 46 players were retained by 10 teams put together.

Each team will have a total purse of ₹ 120 crore as Punjab Kings have ₹ 110.5 crore available with them, followed by Royal Challengers Bengaluru with ₹ 83 crore, Delhi Capitals with ₹ 73 crore and Gujarat Titans with ₹ 69 crore.

Lucknow Super Giants will also have ₹ 69 crore in their purse while five-time winners Chennai Super Kings will have ₹ 55 crore.

Last year's winners Kolkata Knight Riders will come into the auction with ₹ 51 crore in purse while five-time champions Mumbai Indians will have ₹ 45 crore, last year's runner-up Sunrisers Hyderabad will have ₹ 45 crore and Rajasthan Royals will have ₹ 41 crore. (PTI)

Rishabh Pant climbs 5 places to 6th spot in ICC Test batters' rankings

DUBAI, Nov 6: India wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant on Wednesday rose five places to sixth spot in the latest ICC Men's Test Batter Rankings following his strong performance in a losing cause in third Test against New Zealand in Mumbai last week.

Pant made the jump on the back of a pair of half-centuries during the Mumbai Test, in a sure sign that he is back to his best following a serious car accident, with the attacking left-hander now just one spot behind the career-best fifth position he first occupied in July 2022.

The other Indian batter in top Test batter's chart is young left-handed opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who dropped a rung to fourth.

New Zealand secured a narrow 25-run victory in Mumbai to claim an unprecedented 3-0 series white-wash over India, with Pant and visiting side's Daryl Mitchell the main beneficiaries in the top 10 Test batter rankings.

Mitchell jumped eight places to seventh after scoring 82 in the first innings against India in the Mumbai Test, joining teammate Kane Williamson (second) as the only New Zealanders inside the top-10.

England right-hander Joe Root maintained his healthy lead at the top of the list, with Williamson, Harry Brook (third), Jaiswal (fourth) and Steve Smith (fifth) his closest challengers.

India's Shubman Gill (up four places to 16th) also makes some ground on the list for Test batters following a score of 90 in the first innings against New Zealand in Mumbai, while player-of-the-series Will Young of New Zealand gained 29 spots to move to 44th overall.

Ravindra Jadeja climbed two spots to sixth in the Test bowler rankings after taking 10 wickets against New Zealand, placing him just behind top-ranked Kagiso Rabada.

Australia's Josh Hazlewood occupied the second spot ahead of India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and Pat Cummins and Ravichandran Ashwin. (PTI)

David Warner says Cricket Australia 'squashed' ball change issue 'as fast as they could'

SYDNEY, Nov 6: Former Australia opener David Warner has called on Cricket Australia to clarify what happened when the umpires changed the ball during India A's first unofficial Test against Australia A, claiming the governing body "squashed" the matter "as quickly as possible."

Warner, whose leadership ban has just been lifted by Cricket Australia, said the matter was done away with given that the senior Indian team is bound for Australia for a five-Test series.

The issue emerged on the final day of the four-day game in Mackay last week, when the umpires provided the Indian players with a different ball to use at the start of play. The Indian players, particularly Ishan Kishan, were unhappy with the decision as the wicketkeeper-batter terming it as "a very stupid decision."

"I think the ultimate decision's with CA, isn't it? I think they've obviously squashed it as fast as they could, given that India's coming out here this summer," Warner was quoted as saying by the 'Sydney Morning Herald'.

"But if the umpires deem that something happened, then I'm sure there'll be a follow-up and I think the umpires or the match referee should be standing here answering those questions."

"I think the match referee should be coming out and addressing his own staff, who are the umpires, and if they're sticking by the umpire's decisions, then you've got to stand up for that. I think that's obviously a statement that CA probably need to release," he added.

On the final day, the stump mic audio picked umpire Shawn Craig as saying, "You scratch it, we change the ball. There will be no more discussion, let's play. This is not a discussion, you will be playing with that ball." (PTI)

Ponting predicts 3-1 win for Australia, says India will struggle without Shami

DUBAI, Nov 6: Former captain Ricky Ponting reckons Australia will clinch the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1 against India as the visitors will find taking 20 wickets in a Test as their "biggest challenge" in absence of Mohammed Shami.

Australia are keen on ending their barren run in the Border-Gavaskar with India winning each of the four series since 2014-15, including the historic triumphs Down Under in 2018-19 and 2020-21.

However, with India suffering the historic low of a first-ever whitewash by 0-3 against New Zealand, Ponting believes the hosts have a better chance of defeating India now.

"Probably more so now (than before)," Ponting said about Australia's chances on the ICC Review Show.

Shami has been out of action since last November due to injuries and Ponting believes his absence leaves a big hole in India's bowling attack comprising Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep, Prasidh Krishna and the uncapped Harshit Rana.

Ponting said, "Shami just leaves such a big hole in that bowling group. Back then (in August), there was still some conjecture whether Shami would be fit or not."

"I think taking 20 wickets in a Test match for India is going to be the biggest challenge. I think they'll bat well enough out here with the current group of batters that they've got."

While hailing Australia as a more settled unit, Ponting backed India to not be absolute pushovers when the series gets underway from November 22 in Perth. "I think India will win a Test match somewhere through the five Test matches," Ponting predicted.

"But I still think now, Australia probably look a bit more settled, a bit more experienced and we know that they're a very hard team to beat at home. So I'll stick with the 3-1."

Ponting feels one among the veteran Steve Smith or the flamboyant Rishabh Pant would be the highest run-scorers over the five Tests.



"Leading run scorer, I'm going to go Steve Smith or Rishabh Pant," Ponting said. "I think Smith, the fact that he's moved back down from opener to No 4 probably makes it feel like he's got more of a point to prove...that maybe he shouldn't have gone

up to open in the first place," he added.

"...and that No 4 is his spot and where he should have probably been the whole time and where he probably finished his career now."

Pant, who was the highest run-getter during the series against New Zealand, appeared to be the only in-form batter heading to Australia.

"With Rishabh back in the side and probably coming into bat in the middle order when the ball's probably lost a bit of its shine and a bit of its hardness, and the form that he's in, I'll go for him as one of the leading run scorers as well," Ponting said.

The legendary Ponting picked Josh Hazlewood to get more wickets for Australia than his fast bowling partners Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins.

"I think Hazlewood out of the Australian quicks, is right at the moment, is probably at the peak of his powers more than the other guys. So I'll go with him for the leading wicket-taker," Ponting said. (PTI)

IPL mega auction: 1574 players to go under hammer in Jeddah on November 24, 25

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: A whopping 1574 cricketers, including 1165 Indians, have signed up for the mega auction ahead of the Indian Premier League 2025 which will be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on November 24 and 25, the BCCI announced on Tuesday. The list includes 320 capped players, 1,224 uncapped players and 30 players from the Associate Nations.

Among the capped players, 48 are from India. Moreover, 965 uncapped players of the country will also be part of the auction. The player registration officially closed on Monday and a total of 409 overseas players will also go under the hammer. This is the second successive year the auction is being held overseas as Dubai hosted the previous one ahead of the IPL 2024.

However, the auction will clash with the scheduled third and fourth day's play of the first Test between India and Australia in Perth, which begins on November 22.

Each franchise will be able to form a maximum squad of 25 players (including respective retained players), and a total of 204 slots will be up for grabs from the auction. This year's auction will feature some high-profile India stars such as Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer and Arshdeep Singh. South Africa have the second largest players' pool in the auction with 91, followed by Australia with 76 players. There are 52



cricketers from England and 39 from New Zealand while West Indies (33) and Afghanistan (29) and Sri Lanka (29) follow in the list.

The Associates make their presence felt through USA (10), Netherlands (12), Canada (4), Italy (1), UAE (1) and Scotland (2).

The 10 franchises will collectively have around ₹ 641.5 crore to spend for the available 204 slots. Out of those 204 slots, 70 are earmarked for overseas players. As of now, 46 players have been retained by the 10 franchises with cumulative expenditure of ₹ 558.5 crore.

Each franchise was allocated ₹ 120 crore to build their squads but after the retention process, which was announced on October 31, Punjab Kings have the biggest purse -- ₹ 110.5 crore.

The Punjab outfit retained just two uncapped players -- Shashank Singh and Prabhsimran Singh for ₹ 9.5 crore. (PTI)

Despite internal challenges within IOA, commitment to host 2036 Olympics remains steadfast: Usha



NEW DELHI, Nov 6: Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President PT Usha on Tuesday insisted that its commitment to host the 2036 Summer Games "remained steadfast" despite the "internal challenges" her organisation has been facing due to her feud with the Executive Council members.

Usha has been engaging in a raging fight with 12 EC members who have refused to ratify the appointment of Raghuram Iyer as the IOA CEO made by her in January.

"Despite some internal challenges within the IOA, our commitment to hosting the 2036 Summer Games remains

steadfast. The IOA remained in continuous contact with the IOC and I am optimistic that India will be viewed as a gracious host," Usha said in a video sent by her office.

India has submitted a 'Letter of Intent', expressing its desire to host the 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Games, to the International Olympic Committee's Future Host Commission, taking the first concrete step in an ambitious plan after months of informal dialogue with the IOC.

The letter was submitted by the Indian Olympic Association on October 1, a sports ministry source said before Usha officially confirmed the development.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had first talked about his government's aspiration to host the 2036 Olympics last year.

"During the IOC session last year, our PM Narendra Modi put forward his vision of India hosting the Summer Olympics and Paralympics in 2036. Since then we have maintained regular communication with the IOC president Thomas Bach and the officials of the Future Host Commission," Usha said.

"We are also engaged in a productive discussion with the IOC during the Paris

Olympics. Our officials attended the executive programme and observer programme organised by the IOC during Paris Olympics.

"These interactions and learnings led to the submission of our letter of intent to host the 2036 Games in India in the early October this year."

A decision on the host will not be taken before the IOC elections next year and India will also have to face competition from several other nations like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, who are positioning themselves as strong contenders to host the sporting spectacle.

However, with the submission of a 'Letter of Intent', the nation has progressed from "Informal Dialogue" to the "Continuous Dialogue" stage of the host election process.

In this stage, the IOC conducts a "feasibility study" of the progress of projects associated with the Games in the potential host.

The next phase of the process would be "Targetted Dialogue", which would require the submission of an edition-specific formal bid, which would be assessed by the Future Host Commission.

The process would finally end with a host election. (PTI)

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