Vol.No.I

Biden authorises Ukraine to use **US-supplied long range missiles** 

Russian ballistic missile kills 11, injures 84 in Ukraine's north



Gahlot joins BJP

Issue No. 258

www.thehillstimes.in

25 YEARS OF DEDICATED JOURNALISM

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU

GUWAHATI, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

PRICE ₹8 PAGES 12

Voice of the hills people

# Manipur CM convenes NDA meeting to discuss developing situation

RNI-ASSENG/2023/86488

### 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 60member 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.

SHILLONG, Nov 18: On taking

charge of the office, Vice Chancel-

lor in charge of North Eastern Hill

University (NEHU), Prof Nir-

malemdu Saha has constituted an

inquiry committee into the alleged

mismanagement and administra-

tive failures within the university

that led to the prevailing crisis, its

report of which will be submitted

to the two-member committee es-

tablished recently by the ministry

itating students to call off their in-

definite hunger protest, which has

been going on for the past 14 days.

address the core concerns, an in-

quiry committee has been consti-

tuted comprising representatives

from all major stakeholders. The

committee is rigorously working to

In a statement, Saha said, "To

Saha has also appealed to the ag-

of education.

NEHU VC constitutes inquiry

committee into University crisis



Meanwhile, secretary to the chief minister, Ningthoujam Geoffrey, 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

committee established by the min-

istry of education. I appreciate the

dedication and efforts of all mem-

bers involved in this process and

urge everyone to support their

work in the spirit of transparency

"I firmly believe that the stu-

dent's well-being is our paramount

concern. As a university, we exist

to nurture and empower our stu-

dents, and I assure you that every

decision taken during this time will

prioritise their interests. I appeal to

all members of the NEHU commu-

nity to come together, set aside dif-

ferences, and focus on the

collective goal of building a har-

monious and thriving academic en-

vironment," he added. He said that

the North-Eastern Hill University

(NEHU), Shillong, has been wit-

nessing a period of unrest over the

and accountability.'

juncture and to deliberate jointly" The state government's request came even as COCOMI members began their campaign of locking government office buildings at Lamphel area in the Imphal West district on Monday.

son 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

children abducted by militants. "One person was killed in fir-COCOMI had earlier said that ing... it was not immediately clear

"all government offices will be

closed to protest the Centre's in-

ability to secure the life and prop-

erties of the people from attacks

and killings by suspected Kuki-

killed in firing during a clash be-

tween security forces and a mob

that was vandalising properties in

Police confirmed that one per-

vandalising properties at Babupara

in the Jiribam police station area to

protest the killing of women and

Jiribam district, police said.

Meanwhile, a protester was

Hmar militants"

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

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) 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

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 dis-

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

# 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 incharge 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 visitw 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)

### complete its due process, and its past weeks. "As the Vice-Chancelfindings will be submitted to the Hemant dubara' (one slogan, Hemant for second Enough is enough: SC tells lawyer Autopsy of bodies of five persons missing from Jiribam completed 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 Surva 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)

SILCHAR, Nov 18: The postmortem 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

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 devel-

opment told PTI. He said now Manipur Police will make necessary arrangements for taking the bodies back to their state and handing over the mortal

members but when it will be done

is not vet 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 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 highlevel 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, disasterresilient 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)

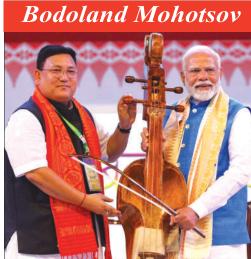
### **Pramod Boro extends** gratitude to PM Modi **HT Correspondent**

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 18: The celebration of the firstever Bodoland Mohotsov-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 Mohotsay, 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 our



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)

MUMBAL Nov 18: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said people are finding current interest rates "very stressful" and urged banks to make them affordable.

THE HILLS TIMES

Speaking at an event organised by SBI, the finance minister said that at present, India requires industry to ramp up and invest in new facilities, and added that lowering lending rates can help achieve the "Viksit Bharat" aspiration. "What is important is when you look at India's growth requirements, and you can have so many different voices coming out and saying the cost of borrowing is really very stressful, and a time when we want industries to ramp up and move (to) building capacities, bank interest rates will have to be far more affordable," Sitharaman said.

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal last week urged the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to cut interest rates to boost economic growth. He also suggested looking through food prices while deciding on monetary policy.

It can be noted that most of the commercial banks are tied directly or indirectly to the RBI's calls on interest rates, with the majority of loans using the repo rate as an external benchmark to which loan prices are pegged.

The consumer price inflation overshot the RBI's comfort level of 6 per cent, with the 6.2 per cent reading for October dashed hopes of a rate cut soon.

Sitharaman said a set of three or four perishable commodities is driving the headline inflation, currently, and the rest of it, the core

### **JSW Steel hosts** mega dealers meet

GUWAHATI, Nov 18: JSW Steel, India's largest steel manufacturer, organised a grand dealers' meet in Guwahati on Monday, in association with its North East India distributors, Surendra Steels Pvt. Ltd. and North East Infra Network. The event was held at the Kiranshree Grand hotel and was attended by over 300 dealers from all seven North Eastern states.

The proceedings kicked off with a ceremonial lamp lighting by Pradeep Bharech, CMD of Surendra Steels Pvt. Ltd., along with key officials from JSW, including Sandeep Khanna, National Retail Head – JSW Coated Steel; Amit Kumar, ZSM-East; Suman Saha. RSM-TMT East; Naba Jyoti Sarmah, ASM-NE; and Rahul Singh, ASM-TMT NE. In his opening address, Pradeep Bharech expressed gratitude towards JSW Steel for its unwavering support over the past 35 years, which he credited as instrumental to Surendra Steels' growth. He also acknowledged the strong bond with the dealers and their collective contribution to the company's success. Surendra Steels' directors - Nishant, Sahil, and Siddharth Bharech – gave a comprehensive presentation on the growth trajectory of the company, showcasing its expansion from a production capacity of 1.6 million tonnes per annum in 2002 to the current 35.7 million tonnes per annum. They also highlighted JSW Group's diversified interests, spanning across industries such as automobiles. cement, paints, energy, infrastructure, and sports, with steel being the group's flagship sector.



items, are at manageable levels of three or four per cent.

The finance minister also made it clear that she does not want to get into the debate of whether food prices should be considered while constructing the inflation indices or to take calls on rates by the RBI's monetary policy committee.

Inflation is a complex issue which affects The common man. she said, adding that the government has been working on the supply side measures, including edible oils and pulses.

However, she was quick to add that India "cyclically" suffers from supply issues and the government efforts are mainly focused on improving the storage facilities to lessen the volatilities.

Meanwhile, amid widespread concerns about a slowdown in growth, Sitharaman assured that the government is fully aware of the domestic and global challenges and added that there is no need to have "undue concerns".

quency indicators are pointing to strong activity on the ground.

Acknowledging that there are voices wondering if the government's fiscal consolidation is hurting economic activity, the finance minister denied any such thing, saying that growth is a priority for the government. She also pitched for a rating upgrade, saying it is time for independent rating agen-

Speaking at the annual business and economic conclave organised by SBI, Sitharaman also asked banks to concentrate on their core function of giving loans while stressing that the "misselling" of insurance products also indirectly adds to the cost of borrowing for

cies to take a call on it.

This is very important from the point of view of increasing people's trust in the banking sector.

"Trust should be built by the way you offer your portfolios, by the way you offer your service, and by the way you look at each customer's requirement without club-

While banks' distribution of insurance has led to a deepening of insurance penetration, it has also raised concerns about the misselling of products.

"Misselling...has added or contributed in indirect ways of increased cost of borrowing for the customers. So, banks will have to look at it with a lot more emphasis on their core banking activities and not burden the customers with insurances which they don't require," the minister said.

To earn the trust of people, banks must prioritise transparency, ethical practices and clear communication strategies, she added.

Meanwhile, Sitharaman said, small business loans are very important and set an MSME lending target of Rs 6.12 lakh crore for FY26 and Rs 7 lakh crore for FY27, on top of the Rs 5.75 lakh crore she has asked them to do in

Having achieved the goal of account opening, the next aim for the banking system should be to channelise the savings into risk capital formation as investments, giving insurance covers and also offering wealth management solutions.

Sitharaman expressed her dismay at countries withdrawing from climate change negotiations, terming it as a "worrying" development and reminding all that climate change impacts all.

Unilateral measures on promoting conscientious behaviours like the ones imposed by the European Union are also "very worrying", she said, stressing that the need is

# Indian employees seek greater recognition and open communication: Indeed survey

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Nov 18: A new survey by Indeed, the global hiring and matching platform, has revealed key insights into the current state of workplace inclusion in India, underscoring the importance of recognition, openness, and creativity in fostering a positive and productive work culture.

The "Bridging the Gap" survey, which focuses on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB), finds that employee satisfaction and confidence are closely tied to feeling valued and included. According to the survey, 63% of employees highlighted the importance of recognition from senior leaders. indicating that acknowledgment from leadership is crucial in creat-

ing a supportive workplace. Individual recognition also plays a significant role in boosting morale, with 62% of employees stating they feel happier when their contributions are appreciated by their team members. Furthermore, 58% of respondents emphasized the importance of having their ideas and opinions welcomed by their immediate colleagues. These

forms of recognition and validation, the survey suggests, not only enhance individual confidence but also contribute to a more collaborative, inclusive work environment. Sashi Kumar, Head of Sales at Indeed India, commented on the findings, saying, "It's clear that recognition and a safe, open environment are central to a thriving workplace. Employees want to feel that their voices are heard and their contributions matter. Companies that integrate recognition and inclusion into their core values are better positioned to attract, retain, and inspire a motivated workforce. Addressing these areas is not just beneficial for employee well-

being—it's good for business." The survey also found that an open environment which fosters creativity is key to employee satisfaction and well-being. Nearly 64% of employees reported that their companies encourage creative thinking, which helps them feel more connected to their work. Additionally, 61% of employees said they feel more engaged in workplaces that allow them the freedom to express themselves openly and contribute ideas. The survey suggests that companies that promote open communication, recognize achievements, and nurture creativity are more likely to deepen employees' connection to their roles, resulting in a stronger workplace culture.

However, despite the progress made, several challenges remain. The survey highlights key barriers to inclusion, including feelings of judgment from colleagues (43%), burnout and work-life imbalance (38%), lack of role clarity (33%), and criticism from direct managers (32%). These factors can undermine a sense of belonging and negatively impact overall employee well-being To create a truly inclusive and fulfilling work environment, Indeed recommends that organizations take concrete steps to address these challenges. This includes making recognition a priority, fostering open communication, and actively working to reduce discrimination. By valuing diverse perspectives and encouraging creativity, companies can build workplaces where every employee feels respected, valued, and empowered to thrive.

### Contd. from Page 1..

### Manipur CM convenes NDA meeting

of five of the six persons who went missing from 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 post-mortem examination of all the five bodies has been done in SMCH. The doctors concerned are in the process to prepare 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 Manipur and handing over the mortal remains to the bereaved family members but when it will be done is not yet known.

Meanwhile, K Rishikanta, vice president of BJP Manipur Pradesh SC Morcha, has tendered his resignation, citing personal reasons. On November 15, office-bearers and executive members of BJP's Jiribam mandal had also tendered their resignations to the state president citing "unwelcome/helpless situation in Jiribam and Manipur as a whole". An uneasy calm prevailed in Imphal Valley, where curfew remained enforced and internet services suspended after agitators vandalised and set ablaze properties belonging to several ministers and legislators. Markets and business establishments, barring pharmacies, remained closed, while public transport was off the roads but a few private vehicles were seen on the roads. Security forces have intensified patrolling in parts of Imphal and increased deployment at many of the residences of legislators as well as all major roads leading to the secretariat, state BJP headquarters and Raj Bhavan. (PTI)

### Cong asks Modi to visit state

32 out of 60 seats in the 2022 polls but within 15 months Manipur began to burn, he said. "The doubleengine government has failed and has been derailed. The Home Minister is directly responsible. We want the Home Minister to resign because it is his responsibility," he said. Manipur Congress chief K Meghachandra Singh alleged that there is an unprecedented turmoil and "complete anarchy" prevailing under the doubleengine government.

He alleged that there is no law and order at all. It is really very painful what the entire people of Manipur have to endure. Abductions of innocent people and killing of innocent people, particularly women and children, is very unfortunate, he said. "We can recall the statement of Narendra Modi ji in February 2017 when he said in an election campaign, those who cannot ensure peace in Manipur, have no right to govern the state. I want to ask the PM is the double engine government maintaining law and order," he said. He said Manipur is a state in the unit of India and asked why Modi is "neglecting" Manipur which is becoming a forgotten state by this

### NEHU VC constitutes inquiry

charge, I would like to address the university community and assure everyone that we are committed to restoring peace, normalcy, and a conducive environment for learning and development," he assured. Further, Saha informed that he has conducted extensive meetings with various stakeholders, including representatives of the NEHU Students' Union (NEHUSU), the NEHU Non-Teaching Staff Association (NEHUNSA), and the NEHU Teachers' Association (NEHUTA). (NNN)

### Enough is enough: SC tells

body meeting of the DHCBA, out of which only three were relevant. The counsel for petitioners said the DHCBA, despite express direction of the top court, is offering a post of joint treasurer which is only a "ceremonial post". On November 13, the top court said it would like to watch the video of the general body meeting of DHCBA to see the "quality and kind" of deliberations held on the issue of women's reservation in the bar body. (PTI)

### Autopsy of bodies of five persons

"We have been told by Manipur Police that those six persons were most likely killed and thrown into the river. Already two bodies, which came floating from Jiribam, were fished out yesterday," he added. The official said all the bodies reached the SMCH morgue in a "highly decomposed" state. Initially, the bodies of a woman and two children were found floating in the Jiri River in Jiribam and were brought to SMCH on Friday. Two more bodies of a woman and one child were found floating in the Barak River on Sunday morning in the neighbouring Cachar district of Assam. The six missing persons were identified as Yumrembam Rani Devi (60), Telem Thoibi Devi (31) and her daughter Telem Thajamanbi Devi (8), Laishram Heithoibi Devi (25) and her two children aishram Chingkheinganba Singh (two-and-a-half-years old) and Laishram Lamnganba Singh (10 months).

Meanwhile, hundreds of Meitei men and women gathered in front of Khudiram Bose statue in Silchar on Sunday night and held a candlelight protest against the abduction and suspected murder of the six persons. Following escalating violence in recent weeks in Jiribam, bordering Assam's Cachar, an alert has been sounded in the district with round-the-clock patrolling initiated in the remote border areas. (PTI)

### LGBI airport records 1.74 lakh

November 10, when the terminal served 20,016 passengers with 131 flight movements. "Notably, the LGBI Airport achieved its highest-ever international passenger traffic in October, serving 7,651 passengers with 104 aircraft traffic movements," the statement said. On regular days, the LGBI Airport manages an average of 17,500 passengers each day with 127 ATMs. "The smooth and seamless passenger movement of over 1.74 lakh travellers is a testament to the dedication and hard work of all the airport stakeholders, including AAI, CISF,

# Immigration, Customs, airline partners and the LGBI Airport team," the company said. (PTI) India calls upon rich nations

CBAM "unilateral and arbitrary" and said such measures could potentially harm India's industries and disrupt the balance in international trade. According to the Delhi-based think tank Centre for Science and Environment, CBAM will impose an additional 25 per cent tax on carbon-intensive goods exported from India to the EU. This tax burden would represent 0.05 per cent of the country's GDP. India also highlighted that global emissions could peak by 2030, as the 2024 NDC synthesis report projects that emissions will be 2.6 per cent lower in 2030 compared to 2019 levels. This is achievable if all countries work together. But for this to happen, developing nations need access to finance, technology, and capacity-building support, it said. (PTI)

### Pramod Boro extends gratitude

He is truly the messenger of peace, not just for BTR & North East, but for us & for the entire nation", Boro said. "His role as a guiding light and a steering force behind the historic BTR Peace Accord is etched in the hearts of every citizen of Bodoland. As we celebrate this vibrant festival of Bodoland's history & heritage, we reaffirm our commitment towards building BTR into the beacon of peace & progress which he has envisioned,' Boro added. More than five thousand participants from different districts of Bodoland Territorial Region, state of Assam, representatives from various states like West Bengal, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and neighbouring countries Nepal, Bhutan participated in the mega event.

The event was organised by the All Bodo Students Union, Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Dularai Bodo Harimu Afad in association with the government of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) to explore the rich culture, heritage of Bodos, and journey of peace and tranquillity in Bodoland region. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, inaugurated the Bodoland Mohotsov amidst the presence of a huge crowd of participants, educational intellectuals, academicians across the region, and subsequently received a grand success in it's event.

In his speech, Modi emphasised on the welfare and sustainable development initiatives being initiated by the government of BTR under the leadership of Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region, NDA alliance government. He lauded the organisers of the event, stating that since signing the BTR peace accord in 2020, the Bodoland region reached new heights in the fields of peace establishment, tranquillity amongst the citizens, and subsequently development initiatives achieved in today's juncture. ABSU president Dipen Boro, and Bodo Sahitya Sabha president, Dr Surath Narzary have also extended their deep gratitude and thanks to PM Modi for his kind gracious during the inaugural ceremony that highlighted the meaningful success of the Bodoland Mohotsov mega event.

## Proactively monitor portfolios, address potential risks: RBI Guv to bank boards

MUMBAI, Nov 18: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday asked banks to proactively monitor their portfolios, identify areas of over-concentration, and take preemptive measures to address potential risks and challenges.

The Governor also asked bank boards to strengthen the internal governance framework to curb unethical practices, such as mis-selling of products or opening of accounts without proper KYC verification.

In a keynote address at the Conference of Directors of Private Sector Banks, Das said bank

external factors like regulatory changes, shifting market winds, overall macroeconomic changes and advances in technology.

"Boards should also be fully cognisant of the organisation's internal strengths, vulnerabilities, and operational conditions so that they have a clear situational awareness,' he said. The Governor stressed that boards must be cognizant of build-up of concentrations in their business model.

Excessive reliance on specific sectors, markets, or customer segments can expose the bank to amplified risks, particularly in times

"Boards can play a proactive role by regularly monitoring the bank's portfolios, identifying potential areas of over-concentration, and taking pre-emptive steps to maintain a balanced approach,"

The boards, he said must also remain vigilant to operational risks, particularly those arising from IT outsourcing and reliance on thirdparty vendors.

He also said that the incentives for bank staff should be carefully structured so as not to encourage them to indulge in unethical prac-

## HDFC Bank wins 'Best private bank in India

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 18: HDFC Bank, one of India's leading private sector banks, was named the 'Best Private Bank in India' at the prestigious Global Private Banking Awards 2024, organised by Professional Wealth Management (PWM), on Monday.

The award, which recognizes excellence in private banking, is part of PWM's annual Global Private Banking Awards, now in its sixteenth year. PWM, a division of the Financial Times, is known for its comprehensive analysis of the growth strategies employed by private banks and regional financial hubs worldwide.

HDFC Bank's wealth management arm, HDFC Private Banking, was commended for its rapid expansion in India, where wealth generation has been growing at a fast pace. The bank's "hub-and-spoke" business model and its investment in expanding its talent pool were key factors behind this recognition. PWM noted that HDFC Private Banking has successfully capitalised on India's burgeoning wealth market by significantly increasing its personnel and strengthening its service offerings.

In response to the recognition, Rakesh K. Singh,

roup head of Investment Banking, Private Banking International Banking, Digital Ecosystems, and Banking as a Service at HDFC Bank, expressed pride in the achievement. "We are honoured to receive this award from PWM," said Singh. "This accolade reflects our team's relentless dedication to serving our clients and the trust they have placed in us over the years. At HDFC Bank, we maintain a customer-centric approach and are committed to delivering personalized financial solutions. Our focus on a 'phygital' experience—blending physical and digital channels—ensures that our clients receive seamless service."

HDFC Bank's wealth management division has over two and a half decades of experience and is among the largest wealth distributors in India. In the financial year 2024, the bank's wealth management business saw a remarkable 34% growth in its client base compared to the previous year. Currently, HDFC Wealth manages assets worth Rs. 6.34 lakh crore across more than 83,000 households.

The bank's wealth management team includes over 1,000 professionals, operating across 923 locations in India through the hub-and-spoke model.

# Eastern India Culinary Association launched to boost regional culinary standards

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 18: The Eastern India Culinary Association (EICA) has officially been launched on Monday, with the goal of advancing the culinary landscape across Eastern India. The newly established organization, which represents a wide geographical region that includes the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, along with the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Tripura, and West Bengal, seeks to foster growth, innovation, and collaboration within the regional food industry

Affiliated with both the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) and the World Association of Chefs Societies, EICA's mission is to unite chefs, culinary institutions, and food industry professionals. The association aims to promote regional cuisines, develop culinary skills, and create a collaborative platform for the culinary community in Eastern India. Under the leadership of President Abhiru Biswas, Vice President Sumanta Chakrabarty, General



Secretary Sandeep K Pandey, and other core members, EICA is poised to drive significant change in the region's culinary culture.

The association's vision includes building a strong culinary network that connects young chefs, culinary schools, hotel associations, and food businesses. By facilitating collaboration, EICA aims to create a united front that will help raise the standards of the food industry in Eastern India. A key part of this effort is the promotion of regional cuisines, with the association focused on highlighting the unique ingredients and cooking traditions of the area. Another priority for EICA is the

professional development of chefs. with plans to offer training sessions, seminars, and workshops to enhance skills and provide exposure to new trends in the global culinary scene. Alongside skillbuilding, the association will also work to raise awareness about food safety, hygiene, and ethical culinary practices to strengthen industry standards across the region. EICA's commitment to innovation is reflected in its efforts to inte-

grate technological advancements into the culinary industry, supporting chefs and food businesses in adapting to global standards.

EICA's focus extends beyond urban centers, as the association is dedicated to bringing together chefs from rural and remote areas of Eastern India, offering them a platform to showcase their talent and celebrate the culinary diversity of the region. In collaboration with key government bodies such as the Ministry of Tourism, Skill Development, and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the association will work toward sustainable growth in the culinary industry.

With plans to publish works from experienced chefs and share cutting-edge culinary ideas, EICA is focused on raising the profile of Eastern India's culinary scene, positioning it as a significant contributor to the global food industry. By fostering collaboration and providing opportunities for skill development, the association aims to ensure that the region's culinary talent gains the recognition it deserves on the national and interna-

## Skill Yatra flagged off in Kokrajhar to empower youth

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024** 

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Nov 18: The ceremonial inauguration of Skill Yatra—a skill awareness initiative by the Assam Skill Development Mission—was held at the Girls' College Auditorium Hall in Kokraihar on Monday.

This programme aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India the 'Skill Capital of the World'. The Skill Yatra aims to raise awareness about skill development opportunities and equip youth with essential skills for employment, empowering them to build better careers.

The Skill Yatra targets students from class 9 to degree level in government schools and colleges. It is designed to raise awareness about skill-based education and inform students about diverse opportunities within and outside the state. A key feature of the programme is the 'Skill Yatra Van', which was flagged off by Kokrajhar ADC, Kabita Deka, and other guests during the event. The van will travel across the region, conducting psychometric tests to assess students' interests and aptitudes in various skills. These online tests will help students identify potential career paths based on their interests, fol-

lowed by counseling sessions that will provide guidance on available livelihood opportunities and career

In her address, additional district commissioner Kabita Deka emphasised the evolving career landscape, particularly for women. She highlighted how traditional job roles, such as teaching and nursing, are no longer the only career paths available to women. With increasing competition for government jobs, she pointed out that acquiring specific skills can significantly enhance employability. ADC Deka urged students to identify their strengths and interests to make informed decisions about their career paths. She stressed that the Skill Yatra programme would provide students with the tools to embark on a journey of continuous learning and professional growth while fostering a supportive community of educators, industry experts, and professionals.

The event was attended by Dhajen Basumatary, district training officer of Kokrajhar; Dr Dimacha D Mwchahary, principal of Kokrajhar Government College; and Dr Adaram Basumatary, principal of Girls' College, Kokrajhar, along with officials, students, and teach-

### Cachar launches special drive for electoral roll updates

GUWAHATI. Nov 18: In a major initiative to ensure accurate and inclusive electoral rolls, the District Election Office in Cachar has commenced a special summary revision of photo electoral rolls. The drive, aligned with January 1, 2025, as the qualifying date, aims to empower citizens by enabling updates, inclusions, and corrections to the electoral rolls. The campaign emphasises a seamless process for voters. Citizens can apply for the inclusion of their names using Form 6, request deletions with Form 7, or

effortlessly via the official portal www.nvsp.in or the Voter Helpline

The initiative underscores the administration's dedication to upholdactive citizen participation. Residents of Cachar are encouraged to take full advantage of this opportunity to ensure their details are accurate, paving the way for transparent

quiries, citizens can visit the District Election Office in Silchar or access

# Seijosa police bust postal cheating racket

Coordinated search operation leads to the arrest of Gano Kanta Hazarika, dismantling the fraud network & recovering stolen property

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 18: In a coordinated effort, Seijosa police, under the leadership of SDPO Seijosa Sashi Dore and a police team comprising OC PS Seijosa SI S Thinley, HC D Talley, Ct T Sera, Ct Godak Raja, Ct T Takar, Ct Adam Namkhang, and Ct F Wangsa, conducted a major search operation in the Noapamua area, PS Gingia, district Biswanath Chariali, on Monday. The operation, carried out under the close supervision of SP Pakke Kesang Tasi Darrang, was based on human and technological intelligence, targeting an alleged accused in a cheating case related to the National Small Savings Schemes under the postal department of Namorah village, Dissing Passo Circle, PS Seijosa, district Pakke Kesang.

The operation, executed early in the morning, led to the arrest of the alleged accused, Gano Kanta Hazarika, from his apartment in the Noapamua area, PS Gingia, district Biswanath Chariali, in connection with his involvement in SJA PS Case No. 06/24 U/S 115(2)/316(4)/318(4)/351(2)

tion met AK Mishra, the adviser of the North

East Division, ministry of home affairs

Mwchahary, president, and Dilranjan

Narzary, general secretary of the association.

and submitted a memorandum to the Union

home minister, Amit Shah through AK

Mishra, that led to a discussion on an issue

A further appeal was made to the Union

home minister of India to grant "General

Amnesty" to all the leaders, members, and

The delegation team was led by Rujugra

(MHA), in New Delhi.

related to former NDFB.



**Ex-NDFB** sought general amnesty

on leaders languishing in jail

The operation, which involved officers from the police teams of both PS jurisdictions of Gingia and Seijosa, focused on a residential neighborhood identified as the

possible residence of the alleged suspect based on multiple tips and intelligence. This led to the arrest of the absconding criminal. Despite various attempts by the fugitive to evade arrest, Seijosa police demonstrated its

commitment to making the area safer by apprehending criminals and recovering stolen

"This operation highlights Seijosa police's continued dedication to tackling crime head-on and making our neighborhoods safer for all residents," stated SDPO Seijosa.

"Our officers worked tirelessly to gather intelligence, execute non-bailable warrants, and bring these criminals to justice," said SDPO Seijosa. "Thanks to the cooperation of the community, Assam Police, and the dedication of our officers, we were able to dismantle this criminal network and prevent further victimisation."

The operation was a direct result of ongoing collaboration between law enforcement and the local community. Residents had reported suspicious activity in the postal department, prompting the police to act on this information and apprehend the suspects. Authorities are now urging the public to continue reporting any suspicious activity or tips that could assist in solving other open

**HT Bureau** 

These applications can be submitted App, ensuring accessibility for all. ing democratic values by fostering

and fair electoral processes.

For additional support or in-

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 18: The ex-National The BTR Peace Accord signed on January 27, 2020, between the government of India, Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) welthe government of Assam, NDFB, ABSU. fare association has sought the granting of general amnesty to all the leaders, members, and UBPO embraced a ray of hope and optiand cadres who are still languishing in jail mism towards aiming for lasting peace in the even after the BTR Peace Accord signed on Bodoland region. However, the association has expressed 27th January. On Monday, a six-member delegation team of ex-NDFB Welfare Associathat they are concerned that Ranjan Daimari.

the founding president of the erstwhile National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB), a party to the signatory of the Bodo Peace Accord, along with some leaders are still languishing in the Guwahati Central Jail. Clause 9.4 of the Accord states that the

government of Assam will dismiss all criminal cases against NDFB members for nonheinous offenses, but many cases, classified as non-heinous, remain un-dismissed to date. Meanwhile, cases involving heinous crimes will be evaluated on an individual basis. while a sympathetic consideration may also

## 7<sup>th</sup> National Naturopathy Day celebrated at MSSV, Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 18: The 7th National Naturopathy Day was celebrated at Mahapurusha Srimanta Sanka-Viswavidyalaya radeva (MSSV) here on Monday.

The event was organised by the National AYUSH Mission, government of Assam, in collaboration with the department of Yogic Science and Naturopathy of the university. The event was attended by Prof Mridul Hazarika, vicechancellor, MSSV; Dr Shoshi Sonowal, joint director of AYUSH, Guwahati; Dr Nibul Gogoi, deputy director of AYUSH, Guwajoint director of Health Services, Nagaon.

The speakers delivered thought-provoking explanations about the importance and needs of naturopathy.

The event was also attended by Dr Rahul Debnath, district nodal officer, AYUSH, Nagaon; Shravan Kumar Bora, district program officer, National AYUSH Mission, Nagaon; Kushal Thakuria, principal secretary of Srimanta Sankaradeva Sangha; and the coordinator of the University, Dr Bichitra Bikash, deputy registrar (Academic), along with faculty

Dr Madhan Bora, Dr Donirung Reang, assistant professor; yoga instructor Ravi Prasad Sarmah; and students Dolly Boro and Subhan Deka from the department of Yogic Science

for various therapies. They also presented a practical demonstration session on therapy.

and Naturopathy, Guwahati

Unit, discussed the impor-

tance of yoga and the need

Dr Sarat Hazarika, registrar of the University, welcomed the distinguished guests to the event, while Dr Sumi Daa-Dhara mentored the entire event, a press note

# Sonitpur holds meeting for LCDC 2024-25



**HT Correspondent** TEZPUR, Nov 18: The District Coordination Committee meeting for the Leprosy Case Detection Campaign 2024-25 (LCDC) was held on Monday at the Conference Hall of the District Commissioner's Office, Sonitpur.

Additional district commissioner (health) Twahir Alam welcomed everyone to the meeting and urged the stakeholders to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for the campaign and to adhere to the provided timeline. Zonal

leprosy officer, Sonitpur, Dr TB Chetri, informed the gathering about the 14-day campaign scheduled to run from December 2 to December 16 in the district. Dr Chetri stated that house-tohouse screening would be conducted by a team of health workers for everyone above 2 years of age. He elaborated on the strategies to be applied for detecting leprosy cases in the district. Joint director of Health Services, Sonitpur, Dr Rupak Baruah, emphasised that no household should be left unvisited, and no individual above 2 years of age should remain unscreened

Inspector of schools Prabhat Das, DIPRO Ankita Gogoi, SDMOs, BPMs, and other concerned officials from the Health Department, NHM, and district administration were present at

# to revive Sattriya culture

Training prog launched



NAGAON, Nov 18: Srimanta Sankardev Research Institute has launched an initiative to revitalise the 500-year-old Sattriya culture of Batadroba Than and surrounding

Batadroba Than. Under the institute's guidance, a group of satras near Batadroba Than has started a free training programme in music, dance, and instrumentation from Monday.

Noted Sattriva artiste Raniit Mahanta will train participants, aiming to preserve the ancient tradition. The programme was inaugurated by Indramohan Baruah, general secretary of the Srimanta Sankardev Research In-

stitute, amidst auspicious rituals. The training is open to all above 10 years of age and will be held every Tuesday from 10:00 am at the institute.

Prominent dignitaries, including Atul Mahanta, vice-president of the research institute, Mohan Baruah, Jiten Bordoloi, Surui Hazarika, and artistes Dipanka Giri Dev Goswami, Lakshyadhar Talukdar, Dibyajyoti Baruah, and Nandeswar Hazarika, attended the inaugural session of the programme on Monday.

This initiative seeks to rejuvenate the ancient Sattriya culture, which has been stagnant for centuries, and pass it on to the new generation, a press note stated.

### Prime accused in Arms Act case arrested

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI,

**Nov 18:** On the early morning of November 16, a Seijosa police team, led by SDPO Sashi Dore, SI Sang Thinley, OC PS Seijosa, H/C Duyu Talley, HC (IRBN) Arman Tachang, CT Adam Namkang, and Kalu Gyadi (CT IRBN), under the direct supervision of SP Pakke Kessang, Tasi Salonibari, under Sonitpur dismost-wanted accused in the Seijosa PS Arms Act case, Md Nur-

jamal Haque alias Rahul, who had received prohibited firearms stolen from the central KOTE of the 3rd IRBN, Seijosa, on October 20, 2024.

Md Nurjamal alias Rahul is a well-known drug distributor in the Sonitpur district, East Kameng district, and Pakke Kessang, as reported. With the arrest of the absconding accused, Darang, conducted a raid at a all suspects in the case have now rented house named 'Kainat' lobeen apprehended. Earlier, three cated in the Air Force Colony, people, including two IRBN personnel, had been arrested in the trict. The team apprehended the same case. Further investigation is ongoing, stated SP Pakke

# Patal Kaal: Detective novel unveiled at Jorhat Book Fair

**HT Correspondent** 

**JORHAT, Nov 18:** Patal Kaal, a detective novel written by Santanu Puzari, was released on Monday at the premises of the Jorhat Book Fair. The book was formally inaugurated by Santanu

Biraj Kumar Baruah delivered the welcome address and honoured the guest with a gamosa. Releasing the novel, Santanu Tamuli appreciated the initiative of the writer and appealed to everyone to

He also emphasised the writer's spirit in undertaking such creative work despite a busy schedule. Senior journalist Sankab Kaushik Baruah narrated the background and theme of the novel, as

well as the life and works of the writer. Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, MP of Kaziranga Parliamentary Constituency, spoke briefly about the current state of literature.

Journalists Lalit Bora, Niranjan Mahanta, Ashok Boruah, Ananta Narayan Borthakur, and many other dignitaries were present at the program.

### Indian Army celebrates International Students' Day

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Nov 18: Spear Corps Warriors of the Indian Army on Monday commemorated 'International Students' Day' with an inspiring event at Patkai Junior College, 6th Mile, Jagun, under Margherita co-district of Tinsukia district. This day is observed annually to highlight the importance of education and its transformative power worldwide. To mark the occasion, the Indian Army organised various activities, including enlightening talks and an essaywriting competition. The event saw enthusiastic participation from over 550 students and 20 teachers. During interactive sessions, students expressed their aspirations to join the armed forces, and their queries about recruitment processes, including NDA, NA, AFCAT, CDS, TES, and the Agnipath Scheme,

## Annual art exhibition showcases creative talent in Hojai

HT Correspondent
HOJAI, Nov 18: An annual group exhibition of paintings created by students from several art schools across Hojai district is being organised at Hembora Art Gallery, Doboka, within Hojai district. The exhibition began on November 15 and will conclude on November 26.

Informing to this correspondent on Monday, Dr Prodip Kumar Sahoo, founder of Small Steps, said a total of 42 participants' paintings has been displayed in the exhibition. The guests present at the opening session were Tikendrajit Saikia from Nagaon, Mukul Saikia from Jamunamukh, Naravan Chandra Sahu from Sankardev Nagar, and Narayan Bhoumik from Doboka. He mentioned that the exhibition was inaugurated by Tikendrajit Saikia of Nagaon. Dr Sahoo added that to inspire the creative individuals involved in the exhibition, Small Steps arranged certificates that were distributed among the participants. Dr Sahoo further encouraged everyone to visit the exhibition and appreciated the efforts of his team members as well as his brother, Hemanta Kumar Sahu, in organising the event. He also informed that Small Steps has already organised various national-level painting and photography exhibitions in and outside Assam in previous years.

# NFR unveils upgraded cricket stadium at Maligaon

Renovated to BCCI standards, the stadium aims to inspire young talent & host national-level events



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 18: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has proudly unveiled its newly upgraded cricket ground at the NFRSA Complex, located at Maligaon, Guwahati. The inauguration ceremony, held on Sunday, was graced by Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, general manager of NFR, along with other senior officials of the zone. The event was marked by a spirited cricket match between the teams of Open Line and Construction of NFR, symbolising the revival of the stadium's sporting legacy.

The NFR stadium, known for hosting 33 first-class cricket matches since its inception in 1976, has now been renovated to meet BCCI standards. With dimensions conforming to professional requirements, the stadium boasts modern

upgrades, including a semi-automatic sprinkler system, a fastdrainage mechanism, and a newly revitalised pitch and outfield for topclass national-level cricket events. These enhancements were undertaken at an investment of Rs 1.5 crore to pave the way for hosting high-profile events such as Ranji Trophy matches. Additionally, the construction of state-of-the-art pavilions is underway and will be completed soon. Further, provisions for a stadium lighting system with floodlights to conduct national-level televised cricket matches will be installed, elevating the venue's status as a premier sporting hub in the re-

The upgraded stadium signifies NFR's commitment to fostering sports and promoting excellence in the Northeast region of India. Beyond being a platform for professional athletes, the facility aims to inspire young talent and nurture future generations of sports enthusiasts. With world-class infrastructure now available, aspiring players will have the opportunity to train and compete in a professional environment, fostering both sporting skills and personal growth.

This initiative underscores NFR's dedication to the holistic development of the region, contributing not only to the enhancement of sports culture but also to community engagement and youth empowerment. The upgraded facility is poised to become a beacon of excellence, driving passion and dedication future athletes, while among strengthening the region's presence on the national and international

### NFR celebrates Janjatiya Gaurav Divas



HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Nov 18: NF Railway celebrated the 'Janjatiya Gaurav Divas' on Monday, to commemorate the birth anniversary of the National Tribal Hero, Bhagwan Birsa Munda. The programme was held at Dr Bhupen Hazarika Sabha Griha in the NF Railway Headquarters complex. Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, general manager of NF Railway, along with other officials, paid homage

by lighting the lamp and of-

portrait of tribal freedom fighter Bhagwan Birsa Munda. Speaking on this occasion, the general manager highlighted the freedom fighter's role in restoring traditional land rights to the tribals, which had been trampled upon by colonial and local authorities. Officers, staff of the NF Railway Headquarters, and representatives of various associations and unions were also present at the programme

### THE HILLS TIMES

VOL.I, ISSUE 258, GUWAHATI, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

Start with what is right rather than what is acceptable. -Franz Kafka

### Manipur's crisis: A failure of leadership

The ongoing violence in Manipur, which has raged since May 2023, reflects a profound failure in governance, both at the state and national levels. As the state is consumed by ethnic strife, primarily between the Meiteis and Kukis, the BJP-led double-engine government in Manipur has failed to control the flames it helped stoke. The unrest, marked by bloodshed, displacement, and destruction, has reached such proportions that even the capital, New Delhi, is feeling the heat. Despite high-level meetings by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and an absence of direct intervention, the violence continues unabated, with no clear strategy to restore order. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains conspicuously silent, adding to the sense of governmental paralysis. The political and administrative mismanagement has prompted sharp criticism, with opposition leaders and activists pointing to the government's inability to address the underlying ethnic tensions or offer meaningful solutions. The questions now being asked are crucial: What has the Modi government done to quell the violence, and why does it continue to prop up Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, who has been unable to restore peace or even prevent further

but the present turmoil has been exacerbated by poor governance and the BJP's polarizing politics. The demands of the Meiteis for Scheduled Tribe status have been seen as a threat by the Kuki community, triggering fears of displacement and cultural erosion. What began as a political issue has spiraled into a violent ethnic clash, with accusations of bias against the government's handling of the situation. The recent abduction and murder of a family from a relief camp, allegedly due to security lapses, has further demonstrated the state's failure to protect its citizens. In response, the National People's Party (NPP), a key ally in the state government, has withdrawn its support, citing the administration's inability to restore normalcy. Even among BJP lawmakers dissatisfaction is growing, with seven Kuki MLAs now at odds with the government, accusing it of favoring the Meitei community. As the violence escalates, the government's primary focus seems to be on maintaining power, rather than on healing the fractured state. It is becoming increasingly clear that the political leadership in Manipur is unable or unwilling to address the root causes of the conflict, and the central government is doing little to hold it accountable. The tragic events unfolding in Manipur are a grim reminder of the dangers of ignoring ethnic tensions and the consequences of divisive politics. The BJP's approach to communal politics, aimed at consolidating vote banks, has deepened divisions and fueled the violence.

To restore peace in Manipur, it is essential to move beyond shortterm fixes and engage in long-term reconciliation. The political leadership must prioritize dialogue over division and seek to heal the deep-seated wounds between communities. An impartial and accountable law enforcement system is crucial, as is equitable development that addresses the socioeconomic disparities fueling resentment. Moreover, the political narrative in Manipur—and across India—must shift from identity-based polarization to one of unity and mutual respect. Only by confronting the historical injustices that have festered for decades can lasting peace be achieved. Manipur's violence is not just a regional issue; it is a national crisis, one that highlights the fragility of India's social fabric and the risks of allowing divisive politics to shape national discourse. The tragedy unfolding in Manipur should serve as a wake-up call for all those who believe that politics should never come at the cost of peace, coexistence, and the nation's unity.

# Centre's ultimate insult to victims of Wayanad tragedy

The people of Kerala would find it difficult to digest it. But it is the grim, unalterable reality. The Union Government's refusal to sanction any funds to cover the losses caused by the July 30 Wayanad landslide is the ultimate insult to the victims of the tragedy besides being a shocking display of political hostility to Ker-

In an act of unparalleled cruelty, Union Minister for State for Home Affairs, Nityananda Rai informed K V Thomas, Special Representative for Kerala in New Delhi, that Kerala does not need additional funds and that sufficient funds were available in the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) for the relief operations!

The Union Government, he claimed, had allotted ₹ 388 crore, which included the Central share of ₹ 291. 2 crore and the State share of ₹ 96.8 crore, for the 2024-25 fiscal in the SDRF.

The letter to Thomas said that the first instalment of ₹ 145.6 crore of Central share was released on July 31 and the second instalment of ₹ 145.6 crore on October 1, well in advance!

The Minister also rejected the State's demand for declaring the 2024 disaster a national disaster. His reasoning: there is no provision to declare any calamity as a national disaster under the existing guidelines of the SDRF/NDRF! What cheek. What impudence.

He also claimed that the primary responsibility for disaster management rests with the State Governments concerned. The Union Government, he added, would provide the requisite logistics and financial support to their efforts.

Another claim of the Minister: that the Prime Minister had undertaken an aerial survey in the landslide-affected areas and discussed the response and relief activities with the Ministers and senior officials of the Kerala Government. The Prime Minister had also assured the Kerala Chief Minister of funds for relief operations. Money would not be a problem or a constraint. These were Modi's words. But the assurances have remained

Manipur's conflict is rooted in deep historical and ethnic divides,

The double standard of the sanctioning relief is clear from the way it responded to calls for help from a few other States like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Tripura. In the case of Andhra, which was battered by floods, the Union Government sanctioned a relief of ₹ 1306 crore on October 5. The lightning speed with which the Centre responded to Andhra's call is in glaring contrast to the shocking refusal to respond

to Kerala's SOS. Incidentally, the death toll in Andhra was only 35 while that in Wayanad, Kerala was 406. The Centre sanctioned ₹ 416 crore to Telangana, ₹ 20 crore to Tripura and ₹ 600 crore to Gujarat. All these states have SDRF too. But the Union Government has not denied assistance to them on the ground that their SDRF has sufficient funds! If this denial of addition funds to Kerala is not bias against the State, what is?

The Union Government's act of hostility is being attributed also to the refusal of the Opposition parties in Kerala to support the LDF Government's demand for financial assistance. That was bad enough. What is worse is their stand that the Kerala Government's demand for assistance is based on highly exaggerated estimates! If only the Opposition parties had taken a united stand and stood in solidarity with the Kerala Government, the Union Government would not have taken the incredibly cruel stand it has taken in the highly sensitive matter. As for the attitude of the Union Minister from the State Suresh Gopi, the less said the better. His standard answer to any question on the issue is: "Ask the Chief Minis-

Now that the Union Government has said a firm 'No' to Kerala's plea for assistance, the only option before the State is to move the Supreme Court. The SC is Kerala's only hope. Remember, when Kerala approached the apex court on an earlier occasion, it succeeded in securing a favourable order which forced a shame-faced Union Government to release financial assistance it had deliberately withheld. Well, it is time to take the legal route once again without losing much time. (IPA Service)

# **AFSPA reimposition in Manipur: Security** measure or political maneuver?

The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) has once again been imposed in parts of Manipur's Imphal Valley, igniting widespread debate and raising questions about the motivations and implications behind this move. This development has been set against a backdrop of escalating violence in the region, characterized by frequent attacks from Kuki militants armed with sophisticated weaponry such as sniper rifles, bombs, and rockets. The ongoing violence has turned these areas into flashpoints of unrest and conflict, compelling the central government to intervene with what it deems necessary measures.

The reimposition of AFSPA in the valley, however, has not been without controversy. Observers and political analysts alike are grappling with the ambiguity surrounding the decision-making process. Was the imposition a unilateral decision by the Centre, or were state authorities informed and involved? This remains uncertain, awaiting clarity from Chief Minister N Biren Singh. Singh, who previously acknowledged in the state assembly that the Unified Headquarters was no longer under his command, has remained conspicuously silent on the proclamation of Article 355. which effectively curtails his powers over security matters.

This silence has raised questions about his autonomy and influence, especially when juxtaposed with his past actions, such as the state Cabinet's unilateral withdrawal from the Suspension of Operations

(SoO) agreement with Kuki militant groups.

The abrogation of the SoO has been a contentious issue for years, fiercely advocated by valley-based civil society organizations (CSOs) and opposed by both the Kuki leadership and security forces. The debate over AFSPA itself is not new in Manipur. Since the infamous Manorama incident of 2004, which catalyzed mass protests and led to the withdrawal of AFSPA from the Imphal Municipal area by the then Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh, the Act has been a polarizing topic. Despite this, both the state and central governments possess the authority to enact or revoke AFSPA and the Disturbed Area Act independently. Notably, during the 2004 protests, the central government under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh did not override the state's decision but instead formed a Commission headed by Justice Jeevan Reddy to explore more humane alternatives to AFSPA.

The current reimposition has led many to question whether Chief Minister Biren Singh would countermand the Centre's order, as he did with the SoO agreement. His recent actions, however, suggest otherwise. His compliance with the central leadership's directives - including the appointment of a Security Advisor and the withdrawal of his command over the Unified Headquarters - paints a picture of political acquiescence. This raises concerns about the state's diminishing role in its own security ap-

The broader implications of reimposing AFSPA are manifold. Historically, the Indian security establishment has opposed any dilution of AFSPA in Manipur, citing the state's volatile security situation. This perspective was reinforced after the withdrawal of

AFSPA from parts of Imphal in

2004, which some critics argued

created a security vacuum. The reimposition today, affecting areas under six police stations -Sekmai and Lamsang in Imphal West, Lamlai in Imphal East, Jiribam, Leimakhong in Kangpokpi, and Moirang in Bishnupur comes at a time when these areas have witnessed increasing violence. Notably, Jiribam, though not situated in the foothills, has been a significant site of confrontations, including clashes between the Cen-

Force (CRPF) and Kuki militants that resulted in the deaths of ten mil-

tral Reserve Po-

itants and the abduction of six Meitei civilians, including women and minors, whose fate remains un-

strategy, sidelining the state admin-

istration in a way that has drawn a young Tangkhul man during an criticism and concern.

Lok Sabha MP Dr. Bimol Akoijam pointed out in a social media post that this marked the first ingovernment over the last quartercentury.

tivated than purely a response to the law and order situation. Such an

**DEGREE OF THOUGHT** Dipak Kurmi

The timing of the AFSPA reimposition - coming just a day after the Centre dispatched 20 additional companies of the Central Armed Police Forces, including CRPF and BSF units - has led many to speculate about the nature of the state's involvement. This move appears to signal the central government's decisive control over the security

stance of the Centre notifying the imposition of AFSPA, a move traditionally reserved for the state

The reimposition has been interpreted by some as yielding to the demands of Kuki organizations, including the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) and Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU), which have long advocated for the extension of AFSPA to valley areas. This interpretation lends weight to the argument that the decision may be more politically mo-

analysis is not without merit, as it aligns with the perception of the Centre's growing influence over

state-level decisions in Manipur. The potential consequences of this move are concerning. Critics argue that AFSPA's history in Manipur is marked by allegations of human rights abuses, extrajudicial killings, and a climate of fear among civilians. The reimposition risks exacerbating the already fraught situation, potentially deepening the suffering of local communities. Instances of violence, such as the recent killing of a woman in Bishnupur's Wathalambi

attack in Shanti Khongbal, highlight the ongoing insecurity and the civilian toll. The question remains whether the reimposition will bring stability or further inflame ten-

The areas where AFSPA has been reinstated are significant not just for their recent violent episodes but also for their demographic composition. These foothill regions have been the epicenters of conflict between different ethnic groups, and the presence of AFSPA is seen by many as a tool that could either suppress violence or inflame ethnic divisions further. The central government's decision, viewed by some as capitulating to external demands, has stirred unease, casting doubt on whether it prioritizes peace or power dynamics.

The events unfolding in Manipur are a stark reminder of the delicate balance between national security and civil liberties. Whether the AFSPA reimposition will achieve its intended effect of curbing violence or escalate the suffering of the people remains to be seen. The broader narrative points to a state government that appears increasingly constrained by central mandates, with Chief Minister N Biren Singh's muted response symbolizing this shift in power. As more eyes turn to Manipur, questions about the effectiveness and ethical implications of AFSPA in preserving law and order in conflict zones will only grow louder. (The writer can be reached at dipakkur-

# **Bulldozer justice verdict boosts Supreme Court's** global prestige and credibility

By: K Raveendran

hief Justice Sanjiv Khanna's tenure has had an eventful start with the Supreme Court delivering the landmark 'bulldozer justice' verdict that grabbed global headlines. That the verdict was delivered by a bench comprising Justices B R Gavai and K V Vishwanathan, of which the chief justice was not a part, is a matter of detail. What is important is that the verdict promises to be one of the most attention-grabbing events of the new CJI's time at the helm of the land's highest court.

The verdict itself has been quite hard-hitting as it put the idea of home at the heart of its stand. It takes direct aim at chief ministers like UP's Yogi Adityanath who used the bulldozer to dispense their idea of justice and even-handed-

The controversial practice has other vulnerable groups.

been criticized for disproportionately affecting Muslims, Dalits, and

For many civil rights advocates

and legal experts, the judgment represents a crucial safeguard against the growing trend of extraiudicial actions by the government. International human rights organizations also responded to the verdict with notable enthusiasm. Amnesty International, in particular, praised the ruling as a potential turning point in the growing atmosphere of hate and fear that has

come to characterize parts of In-

The organization expressed hope that the decision could signal the beginning of a more robust defence of human rights in India, particularly for Muslim citizens, who have been the primary targets of the bulldozer demolitions. Amnesty's reaction reflects a broader global concern about the erosion of democratic norms and the rise of populist authoritarianism in India.

The bulldozer verdict, in this sense, was not just a national but also an international signal that the courts in India are prepared to uphold constitutional guarantees against such actions, despite the

political climate.

The verdict has also contributed to the ongoing debates about the role of the judiciary in a democracy, particularly when political actors seem to be increasingly willing to undermine or bypass judicial processes in favour of swift, populist measures. Critics of the bulldozer approach argue that it represents a dangerous precedent for the erosion of democratic free-

In an environment where the state increasingly seeks to control and punish dissent, the judiciary's intervention serves as a crucial bulwark against authoritarianism. By emphasizing the need for legal accountability and condemning extrajudicial actions, the Supreme Court has underscored the importance of institutional checks and balances, reminding the Executive that it is

Another key dimension of the bulldozer justice verdict is its potential to shift the public narrative surrounding justice and accountability in India. For years, political

leaders who have championed such demolitions have portrayed them as a form of swift and just action against lawbreakers. In many cases. these demolitions were framed as acts of retribution against those involved in anti-government protests or communal violence. However, the Supreme Court's

decision has called into question this simplistic dichotomy of "good" versus "bad" justice. By highlighting the need for legal due process and the inherent dangers of collective punishment, the verdict offers a nuanced perspective on justice that counters the populist rhetoric used by many political leaders to justify such actions. The verdict also touches upon

the broader issue of communal politics and the marginalization of certain communities. The political narrative surrounding these demolitions has often been framed in terms of retribution, with those involved in protests or riots being collectively punished through the destruction of their properties. This has led to widespread fears

that the state is using these demolitions as a tool to further marginalize and stigmatize minority communities.

It is important to note that the bulldozer justice verdict also raises questions about the nature of governance in India today. The ruling is indicative of a growing tension between the Judiciary and the Executive, particularly in a political climate where the government has often been accused of undermining judicial independence and promoting policies that consolidate power in the hands of the state.

The decision to intervene in the bulldozer cases demonstrates the judiciary's willingness to assert its authority in matters of constitutional importance, even when such actions might be unpopular with powerful political forces. This confrontation between the branches of government reflects broader con ocratic institutions in India and the growing centralization of power under the current political leader-

# Trump's health secretary pick Robert Kennedy Jr. is a hazard to American lives

By: Mark Gruenberg & C.J. Atkins

Till Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Republican president-elect Donald Trump's pick to head the giant Health and Human Services Department, be—in the words of the warning on cigarette packages—a hazard to your health? Off both his past stands against vaccines, against fluoridation of water, against the Food and Drug Administration, and more, the answer to that may well be "yes."

And he's never spoken out, as National Nurses United has, against Big Pharma or for-profit hospital chains that greedily gobble up healthcare facilities and slash staff and services in the name of the almighty dollar.

Kennedy's also been silent about the deadly players who really impact the nation's health care, or lack of it, by controlling the purse strings that determine whether people can afford health care, medicines or not: The giant health insurers and the pharmacy benefit managers.

Both special interests are staffed by beancounters, mostly untrained in health, who aim to rake in premiums while denying care. A study several years ago by the Harvard Medical School concluded that deliberate denial of care by insurers refusing to pay for it cost the U.S. 44,000 needless deaths annually. Kennedy hasn't said a word about that,

The Committee on Interns and Residents, a Service Employees sector that has been unionizing those underpaid, overworked groups in hospitals, has. "Before the election, we were fighting for a better healthcare system for our country," said Dr. Taylor Walker, president of CIR/SEIU and a family physician and abortion provider in Massachusetts. "That fight will continue until every person in this country can receive quality, affordable care from their physician regardless of their race, gender, income, pregnancy status, or immigration status.

"More and more often we are hearing about pregnant people being turned away

from receiving life-saving care when they encounter a complication during their pregnancy, causing many of them to die as a result. This is especially true for people of colour. That has to stop."Too often money that should be spent on resources and staffing to improve patient care is going to executives' pockets. That has to stop.

"Our patients rely on us to provide them the best possible care, and we will continue to fight for the tools we need to provide that care. We need strong contracts that give doctors a voice at the decision-making table to ensure we have resources for cutting-edge technology, patient support, and clean and safe working conditions."Today, tomorrow, and always, our plan stays the same: WE FIGHT. Solidarity forever."

In a straight political payoff, Trump nominated Kennedy, son of the murdered presidential candidate, U.S. senator and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, to head the Department of Health and Human Services, the sprawling entity that handles everything from public health to Medicare.

Kennedy first made a name for himself as an environmental lawver but has since veered off the deep end into anti-health crusades, so much so that his siblings, including former Maryland Lieutenant Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, and his cousin, JFK's sole survivor, daughter Caroline Kennedy, made very clear early in the campaign that RFK Jr. had zero family support.

Kennedy opposes vaccination—a favourite bugaboo of Trump supporters during the coronavirus pandemic—fluoridation of water, which helps prevent tooth decay, and opposes regulating the nation's food and medicines. Those RFK policies, if imposed, could lead to further health crises. In one case, in American Samoa, they already did. "It is hard to overstate what a terrible de-

cision" the nomination is, British Columbia physician Robert McAlpine tweeted on X Thursday, "RFK, Jr. has no medical training. He is a hardcore anti-vaccine and misinformation peddler. The last time he meddled in a state's medical affairs" in American Samoa, "83 children died of measles."

McAlpine explained that in 2018 two nurses in Samoa accidentally prepared the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine using muscle relaxant rather than water. Two infants died after receiving the contaminated formula. The Samoan government temporarily halted vaccinations to investigate but eventually concluded the problem was the error in mixing, not with the vaccine in general. That didn't matter to Kennedy. He descended on the island with his anti-vaccine front group, Children's Health Defense, to exploit the deaths. News reports said his organization ran a massive publicity campaign to spread falsehoods about vaccines and to encourage parents not to vaccinate their children. Vaccination rates dropped from nearly 70% to 30%.

One year later, a sick traveller brought measles to the island and sparked an epidemic that infected over 57,000 people and killed 83, including children. Kennedy's record didn't give pause to Sen. Bill Cassidy Jr., R-La., an M.D. who, more importantly, will chair the Senate Health, Education, Labour, and Pensions Committee in the next Congress. The HELP panel will hold the confirmation hearings on the Kennedy nod.

"RFK, Jr. has championed issues like healthy foods and the need for greater transparency in our public health infrastructure," said Cassidy. "I look forward to learning more about his other policy positions and how they will support a conservative, pro-American agenda

Trump's Kennedy nod has yet to produce specific anti-Kennedy reactions from most top health and medical groups. But recognizing the danger of ideology to public health in general, some are taking preventive action.

Healthcare policies from a new administration "can on occasion, even take us back a few steps," warned Dr. George Benjamin, M.D., president of the American Public Health Association, three days after Trump's election. "As we look toward a new admin-

istration and session of Congress, APHA will not waver from its commitment to support strong evidence- and science-based policies and champion efforts for optimal, equitable health and well-being for all. We still believe it is important we work together and collaborate across sectors with health-minded officials, community leaders, local health practitioners, and others to achieve success.

"The American public wants, and deserves, clean air and water, access to care, reproductive health and so much more of what we advocate for." While we expect significant policy changes with the new administration, we reject the idea that the values, perspectives, and guidance we have articulated for many years are wrong and that we should back off. I assure you, that's not going to happen.

"We will continue to work on behalf of the American people to improve their health by advocating for the best science-based social and health policies and programs. Achieving optimal health regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, economic status or geographic residence will remain our chief ob-

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, the Michigan family physician who blew the whistle a decade ago on the health hazard of lead in the drinking water of Flint, Mich.—and elsewhere—sounded the same theme when her institution, Michigan State University, named her associate dean of its new school of public health policy. "A public health approach focuses not on treating individual patients when they become ill, but on what keeps people healthy," she said then. "There is a seismic shift in how we think about health care, partly driven by the pandemic. We want to know how to make an impact on health at the population level. How can we do better?"

The many social determinants of health, including racism, poverty, violence, climate change, mental health, and other factors "all impact health. Your census tract is one of the greatest predictors of health outcomes," Hanna-Attisha said. (IPA Service)

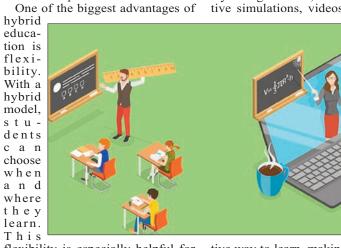
# of flexible education

By: Satyabrat Borah

ducation has always been a key part of personal and societal development. Over time, it has evolved and adapted to meet the changing needs of the world. The rapid advancement of technology, along with the increasing demands of the modern workforce, has led to new methods of learning. One of the most significant changes in recent years is the rise of hybrid models of education. This approach blends traditional in-person classroom learning with online instruction, creating a flexible and dynamic way for students to learn.

The idea of a hybrid model is not entirely new. In fact, blended learning has been used in various forms for many years. However, the global pandemic in 2020 forced schools, colleges, and universities to quickly adopt online learning. While the situation was challenging, it also showed that online learning could be just as effective as traditional in-person teaching when done right. As a result, many educational institutions began to see the potential benefits of combining the two methods. The future of education seems to be heading toward a hybrid approach, where online learning and in-person classes work together to offer a more flexible, personalized, and accessible educational experience.

One of the biggest advantages of hybrid



learn. flexibility is especially helpful for adult learners, working professionals, and those with busy or unpredictable schedules. Instead of being limited to a set classroom time or location, students can access course materials and lectures online, allowing them to learn at their own pace. This freedom can help reduce stress and improve the overall learning experience. It also allows students to balance their studies with other commitments, such as work or family

Hybrid models also open up learning to a broader range of people. For students who live in remote areas or have physical disabilities, attending a traditional classroom may be difficult or impossible. Online learning can make education more accessible to these individuals by eliminating the need for travel or physical atten-

With hybrid models, students can still participate in in-person activities and discussions, but they can do so in a way that accommodates their unique needs. This could help create a more inclusive education system that allows everyone to learn, regardless of their location or physical abil-

Another important benefit of hybrid education is the ability to personalize learning. In traditional classrooms, teachers often have to follow a set curriculum, which may not always meet the needs of every student. Some students may struggle to keep up with the pace of the class, while others may feel unchallenged by the material. Hybrid models allow for a more tailored approach to edu-

With online resources, students can access additional materials, such as videos, articles, and quizzes, to help them better understand the content. They can also review the material as many times as needed, helping to reinforce their understanding. Teachers can use online platforms to track students' progress, identify areas where they may need more support, and provide targeted assistance. This individualized attention can help students learn at their own pace and succeed in ways that traditional classroom settings may not be able to accommodate.

The hybrid model also offers a wider range of learning tools and resources. In a traditional classroom, students may be limited to textbooks, notebooks, and the teacher's instruction. However, with hybrid learning, the possibilities for resources are endless. Students can access a variety of digital tools, such as interactive simulations, videos, podcasts, and on-

> hance their learning experir e sources can provide a

courses,

m o r e engaging and

tive way to learn, making education

more enjoyable and effective. Teachers can use these tools to incorporate different learning styles into their lessons, whether students are visual learners, auditory learners, or kinesthetic learners.

The use of technology in hybrid education also prepares students for the modern workforce. In today's world, many jobs require employees to be proficient in using digital tools and technology.

By participating in hybrid learning, students become more comfortable with online platforms, video conferencing, and digital collaboration. These skills are crucial for success in a rapidly changing job market Hybrid education helps students develop the technological literacy needed to thrive in their future

While hybrid models offer many advantages, they also come with some challenges. One of the main challenges is ensuring that all students have access to the technology and internet connection needed for online learning. Not all students have a reliable internet connection or access to devices such as laptops or

tablets. This digital divide can create inequalities in the education system, preventing some students from fully participating in hybrid learning. It's important for schools, governments, and other organizations to address this issue by providing students with the resources they need to succeed. This could include providing devices, offering free or low-cost internet access, or finding other ways to bridge the technology gap.

Another challenge is maintaining student engagement in an online environment. In a traditional classroom, students can interact with their peers and teachers in person, which helps to keep them engaged and motivated. However, in an online setting, it can be more difficult for students to stay focused and participate actively. Hybrid models need to be designed in a way that encourages interaction and collaboration, even in online settings. Teachers can use video calls, online discussion boards, and group projects to keep students engaged and connected. It's also important for students to be self-disciplined and motivated, as online learning requires a certain level of independence and responsibility.

Despite these challenges, the potential benefits of hybrid learning far outweigh the drawbacks. As technology continues to improve and educational systems adapt, hybrid models will only become more effective and accessible. The future of education is likely to involve a mix of online and in-person learning, with both methods complementing each other to provide the best possible learning experience. Hybrid models offer flexiaccessibility,

personalization, making education more inclusive and better suited to the needs of today's students. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that education can continue even in the face of adversity.

Hybrid learning made it possible for students to continue their studies while maintaining social distancing and preventing the spread of the virus. As we move forward, it's clear that hybrid models will continue to play an important role in education. They offer a solution to many of the challenges faced by traditional education systems, such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of access to education in remote areas, and the need for flexible learning options. By embracing hybrid learning, we can create a more equitable and efficient education system that meets the needs of all students.

In conclusion, the future of education is undoubtedly leaning toward hybrid models. The combination of online and in-person learning offers numerous advantages, including flexibility, accessibility, and personalized learning experiences. Hybrid models have the potential to make education more inclusive engaging and relevant to the needs of modern

While there are challenges to overcome, such as ensuring access to technology and maintaining student engagement, these issues can be addressed with careful planning and support. As we move forward, hybrid education is likely to become the new normal, helping to shape the future of learning for generations to

# Hybrid models: The future Konnichiwa, India: Can Hello Kitty assimilate into the subcontinent's diverse art aesthetic?



By: Andleeb Shadab

The colonial bungalow on Delhi's Barakhamba Road had been given a red-white-pink makeover: a giant plushie bow adorned one corner of the facade, while pink-red plushie apples and hearts dangled everywhere inside. The star of the show was a white feline figure wearing a red bow.

It was all very "kawaii" – an especially apt term for a Hello Kitty exhibit. The Japanese word means a combination of cute, tiny and adorable and has long been used in Japan to describe the iconic cat.

The exhibition by Indian fashion label Péro celebrated the fact that it had been 50 years since Hello Kitty made its first appearance – and was finally making its official entry into India. Featuring Péro's designer clothing collection on life-size dolls and Hello Kitty-themed installations, the exhibition – which ran from October 19 to October 30 - quickly drew the attention of teenagers and young women.

Hello Kitty's India foray, like the popularity of K Pop in in subcontinent, is a sign of strengthening cultural flows between Asian countries - and a shift away from west-to-east cultural flows that have long held

Around the world, Hello Kitty has taken on an artistic and creative life of her own: she has featured on all kinds of merchandise while artists. designers and fans have represented her creatively.

In India, Hello Kitty merchandise has also been around for quite some time but these were mostly available as cheap knockoffs through the informal market.

Is her official India entry the start of new journey into a diverse, vivid and often inexplicable artistic tradition and aesthetic?

The enthusiasm of the visitors to the Delhi exhibition was a window into the popularity of the Japanese cat in India. They swarmed around the venue, taking selfies and photowhere they could measure their tall) and with a doll in designer clothes riding a bicycle or on huge plushy apples to sit on.

A room full of Hello Kitty plushies for fans to literally immerse themselves in – was especially popular. Hello Kitty made an unusual debut. Unlike most cartoon charac-

ters that make their debut as part of a comic or anime narrative, Hello have been a Hello Kitty? Whatever centuries? (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

Kitty first appeared in 1974 as a merchandise character on a vinyl coin or a cat personified as a girl – she is purse, sitting between a bottle of milk and a goldfish bowl.

The simple white figure with a red bow had been created by designer Yuko Shimizu for the Japanese entertainment company Sanrio.

What explains the figure's appeal to fans around the world? Shimzu has said that Hello Kitty does not have a mouth "so that people who look at her can project their own feelings onto her face... Kitty looks happy when people are happy. She looks sad when they are sad.

Though India has had an ambivalent relationship with cats, felines have always registered their presence in art forms. The Indian Cat by art historian BN Goswamy brings together stories, paintings, poetry and proverbs on "the idea of the cat" in the subcontinent. According to him, although cats were associated with superstition and sometimes portrayed as cunning and manipulative, they were commonly represented as resting, gawking and prowling companions in Indian art.

From Mughal miniatures to the work of modern masters like Jamini Roy, cats could be seen as an integral part of life that most artists merely represented without making much of

In the era of the internet, however, cats have been the undisputed rulers of the cyberspace. According to computer scientist and futurist Jaron Lanier, cats "integrated themselves into the modern high-tech world without giving themselves up. They are still in charge." This is, perhaps, one of the reasons why humans like them. They are fiercely independent and, almost always, a little out of

The memes and reels we compulsively make as we pine for the attention and affection of cats slowly turn our social media accounts into little shrines of unrequited love.

As it turns out, Sanrio has specified that Hello Kitty is not a cat at all. Even though she has been degraphs to upload to Instagram: next signed with whiskers, a tail, pointed is a possibility that some of her fans to a pile of apples in the verandah cat ears and is named Kitty, she is might feel left out of her world, actually a girl living in London subheight (Hello Kitty is five apples urb. Shimizu has said that her creation was inspired by a white kitten from her childhood. She is named after Kitty from Through the Looking Glass, the sequel to Alice's Ad-

ventures in Wonderland. Would she have been so popular if she was named differently or didn't look like a cat? Had Shimizu not been a cat lover, would there even she is – a girl with cat-like features an anthropomorphised cat.

Ambiguity aside, the figure has inspired artists and designers worldwide to blend Hello Kitty into their individual aesthetics and expres-

In 2019, Corev Helford Gallery in Los Angeles celebrated Hello Kitty's 45th birthday with a group show of over 100 artists. Artist David Connelly, known for his pop art sculptures made from recycled cardboard, created an art piece titled Kitty Cake Time using recycled cardboard Sanrio boxes, paper and acrylic.

In August, the Fanrio exhibit, organised by OhNami Gallery in Los Angeles, displayed fan art inspired by Sanrio characters. One of the artists, Joy Mercy, created a work inspired by Baroque subject and combined with her own signature anime and manga style featuring Virgin Mary holding Hello Kitty.

Art, advert integration in India Last month's Péro and Hello Kitty exhibition in Delhi could be seen as a clever art-driven advertising gambit, as Sanrio and Dream Theatre, its licensing agency, test the challenging Indian market.

Sanrio also launched an Instagram page specifically for Indian fans, and their first post depicts Hello Kitty with a lotus flower on her pink bow, saying namaste with folded hands. Their posts on Indian festivals -Ganesh Chaturthi, Onam, Dussehra, Diwali – portray Hello Kitty in various Indian costumes and backgrounds that match the occasion. Some posts depict her as a tourist exploring historical places in different Indian states.

But this shorthand approach to representation runs the risk of stereotyping the country's diverse cultures and reducing complex cultural identities to their most visible elements.

Hello Kitty already exists in her ambiguous, minimal, kawaii aesthetic in India and she appeals well to the interested globalised audience here. In such representations, there which would be contrary to Hello Kitty's catchphrase "You can never have too many friends!"

Hello Kitty will have to navigate this fraught territory and the limits of representation set by cultural sensitivities and vigilante censorship. Will Hello Kitty be able to integrate itself into the world of contemporary Indian art, design and lifestyle as cats have done effortlessly across the

# Is it fair to judge someone solely on the basis of exams?

By: Shah Zeeshan

eing a judge puts one in a position of power, more so when one is vested with the authority to influence something. We judge people in our day-to-day lives. A shopkeeper doesn't sell quality things, a chef isn't up to expectations, a baker doesn't bake well, the government doesn't distribute optimally, or some media outlet isn't a source of authentic information. All these are systems that promise to deliver; it's a promise based on some conviction.

But would it make sense to judge the man when he has not asked to be judged, or hasn't promised anything—essentially a dumb being who doesn't know what he is getting into? A student would be an apt example. We are born, named, assigned religion, and merely two years later we are sent to school. Though leniency is practiced to some extent, expectations never cease to exist, especially in our society.

Parents always expect their kids to pull off some magic at every stage of their lives. They submit their children to the care of the so-called professionals so that they may live up to their expectations; all the while they forget that the child is still just a child. Nothing is said to the face of the children: that savage behavior is no longer the way of our adults; instead, the children are put into a situation where they will get judged without their knowledge.

dren are playing, studying, and passing time with not even the slightest idea of what is expected from them. Finally, they are asked to take a test at the culmination of it all. They may not care one iota or pay the slightest heed to this, but as they grow older, the fear of judgment starts to direct every action they undertake. The endless anxiety over failing, the fear of succeeding, and the urge to fit an ideal mold become so strongly ingrained that many students cannot shake them off, even as they enter adulthood.

Today, the exams are just a tool, a permit, a commercial one in its essence, justified by filling an already saturated system. Already struggling to deal with the difficulties of life, the fear of being judged at every turn—it is all they get from the people around them—and this adds to those difficulties. Nobody is the villain here; the villain is the system itself. Because we submit to it, the machine keeps on going; if we don't act the way it wants us to, it has all the power in the

world to eliminate us. The fear of this elimination leaves us in a state where we do nothing but its bidding. Although we are in some semblance of knowledge as to how it works, we are handicapped beyond our limits to act against it. We're caught in a cycle from which we cannot get away, and the system remains

untouched all along The biggest challenge, in this contemporary age, to a healthy and educated student lies in the examinations-the ultimate act of judgment that this world can put one through. Exams by definition is a test method used to filter out the less able lot to move towards the next stage of education. At least that is what exams are officially, and if we go through the official definitions, then our system works perfectly. But we know it, and more importantly, the machinery of the system knows it as well, that the ground situation is so flawed that it has turned into corruption. First things first: exams, speak-

ing strictly in the arena of education, work in a symbiotic relationship with the system. It has emanated from the system itself, and each is dependent on the other. While judging the concept of exams, one ends up judging the whole system. Had it been a question of freely choosing the meritorious candidates, just for the sake of it, exams would be an easy means; but the system itself has no option other than exams. Exams today are a tool, a permit, a commercial one in its essence that is justified by filling the already saturated system.

The best teachers are those who show you where to look but don't tell you what to see. Alex K. Trenfor. This statement sums up a very important aspect of education-learning to think for oneself independently, something that cannot be measured through mere examinations. A true teacher unblocks the avenues of his or her students so they can explore and learn about the world rather than course, he or she scores above just memorizing facts for an impending exam. Unfortunately, the system is tested by short-term memory and not long-term understanding.

This doesn't end here; exams, in addition to being a tool for the system to sift through the sea of people to reach the meritorious ones, is considered a measure of an individual's capability, the parameters of which are set by the system itself and not chosen individually. A good state and system are responsible to all citizens, and every citizen has a rightful position in the system, which the system must be assisting you to achieve.

However, if the system fails any individual, then the said individual must be free to get his or her way independently of anybody else if this is harmless. But the absolute absence of space required by a human being and even the space required by the little part of the human who wants to pursue their own direction invades the space of the system. As much as the system encourages homogeneity, it does not give the same freedom to think, create, or innovate. Individuality is often oppressed for the sake of con-

The infallibility of the exam system is spread far and wide: more conforming and attuned to a traditional system-a huge section of the populace-surrenders. In exchange, the system and society harshly judge a candidate appearing for an exam, unless of

most of the other examinees. The exams are actually proof of one's caliber-they prove that there is a functional educational system. But this, in reality, has become just a façade, one that offers no real solution to the challenges it pretends to address. The system rewards conformity; it penalizes those who do not fit neatly into the boxes designed.

Ask yourselves: the way things are today in our educational system, isn't it an attempt at saving a sinking ship? A few years ago, a score of 300/500 was seen as an achievement, and today even 400/500 is not enough. What changed? Those awarding marks in the past, did they have different rules? Or have the standards gone up? All this speaks to a system under stress: increased academic competition, the frantic pursuit for better marks, the growing chasm between students' performance levels.

Today, parents spend fortunes on their children's education, expecting good grades, a proper career, and a well-planned life for them. A child must live the life his father has lived and give the same to his children. The indecisive young minds are sent away for tuitions, and are expected to score well in the exams. Even if any sport or skill is taken up, that too is for the sake of categories another parasite on the system. Such students are overburdened since they are being asked to conform to a set of standards that might not even be in tune with

their personal aspirations. How do we convince the up-

coming generation that "Education is the key to success" when we are surrounded by poor graduates and rich criminals? -Robert Mugabe. This statement strikes a chord in our minds when we see the difference between academic progression and general progress in life. Education is promised as the step to success, but in reality, it does not often live up to the expectations of promises made. Students graduate to no place, or sometimes just any job. Some dubious characters with dubious means of success thrive to the detriment of students who start to wonder if their education is worth anything.

In all this, we miss the plight of the students. Students are withering away from within. The students are made to perceive their worth in terms of some numbers assigned to them as a result of the exams they are given. Consequently, a person is unlikely to realize his full potential. Saturation may have us thinking otherwise, but there is no scope for innovation. In this age, anything can be commercialized, and we have our examples—this system of education is one. The thing about innovation is that it is interesting, and man is curious. But our society has ways of putting us under debilitating pressure. It is always making one feel that the world may come to an end soon unless we work on certain definite lines.

How can we expect the system to be fair when its defining prin-

ciple is pitching a friend against a friend? What good can a system do if somewhere it is reaping dead bodies off ceiling fans or behind closed doors? What will the students do if they emerge out of this whirlpool with a bruised soul and a depressed mind? There are those who are benefited by this system, and seemingly they are cut out for it. But there are also those who are not up for it.

Hence, by establishing some parameters, you are sowing benefit for a few but shutting doors to many. These systems teach nothing but inequality. Ever thought about how it affects the psyche of a student who is still but a child?

The system that is in place here is a complex power structure; power that, according to the rench philosopher Foucault, is based upon knowledge. It's a back-and-forth motion in play here: wherein knowledge gives you power and vice versa, uses the same power to generate knowledge meant to perpetuate the rule of that power. Such a structure of power should be reconsidered. The point wherein the power somehow interlaces with knowledge is doing a lot in terms of how the educational system operates, unfortunately marginalizing those who cannot fit into the

All we have to ask ourselves at this point is: Is it really fair to judge someone—not that judging someone, in general, is acceptable—on the basis of exams? (Courtesy: Youth Ki Awaaz)

'Strikes are not made with words,' Zelenskyy said during nightly video address

# Biden authorises Ukraine to use **US-supplied long range missiles**

18: President Joe Biden has authorised Ukraine to use US-supplied missiles to strike deeper inside Russia, easing limitations on the longer range weapons as Russia deploys thousands of North Korean troops to reinforce its war, according to a US official and three other people familiar with the matter.

The decision allowing Kyiv to use the Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMs, for attacks farther inside Russia comes as President Vladimir Putin positions North Korean troops along Ukraine's northern border to try to reclaim hundreds of miles of territory seized by Ukrainian

Biden's move also follows the presidential election victory of Donald Trump, who has said he would bring about a swift end to the war and raised uncertainty about whether his administration would continue the United States' vital military support for Ukraine.

The official and the others knowledgeable about the matter were not authorized to discuss the U.S. decision publicly and

anonymity. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's reaction on Sunday was notably re-

"Strikes are not made with words," he said during his nightly video address. "Such things are not announced. The missiles will speak for themselves.'

Zelenskyy and many of his Western supporters have been pressing Biden for months to allow Ukraine to strike military targets deeper inside Russia with Western-supplied missiles, saying the U.S. ban had made it impossible for Ukraine to try to stop Russian attacks on its cities and electrical grids.

Zelenskyy's statement came shortly after he posted a message of condolence on Telegram following a Russian attack on a nine-story building that killed at least eight people in the northern city of Sumy, 40 kilometers (24 miles) from the border with

Russia also launched a massive drone and missile attack, described by officials as the



ing energy infrastructure and killing civilians. The attack came as fears are mounting about Moscow's intentions to devastate Ukraine's power generation capacity before the winter. "And this is the answer to everyone who tried to achieve something with Putin through talks, phone calls, hugs and appeasement," Zelenskyy said.

The comment appeared to be a dig at German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who spoke on Friday with Putin in the first such call with a sitting head of a major Western power in nearly two years. Some supporters have argued that the limitation and other U.S. constraints could cost Ukraine the war. The debate has

become a source of disagreement among Ukraine's NATO allies. Biden had remained opposed, determined to hold the line against any escalation that he felt could draw the U.S. and other NATO members into direct conflict with nuclear-armed

Moscow could provide longrange weapons to others to strike Western targets if NATO allies allow Ukraine to use their arms to attack Russian territory. News of Biden's decision fol-

Putin has warned that

lowed meetings over the last two days with the leaders of South Korea, Japan and China. The addition of North Korean troops was central to the talks.

lines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Peru. Biden did not mention the decision during a speech at a stop in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil on his way to the Group of 20 summit. Asked about the decision, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters that the U.N. position is 'to avoid a permanent deterioration of the war in Ukraine."

"We want peace, we want fair peace," Guterres said Sunday before the summit in Rio de Janeiro. He didn't elaborate.

The longer-range missiles are likely to be used in response to North Korea's decision to support Putin's invasion of Ukraine, according to one of the people familiar with the development.

The overall supply of AT-

ACMS missiles is short, so U.S. officials in the past have questioned whether they could give Ukraine enough to make a difference. Some supporters of Ukraine say that even a few strikes deeper inside Russia would force its military to change deployments and ex-

# Russian ballistic missile kills 11, injures 84 in Ukraine's north

KYIV, Nov 18: A Russian ballistic missile with cluster munitions struck a residential area of a northern Ukraine city, killing 11 people including two children and injuring 84 others, officials said on Monday.

The two children killed in the strike on Sumy late Sunday were a 9-year-old boy and a 14-year-old girl, the regional prosecutor's office said. Six injured children are in critical condition, it said.

The attack damaged 15 buildings, including two educational facilities, the prosecutor's office said. A search and rescue operation continued Monday, on the eve of the war's 1,000-day milestone.

Sumy lies 40 kilometers (24 miles) from the Russian border. Also Sunday, U.S. President Joe Biden authorized for the first time the use of U.S.-supplied longer-range missiles by Ukraine to strike inside Russia, after extensive lobbying by Ukrainian officials.

The weapons are likely to be used in response to North Korea's decision to send thousands of troops to support Russia in the Kursk region where Ukraine mounted a military incursion over the summer.

It is the second time the U.S. has permitted the use of Western weapons inside Russian territory within limits after permitting the use of HIMARS systems, a shorter-range weapon, to stem Russia's advance in Ukraine's Kharkiv region in May.

The first reaction from Ukraine to the longawaited decision from the U.S. was notably restrained. "Today, much is being said in the media about us receiving permission for the relevant actions. But strikes are not made with words. Such things are not announced. The missiles will speak for themselves." Ukrainian



President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address.

Earlier, Zelenskyy said that Russia had launched a total of 120 missiles and 90 drones in a large-scale attack across Ukraine, including Sumy. Russia deployed various types of drones, he said, including Iranian-made Shaheds, as well as cruise, ballistic and aircraftlaunched ballistic missiles.

The attack, which targeted Ukraine's energy infrastructure, came as fears are mounting about Moscow's intentions to devastate Ukraine's power generation capacity ahead of the winter. Ukrainian defenses shot down 144 out of a total of 210 air targets, Ukraine's air force reported.

"The enemy's target was our energy infrastructure throughout Ukraine. Unfortunately, there is damage to objects from hits and falling debris. In Mykolaiv, as a result of a drone attack, two people were killed and six others were injured, including two children,' Zelenskyy said.

Two more people were killed in the Odesa region, where the attack damaged energy infrastructure and disrupted power and water supplies, said local Gov. Oleh Kiper. Both victims were employees of Ukraine's stateowned power grid operator, Ukrenergo, the company said hours later. (PTI)

S Lankan Prez opts

for smaller Cabinet

with fresh faces

COLOMBO, Nov 18: Sri Lankan

President Anura Kumara Dis-

sanayaka on Monday appointed a

21-member Cabinet in the new NPP

government, keeping with his pre-

election promise to streamline the

governance system and ease the

The National People's Power

(NPP) has been advocating a

smaller government to reduce costs

for the public. Since the NPP won

the presidential election in Septem-

ber, the government functioned with

burden on taxpayers.

## Canadian PM admits his govt made 'mistakes' in immigration policy, 'bad actors' exploited system

OTTAWA, Nov 18: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has admitted that his government made "mistakes" in its immigration policy which led to "bad actors" like 'fake colleges" and big corporations exploiting the system for their vested interests.

Trudeau's statement on Sunday came amidst his Liberal Party's denting popularity ahead of the 2025 general election in Canada. The prime minister is facing intense public criticism due to his policies leading to housing shortage, inflation, and deteriorating health and transport systems in the country. The opposition Conservative Party has also been accusing his government of mismanagement and failure to prioritise Canadian citizens' needs.

In a video message posted on his YouTube channel, Trudeau said, "In the last two years, our population has grown really fast, like a baby boom...Increasingly bad actors like fake colleges and big chain corporations have been exploiting

our immigration system for their own interests." To combat this, "we are reducing the number of immigrants who are coming to Canada for the next three years," he said.

"We made some mistakes and that's why we are taking this big turn," he said, justifying his government's action.

Outlining the government's latest immigration strategy, Immigration Minister Marc Miller said last month that Canada will admit approximately 3,95,000 permanent residents in 2025, marking a drop of nearly 20 per cent from the 4,85,000 expected this year. The plan also sets a target for temporary immigrants, including international students and foreign workers. Their numbers are expected to drop to about 4,46,000 in 2025 and 2026, down from roughly 8,00,000 this year.

By 2027, Canada will accept just 17,400 new non-permanent residents, the new policy suggested.

Canada also ended the popular fast track study visa programme, SDS, a major policy decision that is likely to impact scores of international students, including from India. According to the Indian High Commission here, India is the largest source country of

BAKU, Nov 18: As the COP29 sum-

mit entered the second week, the UN

climate chief called on Monday for

swift resolution of less contentious is-

sues and an urgent focus on major po-

litical decisions to advance global

United Nations Framework Conven-

tion on Climate Change Executive

Secretary Simon Stiell urged delegates

to shed "bluffing and brinkmanship"

overcome the critical challenges ahead.

and focus on pragmatic solutions to

During the plenary session here,

climate action.

foreign students with an estimated 4,27,000 Indian students studying in Canada. Trudeau said for years, Canada's immi-

gration system only focussed on Permanent Immigration where people come with family to settle in Canada and the government decides the number of permanent residents that it wants to admit each year. However, in doing so, it missed "the other pathway -- the temporary immigration", which involves international students, temporary workers and so on. "After the (coronavirus) pandemic, our economy came roaring back quickly. We wanted more workers fast. We were in the midst of a huge labour shortage. Temporary foreign workers became such a significant part of our workforce...So, we brought in more workers," he said.

And it was the right choice and it worked, Trudeau emphasised. "Our economy grew. Restaurants and stores reopened, businesses kept running, but most importantly, in spite of lots of economists'

predictions, cession," he said. However, the prime minister said, some saw that as an opportunity to profit, to game the system.

"We have seen way too many large corporations doing this. Far too many colleges and universities used international students to raise their bottom line, because they could charge these students tens of thousands of dollars more for the same degree.

"And then there are really bad actors who outright exploit people who target vulnerable immigrants with promises of jobs, diplomas and easy pathways to citizenship promises that would never come true," he said. "Looking back when the post pandemic boom cooled and the businesses no longer needed the additional workforce, as a federal team, we could have acted quicker and turned off the taps faster," Trudeau admitted. Canada's new immigration plan is "straightforward -- lower the number of immigrants -- both permanent and temporary," he said, adding that the government is prioritising permanent residents with the skills it needs like healthcare and construction

### Bangladesh tribunal tells investigators to finish probe against ousted premier Hasina by next month

DHAKA, Nov 18: A special tribunal in Bangladesh on Monday told investigators they have one month to complete their work on ousted former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her close aides who face charges of crimes against humanity after hundreds of people were killed in a mass uprising this summer.

Golam Mortuza Majumdar, the head judge of the threemember International Crimes Tribunal, set Dec 17 for investigators to finish their work, as the tribunal heard updates Monday from police about what the country's security agencies have done to arrest Hasina and her close aides. The decision came after prosecutors sought more time for the investigation.

Hasina has been living in exile in India since Aug 5 when she fled the country amid the student-led protests. The Dhakabased International Crimes Tribunal on Oct. 17 issued arrest warrants for Hasina and 45 others including former Cabinet ministers, advisors and military and civil officials. The country is now being run by an interim government headed by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus.

At least 13 people, including a former law minister and a businessman who was Hasina's private-sector advisor, appeared before the tribunal on Monday, said B M Sultan Mahmud, a prosecutor at the tribunal.

One former Cabinet minister was not brought to the tribunal as he was in custody for police interrogation in a separate case. Another six people will appear on Wednesday, tribunal officials said. At least 20 suspects have been arrested in the case.

The tribunal will also seek updates from police on their progress in arresting the other suspects, including Hasina. tribunal has already sought help

mention

The chief prosecutor of the

from Interpol through the country's police chief to arrest Hasina. On Sunday, Yunus said in an address to the nation that his administration would seek Hasina's extradition from India.

Authorities say hundreds of people were killed during the uprising in July and August mainly by security agents seeking to quell the initial protests over government jobs. The violence intensified as the protests morphed into an anti-government movement with more bloodshed, ending Hasina's 15year rule. Hasina had also earlier sought an investigation into the

just 3 ministers, including the President. As per the island nation's Constitution, there is a provision for appointing a 30-member Cabinet. Dissanayaka retained the finance and defence portfolios, while appointing 12 new parliament members to key positions and entrusting

served since 2000, with significant responsibilities. Among the fresh faces in the Cabinet are five academic profes-

eight veteran members, who have

Prime Minister Harini Amara suriya who holds the education portfolio and Saroja Savithri Paulraj who has the women's and child affairs portfolio are the two women members in the Cabinet. Paulraj, a minority Tamil from the Sinhala majority south, was involved in the party's long struggle.

A significant feature of the swearing-in ceremony was the fisheries minister Ramalingam Chandrasekaran, who took his oath in Tamil, highlighting the representation of the minority community in the new government.

The new parliament will convene

The NPP led by Dissanayake swept the parliamentary elections held on Thursday by winning a twothirds majority. It also dominated the Jaffna electoral district - the heartland of the nation's Tamil minority. The NPP won a near 62 per cent of the vote 2/3rd majority of 159 seats in the 225-member assembly, a feat which has no parallels

## North Korean leader calls for expanding his nuclear forces in face of alleged US threats

Kim Jong Un renewed his call for a "limitless" expansion of his military nuclear program to counter US-led threats in comments reported on Monday that were his first direct criticism toward Washingpresidential election.

At a conference with army officials on Friday, Kim condemned the United States for updating its nuclear deterrence strate-

gies with South Korea and solidifying three-way military cooperainvolving Japan, which he portrayed as an "Asian NATO" that was escalating tensions and instability in the re-

Agency said.

Kim has prioritized his country's ties to Russia in recent months, embracing the idea of a "new Cold War" and displaying

SEOUL, Nov 18: North Korean leader a united front in Russian President Vladimir Putin's broader conflicts with

> a distraction to accelerate the development of his nuclear-armed military, which targeting South Korea and intercontinental ballistic missiles that can potentially reach the U.S. mainland.

Kim has yet to directly acknowledge



Kim also criticized the United States over its support of Ukraine against a prolonged Russian invasion. He insisted that Washington and its Western allies were using Ukraine as their "shock troops" to wage a war against Moscow and expand the scope of US military influence, the North's official Korean Central News

He has used Russia's war on Ukraine as



ments toward Trump, whose election win has yet to be reported in the North's state media. Kim met Trump three times in 2018

and 2019 in Trump's first presidency, but their diplomacy quickly collapsed over disagreements in exchanging the release of U.S.-led sanctions and North Korean steps to wind down its nuclear and missile North Korea has since suspended any

meaningful talks with Washington and

ity and military demonstrations in the face of what he portrayed as "gangster-like U.S. threats." There's concern in Seoul that Kim in exchange for his military support of Russia would receive Russian technology in return to further develop his

Trump's election win has touched off speculation about a resumption of a summit-driven diplomacy with Kim, which was described by critics as a "bromance." But some experts say a quick return to 2018 is highly unlikely, as too much has changed about the regional security situation and broader geopolitics since then. While the North Korean nuclear prob-

lem was relatively an independent issue during Trump's first term, it is now connected with broader challenges created by Russia's war on Ukraine and further complicated by weakened sanctions enforcement against Pyongyang, Hwang Ildo, a professor at South Korea's National Diplomatic Academy wrote in a study last

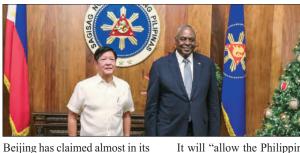
North Korea's nuclear and missile program is now much more advanced, which would increase Kim's perception of his bargaining powers. Kim's efforts to increase North Korea's presence in a united front against Washington could also gain strength if Trump spikes tariffs and rekindles a trade war with China, the North's main ally and economic lifeline, Hwang

### since 1989. (PTI) Seoul as Kim ramped up his testing activ-US, Philippines sign pact to secure shared military intelligence, weapons technology

MANILA, Nov 18: The United States and the Philippines signed an agreement on Monday to secure the exchange of highly confidential military intelligence and technology in key weapons the US would provide to Manila. Defence Secretary Lloyd

Austin and his Philippine counterpart, Gilberto Teodoro, signed the legally binding General Security of Military Information Agreement in Manila at a time when the longtime treaty allies have boosted their defense and military engagements, including large-scale joint combat drills, largely in response to China's increasingly aggressive actions in

The outgoing Biden administration has taken steps to strengthen an arc of military alliances across the Indo-Pacific region to better counter China, including in any future confrontation over Taiwan or in the disputed South China Sea, which



Defense in Manila said the agreement aims to ensure the security of classified military information that would be exchanged between the U.S. and

It will "allow the Philippines access to higher capabilities and

big-ticket items from the United States," the Philippine defense

department said.

Neither side provided more details or released a copy of the agreement Two Philippine security offi-

cials, however, have told The Associated Press that such an agreement, similar to ones Washington has signed with other allied countries, would allow the U.S. to provide the Philippines with higher-level intelligence and more sophisticated weapons, including missile systems.

It would also provide the Philippine military access to U.S. satellite and drone surveillance systems with an assurance that such intelligence and details about sophisticated weapons would be kept highly secure to prevent possible leaks, the two Philippine officials said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the sensitive issue publicly.

Philippine efforts to obtain sophisticated weapons from the U.S. military in the past have been hampered by a lack of such an intelligence deal, including when Filipino forces were scrambling to fight a 2017 siege by Filipino and foreign militants aligned with the Islamic State group in southern Marawi city. Philippine forces, backed by US and Australian spy planes, quelled the uprising after five months. (PTI)

### UN climate chief calls for focusing on major political decisions to advance climate action Stiell stressed the need for collabora-

take the lead. He emphasised that such approaches risk halting progress entirely. "This is a recipe for going literally

"We can't lose sight of the forest be-

cause we're tussling over individual trees," he remarked, warning against

the stalling tactics of "you-first-ism,"

where parties refuse to act until others

nowhere." Stiell said, adding that only parallel efforts from all parties could ensure a robust outcome Azerbaijan, The Presidency of COP29 was praised for its round-theclock efforts, with Stiell pledging the Secretariat's support in fostering inclu-

sivity and keeping negotiations on "Now is the time to get to work," he

The second week at COP29 would be looking to end the deadlock between developed and developing nations on key issues like climate finance, trade measures, and equitable

responsibility for climate action. Last week, India, representing the G-77/China and BASIC blocs, demanded accountability from wealthier nations over unmet financial commit-

The G-77/China bloc reiterated its

demand for USD 1.3 trillion annually in climate finance, emphasising the need for grants and concessional funding to avoid burdening vulnerable economies already struggling with the impacts of climate change. Loans currently make up nearly 70 per cent of climate finance, a figure an

Indian negotiator described as unac-

ceptable, urging developed countries to

shift away from debt-inducing mecha-Stiell had also highlighted the urgency, calling on G20 nations to take bolder action and warning that without it, none of the grouping's economies would escape climate-driven economic losses. Despite his appeal for solidarity, the deadlock remained unresolved.

That has dovetailed with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr's thrust to strengthen his country's external defenses given an alarming escalation of territorial confrontations between Chinese and Filipinos forces in the South China Sea.

The Department of National the Philippines.

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# **Amit Shah reviews Manipur security** situation for second consecutive day

Situation in the northeastern state, which has been reeling from ethnic strife since May last year

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday reviewed the prevailing security situation and deployment of troops in Manipur for the second consecutive day and directed top officials to focus on restoring peace and order there as early as possible, sources said.

The Union home ministry is also rushing in about 5,000 paramilitary troops to Manipur to assist the state government in handling the current "volatile" situation.

The home minister reviewed the security situation in Manipur with top officials of the central and state governments, the sources said.

This was the second consecutive day that Shah reviewed the situation in Manipur. He took stock of the deployment

of central forces there and directed the officials to restore peace and order there as early as possible, they said.

The situation in the northeastern state, which has been reeling from ethnic strife since May last year, has been volatile following protests and violence after the recovery of bodies of women and children.

Irate mobs set fire to the residences of three more BJP legislators, one of whom is a senior minister, and a Congress MLA in various districts of Imphal Valley

## **Arunachal Pradesh** has immense potential in pisciculture: Guv

ITANAGAR, Nov 18: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen (retd) K T Parnaik on Monday said the northeastern state has immense potential in pisciculture, and urged vouths to take up fish farming for sustainable development.

Parnaik, during a visit to a fish farm at Mechukha in Shi-Yomi district, interacted with farmers and officials, and released fingerlings in water, a Raj Bhavan release said.

"Arunachal Pradesh, blessed with pristine environment, perennial water sources and fresh-flowing water bodies, has immense potential in pisciculture. With technical and financial support, the sector can be a popular avenue for entrepreneurship and self-employment," he said.

The governor also asked officials to reach out to the agrarian community, asserting that farmers and youths of the state have the potential to "revolutionise" the farming sector, but require proper motivation and guidance.

"The progress of our rural community, particularly the youths, is important for the state to develop," he added. (PTI)

## Army observes 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Battle of Nyukmadung

Army on Monday paid tributes to the martyrs who fought courageously at the Battle of Nyukmadung during the 1962 Indo-China War against the advancing Chinese forces in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Army observed the 62nd anniversary of the battle at the Nyukmadung War Memorial, situated between Dirang and Sela Pass, a defence spokesman said.

The memorial stands as an enduring symbol of courage and sacrifice, paying homage to the 62 Infantry Brigade, whose bravery on November 18, 1962, etched their names into the nation's history, Defence Spokesman Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said.

The event began with a solemn wreath-laying ceremony at the war memorial by dignitaries, veterans, soldiers and families of the mar-

On the occasion, students performed patriotic songs and traditional dances, while the Tibetan dances by LDL Monastery Dirang, added a soulful touch.

Besides, a cycle rally, a performance of martial arts and a dog show

were organised. "On November 18, 1962, amid harsh terrain and overwhelming odds, the soldiers of the 62 Infantry Brigade, led by Brigadier Hoshiar Singh, stood resolute against advancing Chinese forces. Though engaged in a tactical withdrawal, they inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, embodying the very essence of valour and patriotism, the spokesperson said. (PTI)



on Saturday night even as security forces foiled an attempt by agitators to storm the ancestral residence of chief minister N Biren

These incidents took place even as several restrictions were imposed after people, agitated by the killing of three women and three children by militants in Jiribam district, attacked the residences of three state ministers and six MLAs earlier on Saturday.

Enraged people torched the houses of PWD Minister Govindas Konthoujam at Ningthoukhong, Hiyanglam's BJP MLA Y Radheshyam at Langmeidong Bazar, Wangjing Tentha's BJP MLA Paonam Brojen in Thoubal district and Khundrakpam's Congress MLA Th Lokeshwar in Imphal

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 18: Agriculture and Farm-

ers' Welfare Minister Ratan Lal Nath on Mon-

day said that Tripura will become self-reliant

and self sufficient in potato seed production by

2027-28. Minister Nath said this this during a

Minister Nath highlighted the bright

"We are taking new initiatives. For instance,

we are now cultivating avocado. The Central

Government also believes that Tripura has

great potential in horticulture. We are empha-

sizing its importance and working to increase

farmers' incomes. Today, we held a review

meeting, and the budget has allocated funds

for horticulture. A budget of ₹ 130 crores has

review meeting on Monday.

prospects for horticulture in Tripura.

East district.

The legislators and their family members were not at home when the mobs stormed their residential compounds, vandalised properties and set the houses on fire, police said, adding the houses were partially burnt in the incidents.

On November 11, Manipur Police said 10 suspected militants were killed in a fierce gunfight with security forces after insurgents in camouflage uniforms and armed with sophisticated weapons fired indiscriminately at Borobekra police station and an adjacent CRPF camp at Jakuradhor in

Hours later, suspected militants allegedly abducted six civilians, including women and children from the same district, police said.

said minister Nath.

He further stated that Tripura aims to be-

"We have adopted the True Potato Seed

come self-reliant in potato seed production by

(TPS) system, which allows us to cultivate po-

tatoes. This system is not available elsewhere.

Using this method, we can grow 30 MT of po-

tatoes per hectare. On the other hand, with the

Apical Rooted Cutting (ARC) system, which

we started last year, we found that production

reaches around 60 to 65 MT per hectare.

Farmers are happy with this system, and the

availability of seeds has quadrupled. If we

continue this progress, we will achieve self-re-

liance in potato seed production by 2027-28.

Due to recent floods, we are currently provid-

Tripura to become self-reliant in potato

seed production by 2027-28: Minister

On Saturday, the Union home ministry said all security forces deployed in Manipur have been directed to take necessary steps to restore order and peace in the state.

It said armed miscreants from both communities in conflict have been indulging in violence leading to unfortunate loss of lives and disruption in public order.

The home ministry said strict action would be initiated against anyone trying to indulge in violent and disruptive activities.

Seeing the fragile situation, the Centre on Thursday reimposed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in Manipur's six police station areas, including the violence-hit

More than 220 people have been

killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last It started after a 'Tribal Solidar-

ity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

The ethnically diverse Jiribam, which was largely untouched by the clashes, witnessed violence after the mutilated body of a farmer was found in a field in June

# Manipur protesters defy curfew, lock govt offices

few orders, a group of people led by members of COCOMI on Monday locked the front doors of several government offices in Imphal West district to protest the recent killing of three women and three children in Jiribam, officials said.

Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) is an influential organisation of the Meitei community, the majority ethnic group in the Imphal Valley region that comprises five districts including Imphal West.

The Manipur government on Monday also extended the suspension of internet services by two more days till Wednesday in seven districts of the northeastern state.

Raising slogans demanding justice for the victims and their families killed by suspected tribal militants in Jiribam district, the protesters stormed into the office complex of the Chief Electoral Officer at Lamphelpat and locked its main entrance door with chains and locks, officials said.

The main office doors of the Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD) at Takyel, and the Directorate of Economics and Statistics located a few hundred metres from the CEO's office were also locked by the pro-

Meanwhile, the indefinite sit-in staged by COCOMI at Khwairamband market in Imphal demanding a military crackdown against "Kuki Zo Hmar" militants in the state entered its third day.

Film personality Laimayum Surjakanta who attended the protest said, "We will not tolerate

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: The Rashtriya Swayamse-

vak Sangh (RSS) has condemned the latest violence

in Manipur and demanded the government, both at

the Centre and the state, that they "sincerely" resolve

Manipur starting from May 3, 2023 has remained un-

resolved. Due to the ongoing violence, innocent peo-

ple have immensely suffered," the Manipur unit of

The RSS Manipur 'prant' strongly condemns the

"The act is cowardly and is against the principles

of humanity and co-existence," it said, adding, "The

central and state government should sincerely resolve

The English version of the statement, originally is-

sued in Manipuri, was released by the Manipur unit

of the Vishva Samvad Kendra, the RSS' media wing,

on Facebook. The Manipur unit of the Akhil

Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the RSS'

youth wing, also condemned the violence and said

to ensure the safety and normalcy" in the state.

"inhuman, brutal and merciless acts of killing of

the RSS said in a statement on Sunday.

women and children," the statement said

the ongoing conflict at the earliest."

statement on Monday. (PTI)

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/885

"It is unfortunate that 19 months old violence in



this barbaric killing of three women and three children by Kuki Hmar militants in Jiribam. The Centre needs to take action. Those who killed the innocent woman and children must be arrested immediately.

Manipur has seen a fresh wave of protests after six people went missing from a camp for displaced persons in Jiribam on November 11, following a gunfight between armed men and security forces that resulted in the deaths of 10 Kuki

On Sunday, the bodies of two persons, believed to be among the six missing people from Jiribam, were found floating in the Barak river in neighbouring Cachar district of Assam.

The bodies of three persons, also from the same group, were found floating in the Jiri river in Jiribum on Friday and brought to Silchar Medical College and Hospital for post-mortem examinations.

According to senior police officer officers of Assam, bodies of five missing persons have been

Curfew was imposed for an indefinite period in Imphal East and West, Bishnupur, Thoubal and Kakching districts of Imphal Valley on November 16 "due to developing law and order situation", he

The state administration on Monday extended the suspension of internet and mobile data services in the Imphal Valley and two other districts - Kangpokpi and Churachandpur - after reviewing the law and order for two more days till 5.15 pm of November 20, according to an order.

The suspension shall not apply to lease lines and broadband connections to government offices or any case whereby the state government grants exemption, the order said. The service was initially suspended from November 16 for two More than 200 people have

been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic viobetween Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kukis in Manipur since May last year. (PTI)

### Declare those who killed women, children in Jiribam RSS condemns Manipur violence, as terrorists, Manipur's JD(U) MLA urges PM asks governments to resolve conflict fast IMPHAL, Nov 18: Manipur's

JD(U) MLA Abdul Nasir on Monday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging the Centre to declare those responsible for the killing of women and children in Jiribam district as "terrorists".

Nasir, the MLA of Lilong constituency in Thoubal district, dubbed the killings as an "act of cowardice" and "heinous crime that has crossed all levels of barbarism". 'This heinous crime has crossed

all levels of barbarism... and is an act of cowardice. Those responsible for the killings should be declared as terrorists by the Government of India," he said. Calling for the immediate arrest of those responsible for the killings, he urged the Parliament to pass a resolution in the coming session, condemning the incident. Despite appeals from various corners, women and children were brutally and inhumanely killed, Nasir added.

both the Centre and the state government have "failed The bodies of five of the six per-"The ongoing violence in Manipur since May 3, 2023 has plummeted to unprecedented depths with Jiribam after a gunfight between sethe heinous abduction and murder of six innocent curity forces and Kuki-Zo militants civilians, including three women and three children, that resulted in the deaths of 10 inamong them a seven-Months -old infant," it said in a surgents on November 11, were found in Jiri River in Jiribam and

Barak River in Assam's Cachar over the last few days.

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 incident has sparked massive protests in Imphal Valley, with protesters storming the houses of over a dozen MLAs, including ministers, and setting fire to several properties belonging to the legisla-

Amid the protests, National People's Party (NPP), which has seven MLAs in the 60-member Manipur Assembly, withdrew 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, sons who went missing from 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. (PTI)

Dt.18/11/2024

### been sanctioned for this department. Our main ing potato seeds at a reduced cost," he exaim is to achieve self-reliance in horticulture.' Indian Army celebrates Kepang La Day to honour 1962 war heroes

ITANAGAR, Nov 18: The Spear Corps of Indian Army celebrated the Kepang La Day at Gelling in Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Siang district to pay tribute to the bravehearts who made supreme sacrifice during the 1962 Indo-

The day was celebrated on Sunday to also remember the resilient saga of villagers who stood strong to support the Indian Army during the war, a defence communique said here on Monday.

A ceremony was held at the Kepang La Chorten, followed by a wreath-laying ceremony and Guard of Honour to pay tribute to the martyrs. Prayers were also offered at the historic Gelling Monastery, symbolising the sacred bond between the Army and villagers. The Army also paid gratitude to the villagers who supported the Army during the war by recognizing and expressing their acknowledgement of their ancestor's courage and unity. The event was attended by additional deputy commissioner (ADC) Tuting, school children, and residents to witness the saga and valour of Siang Valley's enduring legacy of bravery, unity and cultural heritage, the communique said.

Kepang La Pass in Siang valley is an inseparable part of India's heritage, symbolising the sacrifices made by soldiers and villagers. The Day is being observed to honour those heroes, whose steadfast legacy at the borders is a reminder of the valour and unity at the heart of national identity.

Kepang La is a significant mountain pass on the Indo-Tibetan border along the Line of Ac-



tual Control (LAC), which holds a special place in the hearts of the Indian people from Arunachal Pradesh.

This strategic location is situated near the course of the Yarlung Tsangpo, known as Brahmaputra River in Assam and Siang in Arunachal Pradesh, which has witnessed numerous heroic sacrifices by Indian soldiers who have guarded the nation's borders.

The bravery of the Siang Valley people and soldiers was put to the ultimate test during the 1962 India-China war. When villagers from Gelling noticed Chinese PLA footprints near the Nyugong Ri stream, Indian forces quickly responded, engaging the enemy in a fierce

For eight hours, Indian soldiers defended their positions with remarkable valour, sacrificing their lives to protect the valley.

Among the fallen heroes were 2 Madras

Regiment's subedar Sheikh Subani, havildar B Ramalinga G, sepoys Murri Raja, Appa Rao and Ellias. (PTI)

### scheme under 15th FC Tied Grant (2nd Installment) for the year 2022-23 during 2024-25.

### NOTICE

This is for information of all concerned students (who have secured 75% and above marks in HSLC Examination, 2024 conducted by SEBA) that 474 eligible students have not yet registered in the online portal i.e. https://bidyarthi.co.in and 1769 students have not submitted online application for the of Anundoram Borooah Cash Award, 2024. Moreover, Bank Account verification of 865 nos. of students

The details of these students are available on the official website of Directorate of Secondary Education, Assam i.e. www.madhyamik.assam.gov.in and https://bidyarthi.co.in.

Therefore, all concerned students are requested to complete their registration and submit the online application on the above mentioned portal. Portal will be opened from 19 /11/2024 to 25/11/2024

Following Important Instruction must be followed at the time of Online Application;

- The Bank Account must be in the name of the Awardee. Name of Account Holder should be same as mentioned in the Admit Card/Mark sheet.
- Ensure the correct IFS Code of the bank account. The Bank account should be Active/ Operational.
- Ensure that minimum transaction limit is maintained if the account holder is a minor.
- Utmost care should be taken while entering the Bank Account details (e.g use numeric "0"
- Enter the correct mobile number of the Awardee or Parents for future communication.

Janasanyog/D/8911/24/19-Nov-24

Secondary Education, Assam Kahilipara, Guwahati - 781019

### No. DA/BTC/K/Dev-82/ KY-(FNS)-Commercial Crops/2024-25/898

### QUOTATION

The Director of Agriculture, BTC, Kokrajhar invites Sealed quotation affixing non-refundable Court Fee Stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight & Twenty-five paisa) only from the registered firm in BTC for supply of Jute against FLD on production Technologies in-intercropping under Krishannati Yojana (FNS)- Commercial Crops(Jute) for the year 2024-25 as per term & conditions detailed below and will be received up to 25 -11-2024 at 3:30 PM and the same will be opened on the same date & time. The quotationers or their representative may be present in the office of the undersigned at the time of opening,

Sl. No.	Item				Tender value	
	FNS - Commercial Crops	Rate	Variety/Type		(Rs. In Lakhs)	Remarks
A1	Jute	Per Kg	JRO-524/ZRC-212/ Olitorious	Certified Seed	10.971	

Details items may be seen in the office of the undersigned during the office hours from 19-11-2024 to 25-11-2024.

No.CHD/UDD/2/15th FC/Tied/2nd Inst./2024/NIT-CS/2522

BTC, Kokrajhar

Director of Agriculture,

Dated Kokrajhar the 2nd November/2024 PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER The Council Head of Department, Urban Development Department, BTC, Kokrajhar invites bid for the following

Group No.	Name of Schemes	Bid cost (Rs.)	Tender Value (Rs.)
Group-1	Supply and Installation of Dustbin 60 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Kokrajhar Town.	600.00	19,89,860.00
Group-2	Supply and Installation of Dustbin 60 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Gossaigaon Town.	250.00	8,06,700.00
Group-3	Supply and Installation of Dustbin 60 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Goreswar Town.	350.00	10,75,600.00
Group-4	Supply and Installation of Dustbin 60 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Tangla Town.	400.00	12,20,806.00
Group-5	Supply and Installation of Dustbin 60 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Fakiragram Town.	250.00	7,74,432.00
Group-6	Supply and Installation of Dustbin 60 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Udalguri Town.	500.00	16,13,400.00
Group 7	Supply of Dustbin 240 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Udalguri Town under	250.00	6.85,000,00

Group-5	Town.	250.00	7,74,432.00
Group-6	Supply and Installation of Dustbin 60 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Udalguri Town.	500.00	16,13,400.00
Group-7	Supply of Dustbin 240 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Udalguri Town under Udalguri M.B.	250.00	6,85,000.00
Group-8	Supply of Dustbin 240 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Kokrajhar Town under Kokrajhar M.B.	550.00	17,81,000.00
Group-9	Supply of Dustbin 240 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Tangla Town under Tangla M.B.	250.00	6,85,000.00
Group-10	Supply of Dustbin 240 ltrs. Capacity in Urban Area of Goreswar Town under Goreswar M.B.	250.00	6,85,000.00
Group-11	Supply of Basic Usage kit to the Safai Mitras of Goreswar Municipal Board.	300.00	9,88,100.00
Group-12	Supply of Basic Usage kit to the Safai Mitras of Fakiragram Municipal Board.	300.00	9,88,100.00
Group-13	Supply of Basic Usage kit to the Safai Mitras of Gossaigaon Municipal Board.	300.00	9,88,100.00
Group-14	Supply of Basic Usage kit to the Safai Mitras of Kokrajhar Municipal Board.	600.00	19,76,200.00
Group-15	Supply of Basic Usage kit to the Safai Mitras of Tangla Municipal Board.	300.00	9,88,100.00
Group-16	Supply of Basic Usage kit to the Safai Mitras of Udalguri Municipal Board.	300.00	9,88,100.00

Last date of submission of completed tender is 22.11.2024 (up to 2:00 PM) and will be open on the same day. The detail tender documents may be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours till 21.11.2024. N.B.: The bill of contractor will be paid only after receiving the fund from BTC.

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/883

Sd/- CHD, Urban Development Department,

BTC, Kokrajhar

"The Mahayuti is committed to

the development of Maharashtra,

whereas Maha Vikas Aghadi will

increase your troubles further," he

ment in Maharashtra, in the third

term of Modiji and India will be-

come the third largest economy of

leader Uddhav Thackeray, Nadda

said, "Balasaheb Thackeray had

said that he would disband his

party but would not compromise

with Congress. But today Uddhav

Thackeray is sitting in the lap of

have been carried forward by CM

Eknath Shinde," Nadda said. "Ma-

harashtra will never forgive you

(Uddhav Thackeray) for the way

you have compromised with the

Congress by putting aside your fa-

ther's ideas for the sake of power,"

"Balasaheb Thackeray's ideas

Attacking Shiv Sena (UBT)

the world," he said.

Congress for power.

"You form a Mahayuti govern-

# NDA has created a new culture of politics, says JP Nadda Day after quitting AAP, Kailash Gahlot joins BJP

'We are providing a government that is accountable to people'

MUMBAI, Nov 18: The NDA and BJP-led Mahayuti in Maharashtra have created a new culture and a new definition of politics under PM Modi's leadership, party president J P Nadda said on Monday.

"We are providing a government that is accountable to people," Nadda said, addressing an election rally in Navi Mumbai.

"Under the leadership of Modi ji, Mahayuti and NDA have created a new culture, a new definition of politics. Today our government is doing the politics of 'whatever was said has been done and what was not said has also been done'," Nadda said.

Slamming Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for "misleading" people on the Constitution, Nadda said, "Today Rahul Gandhi roams around with the Constitution book. He has not read the Constitution book, he just roams around with

"Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote PM Modi on the economic policy

will retain power with a good majority.

the Manmad-Nandgaon assembly segment.

meetings.

his prospects in elections.

vided we fall) poll pitch.

without discrimination.

may work in north India.

our only agenda," Bhujbal said.

YEVLA, Nov 18: Veteran OBC leader and Maharash-

tra minister Chhagan Bhujbal, who belongs to NCP, has

distanced himself from the BJP's 'batenge toh katenge'

poll pitch and asserted that the Mahayuti government

In an interview with PTI in Yevla town of Nashik dis-

trict, Bhujbal also claimed that the Maratha quota agi-

tation, led by activist Manoj Jarange Patil, won't affect

the poll outcome in Yevla and Manmad-Nandgaon con-

stituencies. Bhujbal is in the fray from the Yevla seat,

while his nephew Sameer Bhuibal is a contestant from

Yevla on Saturday morning and left well past midnight,

addressing a gathering and trying to disrupt my public

not have much impact," said Bhujbal, pitted against for-

mer ally Manikrao Shinde of NCP (Sharadchandra

Pawar). Bhujbal is confident that several development

projects undertaken by him in the region would bolster

He disassociated the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Con-

"We have nothing to do with these slogans. Our party

'Vikas is my caste, Vikas is my religion, Vikas is my

gress Party from the BJP's 'batenge toh katenge' (di-

has nothing to do with it. I only talk about Vikas (de-

party and my language will also be Vikas. I only talk

about development and nothing else," Bhujbal added.

Ajit Pawar believed in doing justice to all communities

its, Adivasis, and Marathas among others. We do not

discriminate against any community. Development is

Maharashtra do not like the "Batenge...." pitch which

leaders of the three constituents would decide after the

elections. The Mahayuti comprises Shiv Sena headed

by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, BJP, and NCP led by

Maratha, OBC, or Brahmin. Did anyone ever think Ek-

nath Shinde would become a chief minister? Anything

be held on November 20 and votes will be counted on

November 23. A veteran politician. Bhuibal is seeking

a fifth consecutive term from the Yevla assembly seg-

Born in Nashik, Bhujbal worked as a vegetable ven-

dor in Mumbai's Byculla market. Inspired by Balasaheb

Thackeray, he joined the Shiv Sena in the 1960s. He

"Anybody can become a chief minister. Be it a

Polling for 288 assembly seats in Maharashtra will

He emphasised that the NCP headed by Deputy CM

"In my constituency, there are Hindus, Muslims, Dal-

Notably, Ajit Pawar had asserted that the people of

On Mahayuti's chief ministerial face, Bhujbal said

velopment)," the 77-year-old leader said.

The Bhujbal senior said the Maratha activist visited

"It is fine. I know my constituency quite well. It will



in the Constitution that reservation cannot be given on the basis of religion, but today the Congress party is giving 4 per cent reservation to minorities in giving tenders to private contractors in Karnataka," Nadda said.

The BJP president said the world is seeing a ray of hope in

NCP leader Bhujbal distances himself

front.

was elected as Mayor of Mumbai in 1985.

Leader of the Opposition.

for representation by a senior leader.

gion," Bhujbal told PTI in Yevla.

by 10,000," he added.

Shiv Sena in 1991.

chief minister again.

of these things," Bhujbal said.

region and a 12-km tunnel.

Pawar said at a rally here last week.

He went on to win two consecutive terms as MLA

from Mazgaon in Mumbai- first on Shiv Sena ticket in

1986 and later as a Congress nominee in 1991 after

quitting the Sena. In 1996, Bhujbal was defeated by

Shiv Sainik Bala Nandgaonkar. Congress sent him to

the Legislative Council, where he also served as the

bai, Bhujbal shifted his base to Yevla, then an under-

developed region, after local people expressed a wish

by him in the region for the upcoming electoral contest.

votes. This time the margin could increase to 1 lakh on

the back of development work carried out in the re-

Unsure about his future in electoral politics in Mum-

Bhujbal is banking on development initiatives taken

"I won the previous elections by a margin of 60,000

Sharing his experience, Bhujbal said in every elec-

A key highlight of his campaign is the Manjarpada

tion some 50,000 people vote against him. "This time

that number will either decrease by 10,000 or increase

water diversion project that brings the water from a dis-

tance of 160 km through a canal to the parched Yevla

Bhujbal's political rivals are targeting him for "be-

"Chhagan Bhujbal had told me he would speak to

traying" Sharad Pawar who shaped his political career

Ajit Pawar and make him see clearly. He never returned

and the next day he took oath as a minister," Sharad

The senior Pawar was referring to the split in the

NCP last year when Ajit Pawar claimed the support of

two-thirds of the MLAs and joined the Shiv Sena-BJP

government. "What ideology is Sharad Pawar talking

about? He started the trend of breaking parties and fam-

ilies. He did the 'punya karma' (sacred job) of breaking

the Shiv Sena, garnered the support of MLAs and then

came to me," Bhujbal said recalling his defection from

Sharad Pawar toppled the Vasantdada Patil govern-

'You broke the Congress and also the NCP. You also

ment to become chief minister, he said. Pawar then re-

ioined the Congress, sensing an opportunity to become

admitted several leaders of the BJP into your party. You

have broken several parties as well as families. If we

start digging up what happened 30-35 years ago then

things would go too far. It is better to avoid speaking

led to better irrigation facilities for the orchards dotting

me the confidence of posting a larger victory margin,'

He said the Maniarpada water diversion project has

"This has led to prosperity among farmers. This gives

in a big way, and siding with Ajit Pawar in July 2023.

largest 10 years ago; PM Modi made it the fifth largest," he said. hayuti is a "rising sun which will give light to Maharashtra" whereas

### "India's economy was 12th In Maharashtra, the BJP-led Ma-

the Maha Vikas Aghadi is going to push Maharashtra into darkness,

### he added. (PTI) Modi's visit abroad shows he has conceded from 'Batenge toh Katenge' poll pitch defeat: Reddy

PUNE, Nov 18: Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Monday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit abroad before the campaigning for the November 20 Maharashtra elections could end shows that he and the BJP have conceded defeat.

Addressing a press conference here, Reddy dared the saffron party to prove its claim that the Congress government in the southern state did not fulfil its poll guarantees.

He said if the Centre wants to send a minister or committee to verify the fact, he is ready to send a plane from his state.

"Today is the last day of campaigning for the Maharashtra polls, and just before the last day, PM Modi left the country and went abroad. This shows that the BJP and Modiji have conceded defeat as the party exited the poll ground," he claimed. The Congress leader further

vertisements in newspapers, which showed that they would even break the country to win the elections. He questioned PM Modi and the

claimed that he saw the BJP's ad-

BJP about what they had done in the last 11 years they have been in power. He said in 2014, the BJP promised to double the income of farm-

ers and create two crore jobs annually and claimed that by 2020, every poor person in the country would get a house. "Forget doubling the income of farmers. They brought three black farm bills, forcing cultivators to agitate around Delhi, and more

than 700 farmers were martyred.

PM Modi had to withdraw the bills

and apologise to the farmers," he He said Modi is talking about guarantees the Congress gave in Telangana, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh, claiming that the

states did not fulfil these promises. "As the chief Minister of Telangana, I would like to dare PM Modi and BJP leaders that if you have the courage, form a central committee with a Union minister and send it to Telangana. If you don't have money, I will send a plane to Delhi or Mumbai, but you come and verify whether the guarantees are fulfilled," Reddy

ministers Manohar Lal Khattar and Harsh Malhotra, Delhi unit president Virendra Sachdeva, party vice president Baijayant Jay Panda and national media head Anil Baluni among others.

Addressing the media after joining the party, Gahlot said efforts are being made to build a false narrative that his decision to quit the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was the result of ED and CBI pressure.

The fact is that the AAP compromised its values, he said, claiming that he has never acted under anyone's pressure.

He said maintaining good relations with the Centre is essential for Delhi's development, as he accused the AAP government of constantly being in a fight with the central government led by the BJP.

Be it chief minister or ministers, they were picking fights with the Centre over smallest of issues all the time, he alleged, claiming that he maintained good relations with the central government, including

Gahlot said people like him joined the AAP not out of personal ambitions but for Delhi's development and that he has joined the



BJP for the same reason. He praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and

He accused the AAP of compromising the values which attracted people in large numbers to its fold following its birth as a political party after the Anna Hazare-led anti-corruption movement.

People saw hope in a person, an apparent reference to AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal, and the party's ideology but those values were compromised.

They have become "khas" (special) from "aam" (ordinary), Gahlot claimed.

Khattar described Gahlot's joining as a "turning point" in the politics of the national capital.

The BJP is hopeful that Gahlot's induction into the party will boost its prospects in the upcoming assembly polls as it looks to wrest

power from the AAP.

'political ambitions" had overtaken the party's commitment towards people. "Instead of fighting for people's

Sachdeva said Gahlot, a two-

The former transport minister

quit the AAP on Sunday, alleging

term MLA and an advocate, is a

leader known for his good work.

rights, we have increasingly only been fighting for our own political agenda." the 50-year-old said in his resignation letter to AAP national convener Kejriwal.

Gahlot, a prominent face of the AAP, also took a jab at Kejriwal as he flagged some "awkward" and "embarrassing" controversies like 'sheeshmahal', saying it makes everyone doubt if "we still believe in being the 'Aam

The AAP had claimed that Gahlot's decision was influenced by cases being probed against him by central agencies. (PTI)

### NCP (SP) chief slams Shinde govt for agrarian crisis, farmer suicides



MUMBAI, Nov 18: NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar on Monday said the Mahayuti government had failed to address Maharashtra's agrarian crisis and claimed more than 20,000 farmers had ended their lives under the Eknath Shinde dispensation. He was addressing a rally for his party candidate and sitting MLA Rohit Pawar in Karjat-Jamkhed in Ahilyanagar district (formerly Ahmednagar) on the last day of campaigning for the November

The policies of the Centre and state government were making farming unviable, leading to distress among farmers, which was driving them to suicide, the former Union agriculture minister said

20 assembly polls.

"The real reason behind these suicides is clear. Farming has become unaffordable. Under the Mahavuti government, more than 20,000 farmers have committed suicide. Despite this, the government continues to ignore their plight. The government waives loans of industrialists but does not extend this benefit to distressed farmers," he said.

The Mahayuti comprises Chief Minister Shinde's Shiv Sena, the

BJP and the Aiit Pawar-led NCP. Pawar said just like Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "unfulfilled promise" of depositing ₹ 15 lakh in the accounts of citizens, the Shinde government's flagship Ladki Bahin Yoiana too would be abandoned after the polls. Under the scheme,

women with an annual family income of less than ₹ 2.5 lakh are given ₹ 1500 as monthly aid.

The Mahayuti has been claiming that this amount will be raised to ₹

2100 if it retains power in the state. "In the past few years, 67,000 complains have been filed regarding violence against women. Additionally, 64,000 women are missing. Nearly 62 lakh people have no jobs in the state. These are the harsh realities," he said attacking the ruling alliance. He also attacked BJP leader Ram Shinde, who is pitted against Rohit Pawar, without taking the former MLA's name.

Pawar said the Karjat-Jamkhed region lacked development because the previous elected representative did nothing. Shinde had won the seat in 2009 and 2014 before being defeated by Rohit Pawar in 2019 by a margin of more than 43,000 votes.

"I once came here and saw a luxurious bungalow and wondered who could afford such a house in a drought-prone region. You can guess the answer." Pawar said.

"I began my political journey as an MLA, then became a junior minister, later a cabinet minister, and eventually chief minister and Union minister. Rohit Pawar is completing his first term. With your support, he can continue his progress in the next term," the NCP (SP) chief told the gathering while underlining his belief in the 39-year-old leader's poten-

## Soren govt 'giving shelter' to Bangladeshi infiltrators: Chouhan

PAKUR/SAHEBGANJ (JHARKHAND), Nov 18: Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday alleged that the JMM led alliance government in Jharkhand was giving shelter to Bangladeshi infiltrators who are grabbing tribal land.

Singh, the BJP election incharge for Jharkhand polls held a roadshow in support of saffron party candidate Navneet Hembram in Maheshpur assembly constituency of Pakur district and claimed that a wave for change is sweeping across Jharkhand and people have made up their mind to oust corrupt" JMM-led govern-

"Mothers and sisters are not safe under Hemant Soren-led regime as the government is patronising Bangladeshi infiltrators, who are grabbing tribal land and playing with the dignity of tribal women", Singh said.

He asserted that a wave for change was sweeping across Jharkhand and BJP will form the government in the state with twothirds majority.

Addressing another public meeting at Barhait in Sahebganj district in support of party's Barhait seat candidate Gamaliyal Hembrom and Dhanbad constituency candidate Raj Sinha, Singh said if BJP returns to power in Jharkhand, Barhait will be made a Sub-division.

The Union Agriculture minister said 'Roti, Mati and Beti' in Jharkhand was at stake and promised to drive out infiltrators f BJP is voted to power in Jharkhand. "We will identify each and every infiltrator and chase them out to save Jhark-MoEFCC, FSI refute data claiming loss of 2.33 million hectares of forest cover in India since 2000

# RRAG alleges human rights violations in Dr Yunus' first 100 days

### **HT Bureau**

is possible in politics," Bhujbal said.

ment where he shifted in 2004.

GUWAHATI, Nov 18: As Chief Adviser, Professor Mohammad Yunus completed 100 days of his interim government on Sunday, the Rights and Risks Analysis Group (RRAG) released a report accusing his administration of human rights violations and targeting journalists.

The report, titled "100 Days of Dr. Yunus: Mobocracy Imperils Bangladesh's Reforms", accuses Dr. Yunus of mirroring the actions of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while overseeing increased violations against indigenous peoples and religious minorities. It also claims that his government granted impunity to the perpetrators of police killings during student protests, in which 44 officers were killed. The RRAG report highlights widespread human rights violations, including filing criminal cases against at least 2.72,316 individuals, primarily political opponents, in 1,598 cases.

"Targeting of 354 journalists, with 74 incidents of violence, 113 criminal cases, and the revocation of press accreditation for 167 journalists. Removal of five Supreme Court judges, including the Chief Justice, and 12 High Court judges due to protests by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement. Forcing the resignation of all members of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) following critical reports about law and order. Using the discredited International War Crimes Tribunal to file over 80 complaints of crimes against humanity and genocide against political opponents," the

report claimed. The report also details increasing violence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs) between September 19 and October 1, which resulted in the killing of four indigenous individuals, injuries to 75 people, and the destruction of 142 homes. shops, and Buddhist temples. Despite these incidents, the government has not made public the findings of the Inquiry Commission. The report further accuses Dr Yunus of rejecting the implementation of the CHT Peace Accord and dismissing over 2,000 cases of attacks on religious minorities, labeling them as Awami League supporters. It also alleges systematic suppression of indigenous people and minorities' freedom of association and peaceful assembly, particularly following the "March for Identity" on September 18.

Additionally, after the November 5 violence in Chittagong's Hazari Gali area, a case was filed accusing 582 people, mostly Hindus, raising concerns about targeting minorities.

The RRAG criticises the continued use of the controversial Cyber Security Act, with 11 cases filed so far, and the government's decision to bar law enforcement from acting against those involved in the July-August uprising that resulted in the deaths of 44 police officers.

The report further highlights efforts to create an "Awami League-Free Bangladesh" by banning its student wing, the Chhatra League, as a terrorist organization and excluding the Awami League-led alliance from discussions on electoral reforms.

"Dr. Yunus is repeating the worst practices of Sheikh Hasina's tenure while enabling further human rights violations," said Suhas Chakma, director of RRAG.

He added that granting indemnity to those responsible for killing 44 police officers during the uprising marked a dangerous precedent.

Chakma further criticised Dr Yunus's reliance on student-led movements to justify unconstitutional actions, stating, "Dr Yunus's claim that elections will occur only after reforms could allow him to remain in power indefinitely, as these reforms may be rejected by the next elected government."

stating that no one dares challenge the government's reforms for fear of student reprisals. The RRAG claims that the Jamaat-e-Islami has become a key supporter of Dr Yunus's government, citing the burning of the Jatiya Party headquarters on October 31 as an example of unchecked violence.

The report warns of mob rule,

"Dr Yunus has squandered an opportunity to establish genuine democracy in Bangladesh through national reconciliation," Chakma cautioned, urging the international community to consider the longterm implications of supporting reforms that may lack acceptance

from future governments. The RRAG recommended implementing the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk's proposal to establish an office in Bangladesh to provide guidance on reforms, transitional justice, and reconciliation efforts.

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: The Union Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoE-FCC) and Forest Survey of India (FSI) have refuted the data of the Global Forest Watch monitoring project, which said the country lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000 The MoEFCC and FSI filed a joint reply before the National Green Tribunal, which had sought

motu cognisance of a news report regarding the alleged loss of forest cover. The reply filed on November 16 said that the Forest Survey of India (FSI) conducted a wall-to-wall forest cover mapping data using remote sensing data and 17 cycles of forest cover assessment had been

completed between 1987 and

a response from the authorities ear-

lier. The green body had taken suo

It said, "FSI also undertakes sampling based National Forest Inventory (NFI) to assess information on tree cover, growing stock in forests and trees outside forests (TOF), bamboo resource, carbon stock along with several other pa-



rameters and the findings of above exercise are published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR) in a cycle of two years.

According to the reply, the IFSR definition of forest cover included all land, more than one hectare in area, with a tree canopy of more than 10 per cent irrespective of ownership and legal status, while tree cover was defined as tree patches of size less than one hectare occurring outside the recorded forest area.

It said, "The country's forest cover reported in the IFSR is based

on internationally accepted criteria and the parameter adopted by the Global Forest Watch for forest cover is not based on the internationally accepted criteria and the Global Forest Watch is an initiative of an independent non-profit organisation which might have dif-

The reply signed by FSI's Assistant Director S V Nagaraja said that as per the IFSR reports, from 2001 to 2021, there was a net increase of 59,891 sq km in forest cover and 14,277 sq km in tree

for forest cover assessment."

ferent methodology and definition

Global Forest Watch, an average of 51 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year was released into the atmosphere as a result of tree cover loss in India.

Refuting the claims, the report said, "However, it is humbly submitted that there is no decrease in forest and tree cover, and the question of emission of carbon dioxide from the forest in India does not arise.

It noted that according to the

It said the IFSR assessment of carbon stock in forests of the country in 2013 was around 6,941 million tonnes and in 2012 it stood at around 7,204 million tonnes.

"There is a net sequestration of 263 million tonnes of carbon in the forests of India between 2013 to 2021. Hence, India's forests represent a net sink of carbon dioxide not as a source of net emission of carbon dioxide.

"In view of the submission made in the above para, the Global Forest Watch (data) is devoid of the facts and ground reality and internationally accepted norms," the reply said. (PTI)

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024** 

pendent mechanism was in place

to ascertain the number of trees

The bench had asked the DDA

form it about the status of trees

felled, consequential actions and

November 8, the last working day

of Justice Chandrachud. The

ridge is an extension of Aravalli

Hill range in Delhi and is a rocky,

It has been divided into four

zones -- south, south-central, cen-

tral and north -- for administrative

reasons. These four zones make

up a total area of around 7,784

The bench was dealing with a

plea seeking action against erring

officials for the alleged illegal tree

the monitoring mechanism.

hilly and forested area.

# CJI Sanjiv Khanna recuses himself from hearing pleas related to felling of trees in Delhi ridge

Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Monday recused himself from hearing pleas related to the alleged illegal felling of several hundred trees in the Delhi Ridge

Earlier, a bench headed by the then CJI D Y Chandrachud, since retired, had sought a personal affidavit of Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena in the case which had also sought initiation of contempt proceedings against certain DDA officials.

At the outset, the CJI, who was sitting on the bench with Justice Sanjay Kumar, said, "One thing I would like to point out that when I was the NALSA chairman, I had gone to Patna and with Delhi LG had toured jails there. So, it will not be appropriate for me to hear the plea..

The bench ordered the listing of the pleas before a bench of which the CJI is not part in the week commencing November 27.



thorities.

A lawyer pointed out that there were orders passed by two other benches. "We know," the CJI responded.

On November 7, the top court had asked the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) about the measures undertaken to restore the Delhi Ridge area, where several

hundred trees were allegedly felled illegally, and sought the extent of plantation done by the au-

The bench had said it would introduce a monitoring system to ensure planted trees were surviv-

"What are you doing to restore the ridge?" the bench had asked, adding, "We want to know how It had wondered if any inde-

felling in the area.

hectares

many trees were cut and what is being done to restore the ridge and carry out afforestation.'

advocate Gopal Senior counsel and the petitioner to in-Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the petitioner, who has alleged contempt on the part of the officials, said according to a report of However, the then CJI-led the Forest Survey of India (FSI), a total of 1,670 trees were cut. bench did not pass any order on

> The DDA, however, earlier said the numbers stood at 642 trees. The top court had issued a con-

tempt notice to the DDA vicechairman for the felling of trees for the construction of an approach road.

The top court had said that retired IFS officer Ishwar Singh, central empowered committee member Sunil Limaye and ecological gardener Pradip Kishen would be associated with the work assigned to the FSI.

The bench had observed that 3,340 trees should be planted at the ridge along with 100 times the

### **Protesting farmers to march** towards Delhi on Dec 6

Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha on Monday announced that farmers will march towards Delhi on December 6 to press the Centre to accept their various demands, including a legal guarantee of MSP for crops.

The decision was taken at a meeting of farmer leaders here.

The protesting farmers have been camping at Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since February 13, when their 'Delhi Chalo' march, spearheaded by the SKM (Non-Political) and the KMM, was stopped by security forces.

Addressing the media here, KMM leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said after a long wait, they have decided to head towards

"We will move towards Delhi on December 6," he said.

Pandher slammed the Centre for not holding any talks with the farmers to discuss their demands.

"We have been left with no option. We waited peacefully for the government (to reach out) for nine

CHANDIGARH, Nov 18: The months. But now we will head to-

wards Delhi," he added. The farmers will move towards the national capital in batches from

the Shambhu border. Tejveer Singh of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Shaheed Bhagat Singh) said they have been camping at the two border points for 280 days and the Centre has not held any talks with them since February

Last week, the farmers announced that they would intensify their agitation and start a fast unto death from November 26. Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal will observe the fast.

Besides a legal guarantee of minimum support price (MSP) for crops, the farmers are demanding a farm debt waiver, pension for farmers and farm labourers, no hike in electricity tariff, withdrawal of police cases and "justice" for the victims of the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence, reinstatement of the Land Acquisition Act, 2013, and compensation to the families of the farmers who died during a previous agitation in

### Dalit student alleges casteist slurs, assault by principal at DU college



NEW DELHI, Nov 18: A Dalit student at Delhi University's Shaheed Bhagat Singh College has filed a police complaint alleging that its principal hurled casteist slurs and assaulted him after he was falsely accused of sending obscene messages on the official WhatsApp group of his depart-

Principal Arun Kumar Attri denied the allegations, claiming the student was being manipulated by a faculty member against whom an inquiry is underway for taking appointment and promotion on fake and fabricated experience certificate.

The allegations by the student have sparked protests by student groups. Students from other universities like JNU gathered at the college on Monday demanding the principal's resignation.

The student, a third-year BA Hindi Honours student, claimed the incident caused him mental trauma and defamation. He has also written to the University Vice-Chancellor and the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, seeking action against those involved.

In his complaint, the student detailed the events, stating that on October 24. a classmate's phone was allegedly hacked, and objectionable content, including links to obscene videos, was shared in the department's WhatsApp

He claimed to have helped fix the classmate's phone to prevent further misuse. However, during a preliminary investigation initiated by the principal he was accused by some students of sending the messages.

"Despite my full cooperation, I was subjected to intense scrutiny, including having my phone searched without my consent, which violated my right to privacy," he stated in the letter. The student alleged that some teachers pressured him to admit to the allegations and threatened him with expulsion.

"When I refused to accept the false charges, Principal Arun Kumar Attri physically assaulted me. He also made casteist remarks, asking why I disclosed my Dalit identity and threatened to expel me if I spoke about the incident," the letter claimed.

The student added that he faced severe humiliation when he returned to college, with peers treating him as a criminal, which affected his mental health.

"These actions have hurt my self-esteem. I am under immense mental tension and have even had suicidal thoughts," he wrote, requesting urgent legal action.

However, Principal Attri said the allegations are "completely false" and the complaint is an attempt to malign him and the col-

The allegations of casteist slurs and assault are completely false. The student was found guilty by a disciplinary committee of sending obscene messages and hacking WhatsApp accounts. However, to protect his career, the college refrained from filing a cyber cell complaint and instead counselled him, warning him for the future. This complaint is an attempt to malign me and the college," Attri told PTI.

The All India Students Association (AISA) unit of JNU and DU gheraoed the principal's office on Monday in Shaheed Bhagat Singh College demanding action.

The protests reportedly disrupted classes, prompting the college to announce a shift to online teaching. In a notification, the administration cited "deteriorating air pollution" as the reason for the

# SC Collegium recommends Madras HC Judge D Krishnakumar's name for Manipur HC chief justice

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: The Supreme Court Collegium on Monday recommended appointment of Justice D Krishnakumar, currently serving as a judge of the Madras High Court, as the chief justice of the Manipur High Court.

The Collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and comprising Justices B R Gavai and Surva Kant, took the decision in a meeting held on Monday.

A vacancy in the office of the chief justice of the High Court of Manipur would arise consequent upon the retirement of Justice Siddharth Mridul on November 21, 2024. Therefore, appointment to that office is required to be made, the Collegium noted.

"It is proposed to appoint Mr. Justice D Krishnakumar, presently serving as a Judge of the Madras High Court, as the Chief Justice of High Court of Manipur with effect from the date on which the incumbent Chief Justice demits office on retirement," it said.

"Mr. Justice D. Krishnakumar was appointed as a Judge of the Madras High Court on 07th April 2016 and is due to retire on 21st



"He is the senior-most puisne Judge in his parent High Court and belongs to a Backward Community. Before his elevation as a Judge of the High Court, he had extensive practice in civil, Constitutional and service matters in the High Court, with specialisation in Constitutional law," it added.

The Collegium noted that Justice Krishnakumar is a competent judge with sound legal acumen and is endowed with high level of integrity and honesty.

"While recommending the name of Mr. Justice D. Krishnakumar, the Collegium has also taken into consideration the fact that at present

there is only one Chief Justice from the Madras High Court among the Chief Justices of the High Courts.

"Having regard to all relevant factors, the Collegium is of the considered view that Mr. Justice D. Krishnakumar is fit and suitable in all respects for being appointed as the Chief Justice of High Court of Manipur," it said.

'The Collegium, therefore, resolves to recommend that Justice D Krishnakumar be appointed as the Chief Justice of High Court of Manipur consequent upon the retirement of Mr. Justice Siddharth Mridul on 21st November 2024," it

### 3.3 lakh Indians are studying in the US, making India the "top sender" of international students to Amer-

'India top sender of international students in US

ica for the first time in 15 years, according to the Open Doors Report 2024 released on Monday. In the academic year 2022-23.

the leading source country for international students in the US was China followed by India. According to the latest Open

Doors Report, the number of Indian students studying in the US in the academic year 2023-24 is at an "all-time high" at 3,31,602, a rise of 23 per cent from 2022-23 when the number stood at 2,68,923.

"India is now the leading country of origin for international students in the United

States, accounting for 29 per cent of the total international student population," according to a note shared by the US Embassy on the Open Doors Report 2024.

According to official data associated with the latest report, the top five source countries for international students in the US for 2023-24 are -- India, China (2,77,398), South Korea (43,149), Canada (28,998) and Taiwan (23,157).

"India is the top sender of international students (for the first time since 2008/2009) with over 3,31,602 students studying in the

Toxic haze envelops Delhi,

United States. The number of Indian students is at an all-time high," the US Embassy's note read.

Normally, the academic year in the US begins in September and runs through May.

India also "remained the largest sender" of international graduate (masters and PhD level) students in the US for the second year. The number of Indian graduate students increased by 19 per cent to reach 1,96,567, it said.

The number of undergraduate students from India also increased by 13 per cent to

36,053 while the number of nondegree students experienced a 28 per cent

decline to 1,426 students, according to the report.

The release of the Open Doors Report marked the beginning of International Education Week (IEW), which celebrates the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide.

The report is published by the Institute of International Education. The IIE has been conducting an annual statistical survey on international students in the US since its founding in 1919 and in partnership with the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and

## LeT terrorist, terror associate held in J&K doctors warn of health risks for all

SRINAGAR, Nov 18: Security forces have arrested a Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) terrorist and a terrorist associate in two separate operations in Pulwama and Baramulla districts of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Mon-

"Police along with security forces arrested a terrorist affiliated with proscribed terror outfit LeT and recovered incriminating materials, arms and ammunition from his possession at Tral in Awantipora area (Pulwama district)," a

police spokesman said. The spokesman said acting on specific intelligence, police along with Army and CRPF arrested the terrorist, affiliated with LeT, from orchards in village Pinglish area of Police Station Tral.

"He has been identified as Irshad Ahmad Chopan, resident of Lurgam Tral. Incriminating materials along with arms and ammunition, including a pistol, 18

rounds and two magazines have been recovered from his possession," he said.

The spokesman said prelimi-

nary investigation has revealed

that Chopan has been involved in several terror related activities in South Kashmir Range. He said the accused was involved in the case related to firing

upon, and injuring, one non-local labourer Shubam Kumar on Octo-In another operation, a terrorist

associate was arrested from Baramulla district on Sunday. Showkat Ahmad Bhat, who hails from Kulgam district in south

Kashmir, was arrested on Sunday from Janbazpora-Binner road in Baramulla district, they said. An AK rifle, one magazine and

some rounds were recovered from Bhat's possession.

Bhat was reported missing last week from his Naganad village in D H Pora area of Kulgam. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: Delhi's air quality took a turn for the worse on Monday, with areas like Dwarka, Mundka and Najafgarh recording a maximum AQI of 500 in the after-

People complained of itchy and watery eyes as a dense layer of smog continued to envelop the national capital. The city's Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 484, the worst this season, at 8 am on Monday. By 2 pm, the AQI worsened further and it was recorded at 491, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Data from 37 out of 40 monitoring stations revealed that four stations — Dwarka Sector 8, Najafgarh, Nehru Nagar and Mundka — reported AQI levels at the maximum of 500, according to the SAMEER app, which provides hourly updates on the National

With the AQI crossing 450, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas ordered the implementation of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) Stage-IV restrictions in Delhi-NCR.

As the city's air quality is in the "severe plus" category, doctors have warned of health risks for all.

"At this level of pollution, wearing an N95 mask is not an option but a necessity. Even healthy individuals can face respiratory illnesses and other complications," said Dr Rajat Sharma, resident doctor of Community Medicine at UCMS & GTB Hospital. Ujjwal Parakh, senior consultant, Department of Chest Medicine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, emphasised that people need to be extremely cautious at this time due to the hazardous air quality.

"Everyone should avoid outdoor activities as much as possible and use masks to reduce the effects of air pollution if they must go out," he said.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court questioned the Delhi government over delay in implementation of stricter anti-pollution measures under GRAP-4 and said it will not allow scaling down of the preventive measures without its prior permission. It told the state

government that the court wants to know what steps it has taken to curb the alarming rise of pollution level.

"We won't allow scaling down of preventive measures under stage 4 even if AOI goes below 450. Stage 4 will continue till court permits," a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George said, adding it will hear the matter in detail at the end of the day's work.

Addressing a press conference, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi alleged that the BJP-led central government has been doing politics over the issue of pollution but has taken no step to check stubble burning in states like Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh -- all ruled by the saffron party.

Lauding the AAP-ruled Punjab, she said it is the only state where the cases of stubble burning have come down significantly. In the BJP-ruled states, they have gone up, she claimed. As Delhi's air quality worsened to the "Severe Plus" category, tighter pollution control measures came into effect on Monday morning, including a ban on truck entry and the suspension of construction activities at public projects. There has been a rise in the sale of air purifiers.

Vijendra Mohan, owner of Air Expert India, a dealership shop in Indrapuram, reported a surge in air purifier sales following the severe air pollution levels. "We have seen a remarkable increase in demand, with daily sales jumping from 20 to 40 units per day, especially after Diwali. Previously, we'd sell around 20 purifiers per day. Now, we are selling around 40 air purifiers per day," he said.

According to an order issued by CAQM on Sunday, no trucks will be allowed in Delhi except for those carrying essential items or using clean fuel (LNG/CNG/BS-VI diesel/electric).

Non-essential light commercial vehicles registered outside Delhi will also be prohibited, except for EVs and CNG, and BS-VI diesel ones. Delhi-registered BS-IV or older diesel medium and heavy goods vehicles are banned except for those in essential services, the order said.

All construction activities, including highways, roads, flyovers, power lines, pipelines and other public projects, have been suspended.

The CAQM recommended that offices in the NCR work at 50 per cent capacity, with the rest working from home. The Delhi government asked all schools to discontinue physical classes for all students, except those in classes 10 and 12, from Monday

An AQI of 400 or higher is deemed 'severe' and it can have an adverse effect on both healthy individuals and people who already have medical conditions.

First implemented in 2017, the GRAP is a set of anti-air pollution measures followed in the capital and its vicinity according to the severity of the situation.

It classifies the air quality in the Delhi-NCR under four different stages: Stage 1 - 'poor' (AQI 201-300), Stage 2 - 'very poor' (AQI 301-400), Stage 3 - 'severe' (AQI 401-450) and Stage 4 - 'severe plus' (AQI above 450).

Additionally, dense toxic smog caused visibility to drop sharply in the morning. According to officials, visibility at Safdarjung airport was 150 metres. (PTI)

# Book chronicles integration of princely states into Indian Union

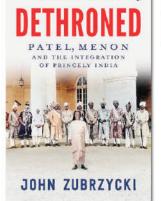
BOOK

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: A new book through the story of 14 princely states reconstructs and covers the episodes of the tumultuous period in which India as we know it today was formed.

Written by award-winning author Mallika Ravikumar, "565: The Dramatic Story of Unifying India" is touted to be a gripping, information-packed dramatisation of the history-making events that led up to the integration of 565 princely states after Viceroy Mountbatten announced the exit of the British from India in 1947.

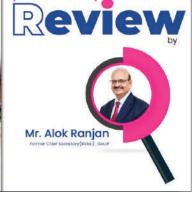
It is published by Hachette India.

"Over 565 princely states were knit together in about two months, to form the India we now have – a significant saga that left an indelible mark on India's geography and history, its present and its future. And yet, so little is known about it. I feel honoured and happy to bring this thrilling story to young readers," Ravikumar said in a state-



There were more than 500 princely states in India that were not a part of the British Empire officially at the time of independence. These 565 princely states, which constituted roughly 45 per cent of the pre-Partition India, were given the choice to accede to either India or Pakistan or remain

independent. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was



given the responsibility to convince the princely states to join India. Travancore, Bhopal, Jammu and Kashmir, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Rampur, Gwalior and Junagadh are among the princely states whose stories of integration into the Union of India are featured in

> While many of the nearly 600 rulers united with India, some with

larger kingdoms decided to either wait for a better bargain, negotiate terms for joining Pakistan, or use the opportunity to give flight to their lofty ambitions, read the description of the book.

"What unfolds in those nerveracking last days of the Raj? In a gripping account, highlighting the key events and personalities of the time, this thoroughly researched book introduces young adults and older readers to the dramatic saga of how a great nation was forged," the publishers said. Congress leader-writer Shashi

Tharoor and historian Rana Safvi have praised "565: The Dramatic Story of Unifying India" While Tharoor described the book as an "outstanding volume"

which would enthrall readers, Safvi said it is a "compelling narrative" that unravels the intricate negotiations and strategic manoeu-The book, priced at ₹ 699, is

available for purchase across online and offline stores. (PTI)



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

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: Punjabi music sensation Diljit Dosanjh says he will stop singing alcohol-themed songs if all the 'thekas' (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 'theka' (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."

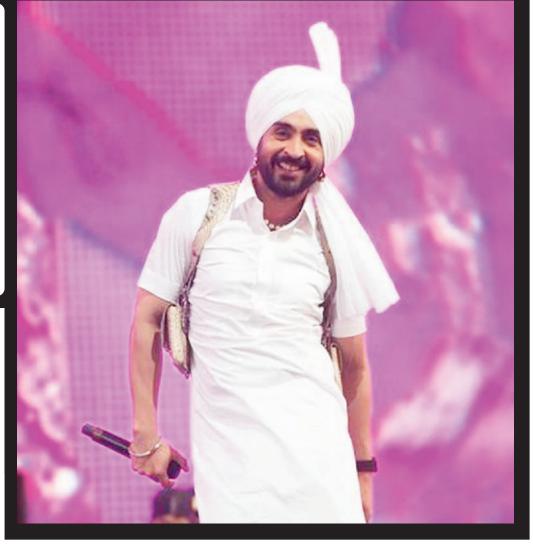
The singer said he was a teetotaler and was even willing to take a pledge to not make such songs but the governments of each state should declare themselves dry states.

"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 'thekas' 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:

"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 au-

"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 "Ju-

"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 like the Prime Video period drama directed by Vikramaditya Motwane. "I kept looking for something like that, that I read something and it stays in-

side, 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 peo-

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 To prepare for their roles, all three ac-

tors 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

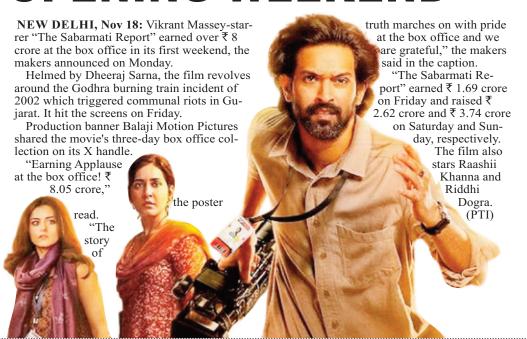
daughter Indira Gandhi. "I didn't read the book ('Freedom at Midnight') because I didn't want to draw comparisons. I treated the script as everything," he added.

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 interestin and challenging," the actor said, adding he worked closely with Advani to explore the

depths of his char-

acter. (PTI)

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



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

Singh and Devi are currently en route to the Estonian capital Tallin 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

"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 "Pvre"

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.

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



# HARRY KANE SPARKS ENGLAND ROUT AGAINST IRELAND AND NATIONS LEAGUE PROMOTION

LONDON, Nov 18: Harry Kane's 69th international goal sparked a second-half scoring spree that fired England back to the top tier of the UEFA Nations League. In temporary head coach Lee Carsley's final game in charge, a 5-0 win against Ireland secured promotion and ensured England will be back among Europe's leading nations in the next edition of the competition. "I wanted the England team to be exciting to watch and attacking," Carsley said. "I see them do it day in, day out on the training ground. And now we've seen it (on the field).'

England won its group on goal difference ahead of secondplaced Greece, which beat Fin-

Kane's 53rd-minute penalty at Wembley was a record-extending goal for his country after Liam Scales brought down Jude Bellingham in the box and was sent off for a second yellow card offense.

Within five minutes England was 3-0 up through Anthony Gordon in the 55th and Conor Gallagher in the 58th.

Substitute Jarrod Bowen made an immediate impact, scoring with his first touch in the 75th and Taylor Harwood-Bellis, making his debut, headed in another four minutes later.

'A really important win for us," Kane said. "It was a tough first half, but we came out second half with a lot more energy

England, which is set to welcome new head coach Thomas Tuchel in January, needed to match Greece's result to top

Anastasios Bakasetas had put Greece ahead in the 52nd in Finland, with Kane's England opener coming a minute later.

Christos Tzolis scored the second for Greece, which faces a playoff to try to win promotion. After five wins from six games, Carsley will now return to his permanent role as head coach of England's under 21s. Tuchel begins in January and will lead the campaign to qualify for the 2026 World Cup.

He should have plenty of options when he selects his first squad after Carsley handed debuts to eight players during his short reign.

In his final game, Gordon, Gallagher, Bowen and Harwood-Bellis all scored their first senior goals for England.

"Lee has achieved the main objective from the six fixtures this autumn: securing promotion back to the top tier of the Nations League," English Football Association CEO Mark Bullingham said. "The players have really enjoyed working with Lee and his team – they have made a real impact in their interim roles."

Adrien Rabiot scored two goals as France beat Italy 3-1 to win Group A2.

Both teams had already secured their places in the quarter-

finals before the match in Milan, but France needed to win by at least two goals to take top

"It's been a while since we've played a match like that, fighting all together," Rabiot told French television channel TF1. The aggressiveness that we showed, our team spirit, that should all be highlighted. That is the real face of the France

Rabiot headed the visitors in front just inside two minutes.

France shocked San Siro into silence in the 33rd when Lucas Digne curled in a magnificent free kick from 25 yards that went into the top left corner via the underside of the bar and Guglielmo Vicario. It went down as an own-goal from the ing to soccer statistician Opta Italy goalkeeper, who was a late replacement after Gianluigi Donnarumma fell ill with a

Italy pulled a goal back two minutes later when Andrea Cambiaso volleyed past Mike

But Rabiot grabbed his second in the 65th with another header — the sixth goal in a row Italy has conceded from set plays. While the match had started with the Italy fans booing the French anthem, it finished with France supporters proudly singing the same song in triumph.

It was the first time Italy had lost a home game by two or more goals since 1983, accord- five. (AP)

Also in the group, No. 6ranked Belgium fell to a sur-

prise 1-0 loss against Israel ranked 81st. Yarden Shua's goal settled the game, which was held in Budapest, Hungary, in the 86th. Israel was relegated to League B despite the win. Belgium must now face a

playoff to try to avoid relegation. Erling Haaland leads the Nations League scoring charts after hitting a hat trick in Norway's 5-0 win against Kazakhastan in Group B3.

The Manchester City striker took his total to seven goals and is two clear of Viktor Gyokeres, Cristiano Ronaldo and Benjamin Sesko, who are all tied on

# India look to play to their strength, start as favourites against Japan

RAJGIR (BIHAR), Nov 18: A confident and unbeaten India will back their strategy of attack and defense at appropriate times when they take on Japan in the semifinal of the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here Tuesday.

Hosts and defending champions India will undoubtedly enter the semifinal as clear favourites against a side which they trounced 3-0 in their final league game.

World number nine India have registered five wins from as many games, including 3-0 victory over Olympic silver medallist and world number six China. India's chief coach Harendra Singh also emphasised on the need to continue in the same vein in the tournament.

"We know what are their strengths and weaknesses. For us, this tournament is about working on our strengths and build a formidable style of play for Indian women's hockey team. It's a mixture of attacking and defensive," Harendra said.

"So far the girls have executed really well. I am satisfied with their decision making but semifinal will be a different ball game." The Indians must guard against complacency, as a single mistake could shatter their dreams of retaining the crown.



The top four sides qualified for the semifinals of the six-team continental tournament. In the other semifinal China will be up against

The Indians might have defeated Japan hands down in the

league stage, but Harendra is in no mood to take their opponents lightly in the knock-out match.

"Of course we are expecting a tough fight from Japan because the training game and pool matches are different. It's a semi-

final and every team prepares according to their plans.

"We are going to face some resistance from Japan for sure. They have a good side but we have to do our homework. We need to focus on how we want to play rather than focussing on the oppo-

nent," he said. After a cagey start, India quickly found their rhythm, elevating their performance dramatically and excelling in every aspect of the game.

One of the most encouraging aspects of India's success here has been the stellar performance of their backline, led brilliantly by Udita, Sushila Chanu, and Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke.

The Indian defense has been so solid that goalkeepers Savita Punia and Bichu Devi Karibam have hardly been tested in the tournament thus far.

In the first part of the tournament, the Indians were guilty of rushing the play and failing to identify the right options inside the opposition circle, a shortcoming acknowledged by Harendra.

But it seems the hosts have gotten over that bad habit in the last few matches. Not only have they managed to play full press hockey, but they've also displayed improved decision-making inside the circle, resulting in some fine field

Penalty corner conversion was also an area of concern but over the last few games, the likes of Deepika and Manisha Chauhan have risen to the occasion on that

# Nadal and Spain's Davis Cup captain won't say whether he'll play before retirement

FUENGIROLA (SPAIN), fewer than 25 official matches in Nov 18: Neither Rafael Nadal

nor Spanish captain David Ferrer would say Monday whether the 22-time Grand Slam champion will play singles or doubles — or even at all — at the Davis Cup Final 8, his last event before re-

Spain is scheduled to face the Netherlands on Tuesday in the quarterfinals on an indoor hard court at the Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martin Carpena. The winner will play in the semifinals on Friday. The championship will be decided on Sunday.

Asked at a news conference how he has been feeling in practice in recent days and

whether he is ready play, Nadal said: "That's a question for the captain." That drew smile and laugh from Ferrer, sit-Nadal's left.

Moments later at a hotel in Fuengirola, about 12 miles south of the arena in Malaga, the question of Nadal's participation was put to

"I don't know yet," Ferrer said. "At the moment, I have not decided the players that are going to play tomorrow.'

The 38-year-old Nadal announced last month that he would walk away from tennis after the Davis Cup at home in Spain. He has been dealing with a series of injuries the past two

"I'm not here to retire. I'm here to help the team win. It's my last week in a team competition and the most important thing is to help the team. The emotions will come later," said Nadal, wearing the squad's red polo shirt with a tiny red-and-yellow Spanish flag

on the left sleeve. "I'm enjoying the week. I'm not putting too much attention to the retirement," Nadal said. "It will be a big change in my life after this week.'

Nadal said it doesn't "make sense to keep going knowing that I don't have the real chance to be

competitive the way that I like to be competitive because my body" won't allow it. He hasn't

played an official match since the Paris Olympics in early August. He lost in the second round of singles to Novak Djokovic and in the quarterfinals of

doubles alongside Carlos Alcaraz.

"I've tried to prepare as hard as possible for the last month and a half. I'm trying to give my best for this event," Nadal said. "When you don't compete so often, it's difficult to maintain the level consistently. But the improvement is there every day. I believe that."

Spain's Davis Cup team also includes Alcaraz, Marcel Granollers, Roberto Bautista Agut seasons and has been limited to and Pedro Martinez. (AP)

# We got what we wanted out of it: Nayar, Morkel on match simulation

PERTH, Nov 18: The centrewicket match simulation at WACA ground has served its purpose as the Indian team got what it wanted ahead of the opening Test against Australia, believed Abhishek Nayar and Morne Morkel, the two lieutenants of head coach Gautam Gambhir. The focus was on getting acclimatised to the conditions after the visitors had decided to scrap the intra-squad game with India 'A' team at the expense of match simulation.

"Just before we came to Australia, Gauti bhai (Gautam Gambhir), Rohit (Sharma), we discussed what we wanted out of these three days, and the idea was to try and make sure that one, for the younger guys and also the experienced guys, to give them a lot of time in the centre to adapt, to understand conditions," Nayar said in a BCCI

"We are coming and playing Test cricket (here) after, you know, four years. So initially, we got the guys to come in and had it like a game where you got out,

if you got out, you got out." "But then, we tried to give them another chance, and we felt that second time around, the guys adapted better, they understood the conditions better, and were a lot more comfortable. We got what we wanted out of it."

The five-match series between the two heavyweights of world cricket begins at the Optus Stadium here from November 22.

Navar added, "Day two was quite similar, where we then also were using the facilities outside, getting the nets in, the quantity and the quality down in the cen-

"Day two was about our bowlers coming in and bowling spells, getting up the workloads, bowling 15 overs each, you know, Bumrah's bowled 18, a couple of others bowled 18. So, it's just more about getting guys into the game sense.

Analysing the bowlers' performance during training, India's bowling coach Morné Morkel expressed his satisfaction with

"Very happy with how the

bowlers went. They summed up conditions very well. Yeah, I think we're on track for the 22nd. So, another three training sessions left," he stated. "We'll sit down this afternoon or tomorrow and start planning,

looking at game plans and how we're going to bring out the best and edge in everyone for game time on 22nd." As Jasprit Bumrah takes on the dual role of spearheading the

pace attack and leading the team in the absence of Rohit Sharma, his colleague Mohammed Siraj will be expected to provide him much-needed support when he operating with both new and old ball. Siraj finished as the highest wicket-taker during the 2020-21 Test tour of Australia, bagging 13 wickets in three matches at an average of 29.53, including a five-for. "This man (Siraj) is a legend. He's got a big heart, aggressive mindset, one of the leaders of the attack and I'm very excited to see how he goes on this tour," Morkel said.

"Last year, he was the go-to man in tough situations, and we're excited to see more of that senior role coming out on a very important tour," he signed off.

# China Masters: Satwik-Chirag return to action in BWF World Tour

SHENZHEN (CHINA), Nov 18: India's premier men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will make a highly-anticipated return to action at the China Masters Super 750 badminton tournament, starting here on Tuesday, following a disappointing Paris Olympics cam-

The former world number one duo had been sidelined from competitive action post the Paris Olympics due to Satwik's shoulder injury.

Their absence from the circuit led them to miss several high-profile tournaments, including the Arctic Open, Denmark Open, and China Open.

Fresh off a lengthy recovery, Satwik and his Asian Games gold medal-winning partner Chirag will aim to regain their momentum, despite having been without a coach since Mathias Boe's departure in Au-

Satwik and Chirag, who finished runner-up in the last editions, will start their campaign against Chinese Taipei's Yang Po-Hsuan and Lee Jhe-Huei in the opening round.

Elsewhere, P V Sindhu and Lakshya Sen will look to overcome their recent struggles and aim for improved performances as they continue their quest for consistency and

Both the players, who took a long break after their campaign at the Paris Games ended in early August without a medal, have struggled to regain their best form since the Olympics. Since his semifinal loss in

Paris, Lakshya has endured

early exits at the Arctic Open Super 500 and Denmark Open, and the trend continued last week, with the young shuttler making another first-round exit from the Kumamoto Mas-

ters Japan He will kick off his campaign against seventh-seeded Malaysian Lee Zii Jia.

The 23-year-old possesses the ability to beat any opponent, but his mental toughness has been questioned following his agonising near-miss at the Tokyo Olympics, where he slipped from a medal position in a heartbreaking loss.

Two-time Olympic medallist Sindhu bounced back from her shock opening-round loss to Canada's Michelle Li in Finland, reaching the quarterfinals in Odense.

However, Li proved to be a hurdle once again, defeating Sindhu in the round of 16 last



whom she leads 5-4 on headto-head record. Also competing in the women's singles event will be promising young talents

Malvika Bansod. Aakarsi will face Tomoka Miyazaki of Japan in her opener while Malvika will take on Line Højmark Kjaersfeldt in the first round.

Aakarshi

Kashyap

The women's doubles team of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, that made a first round exit from the Kumamoto Masters Japan, will also be in action. The Indian duo will square up against the second seeded Chinese combination of Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning.

B Sumeeth Reddy will partner Sikki Reddy in the mixed doubles event. (PTI)

## Pickleball association approaches sports ministry for NSF status

erning body for pickleball has approached the sports ministry for recognition as a National Sports Federation (NSF) following the successful hosting of the inaugural World Championship here this month, said All India Pickleball Association chief Arvind Prabhoo on Monday. The World Pickleball Championship was held here from November 12-17 with around 650 players from countries like Australia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Poland, and Singapore, competing in the event.

Prabhoo said the All India Pickleball Association (AIPA) had submitted the required documents for getting recognition as an NSF to the ministry and was hopeful of a positive response. "AIPA submitted the paperwork for recognition to the ministry two months back. One of the hurdles we were facing was that because it was not an Olympic sport, there were challenges," he said in an interaction with PTI.

"We are now pushing for Olympic status for pickleball years, it will become an nis and badminton. (PTI)

MUMBAI, Nov 18: The gov- Olympic sport and we are all geared up for that. We are awaiting their (ministry's) response to recognise us as a (national) federation," he said.

He said AIPA had started the process of preparing young Indian players to compete in the Olympics whenever the sport gets included in the quadrennial

"AIPA has already started preparing youngsters for the Olympics. We feel that if not in 2028 (Los Angeles), definitely in 2032 Olympics, pickleball will be incorporated, which gives us eight years," said Prab-

"We have started working on the under-14 kids. We've sent them for events to Vietnam where they played very well. We have started putting our youth into training programmes to ensure that whenever the sport becomes a part of the Olympics, an Indian will win a

medal," he said. He said that the reduced cost of pickleball equipment, including the paddles and the balls, will help the sport compete with and, hopefully, in the coming other racquet sports such as ten12 THE HILLS TIMES

### PAKISTAN WON THE PRECEDING ODI SERIES 2-1 BUT ITS STRUGGLE IN T20S CONTINUED

# Australian cricketers clean sweep Pakistan in T20 series

18: Marcus Stoinis bludgeoned 61 not out off 27 balls as Australia swept Pakistan 3-0 in the Twenty20 series with a sevenwicket victory in the final game on Monday. The hosts had a 29run win in a rain-shortened sevenovers-a-side match in the first T20 in Brisbane, before fast bowler Spencer Johnson then grabbed a career-best 5-26 to propel Australia to a 13-run win.

Stoinis smacked five sixes three in one over off Shaheen Shah Afridi -- and five fours as Australia raced to 118-3 in 11.2 overs. Fast bowlers Shah Afridi (1-43) and Haris Rauf (0-34) conceded 77 runs off their combined six overs in a one-sided game.

Earlier, Pakistan lost nine wickets for 56 runs on the way to a meagre total of 117 in 18.1 overs despite Babar Azam (41) and Haseebullah Khan (24), one of two changes made from the second game, scoring at a brisk pace in the powerplay.

"It's been a great week," Australia captain Josh Inglis said. "We've had a lot of fun as a group. When Stoinis is going like



that, he is really hard to stop." Haseebullah replaced regular white-ball captain Mohammad Rizwan and Salman Ali Agha took over as Pakistan's fourth T20 skipper in 2024. Left-arm fast

ferred to Naseem Shah.

Leg-spinner Adam Zampa (2-11) ignited Pakistan's slide when he had Haseebullah caught at short fine leg. He then clean bowled Babar with a sharp googly. Babar surpassed Virat Kohli's

Indian tally of 4,188 runs in T20s and moved up to second place with 4,192 in 126 games. Rohit Sharma leads the way with 4,231 in 159 matches.

Aaron Hardie (3-21) removed Sydney Usman Khan when he

while Salman played across the line against the fast bowler and was out leg before.

Shah Afridi smashed two fours and a six in his quickfire 16 and helped Pakistan cross the 100-run mark. Australia's player of the series Johnson (2-24) wrapped up the innings by clean bowling No. 11 Sufiyan Muqeem.

Australia openers Jake Fraser-McGurk (18) and Matthew Short (2) fell inside the batting powerplay before Inglis (27) and Stoinis hurried the run chase.

Inglis couldn't clear short fine leg as he tried to scoop Abbas Afridi in the 10th over before Stoinis hit three sixes and a four in Shah Afridi's one over to complete the win.

Pakistan won the preceding ODI series 2-1 but its struggle in T20s continued. It was knocked out in the group stage of the World Cup in June.

"It's obviously a big achievement winning the ODI series but we could have done much better in the T20s," Salman said, "I think in the middle overs, we didn't

this is a process.

Lanka reached 210-7 in 46 overs. The match was cut to 47 overs-aside after two rain interruptions when New Zealand batted and was bowled out for 209 in 45.1 overs. Sri Lanka was set a target of 210. Off-spinner Michael Bracewell's

first four-wicket ODI haul (4-36) gave New Zealand a sniff when Sri Lanka slipped to 163-7 before Maheesh Theekshana (27 not out) shared a match-winning 47run stand with Mendis and car-

## Sri Lanka beats New Zealand in 2nd ODI to win another home series



PALLEKELE (SRI LANKA), Nov 18: Kusal Mendis hit a patient 74 not out as Sri Lanka beat New Zealand by three wickets under the DLS method with six balls remaining in the rain-hit second ODI.

Sri Lanka took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series with the final game also at Pallekele on Tuesday. Sri Lanka won the first one-day international by 45 runs — also by DLS - after rain disrupted that game at Dambulla.

It was Sri Lanka's fifth ODI series win at home in 2024 after it beaten Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, India and West Indies. Sri Lanka couldn't qualify for next year's Champions Trophy after finishing ninth at last year's 50-over World Cup in India, but has since then lost just one ODI series in Bangladesh while winning five at home.

"It is really tough for batters to score runs here," Sri Lanka captain Charith Asalanka said. "This is just another series. As a team, we are moving towards a big goal and we have to achieve that,

Mendis followed his career-best 143 in the series opener with a determined 102-ball knock as Sri

ried the team home.

Earlier, Sri Lanka grassed a few hard chances but Avishka Fernando took three spectacular catches after Asalanka won the toss and elected to field.

Mark Chapman ended his struggling batting form with 76 off 81 balls, but his dismissal in the 37th over would see New Zealand lose its last six wickets for 36 runs. Mitchell Hay made a well composed 49 off 62 balls and shared a 75-run stand with Chapman. Hay was the last man to be dismissed.

New Zealand struggled against a four-pronged spin attack with Theekshana (3-31) and Jeffrey Vandersay (3-46) sharing six wickets. Left-arm spinner Dunith Wellalage, the only change Sri Lanka made from the team which won the first game, and Asalanka took one wicket each. Bracewell mopped up the top order but Mendis stood firm as he completed his half century off 84 balls with four boundaries. He added 39 runs with Janith Livanage and another 31 with Wellalage, who struck three successive boundaries in his 18-run knock against Nathan Smith before holing out at mid-on to give Bracewell his fourth wicket.

But Theekshana showed some aggression against pace, slicing fast bowler Jacob Duffy for the only six in the Sri Lanka chase and also struck two boundaries. "It is always a challenge when

you are defending a low score,' New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner said. "Kusal played the situation very well ... that partnership (between Kusal and Theekshana) at the end took it away, but we also left a few runs

### **Australia assistant coach Daniel Vettori** to leave Perth Test



PERTH, Nov 18: Australia's assistant coach Daniel Vettori will be leaving his duties mid-way through the opening Test against India here to attend the IPL mega auction over the

The IPL auction will be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on November 24-25, clashing with the Perth Test scheduled from November 22.

Besides being Australia's assistant

coach, the 45-year-old is also the head coach of IPL franchise SunRisers Hyderabad (SRH). "We are very supportive of Dan's

role as Head Coach of Sunrisers Hy-

"Dan will complete the final preparation for the first Test before attending the IPL auction. He will then be with the team for the remainder of the Border Gavaskar Trophy," spokesperson of the Australian team told ESP-

Cricket Australia's (CA) national development coach Lachlan Stevens will be filling in for Vettori during the Perth Test.

Besides the New Zealander, Ricky Ponting and Justin Langer will also be missing out on commentary duties for Channel Seven due to the IPL auction, as they happen to be head coaches of Puniab Kings and Lucknow Super Giants,

# Ashwin, an incredibly smart bowler, has taught me a lot: Nathan Lyon

PERTH, Nov 18: Veteran Australian spinner Nathan Lyon believes that rival players often serve as the "best coaches", acknowledging that his Indian counterpart Ravichandran Ashwin has "taught" him a great deal through their faceoffs since 2011-12.

Having made their Test debuts in the same year, Lyon and Ashwin will face each other for the eighth time in the longest format during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy five-Test series beginning in Perth on November 22. "Ash (Ashwin) is an incredible bowler. I've gone head-to-head with him for basically my whole career, so I've learned a lot from Ash," Lyon

"He's an incredibly smart bowler, and he's able to learn and adapt very quickly, and I think the best bowlers in the world are able to do that. He used his skills to benefit himself and his team.

"So, you've got to give credit where credit's due, he was the best bowler (in 2020/21), as he usually is. So, hats off to Ash.' It will be Ashwin's fifth Test tour of Australia, where he has claimed

39 wickets in 10 Tests at an average of 42.15. Lyon further admitted to having studied Ashwin's bowling closely, especially before Australia toured India in the last few years.

"He's taught me a lot," Lyon said. "I'm a big believer in the players that you play against are your best coaches that you eventually come

"I've watched a lot of his footage heading over to India, the way he goes about it here in Australia, see if I can pick up anything.

"The way I look at cricket is that I've never met anyone who has conquered the game, never played against or with anyone who's conquered the game. "There's so much to learn in this great game, and there's so much for me to learn from Ash. He's a world-class bowler. He's taken over 500 Test match wickets, and he should be extremely proud of that."

Ashwin outshines Lyon in terms of having the best bowling average outside Asia, with the former averaging 33.14 compared to the latter's 30.09. However, the Australian averages better in Asia than the Indian -- Lyon: 30.81, Ashwin: 21.76.

Asked if they could face again post this tour, Lyon reckoned, "Spin bowling is a craft that the older you get, the better you get with age.

"There's definitely no limit for me, and I don't think there should be a limit for us as well. He's absolutely world-class, and there's a series in a couple of years' time. So, who knows?" (PTI)

## IOA gets involved as India host first **Kho Kho World Cup from January 13-19**



NEW DELHI, Nov 18: The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Monday confirmed its partnership with the Kho Kho Federation of India as the country gets to ready to host the first-ever Kho Kho World Cup, to be held here from January 13 to 19.

The IOA has pledged its "unwavering support" for the event to be organised at the at the IGI Stadium.

In a statement to KKFI chief Sudhanshu Mittal, IOA president PT Usha expressed the association's strong commitment to elevating indigenous sports like Kho Kho. Usha said, "We recognise the significance of this event in celebrating our cultural heritage and promoting traditional sports, and we look forward to collaborating with Kho Kho Federation of India to ensure the success of the tournament.

"Together, we aim to make this event memorable and impactful, encouraging the spirit of sportsmanship among participants and fostering a deeper appreciation for Kho Kho worldwide.

Mittal said the partnership between IOA and KKFI will be a "game-changer" for Kho Kho.

"The support of the IOA, led by President PT Usha, is a game-changer for Kho Kho. This collaboration is pivotal in putting Kho Kho on the global map, and we're thrilled to be hosting the first-ever Kho Kho World Cup, a truly historic event for the sport," Mittal said.

The World Cup will feature both men's and women's teams, with 25 countries from six continents set to com-

Teams from Asia, including hosts India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, will face off alongside competitors from Africa, Europe, North America, South America, and Oceania. Nations like Ghana, Kenya, England, Germany, Brazil and Australia will be among the partici-

## Former Black Caps pacer Doug Bracewell served 1-month cocaine ban

WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND), Nov 18: Former New Zealand fast bowler Doug Bracewell tested positive for cocaine earlier this year and has since served a onemonth ban. Details of the ban were made public for the first time Monday by the New Zealand Sport Integrity Commission.

The 34-year-old who played 28 tests for New Zealand tested positive after a domestic Twenty20 match between Central Districts and Wellington in January. He was named Player of the Match.

The initial three-month ban imposed by the Commission was reduced to one month on the condition Bracewell completed a treatment program. The onemonth ban was then backdated to April, meaning he can now return to cricket. "It was accepted that he had used the cocaine out of competition and for reasons unrelated to sport performance," the Commission said.

"Athletes have a responsibility to set a positive example. Their actions, both on and off the field, influence the next generation of athletes and it's essential that they act as role models by making healthy, responsible choices." In a statement, New Zealand Cricket chief executive



Scott Weenink said Bracewell had let himself down and NZC is "frustrated" with his conduct.

"Doug accepts full responsibility for his error of judgement, the consequences of his behaviour and the penalty imposed," Weenink said. "As an organization, we will continue to provide support for Doug who is fully aware of our expectations moving forward.'

Bracewell took five wickets in an innings in his test debut against Zimbabwe in 2011 and 6-40 in New Zealand's win over Australia in Hobart later the same

# 'Hungry' Virat's record in Australia will give him confidence, says Gavaskar



NEW DELHi, Nov 18: Virat Kohli will be "very, very hungry" for runs following his lean patch against New Zealand, according to former Indian captain Sunil Gavaskar, who feels the veteran batter's good track record Down Under will boost his confidence heading into the upcoming Test series against Australia.

Kohli has faced a challenging patch in all formats over the past few months. In his last 60 Test innings, he has managed just two centuries and 11 half-centuries.

This year, he has averaged only 22.72 across six Tests, and in the three games against New Zealand, he could manage only 93 runs.

"Because he hasn't scored runs against New Zealand, he'll be very, very hungry," Gavaskar told Star Sports.

"Even in that Adelaide Test, where India was bowled out for 36 in the second innings, Kohli scored 70-plus runs in the first innings before being run out," he added. Despite these recent struggles, Kohli has an

outstanding record in Australia. The right-hander, who has been part of four tours Down Under, averages a stellar 54.08. Gavaskar believes these stats will provide a significant confidence boost as Kohli prepares

for the upcoming five-match series, starting

with the first Test in Perth on Friday.

"He has consistently performed in Adelaide, a ground he knows well. Before Adelaide, it's Perth, where Kohli played one of his finest Test centuries in the 2018-19 series — a terrific hundred.

"Having performed on these grounds, he'll feel an extra bit of confidence. Of course, you need a bit of luck at the start, but if he gets off to a good beginning, he will score big runs," Gavaskar added.

Kohli, who will look to bounce back with his trademark resilience and continue his fine record in Australia Former India cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar

As the series approaches, all eyes will be on

also weighed in on how Australia might target Kohli. "I think Virat knows exactly what's coming,"

Manjrekar said. "They'll start with a line outside the off stump to assess his mindset. These days, he often leaves balls outside off and looks to drive anything pitched up. Australia may try to

cramp him for room and attack his body, espe-

cially since he likes to get forward. New

Zealand used this tactic effectively." Manjrekar continued, "If he's focused on balls outside off stump, bowlers like Josh Hazlewood could target the middle-stump line, much like Vernon Philander used to do. Australia will experiment with different strategies, and Virat Kohli is well aware of that." (PTI)

## Jannik Sinner dominated so much at ATP Finals that it was hardly a contest

posed to be the tournament where the year's top eight players battle it out for one last prestigious trophy. Only this year it was hardly a contest at the ATP Finals.

That's because Jannik Sinner's game reached such a high level in Turin that his fellow competitors all of them ranked in the top 10 said, "There's nothing you can really do" because "he's playing almost too good."

"I go into these matches expecting him to hit incredible shots," said Taylor Fritz, the American who had the misfortune of facing Sinner twice, losing both in the group stage and in Sunday's final. "When it happens, you just tell yourself there's nothing you can really do."

Sinner's triumph followed his first two Grand Slam titles this year at the Australian Open and US Open. He's got a huge lead atop the rankings, is on an 11-match winning, has won 26 of his last 27 matches and has a 70-6 record overall this year.

In matches against No. 9 Alex de Minaur, No. 4 Fritz, No. 5 Daniil Medvedev in the group stage; then No. 6 Ruud in the semi-finals and Fritz again in the final, Sinner didn't drop a set — a feat last accomplished at the ATP Finals by Ivan Lendl in 1986. Nobody even got more than

four games off him in a set. However, Sinner didn't face Carlos Alcaraz, the only player who beat him more than once this year.

Ruud was blown away by Sinner's level after playing him for the first time in three years. "Everything in his game improved," Ruud said. "He's very serious about what he does. It's inspiring

"Even though he's younger than

me, I have a lot to learn from him. He's playing almost too good for most of the opponents," Ruud added. Ruud, who only managed to win three games against Sinner in a 6-1, 6-2 rout, described the Italian's shots

as "missiles." "You feel like unless you hit a ball with really good depth or close to the sidelines — and even if you hit close to the sidelines but not fast enough he's going to rip it back at you,'

"It's stressful. For a split of a second, every time before you hit a shot vou know, If I don't get this right, I might be punished on the next shot. Ruud was asked to compare Sinner's level to Novak Djokovic, the record 24-time Grand Slam champion who withdrew from the tournament this year due to injury

"On TV, it looks probably similar the way they play. But Jannik hits a faster ball than Novak. He doesn't let

"With Novak, you can play rallies.

I'm not going to say it's easier to play Novak because he's the best in history. At least with Novak, you can play more rallies and not be terrified of Novak ripping a bomb down the line or cross-court.

"You don't realize how fast Jannik plays unless you watch him play live and you're there in the stadium," Ruud added

Sinner tested positive in two separate drug tests in March and a decision to clear him of wrongdoing was appealed by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in September. A final ruling is expected next year.

Sinner explained that the banned performance enhancer entered his system unintentionally through a massage from his physiotherapist, who had used a spray containing the steroid to treat his cut finger.

WADA is seeking a ban of one to two years, but Simone Vagnozzi, one of Sinner's co-coaches, said the team isn't even planning for a possible

"Honestly, we haven't even thought about it, and I don't even want to think about it," Vagnozzi said. "He doesn't deserve a ban because he didn't do anything wrong. He couldn't have prevented what happened." (AP)

Printed, published and owned by Rameswar Chauhan & Printed at Echo Printing Press, Printing unit of The Echo of India, AK Deb Road, Katabari, Gorchuk, Guwahati- 781035 and Published at Rabha Complex, 2nd Floor, Rukmini Gaon, Opp.- Pantaloons, Guwahati-781022. Editor -Rameswar Chauhan, Guwahati Office Ph - 0361 2220018, Fax- 272106, e.mail: hillstimes@gmail.com and ads.hillstimes@gmail.com (only for advertisement)