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Manipur CM convenes NDA meeting to discuss developing situation

Govt gears up to control the incessant crisis in the state

IMPHAL, Nov 18: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh has convened a meeting with ministers and MLAs of the ruling NDA here at 6 pm on Monday to review the "developing law and order situation in the state", officials said.

The development comes amid the National People's Party (NPP), which has seven MLAs in the 60-member Manipur Assembly, withdrawing support from the BJP-led government, claiming that the N Biren Singh dispensation has "completely failed to resolve the crisis and restore normalcy" in the northeastern state.

The withdrawal of support on Sunday, however, would not have any impact on the BJP government, as the saffron party enjoys a majority with its 32 MLAs. The saffron camp has also the support of five MLAs of the Naga People's Front (NPF) and six JD(U) legislators.



Meanwhile, secretary to the chief minister, Ningthoujam Geofrey, in a letter to the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), requested the influential body in Imphal Valley to "refrain from taking up any violent form of agitation at this critical

"all government offices will be closed to protest the Centre's inability to secure the life and properties of the people from attacks and killings by suspected Kuki-Hmar militants".

Meanwhile, a protester was killed in firing during a clash between security forces and a mob that was vandalising properties in Jiribam district, police said.

Police confirmed that one person was killed in a firing but said it was not immediately clear who opened fire, while eyewitnesses claimed the firing came from the direction of the security forces.

The incident took place late on Sunday night when agitators were vandalising properties at Babupara in the Jiribam police station area to protest the killing of women and children abducted by militants.

"One person was killed in firing... it was not immediately clear

who opened fire," a police officer said. The deceased has been identified as K Athouba, who was in his twenties, he said.

The offices of the Congress and BJP, and a house belonging to Jiribam's independent MLA were ransacked by a group of agitators. They brought furniture, paper and other things out of the properties and made a bonfire out of them in front of the buildings, officials said.

Earlier on Sunday, the body of another man, whose identity was yet to be ascertained, was found near Jiribam town and it was kept in the district hospital.

Meanwhile, the post-mortem examination of five bodies of persons who went missing from Jiribam district has been completed at a state-run hospital in Assam's Silchar town, sources said. The bodies (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Cong asks Modi to visit state, demands Shah's resignation



NEW DELHI, Nov 18: Amid a spike in violence in Manipur, the Congress on Monday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the troubled state before the Parliament session this month and demanded Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation for the "double engine government's complete failure" there.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said Modi must first meet an all-party delegation from Manipur and then also call an all-party meeting at the national level ahead of the Parliament session starting November 25.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here along with Manipur Congress chief K Meghachandra Singh and AICC in-charge of state Girish Chodankar, Ramesh demanded that Shah and chief minister N Biren Singh must resign.

"From May 3, 2023, Manipur has been burning and Prime Minister Modi visit various countries of the world, and gave sermons, but could not find time to visit Manipur. So, our first demand is that PM should take time out before the Parliament session to visit Manipur and meet political parties, politicians, civil society groups, and people in relief camps there," Ramesh said.

He said the Congress also demands that the Prime Minister should meet an all-party delegation from Manipur and then also call an all-party meeting be called at the national level.

"From July 31, 2024, there is no full-time governor. Before that an ST person was governor but she was removed within 18 months. We demand that immediately a full-time governor be appointed," Ramesh said.

The Congress also alleged that the prime minister has "outsourced" Manipur to the home minister. "There is a strange 'jugalbandi' between the home minister and the failed CM. Why the home minister has not taken cognizance of the CM's failures and why has he been attempting to save him?" Ramesh said.

If the BJP government, the Prime Minister and the home minister honestly want to fight the drug mafia then why do they not act on the cases pending before the courts, he said, adding the immediate need was for the PM to visit Manipur.

"The pain of Manipur is the pain of the country. More than 300 people have died and over 60,000 have been displaced. It is a story of the complete failure of the double-engine government," Ramesh said. The BJP got (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NEHU VC constitutes inquiry committee into University crisis

SHILLONG, Nov 18: On taking charge of the office, Vice Chancellor in charge of North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Prof Nirmalendu Saha has constituted an inquiry committee into the alleged mismanagement and administrative failures within the university that led to the prevailing crisis, its report of which will be submitted to the two-member committee established recently by the ministry of education.

Saha has also appealed to the agitating students to call off their indefinite hunger protest, which has been going on for the past 14 days.

In a statement, Saha said, "To address the core concerns, an inquiry committee has been constituted comprising representatives from all major stakeholders. The committee is rigorously working to complete its due process, and its findings will be submitted to the

committee established by the ministry of education. I appreciate the dedication and efforts of all members involved in this process and urge everyone to support their work in the spirit of transparency and accountability."

"I firmly believe that the student's well-being is our paramount concern. As a university, we exist to nurture and empower our students, and I assure you that every decision taken during this time will prioritise their interests. I appeal to all members of the NEHU community to come together, set aside differences, and focus on the collective goal of building a harmonious and thriving academic environment," he added. He said that the North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, has been witnessing a period of unrest over the past weeks. "As the Vice-Chancellor in (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Jharkhand election is for poor, youth, Hindu pride: Himanta



RANCHI, Nov 18: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said the Jharkhand election is for poor, youth, women, and Hindu pride.

He also accused the JMM-led government of allegedly not fulfilling any promise made during the 2019 elections.

"Chief Minister Hemant Soren is busy talking about his wife, while his wife Kalpana Soren says 'ek hi nara Hemant dubara' (one slogan, Hemant for second

time). I want to ask who will talk about youth, women and the poor in the state. This time no Hemant 'dubara' but poor and youth 'dubara'." Sarma said addressing an election rally at Mandu in Hazaribag district.

He added, "This Jharkhand election is for poor, women and youth, besides Hindu pride and protection. This election is for Jharkhand's as well as the country's development."

Attacking Hemant Soren-led government for allegedly not fulfilling its promises, he said that the government had promised to provide five lakh jobs and unemployment allowances.

"But, the government did not fulfil its promise. If BJP is voted to power, we will provide 2.87 lakh government jobs and create five lakh job opportunities. We will give ₹ 2,000 to graduate and post-graduate level students for two years so that they can carry out their preparations for jobs," he said.

He accused the JMM-led alliance government in Jharkhand of "patronising" infiltration.

"Bangladeshi infiltrators are entering Jharkhand, marrying tribal women and grabbing their lands. If BJP is voted to power, we will drive them out from Jharkhand," he said. (PTI)

Enough is enough: SC tells lawyer over comment on women judges



NEW DELHI, Nov 18: "Enough is enough. Don't mess with the court," an irked Supreme Court on Monday said after a lawyer claimed that advocates in the Delhi High Court have questioned the lack of adequate representation of women judges in the top court.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing a batch of pleas seeking 33 per cent

reservation of seats for women lawyers in the Delhi High Court Bar Association (DHCBA). During the hearing, an advocate appearing in the matter said lawyers at the high court were asking how many women judges there are in the Supreme Court.

Justice Surya Kant said, "If you are to play to the gallery by saying all these things, then please do. Say

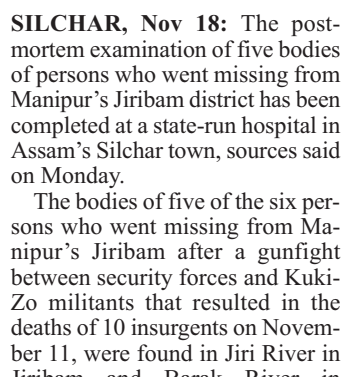
it 10 times. You are adding fuel to the fire. Let the media hear it. Don't mess with the court. Enough is enough. Pathetic. This is not the way the bar conducts itself," he said. The annoyed bench refused to hear any further explanation from the bar body.

"We won't hear anything. Now, we will go into the larger issue of the matter and decide the issue finally," it said.

The bench fixed November 29 for final arguments and said the judgment on the issue will be pronounced thereafter in three days.

The top court saw the video clips submitted by senior advocate and DHCBA president Mohit Mathur on deliberations over the issue of 33 per cent reservation in the bar body that took place at the general body meeting. It noted that eight video clips were submitted on the deliberations that took place at the general (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Autopsy of bodies of five persons missing from Jiribam completed



SILCHAR, Nov 18: The post-mortem examination of five bodies of persons who went missing from Manipur's Jiribam district has been completed at a state-run hospital in Assam's Silchar town, sources said on Monday.

The bodies of five of the six persons who went missing from Manipur's Jiribam after a gunfight between security forces and Kuki-Zo militants that resulted in the deaths of 10 insurgents on November 11, were found in Jiri River in Jiribam and Barak River in Assam's Cachar over the last few days and were brought to Silchar Medical College and Hospital (SMCH) in a "highly decomposed state".

The six persons, including three women and children each from the Meitei community, went missing from a relief camp in Jiribam's Borobekra area and were allegedly abducted by Kuki-Zo militants.



"The post-mortem examination of all the five bodies has been done in SMCH. The doctors concerned are in the process of preparing the report," a source privy to the development told PTI.

He said now Manipur Police will make necessary arrangements for taking the bodies back to their state and handing over the mortal remains to the bereaved family

members but when it will be done is not yet known.

With this, five of the six people have been traced, while one remained missing.

A senior official from Assam Police Headquarters said that the local unit of Cachar district is carrying out search operations in the Barak River to locate the sixth person. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

LGBI airport records 1.74 lakh passengers

GUWAHATI, Nov 18: The Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International (LGBI) Airport said it has handled 1.74 lakh passengers in just 10 days since November 6.

The Adani Group-controlled facility, in a statement, said the LGBI Airport in Guwahati successfully managed 1,202 flights, ensuring smooth operations for passengers, during the 10-day period this month.

In this phase, the airport processed over 1.74 lakh passengers, both domestic and international, it added. "On November 14, the LGBI Airport recorded its highest passenger count of the year with over 20,413 passengers passing through the terminal and 146 aircraft traffic movements (ATMs)," the company said.

In the same festive week, the Guwahati airport witnessed the second-highest passenger movement on (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Urges for the removal of tech transfer restrictions, unilateral trade measures India calls upon rich nations at COP29 for a sustainable future

BAKU, Nov 18: India on Monday called on developed countries to remove barriers to technology transfer, increase public climate finance, and avoid unfair trade measures disguised as climate action.

The appeal came during a high-level ministerial roundtable on pre-2030 ambition at the UN climate talks in Baku.

India's environment secretary Leena Nandan also urged rich nations to take the lead in cutting emissions and achieving net-zero by 2030. "This is essential to build a stronger, sustainable future," she said. The official said that innovative technologies are critical for a low-carbon future but said they must be made accessible to developing countries.

Developing countries need solutions like clean energy and carbon removal, but barriers like intellec-



tual property rights make it hard for them to access these technologies, Nandan said. "COP29 should come up with practical solutions to make technology affordable, adaptable, and relevant for developing countries," she added.

India asked developed countries to close the massive climate finance gap delaying climate action in developing countries.

"Trillions of dollars are needed for clean energy projects, disaster-resilient infrastructure, and climate

adaptation... It should be ensured that deviation from least-cost development pathways committed by developing countries is fully met through public finance by developed countries." "Not doing so puts an additional cost on people in developing countries bearing a disproportionate burden of climate change without having caused the problem," Nandan said.

India also raised strong objections to unilateral trade measures like the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which it said unfairly shifts the costs of climate action to poorer nations.

These measures hurt international cooperation and add financial burdens to developing countries, Nandan warned. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman last month termed (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

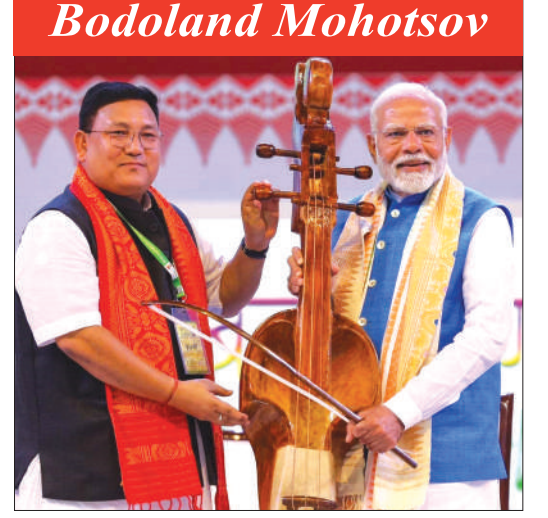
Pramod Boro extends gratitude to PM Modi

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Nov 18: The celebration of the first-ever Bodoland Mohotsav-a mega cultural event being held at the SAI Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi was concluded on Saturday that marked enthusiastic gracing of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, and several Union members during the two-day program scheduled.

Pramod Boro, the CEM of Bodoland Territorial Region, extended his gratitude and sincere thanks to PM Modi for his deeply moving remarks about the vibrant Bodoland Mohotsav, and the rich culture & heritage of Bodos, and BTR's journey of peace at the HT Leadership Summit.

He stated that the PM feels the pain of Bodo mothers, brothers, and sisters who suffered through the dark of five decades, and it is he who catalysed BTR's transformation from violence to peace through the historic BTR Peace Accord which was regarded as the third Bodo peace accord.

"It is my immense gratitude to Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji for his deeply moving remarks about the vibrant 1st Bodoland Mohotsav, our rich culture & heritage, and BTR's journey of peace at the HT Leadership Summit. Hon'ble PM feels the pain of four



Bodo mothers, brothers and sisters who suffered through the dark decades, and it is he who catalysed BTR's transformation from violence to peace through the historic BTR Peace Accord. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Will stop singing songs on alcohol if govt shuts 'theikas' across country: Diljit Dosanjh

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: Punjabi music sensation Diljit Dosanjh says he will stop singing alcohol-themed songs if all the 'theikas' (liquor shops) in the country are shut down.

At his Sunday show in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, the singer-actor responded to the notice sent to him ahead of his Hyderabad concert directing him to avoid songs related to alcohol, drugs and violence.

Diljit tweaked the words in his chartbusters "Lemonade" and "5 Taara" - which originally mention 'daaru' (alcohol) and 'theika' (liquor store) in their lyrics - after he received a notice from the Telangana government ahead of the Hyderabad concert of his "Dil-Luminati India Tour 2024 Tour" on Saturday.

Taking a swipe at the notice, the singer at his Sunday's show told the Ahmedabad audience: "There's some good news. I didn't get any notice today. There's more good news: I'll not sing a single song on alcohol today either. Ask me why? Because Gujarat is a dry state."

The singer said he was a teetotaler and was even willing to take a pledge to not make such songs but the governments of each state should declare themselves dry states.

"Let's do something, let's start a movement. If all states declare themselves dry states, I'll stop singing songs on alcohol from the very next day... I will stop singing about alcohol, you shut the 'theikas' in the country... I take a pledge."

"Is this possible? It's a big source of revenue. Everything was shut in corona (pandemic), except the thekas. You can't fool the youth," he can be seen saying in a video shared on Diljit's official Instagram page. The 40-year-old also had a word of caution for his naysayers: "Don't mess with me."

"I sing my songs and leave. Why are you messing with me? I have sung over dozens of devotional songs. In the last 10 days, I released two devotional songs but nobody is talking about them. Every person on TV channels is sitting and talking about 'Patiala Peg' (one of his songs). "There are dozens of Bollywood songs on alcohol. I barely have two-four songs like these. I'll not sing them today either. It's very easy for me to tweak the songs because I'm a teetotaler. Bollywood artists endorse alcohol. Diljit Dosanjh doesn't," he added. Diljit, also famous for Punjabi songs such as "G.O.A.T.", "Kinni Kinni", "Hass Hass", and "Born To Shine", had another offer for authorities.

"Declare a dry day on the same day I have my concerts, I won't sing any song on alcohol. I am not a new artist to whom you will say that 'You can't sing this, you can't sing that' and I will say 'Oh, what will I do?' I will tweak the song and it will be as much fun. If Gujarat is a dry state, I am a fan of the state government. I openly support the Gujarat government," he said. (PTI)



FELT LOT OF RESPECT FOR NEHRU DURING MY RESEARCH FOR 'FREEDOM AT MIDNIGHT': ACTOR SIDHANT GUPTA

MUMBAI, Nov 18: Actor Sidhant Gupta, who plays Jawaharlal Nehru in "Freedom At Midnight", says he was initially clueless about the approach he would take to essay the iconic real-life personality on screen until he read the third episode of the web series. The seven-episode show, streaming on Sony LIV, is the actor's first project since his breakout 2023 series "Jubilee".

"Freedom at Midnight", based on the celebrated book of the same name by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins, is directed by Nikkhil Advani. "I'm so obsessive about my characters... (But) I didn't know where I was, how I was going to go, how I was going to find this person. I felt so much respect and admiration for him (Nehru) when I researched him."

"When this ('Freedom At Midnight') came along, I read it, and I remember I was reading the third episode, all doors were closed, and there was no going out of this world. That's when I knew that this felt right... I thought I was feeling the right emotions and then I chose this one," Gupta told PTI.

The actor said he received many offers after the success of "Jubilee" but didn't sign on a project until he found something that stayed with him much like the Prime Video period drama directed by Vikramaditya Motwane. "I kept looking for something like that, that I read something and it stays inside, and it doesn't leave me. You want to strive and face the challenge, be that

character. I was longing for that feeling," said Gupta, who won the hearts of audiences and critics with his performance as the aspiring filmmaker Jay Khanna in "Jubilee". "Freedom At Midnight" also stars Rajendra Chawla and Chirag Vohra in which they essay the roles of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahatma Gandhi, respectively.

This was not Vohra's first time playing the role of Gandhi. He previously essayed the Father of the Nation in a play called "Gandhi Ke Godse".

"To get a character like Mahatma Gandhi, and the confidence of the director in you that you can play this part... It's my responsibility to give my best," the "Scam 1992" actor said. Chawla, known for his work in TV shows like "Family No. 1" and "Saas Bina Sasural" as well as movies such as "A Wednesday", and Advani's "Vedaa", thanked the director for trusting him with the role of Patel.

"A lot of people

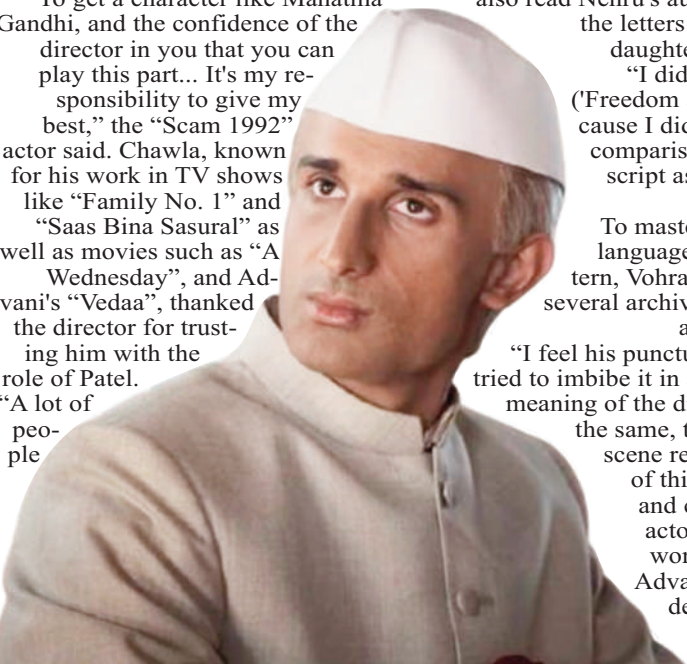
told Nikkhil sir that I do many comedy roles but he didn't grade me based on my record. He cast me because of the audition that I gave. This kind of confidence from a director and the praise coming from him... You feel you will get the fruit of all the hard work you've been doing for years," he added.

To prepare for their roles, all three actors made a conscious decision to abstain from reading the source material. Gupta said he swore by the script but also read Nehru's autobiography and the letters he penned to his daughter Indira Gandhi.

"I didn't read the book ('Freedom at Midnight') because I didn't want to draw comparisons. I treated the script as everything," he added.

To master Gandhi's body language and speech pattern, Vohra said he watched several archival footage available on YouTube.

"I feel his punctuation was odd. I tried to imbibe it in a way so that the meaning of the dialogues remains the same, the gravity of the scene remains intact. All of this was interesting and challenging," the actor said, adding he worked closely with Advani to explore the depths of his character. (PTI)



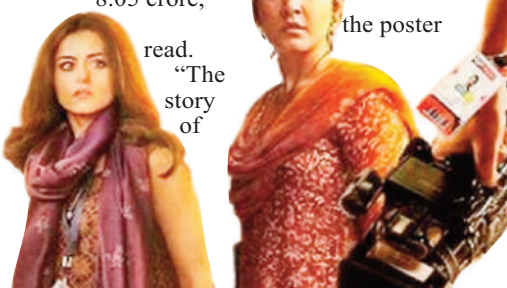
'THE SABARMATI REPORT' EARNS ₹ 8 CRORE IN OPENING WEEKEND

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: Vikrant Massey-starrer "The Sabarmati Report" earned over ₹ 8 crore at the box office in its first weekend, the makers announced on Monday.

Helmed by Dheeraj Sarna, the film revolves around the Godhra burning train incident of 2002 which triggered communal riots in Gujarat. It hit the screens on Friday.

Production banner Balaji Motion Pictures shared the movie's three-day box office collection on its X handle.

"Earning Applause at the box office! ₹ 8.05 crore,"



truth marches on with pride at the box office and we are grateful," the makers said in the caption.

"The Sabarmati Report" earned ₹ 1.69 crore on Friday and raised ₹ 2.62 crore and ₹ 3.74 crore on Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

The film also stars Raashii Khanna and Riddhi Dogra. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: Padam Singh and Heera Devi, two octogenarians from an Uttarakhand village and now the unlikely stars of director Vinod Kapri's "Pyre", are embarking on a new adventure in life.

Singh and Devi are currently en route to the Estonian capital Tallinn for the world premiere of the film on Tuesday at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival 2024. It is their first ride in a plane as well as their first foreign trip, according to Kapri.

"Pyre", billed as a melancholic ballad of an undying love in a dying land, has been chosen in the Official Selection - Competition section at the 28th edition of the movie gala. The Hindi-language film is set in the Himalayan Mountain range and features Padam Singh and Tulsi as an elderly couple who live in isolation in a mountain village whose residents have moved away to big cities in search of livelihood.

For "Pyre", Kapri cast two local residents: Singh, a retired Indian Army soldier, and Devi, a farmer, neither of whom had ever acted in a film before. Both hail from Berinag Tehsil in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district.

The filmmaker, who accompanied Singh and Devi to Tallinn for the film festival, shared a post on his official X page on Monday.

"#AamaBubu of #Uttarakhand. Off to #Tallinn @TallinnBNFF Their first flight Journey, First foreign trip. World premiere of @PyreFilm!" he wrote on the microblogging site.

Kapri shared a video of

Singh and Devi being escorted into the airport on wheelchairs. He also posted a picture of the duo smiling for the camera as they sat in the plane.

"Pyre" is the only Indian entry in the Official Competition category of the prestigious film gala, held annually in Estonia's capital, Tallinn.

"In the Himalayan Mountain range, a rural village loses its inhabitants to the city's allure while an elderly couple, Padam Singh and Tulsi, live in desolate isolation. Their days are filled with routine and occasional humour as they mask their loneliness.

"Their son's absence gnaws at them, and when a letter arrives promising his return, it reignites their hearts with joy and anticipation. However, the reunion does not unfold as expected, shattering their hopes. As the film climaxes, the spectator is confronted with a more rueful plight, deeply engaging the audience's empathy," read the film's official synopsis.

The film is inspired by a true story of an elderly couple Kapri met in 2017 in Munsyari, a village affected by migration in Uttarakhand. The couple's bond left a deep impact on him, prompting him to make "Pyre".

Kapri and his wife, Sakshi Joshi, have produced the movie independently through Bhagirathi Films. Legendary lyricist Gulzar has penned a song for the film.

The Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, which started on November 8, will come to a close on November 24. (PTI)

From Indian village to Estonia's Tallin: Uttarakhand elders embark on 1st foreign trip for film gala



