

**6 WORLD**  
 ● In final talks, Biden to press China's Xi on North Korea's ties with Russia  
 ● Israeli troops reach deepest point in Lebanon since Oct 1 invasion

**8 NATION**  
 ● 'Defeat those who spoiled cultured politics of Maha by breaking parties'  
 ● PDP chief seeks NC's clarification after Kharage's remarks on Article 370

Vol .No. I Issue No. 256 RNI-ASSENG/2023/86488 GUWAHATI, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2024 PAGES 12 PRICE ₹ 8

## Assam Police must work to protect people: CM

**Cop involved in beating up of delivery boy placed under suspension**

GUWAHATI, Nov 16: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said that the state police must transform itself into a force that serves and protects the people with dignity and respect, not one that uses unnecessary force against common citizens on the streets.

A food delivery boy, also a student of Cotton University, had allegedly entered a no-entry zone in Guwahati by mistake on Friday night and the officer-in-charge of Panbazar police station had assaulted him, with the video of the incident going viral on social media.

Reacting to the incident, the chief minister said, "Those days of unchecked power are long gone. The society will no longer tolerate the misuse of authority or violence against the very people the police are meant to safeguard."

"It is time for the police to embrace reform, accountability, and compassion, or step aside to make way for a force that truly upholds these values," Sarma posted on X.

The police officer has been suspended for allegedly assaulting the delivery boy during routine patrolling in the city.

Director General of Police G P Singh said that the OC of Panbazar police station, Inspector Bhargav Borbora, has been placed under suspension with immediate effect and a departmental inquiry has been ordered into the incident.

"The behaviour of Inspector Bhargav Borbora OC Panbazar is unacceptable. He is being placed under suspension with immediate effect and a departmental inquiry has been ordered," the DGP posted on X. Singh also directed Guwahati (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**Protesters storm residences of 2 Manipur ministers, 3 MLAs over killing of 3 persons**

## Tension runs high in Jiribam, curfew clamped

IMPHAL, Nov 16: Protesters stormed the residences of two ministers and three MLAs in Manipur's Imphal on Saturday, demanding justice for the murder of three persons in the Jiribam district, police said.

The mob attacks on legislators' houses prompted the Imphal West administration to impose prohibitory orders in the district for an indefinite period.

According to an order issued by the Imphal West District Magistrate Th Kirankumar, the curfew was imposed from 4.30 pm on Saturday.

A mob stormed the residence of health and family welfare minister Sapam Ranjan in Lamphel Sanakeithel area, a senior officer said.

Lamphel Sanakeithel Development Authority's representative David told reporters, "Sapam assured us that the issues related to



the killing of three persons will be discussed at a cabinet meeting and that the minister will tender his resignation if the government fails to honour the sentiment of the public."

Protesters also stormed the house of consumer affairs and public distribution minister L. Susindro

three persons and urging the authorities to "arrest the culprits within 24 hours".

Protesters, who had come to meet Keishamthong constituency's independent legislator Sapam Nishikanta Singh at his residence at Tiddim Road, targeted the office building of a local newspaper owned by him after they were told that the legislator was not present in the state, a senior officer said.

The mob destroyed some temporary structures in front of the office building, he claimed.

Three bodies, suspected to be of six missing people from the Jiribam district, were found near the confluence of the Jiri and Barak rivers along the Manipur-Assam border on Friday night. The bodies of a woman and two children were found about 16 km from Borobekra in Jiribam district, close to the location where the six people went missing on Monday. (PTI)

## Family of suspected militants clash outside SMCH

GUWAHATI, Nov 16: Police resorted to lathi charge outside the Silchar Medical College Hospital (SMCH) on Saturday as family members of 10 suspected militants, killed in a gunfight with security personnel in Manipur's Jiribam district, clashed with the forces demanding that the bodies be handed over to them, officials said.

Family members of the suspected militants were camping outside the hospital and demanded that the bodies be handed over to them.

Assam police officials tried to convince them that the bodies would be handed over to Manipur police and that they could take up the matter with them.

The agitated family members refused to accept the proposal and attacked police personnel by pelting stones as several persons were injured. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Two more arrested in attempt to murder case in Jorhat

JORHAT, Nov 16: In connection with the case from the night of November 12 when an attempt of murder was made on a biker by slitting his throat, two more people have been arrested by the Police on Saturday, taking the total to five.

The two have been identified as Dipankar Neog and Partha Pratim Pathak.

Pathak who worked with Nikumoni Baruah, wife of the biker Prasenjit Baruah, told newsmen on being arrested that he was trapped by Nikumoni and Mukul Chetia. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Bodo Sahitya Sabha celebrates 73rd Foundation Day

**HT Correspondent**  
 KOKRAJHAR, Nov 16: The Bodo Sahitya Sabha celebrated its 73rd Foundation Day on Saturday as Bodo Thunlai Saa across the districts of Bodoland Territorial Region and the state of Assam.

Besides the state, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha in association with the All Bodo Students Union centrally celebrated the Bodo Thunlai Saa at the SAI Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, New Delhi.

Bodo Sahitya Sabha president, Dr Surath Narzary, ceremonially hoisted the Sabha flag followed by the floral tributes to the martyrs by Bodo Sahitya Sabha vice president, Sitaram Basumatary.

The occasion celebrated the rich literary and cultural heritage of the Bodo community, highlighting the Sabha's contributions to preserving and promoting the Bodo language and literature.

All Bodo Students Union president, Dipen Boro,

cabinet minister Urkhao Gwra Brahma, Gandhi Hindustani Sahitya Sabha president, Ramesh Bhardwaj, and representatives from various organisations as well as the public participated in the program.

A grand cultural rally was organised in connection with the celebration of Bodoland Mohotsav on Saturday to mark the foundation of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha.

Lok Sabha MP, Joyanta Basumatary flagged off the cultural rally amidst the presence of Pramod Boro, the Chief Executive Member of Bodoland Territorial Region, MPs Rungwra Narzary, Dilip Kumar Saikia, and several other dignitaries.

A seminar on the language, education, and culture of the Bodos was also held on the occasion.

Meanwhile, the vibrant Bodoland Mohotsav began on Friday at the SAI Indira Gandhi Stadium, New Delhi, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurating the two-day event. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 2,500 universities needed to accommodate 50% students: NITI Aayog CEO

HYDERABAD, Nov 16: In order to have 50 per cent of students in universities, India needs to double the varsities' strength to 2,500, NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam has said.

Delivering a keynote address at the Indian School of Business (ISB) here on Friday, he said though one university and two colleges were opened every week in the past ten years, only 29 per cent of the age cohort enrolled in the varsities.

Subrahmanyam also said that with a huge digital infrastructure, India has become the biggest laboratory in the digital world where one can experiment at a scale. "Today we have 1,200 universities and slightly more than four crore students, but that's only 29 per cent of the cohort age enrolled in the university sys-

tem. Actually, at least 50 per cent of the students should be in college."

"We need to double the colleges and universities in the country. The country needs 2,500 universities. It may look like a lot of universities are not up to the mark or whatever, but the fact is, you need those numbers. Maybe we need to deliver education differently," he said. The CEO said India has created a huge architecture called digital public infrastructure by going the public route rather than the private.

The official further said Estonia was the first country with a population of two million which went for digital identity. However, India did at the scale of 140 crore people and everybody has a digital identity and 120 crore people have bank accounts. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

# KARBI ANGLONG DAY 2024

NORTH-EAST SIXTH SCHEDULE AUTONOMOUS COUNCILS, CULTURAL EXCHANGE EVENTS DURING KARBI ANGLONG DAY 2024

16TH - 18TH NOVEMBER  
 KARBI PEOPLE'S HALL, TARALANGSO, DIPHU  
 KARBI ANGLONG, ASSAM

'BRIDGING & FOSTERING UNDERSTANDING THROUGH CROSS CULTURAL EXCHANGE'

# Colombia's government eager for post-fossil fuels economy

**BOGOTA (COLOMBIA), Nov 16:** Colombia's fiery left-wing President Gustavo Petro is one of the biggest opponents of fossil fuels on the world stage today, with speeches that lump oil and coal with cocaine as his country's "three poisons".

He's set a goal of weaning Colombia off those fossil fuels, putting the green energy transition and environmental protection at the center of his agenda.

His opposition is long-held, but it's also practical. Colombia's oil reserves are projected to last only about seven years, and without new discoveries, the country will eventually have to find a way forward without the oil and coal that make up more than half its exports.

But doing so will require overcoming the same challenges that many smaller nations face with the energy transition: higher borrowing costs that more developed nations face, Environment Minister Susana Muhamad said.

Muhamad has been highlighting Colombia's challenge at the United Nations climate talks in Azerbaijan, where the major goal of this year's talks known as COP29 is establishing just how much wealthy nations will contribute to the developing world to cope with climate change and transform their energy systems.

At a press conference on the sidelines of the climate talks Saturday, Muhamad said the world "cannot continue to play with the same financial rules that leave developing countries behind".

Muhamad also touted her country's support for a non-proliferation treaty for fossil fuels. The treaty, modelled on others like a non-nuclear proliferation treaty, is aimed at ending the expansion of new coal, oil and gas projects, and manage a global transition away from fossil fuels.

"Oil is not a gift from god," Muhamad told The Associated



Press on the sidelines of COP29, referring to a comment made by Azerbaijan's president Ilham Aliyev earlier in the talks. "It's a trap. We need to untangle ourselves from that."

"We're trying to look for a path that actually helps us to be more resilient, be more competitive in a new era of economics where climate and people are at the centre, so we can create a different economy," she said. "But we are not finding a positive response towards this path."

Developing economies face higher costs for renewable energy and sustainable projects due in part to perceived risks for investors, according to the World Economic Forum, which says significant international investment is necessary for the energy transition.

Muhamad said, like many developing nations, Colombia faces "unfair conditions" in accessing capital.

Petro, a former guerrilla with the M-19 Marxist group in his youth, is a longstanding critic of what he calls the "greedy" extractive sector. He has stopped approval of new oil drilling contracts, has banned fracking and pushed through some of the first offshore wind power projects in Latin America since taking office

in 2022.

But his mission to leave fossil fuels behind has faced criticism. Tomas Gonzalez, a former Colombia energy minister from the Conservative Party who now directs the Bogota-based Regional Centre for Energy Studies, called Petro's approach "very radical".

"As long as there is demand someone will meet it, so restricting Colombian production doesn't reduce emissions globally," Gonzalez said. "But for Colombia, it means major sacrifices in fiscal revenue and funding for public spending."

Oil and coal are key to Colombia's national revenue, according to government data, accounting for about 8 per cent of GDP and over 50 per cent of its exports. It's the world's sixth-largest exporter of coal, according to the national mining agency, and a top-20 exporter of crude. But its oil reserves are considered small, at around seven years, according to the country's oil regulator, ANH.

"We don't have huge reserves," Muhamad said. "We are not like other countries which could have 200 years of oil under the soil. So as the world decarbonizes, our markets will be closing and we need a replacement."

Colombia may have more oil

and gas, but Petro's administration has stopped issuing new oil and gas exploration contracts. Gonzalez called that "the opposite direction of what we need".

Colombia launched a new investment portfolio at the end of September for its climate adaptation plans, which it hopes will attract around \$40 billion to help fund ecotourism, a fair energy transition and conservation and restoration of ecosystems.

"Colombia is doing the right thing in a way by saying we need to move away from fossil fuels," said Bill Hare, a climate scientist and chief executive of Climate Analytics, a science and policy group that supports action on climate change.

"They're doing it for a combination of different reasons, some of them economic, some basically completely moral and oriented around the climate crisis. What is really bad that's happening is that they're not being backed up by the international financial community," Hare said the whole ecosystem of the international financial community is not backing Colombia up.

"They're going with the fossil fuel industry. So Colombia is facing a downgrade economically because of that," he said. "It will need backing. It may not be hard cash, but it could be debt guarantees. It can be all sorts of things like that that ultimately don't cost a lot that make all the difference."

For Gonzalez, when it comes to the energy transition, there are serious gaps between the ambitions Petro has set and the policies in place.

"Colombia needs to expand its clean energy supply and improve energy efficiency at a scale and speed far greater than what we're currently achieving," he said. "When you want to be a global leader the disconnect between goals and policy actions in this area remains a major challenge." (AP)

# International flight service starts from Port Blair with AirAsia flight from Kuala Lumpur

**PORT BLAIR, Nov 16:** The first international flight service from Veer Savarkar Airport in Andaman and Nicobar Islands started on Saturday with AirAsia's aircraft on the Kuala Lumpur-Port Blair route landing here, officials said.

The AirAsia flight from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia landed here at 10.20 am with 120 passengers. The plane then took off after 30 minutes for Kuala Lumpur from here with 150 passengers, they said.

Speaking to PTI, Chief Airport and Customer Experience Officer, AirAsia, Kesavan Sivanandam said, "The inbound flight from Kuala Lumpur with 120 passengers including Malaysian and Japanese tourists arrived here at Port Blair around 10.20 am and it departed for Kuala Lumpur around 10.55 AM with 150 passengers. Today, it's a historic moment as AirAsia became the first carrier to start international flight service from Port Blair." AirAsia would run thrice a week - Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday - flight service between Kuala Lumpur and Port Blair.

He said, "The response is very good and we are expecting more tourists from South East Asian countries in the near future. Our motto is not only looking at

commercial viability but also connecting people. I would like to thank the local administration for all their support."

Four operators in Andaman feel that the commencement of AirAsia flights to Malaysia will be a big game changer in the tourism sector in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Southeast Asia.

"I would like to convey my sincere thanks and congratulations to AirAsia for taking this initiative to extend air connectivity from Andaman and Nicobar Islands to South East Asia. The Airports Authority of India has invested a lot in strengthening both ground and air navigation infrastructure to boost the air connectivity of the region," Airport Director, Port Blair, Devender Yadav said.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands Civil Aviation Secretary, Vishwendra, who was also present during the inaugural session of the international flight, said, "With the commencement of AirAsia international flight to Kuala Lumpur, we are expecting that more aviation companies will come forward to start their international flights from Port Blair. We will provide all assistance to private carriers." (PTI)

# Aditya Ultra Steel to set up 5 MW solar plant

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16:** Rolled steel products manufacturer Aditya Ultra Steel Ltd has reported a net profit of ₹5.87 crore for April-September period of 2024-25 and also announced setting up a 5 MW solar plant at Rajkot in Gujarat.

The company in a statement on Saturday said its revenue from operations stood at ₹312.39 crore in the first six months of 2024-25.

Operating profit stood at ₹10.50 crore in the period under review.

The rolled steel products maker, which sells products under the Kamdhenu brand, listed on NSE SME platform in September following its around ₹46 crore IPO. The company had reported revenue of ₹587.80 crore in FY24 while profit was ₹7.69 crore in the fiscal.

Aditya Ultra Steel Ltd Manag-

ing Director Sunny Sunil Singh said that the company is setting up a ₹15-crore solar power plant with a capacity of 5,000 KWP at Jasdian, Rajkot, to meet its energy needs and enhance sustainability.

The company is set to embark on a major expansion initiative aimed at increasing production capacity, improving operational efficiency, and advancing sustainable practices, he added. (PTI)

*Contd. from Page 1.*

# Assam Police must work

Commissioner of Police Diganta Borah to post another officer to the police station immediately. Guwahati Police have intensified patrolling following intelligence inputs on possible incidents of violence on or before ULFA's Protest Day on November 27 -- the day the outfit was banned, officials said. (PTI)

# Bodo Sahitya Sabha celebrates

Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma joined virtually, while several dignitaries, including Assam Governor, BTR Chief Executive Member Pramod Boro, Bodo Sahitya Sabha president Dr Surath Narzary, ABSU president Dipen Boro, cabinet minister Urkhao Gwra Brahma, and MPs Rongwra Narzary and Joyanta Basumatary, were in attendance.

The Mohotsav, themed "Ethos of Peace & Harmony: An Integral Part for Nation Building," highlighted the rich cultural heritage of Bodoland through traditional Bagurumba and Dahal-Thungi dance performances. Exhibits showcased Bodo musical instruments, 21 authentic food items, and GI-tagged traditional costumes, reflecting the community's deep cultural roots.

Prime Minister Modi termed the event an emotional moment, recalling his visit to Kokrajhar after the Bodo Peace Accord of 2020. "The love and affection I received from the Bodo people remain etched in my heart. The day of the Peace Accord was a moment of peace and happiness, marking the beginning of a new chapter for Bodoland," he remarked.

He praised the Bodo community for creating history by choosing peace and development over conflict, inspiring other regions to follow their example. Referring to over 10,000 youth who renounced violence, he said, "Guns never brought peace, but the path adopted by the Bodos has led to lasting harmony."

Highlighting the rapid progress in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), PM Modi revealed that the central and state governments have allocated ₹1,500 crore for BTR's development, with ₹5 lakh assistance provided to former members of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB).

"From hosting two editions of the Durand Cup to literary festivals, Kokrajhar is becoming a hub of culture and sports," he said.

He also lauded Bodo craftsmanship and tourism, emphasising their integral role in Assam's and India's tourism potential. "Bodoland is at the heart of Assam's tourism, just as Assam is the strength of India's tourism."

PM Modi paid tribute to Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma and Bodoifa Upendra Nath Brahma, recognising their contributions to Bodo identity and unity. "There are no more tears in the eyes of Bodo mothers—only the sparkle of hope and development," he said.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed his commitment to the aspirations of the Bodo people, stating, "I am here to thank you all and to say 'pranaam' to your families. The government is leaving no stone unturned for BTR's development and is working towards everlasting peace in the Northeast."

# 2,500 universities needed to

"India has become the biggest laboratory in the digital world. A laboratory where you can experiment at a scale, which is impossible and inconceivable anywhere else, probably except the United States. Maybe we even leapfrog them for a variety of reasons," he said.

India has become a place that is digitally and financially connected with an identity, which has led to innovations one after another, he said, adding that UPI is an innovation and 48 to 50 per cent of all global financial transactions happen in India.

As many as 10 billion transactions a month are happening, which may be lower in terms of value and very high in terms of volume, the NITI CEO said. He said "Viksit Bharat" is not necessarily just being a prosperous country, but also an inclusive nation which will have a "rising tide which lifts all the boats."

He said the country is expected to become a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047, surpassing the present size of the US and Chinese economies.

Research and innovation are crucial for becoming a modern developed economy, he said.

With the vast base that has been created in the last 10 years, India has probably become a huge hub for fintech innovation, Subrahmanyan said.

Talking about the transformation in the country during the last decade, he said there will be a drinking water supply in every village by the end of next year.

"Every house is connected to an electricity supply. There is a road to every village. We have housing which is being built at a rapid pace," he said.

In the last 10 years, 25 crore people have escaped "acute poverty", he said, also highlighting the transformation in highways, railways (including Vande Bharat trains) and others in the country.

He also said India can be a leader in climate change as the technologies to address the issue have not yet been invented fully.

Observing that most countries in the West have developed stable economies which have to be "rewired and re-engineered" for a green future. He said such re-engineering is not required in a large part of India and climate-friendly mobility and power systems can be developed.

The government's missions, such as those related to AI and semiconductor are aimed at keeping the country ahead in the concerned areas, he said.

India is going to be a powerful nation in terms of its innovative capabilities, he said.

He also said NITI Aayog is preparing visions for the country, preparing economic plans for cities and trying to transform agriculture into new areas like horticulture and aquaculture. "The second area in which NITI works is how we capture the technological trends to benefit the country..." he said. India should be a global leader in frontier technologies, he added.

Since the technologies don't exist, everybody is starting afresh and India should be setting the benchmarks, the standards, and the certification methods for technologies, he said. "I think NITI would lead that drive," he said. (PTI)

# Two more arrested in attempt

a junior engineer of the Town and Country Planning department, both of who had been arrested on Thursday and remanded to two days police custody. Meanwhile, Dipankar Neog is alleged to have contacted Mohen Nayak.

Mohen Nayak, the prime suspect, sought a lift from Prasenjit Baruah at Solmara on Monday night before attacking Baruah from the pillar seat with a sickle after going a certain distance. Baruah, who was grievously injured in the neck, fell to the ground along with the bike and Nayak. Locals caught Nayak and rushed Baruah to JMCH, where he received treatment and 20 stitches in his neck.

Nayak, a resident of Meleng, told police that he had been hired by Prasenjit's wife and Mukul Chetia. He alleged that Prasenjit's wife had paid him ₹5000 and had promised to give him another ₹10000 after the crime was committed.

Prasenjit Baruah, however, denied that his wife could be in any way involved in attempting to murder him. It may be mentioned that Prasenjit Baruah works in Guwahati and resides there.

# Family of suspected militants clash

Among the injured were four media persons, including a woman journalist. The police lathi-charged the protestors and the situation was brought under control after some time, with the family members agreeing that they would receive the bodies from Manipur police.

The authorities have decided that both Manipur and Assam police will airlift the bodies of the 10 militants to Churachandpur and the process has already begun. Ten suspected militants were killed in the gunfight with security forces after insurgents attacked the Borobekra police station in Jiribam district on Monday. (PTI)

# EICA launches to elevate culinary standards in eastern India

**HT Bureau GUAHATI, Nov 16:** The Eastern India Culinary Association (EICA) has been formally launched as a dedicated organisation committed to supporting and advancing the culinary industry in Eastern India. Representing a wide geographic area, including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Tripura, and West Bengal, EICA aims to foster growth and innovation in the regional culinary landscape. EICA is now officially recognised and affiliated with 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 to promote regional cuisines, advance culinary skills, and create a collaborative platform for the industry. The association is led by a dedicated team comprising president Abhiru Biswas, vice president Sumanta Chakrabarty, general secretary Sandeep K Pandey, joint secretary Sunayan Pramanik, treasurer Rangonath Mukherjee, associate treasurer Arabinda Seth, and executive committee members Sanjay Kak, Indraneel Bhattacharya, Ramchandrar, Santanu, Kritika, and Amit Chauhan.

EICA has been established to serve as an inclusive, non-political, and voluntary organization focused on advancing culinary standards and supporting regional chefs. Its objectives include, Building Culinary Community, Promoting Regional Cuisine, Professional Empowerment and Skill Development, Educational Initiatives and Food Safety Awareness, Innovation and Technological Growth.

In collaboration with government sectors like Tourism, Skill Development, and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), EICA will also work toward sustainable development within the culinary industry.

With plans to publish works from experienced chefs and share innovative culinary ideas, EICA is dedicated to raising the standards of Eastern India's culinary scene and positioning it as a significant contributor to the global food industry.

# Indian employees crave recognition and openness at work, Indeed finds

**HT Bureau GUAHATI, Nov 16:** DEIB survey "Bridging the Gap" from Indeed, the global matching and hiring platform, sheds light on the current state of workplace inclusion and the factors that affect it. The survey highlights that feeling valued and included is closely linked to employee happiness and confidence.

The survey reveals that recognition from senior leaders is one of the most important factors in fostering a positive workplace culture, with 63% of employees emphasizing the value of acknowledgement from leadership. Acknowledging individual contributions also plays a key role in boosting morale, as 62% of employees report feeling happier when their efforts are appreciated by their team. Furthermore, 58% of employees stress the importance of having their opinions and ideas welcomed by their immediate colleagues. These forms of validation and inclusion help build confidence and contribute to a more support-

ive, collaborative work environment, empowering employees to thrive.

Sashi Kumar, head of sales, Indeed India, commented, "It's clear that acknowledgement and a safe, open environment are at the heart of a thriving workplace. Employees want to feel that their voices are heard and that their contributions matter. Companies that make recognition and inclusion core to their culture will be better positioned to attract, retain, and inspire a motivated workforce. Addressing these areas is not just good for employee well-being—it's good for business."

The survey finds that an open environment that values creativity boosts satisfaction and helps manage workplace stress. Nearly 64% of employees say their companies promote creative thinking, helping them feel more connected. Additionally, 61% appreciate the freedom to express themselves openly, feeling more engaged in workplaces that foster idea-sharing and inclusion. By encouraging open communication, recognising achievements, and fostering creativity, companies can deepen employees' connection to their roles and nurture a thriving workplace culture.

# CBDT launches campaign to intimate taxpayers on undeclared foreign assets in ITR

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16:** The income tax department on Saturday said it has launched a campaign to send messages to taxpayers who have not disclosed high-value foreign income or assets in their ITRs for AY 2024-25. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has launched a Compliance-Cum-Awareness Campaign for Assessment Year (AY) 2024-25 to assist taxpayers in accurately completing Schedule Foreign Assets (Schedule FA) and reporting income from foreign

sources (Schedule FSI) in their income tax returns (ITR). In a statement, CBDT said informational messages will be sent via SMS and email to resident taxpayers who have already submitted their ITRs for AY 2024-25. These messages are intended for individuals identified through information received under bilateral and multilateral agreements, suggesting that they may hold foreign accounts or assets, or have received income from foreign jurisdictions. (PTI)

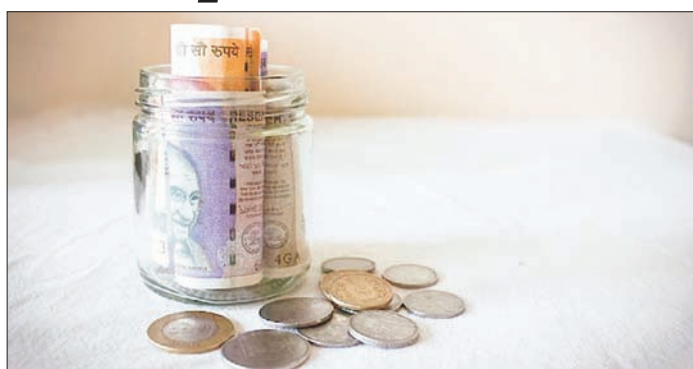
# Cedar-IBSi Capital plans to fund 10-15 startups in fintech sector

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16:** Cedar-IBSi Capital on Saturday said it is looking to invest in 10-15 startups working in the banking and insurance technology segment to expand its footprint in the country.

"The fund plans to build a portfolio of the companies, allocating a budget within the range of ₹4-10 crore, with an intensified focus on financially strengthening 8 to 10 high-performing companies," it said.

The fund has already gathered commitments in the range of ₹50-75 crore from its ₹240 crore early-stage fund launched in 2023, it added.

"We are focusing on investing in startups which offer unique prod-



ucts and innovative tech to help improve efficiency at financial institutions. We have made our first investment in Cogniqest, an intelligent document processing tech company and are looking forward to announcing our second investment shortly," Sahil Anand, Founder and Managing Partner, Cedar-IBSi Capital, said.

# 58<sup>th</sup> National Press Day observed across state

*Evolving media, enduring democracy*

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 16:** The department of information and public relations, BTC, in association with the Bodoland Journalists Association, observed National Press Day at the Kokrajhar Planetarium on Saturday with a series of activities and discussions. The event commenced with a tribute to martyrs (Shahid Tarpan) and a tree plantation drive, symbolising respect for sacrifices and a commitment to environmental conservation, followed by a representative meeting of journalists.

After this, the council head of information and public relations department of BTC and regional officer, Zahid Ahmed Tapadar, delivered the welcome address. Messages of goodwill from BTC Chief Executive Member (CEM) Pramod Boro, Executive Member (EM) of information and public relations department, Dr Nilut Swargiary, and BTC principal secretary Akashdeep, who are attending the Bodoland Mahotsav in New Delhi, were read out to the audience, setting a positive tone for the day's proceedings.

The inaugural address was delivered by vice chancellor of the Bodoland University and chief guest of the event, Prof B L Ahuja, who underscored the vital role journalists play in maintaining peace and order in the BTR.

He highlighted the challenges faced by the media, such as time pressures, inad-

quate remuneration, the implications of Artificial Intelligence, and the need to prioritise positive news narratives.

Dr Zakir Hussain, chairman of NEF group of institutions and editor of Dainik Gana Adhikar, graced the event as Guest of Honour, stressing that democracy's survival is tied to the freedom of journalists, often described as the fourth pillar of democracy.

Some of the other guests including Colonel Arun Prakash Agarwal reflected on the environment of the 1990s, emphasising the media's crucial role in the fight for freedom and safeguarding the homeland. Adding to the discussion, Rakesh Sharma, editor of Viksit Bharat Samachar, provided an insightful historical perspective on the significance of National Press Day, tracing its roots and evolution over the years. In a keynote address on the theme "Changing Nature of Press," Mrinal Talukdar, consulting editor of Pratinidhi Time, reflected on the evolution of journalism. He noted that while the press was once regarded as a beacon of truth and a catalyst for social change, its role and perception have shifted significantly over time.

He also observed that true impartiality in journalism is a challenging ideal, given the complexities of modern media dynamics.

With rest of the nation the 58th Na-



tional Press Day to commemorate the inception of the Press Council of India (PCI), which came into effect on the same date in 1966, was also celebrated across Karbi Anglong by different press associations and clubs at separate venues today.

Diphu town saw the celebration by different press clubs and associations at respective venues by arranging special programmes dedicated to media persons. Among them is the District Press Club of

Karbi Anglong (DPCKA), which organised daylong celebration at the Rangina Bhawan, Lorulungso, here, with the theme, "Changing nature of press." The DPCKA has collaborated with the District Information & Public Relation Officer (DIPRO) to celebrate the day.

The celebration started with the unfurling of the DPCKA flag by president Diganata Teron and homage to the departed media persons was led by the working

president, Danielson Bey, where all attended media persons followed in offering prayers.

On the other hand Diphu Press Club (DPC) and Digital Media Union of Karbi Anglong (DMUKA) have jointly celebrated the National Press Day at Rangina Sarpo Auditorium, here at Lorulungso with a daylong programme. DPC president and editor of Solongdo Assamese daily, Borsing Rongphar; journalist Jous-

ing Tokbi and several others were in attendance.

National Press Day was commemorated with great enthusiasm in Cachar, highlighting the theme "Changing Nature of The Press".

The event, organised by the Regional office of Information & Public Relations Barak valley Zone Silchar under the aegis of the district administration Cachar at the new conference hall of DC's on Saturday, brought together luminaries from the media and academic spheres.

Nagaon district administration with the Nagaon Press Club on Saturday celebrated National Press Day with a day-long at the Nagaon Press Club auditorium here.

Former journalist and volunteer retired information department official Gurmail Singh attended the event as the chief guest. The National Press Day 2024 was observed on Saturday in Sonitpur under the initiative of the district administration and the office of the district information and public relations officer.

The event commenced with the rendition of the state anthem.

Following this, a minute of silence was observed in remembrance of the late senior journalist of the district Kusmakhar Upadhyaya, who passed away earlier this year on January 24, as well as other known and unknown departed journalists.

## 73<sup>rd</sup> Boro Sahitya Sabha anniversary celebrated with statewide enthusiasm

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Nov 16:** The 73rd anniversary of the Boro Sahitya Sabha (BSS) was celebrated with enthusiasm across the state, including Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts.

Events commemorating this foundation day were organised in each branch or unit of the BSS, with participation from individuals and officials of various Bodo organisations. The celebration featured a range of activities, including traditional games, sports competitions, and contests aimed at engaging students and youth. In Howrahgah, the Howrahgah Town Bodo Society organised a vibrant celebration. The event took place at the Howrahgah Sports Association playground, where the BSS flag was ceremoniously hoisted by president of Howrahgah Town Bodo Society, KK Brahma. He was joined by Secretary Bhabananda Khakhary and Joint Secretary Paresh Boro.

In his speech Brahma talk about the historical progression of the Boro language and its development. He also called upon the younger generation to engage with literature for the advancement of the community.

The Boro Sahitya Sabha was established on November 16, 1952, in Basugaon, now part of Chirang district, aiming to promote Bodo language and literature.

The founding president, Joy Bhadra Hagjer, along with representatives from Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, and Nepal, laid the foundation for this literary organisation.

Following India's independence, a group of Bodo intellectuals recognized the urgent necessity to preserve the Bodo language. Many early authors were educated in institutions where instruction was primarily in Assamese or Bengali, leading to a collective understanding that the Bodo language required similar levels of preservation and development. There was a realisation among the Bodo population that education was essential for their overall development and the advancement of their language.

Through sustained efforts by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, the Bodo language was introduced as a medium of instruction at the primary level in 1963 and subsequently at the secondary level in 1968. The language and its literature

have gained recognition as one of the Major Indian Languages (MIL) within several universities, including Gauhati, Dibrugarh, and North-Eastern Hill Universities. In 2004, the Bodo language was designated as an associated official language of Assam. Its status has further been enhanced with the introduction of Post-Graduate Courses in Bodo language and literature at Gauhati University in 1996 and Bodoland University, Kokrajhar.

Furthermore, under the auspices of the Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha is actively engaged in the development of over forty thousand scientific and technical terms in the Bodo language. It is also anticipated that the Sahitya Academy will grant "Bhasa Sonman" to the Bodo language and its literature as an initial step toward comprehensive recognition.

Furthermore, the Government of India has, in principle, acknowledged the importance of including the Bodo language and literature in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India.

## 58<sup>th</sup> National Press Day held

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 16:** Padmashree awardee author Arup Kumar Dutta on Saturday traced the changing face of mass media in India from the time as a young nation to present day, highlighting the challenges of financial sustainability while maintaining its credibility and objectivity. Delivering a lecture on "Changing Dynamics of Mass Media: Freedom and Credibility" organised by Gauhati Press Club on occasion of National Press Day, Dutta stressed on role of the reader and viewer in helping media regain and retain its neutrality and work as watchdog of the society.

He emphasised that National Press Day is not a time for celebration, but for introspection. Dutta elaborated on how the changes in media ownership, outlook of journalists

and audience taste have eroded media's trustworthiness over time.

"Advent of electronic media had an impact on print media, while the free internet and social media are putting pressure on electronic media to change itself to meet the public demands", he said.

All stakeholders must come together for media to regain its lost ground, with onus both on journalists and people in this regard, the Padmashree awardee added.

Gauhati Press Club, president Sushmita Goswami and general secretary Sanjoy Ray, senior journalists Sushanta Talukdar, Nitumoni Saikia, Montu Saikia, Utpal Parashar, Rajib Lochan Borthakur, Dhruvajyoti Pathak, Shah Alam and other member-journalists were present on the occasion.

## NBWL team visits proposed site of oil, gas exploration by Cairn

**HT Correspondent**  
**JORHAT, Nov 15:** A team of the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) on Saturday visited the site close to the Hollongapir Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary where Vedanta-owned Cairn Oil and Gas proposes to explore and drill for oil and gas.

Jorhat DFO Nanda Kumar said that the team comprising four or five members inspected the site on Saturday and held discussions with Forest department members and the proponents. The DFO said that the team would take about a week to submit their report to the Board. After final approval from the Board, Cairn would be allowed to start operations.

Approval has already been granted by Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to Vedanta-owned Cairn Oil and Gas' proposal for exploration and drilling on 4.49 hectares very close to the Hollongapir

Gibbon Sanctuary located in Jorhat district, bordering Nagaland. The state government has also granted approval following clearance by the office of the PCCF.

The oil exploration activities may be at a distance of 13 kms distance from the 21 sq km sanctuary which houses the endangered Hoolock Gibbon, the only ape species found in India, but the site falls within the contiguous Dissoi Valley Reserve Forest, which are also an important eco sensitive zone and an elephant corridor. In view of the apprehended adverse impact on environment and wildlife several organisations have opposed the proposal of exploration and drilling at the place as it will disturb the eco system and ultimately destroy the biodiversity in which several varieties of butterflies, insects, frogs, reptiles and six other primate species are found apart from the endangered Hoolock Gibbon.

## Addl chief secretary reviews development projects in Dima Hasao

**HT Correspondent**  
**HAFLONG, Nov 16:** The additional chief secretary of the Government of Assam, Biswaranjan Shamal, IAS, conducted a comprehensive review meeting on Saturday with departmental heads under the jurisdiction of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council.

The meeting was convened in the principal secretary's conference hall at the council secretariat. Principal Secretary Thai Tsho Daulagupu, along with council secretaries and officers, participated in the discussions.

The review meeting aimed to assess the progress of ongoing development programs and schemes in the district.

It brought together key stakeholders, including the additional chief secretary, principal secretary, council secretaries, and departmental heads. The visit forms part of Shamal's

three-day tour of the Dima Hasao district to monitor the implementation of council-led initiatives.

During the meeting, Shamal reviewed the physical and financial status of various flagship programs and other key schemes. He expressed satisfaction with the departments' efforts and progress while emphasising areas requiring additional focus.

Notably, he highlighted the importance of enhancing food storage capacity to ensure adequate supplies during disasters. He also urged the health department to intensify efforts to promote institutional deliveries, aiming to improve maternal and child healthcare outcomes.

As part of his visit, the additional chief secretary is scheduled to inspect various project sites to evaluate work progress on the ground before returning to Guwahati.

## CUBE IIT Madras audits 'Jal Jeevan Mission' in Karbi Anglong

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Nov 16:** A team from Centre for Urbanization, Buildings & Environment (CUBE) from IIT Madras, is on a three day visit in Karbi Anglong district, to inspect the technical and social aspects of the implementation of Jal Jivan Mission (JJM), which is a Central and State government sponsored scheme aimed at providing safe drinking water to every rural household and public institution in India by 2024. In Karbi Anglong district the PHE Rural Division is the nodal agency for implementing JJM. CUBE has been raised by IIT Madras and Government of Tamil Nadu as an applied research, technology and consultancy centre.

Technical Auditors of CUBE IIT Madras, Chennai Prasad R and Upam Dev Agnibashya, the two officials in their three day visit in the district have inspected the five completed Pipe Water Supply Scheme (PWSS) of JJM, which are in operation providing free flow of piped water to the doorstep in rural households and public institutions.

On Saturday, the team accompanied by Biman Baruah, executive engineer and Bikrom Teron, Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Diphu Rural PHE Division visited Jeng Bey PWSS, under JJM at Langsoli-et, which is 23 km from here, to find out about the functioning of the scheme. The two officials inspected the whole plant like the pump house, water tank, solar panels, boring, water tape and also interacted with the villagers.

The Jeng Bey PWSS was completed on December 24, 2023 with a total cost of Rs. 68,53,235 out of which central share is Rs. 58,59,515.93 and state share is Rs.

6,51,057.33. As informed by Longki Bey S/o of the village headman of Mensing Bey, said it covers two villages Jeng Bey with 44 families and Diliram Terang with 40 families. While the information provided on the board for Functional Household Tape Connection (FHTC) is 74 families, Inglongkiri Medical Sub-Centre and Nilalung LP School are also covered under Jeng Bey PWSS.

The Technical Auditor, CUBE IIT Madras, Chennai, Prasad R said, "We come here to audit the JJM implementation in Karbi Anglong. We have done the survey, where JJM are provided and looked into the whole thing. We also interacted with the villagers about JJM and whether it benefited them or not."

The technical auditor also expressed satisfaction in all the sites they visited as the piped water has reach to every household. All the reports collected will be submitted to the JJM head office.

Earlier, Longki Bey, S/o Mensing Bey, of headman of Jeng Bey village told the visiting team that before the PWSS was set up, villagers have to reach down to the stream to fetch water. It was a long walk and time consuming. Some households draw water from kutchra ringwells and during rainy season the water is muddy. Now as the PWSS has been installed villagers are overjoyed particularly women as the burden of fetching water from kutchra ringwells and rivers is no more.

The executive engineer, Baruah said in Karbi Anglong there are 525 new JJM schemes and out of this 140 schemes have been complete. Another 385 schemes are yet to be completed.

## So-called scribe arrested for alleged blackmailing

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, Nov 16:** A so-called scribe of Nagaon identified as Abdul Jalil Akand, was arrested last night by Nagaon police for allegedly blackmail-

ing a youth, Obaidur Rahman, through his web portal. According to sources, Akand had threatened to publish a news article on Rahman's alleged involvement with a cattle

smuggling racket unless he paid ₹ 50,000. Rahman in this regard, filed a complaint at Nagaon Sadar Police Station, leading to Akand's arrest under sections 1096/24 and

61(2)/308(2)/35(2) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanghita. This is not Akand's first arrest; he has previously spent time in jail twice on similar blackmailing charges, sources added further.

## Dibrugarh University hosts five-day workshop on 'Theatre of the Oppressed'



**HT Correspondent**  
**DIBRUGARH, Nov 16:** The Centre for Social Work, Dibrugarh University, successfully conducted a five-day workshop on Theatre of the Oppressed for third-semester Social Work students.

This annual program, now in its fourth year, serves as an introductory course, with an advanced module planned for the subsequent

semester. The workshop was led by Shobha Raghavan, a Bangalore-based development consultant and certified Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) facilitator with over 20 years of experience.

A seasoned practitioner, Shobha has worked extensively in areas such as social justice, human rights, and community empowerment.

Her innovative use of TO techniques has addressed critical issues like gender-based violence, access to natural resources, and community resilience, making her a highly respected figure in the field. During the workshop, students learned essential skills and competencies to integrate TO as a tool for social change.

Through interactive ses-

sions, Shobha shared her expertise, emphasising the importance of creative expression in fostering dialogue and addressing social issues.

The workshop highlighted Dibrugarh University's commitment to experiential learning and its mission to prepare socially responsible professionals capable of driving meaningful change. The initiative continues to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical applications, empowering students to use innovative approaches in their future endeavors.

Dibrugarh University is one of the leading educational institutions in Assam, offering a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs and is recognised for its contributions to research and innovation, particularly in the fields of environmental sciences, biodiversity, and climate change.

## Empowering street vendors: Cachar DC leads efforts to resolve PM SVANidhi challenges



**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 16:** In a significant stride towards empowering street vendors and enhancing the efficiency of the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme, district commissioner of Cachar, Mridul Yadav conducted an interactive session at the new conference hall of DC's office here on Saturday.

The meeting aimed to address the challenges faced by beneficiaries of the scheme and strategize actionable solutions to overcome them. DC Yadav emphasised the importance of inclusivity and a problem-solving approach in ensuring the scheme's success.

Key officials present included district development commissioner, Narsing Bey; additional district commissioner and executive officer of Silchar Municipal Board, Van Lal Limpuiya Nampui; executive officers from Sonai and Lakhipur town committees; the lead district manager, Cachar; the city project manager, ASULMS Cachar; and representatives from multiple banking institutions.

The session witnessed active participation from street vendors, the scheme's primary beneficiar-

ies, who candidly shared their experiences. Their feedback highlighted procedural and technical hurdles, providing critical insights into areas needing immediate attention.

Acknowledging their concerns, DC Yadav stressed the importance of synergy between banks, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and other stakeholders. He called for the establishment of robust coordination forums to address grievances swiftly and streamline processes for the beneficiaries.

"This initiative is a testament to our commitment to building a more inclusive and supportive ecosystem for street vendors. We are determined to ensure they reap the full benefits of the PM SVANidhi scheme and enhance their livelihoods," stated DC Yadav.

This proactive engagement reflects the district administration's unwavering dedication to driving grassroots empowerment and fostering sustainable development through the PM SVANidhi scheme. This is stated in a press release issued from Regional office of Information & Public Relations Barak valley Zone Silchar Assam.

## NFR unloads 921 freight rakes in October 2024



**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 16:** The North-east Frontier Railway (N.F. Railway) has achieved a remarkable feat by unloading 921 freight rakes during October 2024, ensuring the seamless supply of essential and other commodities across its jurisdiction.

Out of these, 534 rakes were unloaded in Assam, with 304 carrying essential goods. Tripura saw the unloading of 59 rakes, followed by Nagaland with 15, Arunachal Pradesh with 10, Manipur with 2, and Mizoram with 1. Additionally, 160 rakes were unloaded in West Bengal, and 140 in Bihar.

The efficient handling was made possible by speedy infrastructure development, advanced terminal facilities, and continuous monitoring, resulting in reduced turnaround times and enhanced unloading efficiency. This initiative has significantly contributed to the movement of vital commodities and the overall growth in freight transportation.

## Editor's pick

## Israel, Palestine and a divided Africa: Seeking a path forward

By: Manish Karmwar

The ongoing conflict in Gaza between Israel and Palestine, which began on October 7, 2023, marks a significant military engagement in the region, being the largest confrontation since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. This conflict has global ramifications, with the African continent likely to feel its effects profoundly. Africa, with its 55 countries and diverse political landscape, is particularly vulnerable to such geopolitical divides.

Africa's Divided Stance on Israel-Palestine: African countries vary widely in their stance on the Israel-Palestine issue, often shaped by historical, ideological, and economic factors. Pro-Palestinian countries like Algeria, Tunisia, South Africa, Senegal, Mali, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Libya support Palestine, often viewing the Palestinian struggle through the lens of their anti-colonial histories. In contrast, several nations, including Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Morocco, and Chad, have established close relations with Israel, motivated by economic, technological, and security interests. Additionally, neutral countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan maintain diplomatic ties with both Israel and Palestine, typically refraining from favoring one side over the other.

At the continental level, the African Union (AU) has traditionally supported Palestine's statehood and criticised Israeli policies. A Deeper Look at Africa's Reactions: African responses to the Gaza conflict highlight the continent's fractured stance on foreign policy issues. In South Africa, for instance, public protests have likened the Palestinian struggle to the country's anti-apartheid movement. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has voiced strong support for Palestine, and his government filed a lawsuit against Israel at the International Court of Justice. Algeria's Foreign Minister similarly condemned Israeli actions, citing international law, while Comoros President Azali Assoumani labeled Israeli actions as genocidal.

On the other hand, several sub-Saharan nations, including South Sudan, Cameroon, Togo, and Cape Verde, chose not to support the recent United Nations resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Even Muslim-majority countries like Morocco, Chad, and Sudan have limited their response to public condemnations without altering diplomatic ties. Malawi and Kenya recently agreed to send laborers to Israel following a halt in work permits for Palestinians, further signaling the complexities in Africa's stance. Africa and Israel share a complex, long-standing relationship that dates back to before Israel's founding. Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, expressed support for African liberation, envisioning solidarity between Jews and Africans in their quests for self-determination. This vision gained traction in the 1960s, with Israel maintaining a strong presence in Africa, including 33 embassies across the continent. Israel's model of decolonisation and development attracted the admiration of African leaders who saw parallels in their own struggles for independence.

However, following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, pressure from Arab countries led many African states to sever ties with Israel. This led to a period of estrangement, with African leaders feeling frustrated by unmet promises from Arab allies, particularly in the realm of energy cooperation. Gradually, ties began to thaw, and by the early 21st century, Israel was once again seeking partnerships in Africa, with diplomatic and economic collaborations resuming.

In recent years, Israel's outreach has intensified. In 2016, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited East Africa, and a year later, he addressed the Economic Community of West African States. In 2022, Israel and several African nations agreed to expand cooperation in renewable energy, trade, and technology. Kenya's President William Ruto visited Israel in 2023, further strengthening ties in agriculture, climate change, security, and other sectors.

These relationships are essential for African nations, many of which aim to modernise infrastructure and boost economic growth through partnerships with technologically advanced countries like Israel. Given the historical context and current diplomatic landscape, it appears unlikely that the Gaza conflict will irreparably divide Africa. While opinions on the Israel-Palestine issue are undoubtedly polarized, African nations often prioritise pragmatic interests over ideological alignment. The Gaza conflict may not permanently alter Africa's alliances, but it does highlight the need for more cohesive foreign policy coordination on the continent. Africa's relationships with Israel have historically ebbed and flowed, often dictated by external pressures and internal priorities rather than a single, unified stance. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

## Good for crop, good for human health either

By: Er. Rajesh Pathak

Today the farmer wants to rely fully on chemical or inorganic pesticides to save the crop from harmful insects. Which is to keep moving and moving ahead on the path of destruction, and nothing else. Laying stress on the organic farming, so was told to the farmers in "Kisan Sangoshthi" (Farmers-Symposium) organised by Shivshakti Bio-Group. The symposium was organised in the Shaikpura village of Sehore district close to Bhopal, the capital of MP.

Speaking about the organic manure and organic pesticides available in the market, Omprakash Tyagi of the Shivshakti organisation tells the presence of farmer-friendly culture of micro-organisms offer the life to the farm-land that ultimately transcends into the crop. Thus crop grows up into the higher state of vitality.

Notably, as low is the intrinsic health of the crop, so many pesticides will it requires to protect itself from pests. Whereas the crop produced from organic manure possess enough immunity to fight out the onslaught of pests. Therefore it requires pesticide far a little amount, that's too in unavoidable condition.

Owing to which crop remains free from harmful elements caused by pesticides, thus gets to be far a more nutritious for the human health. And keeps farmer away from burden of unnecessary over

expenses as well.

Secondly, as chemical fertilizer boost up the growth of crops, so swiftly the soil-friendly organisms perish. Notably, with their mobility the organisms maintain porosity and dampness in the soil, as also allows the presence of oxygen through pores for the plants.

On the other hand, when organisms destroyed, land succumbs to get hard. Then the same piece of land requires more fertilizer, and more water. In other words the cost of farming gets more expensive. According to a study, 9 kg/hectare of chemical fertilizer was once needed in 1960-61; in 1987-88 it shot up to 51.20 kg/hectare!

Organic farming increases fertility and the soil friendly organisms so also. It contributes in the preservation of environment, and cow stock moreover. Farmland should have minimum 0.9% carbon, but with the time it came down to 0.6-0.7 % and even a worst level in many a place in the country. With this note symposium ended.

Inspired by what learned in the symposium the farmers presented their took the oath to begin to adopt organic farming, increasing 1-2 acres of their farmland every year.

The village to village public-awakening programme of Shivshakti organization has even begun to yield results. Successful organic farming in 4 acres farmland done by the Nagar-family of Jammipaldi village near district headquarter is today the hot topic of discussion in the villages around.

## The bulldozer approach to justice: Pros and cons

The "Bulldozer Concept" in justice has recently gained attention, especially in the context of certain legal and political measures. At its core, the idea revolves around using forceful or decisive actions to enforce laws or bring about a sense of justice, especially in cases where traditional legal proceedings may seem slow, inefficient, or even ineffective. The term "bulldozer" symbolizes the heavy-handed approach or the decisive methods often deployed to address complex issues, and it has been a topic of debate in several countries, including India.

In recent times, the Bulldozer Concept has been highlighted in instances where authorities have used literal bulldozers to demolish structures tied to individuals accused of crimes. This approach is particularly evident when officials believe that the properties are either illegally constructed or linked to criminal activities. By using bulldozers to demolish properties, the government aims to send a strong message, emphasizing that crime will not be tolerated and that justice will be swift and visible. This method is thought to have a two-fold effect: it acts as a punishment for the accused and serves as a deterrent to others who may be involved in similar activities.

The rise of the Bulldozer Concept reflects the desire of many for swift justice. In many cases, especially in countries where court systems are bogged down by a high volume of cases and prolonged trials, there is a perception that the legal process is often slow and unresponsive to public needs. For citizens who want fast solutions to crime and corruption, bulldozing illegal properties can seem like an efficient way to enforce the law. This approach is particularly popular when people believe that certain individuals have used their power or influence to sidestep the law and continue harmful practices that affect society.

By demolishing the properties linked to these individuals, authorities are demonstrating a commitment to upholding justice, regardless of the accused's power or influence.

However, the Bulldozer Concept raises essential questions about the rule of law and due process. Legal systems around the world are built on principles like the presumption

of innocence, fair trials, and equal treatment under the law. When authorities take such drastic actions without a full legal process, it can lead to concerns about whether the justice system is bypassing essential checks and balances.

The Bulldozer Concept, by its nature, often involves immediate action, leaving little time for thorough investigations or legal defenses. This can create a situation where people are punished before being proven guilty, which runs counter to the foundational ideas of justice in democratic societies. Critics argue that this approach can undermine trust in the judicial system if it appears that officials are more focused on quick results than on ensuring fairness and impartiality.

One reason for the popularity of the Bulldozer Concept is that people often feel frustrated by a legal process that seems unable to address urgent issues. In cases of corruption, violence, and organized crime, communities may suffer due to the prolonged presence of criminals who exploit legal loopholes to evade justice.

When people witness the bulldozing of properties associated with such criminals, they may feel that justice is being served in a visible, impactful way. The sight of bulldozers tearing down illegal structures can symbolize a reclaiming of public space and a removal of unlawful influence from the community. Supporters argue that by eliminating illegal properties, authorities are creating a safer environment and restoring law and order.

At the same time, the Bulldozer Concept must be handled carefully to avoid the risk of misuse. In many cases, the individuals targeted are seen as harmful elements in society, but there is a possibility that innocent people could be caught up in these actions. Without a transparent legal process, the use of bulldozers to enforce justice could be manipulated for political or personal motives. There is a concern that authorities may use this method to target political opponents or marginalized communities under the guise of fighting crime. To prevent this, there must be strong oversight to ensure that only



genuine cases of crime and corruption are addressed and that all actions are based on evidence rather than personal or political agendas.

Another critical aspect of the Bulldozer Concept is the impact on the communities where these actions take place. For residents in neighborhoods where properties are demolished, there can be a sense of both relief and apprehension. On one hand, they may feel safer and more optimistic about the future, believing that law enforcement

is taking steps to address criminal elements. On the other hand, there can be fear about whether similar actions might affect innocent residents or lead to a climate of uncertainty. When properties are demolished, especially without full due process, it can create a precedent where people feel that their own rights or properties could be at risk. This sense of instability can have broader effects on community morale and cohesion.

The Bulldozer Concept can also bring challenges for local economies. In areas where demolitions occur frequently, businesses and property values can suffer as people may hesitate to invest or expand due to the potential for sudden government action. For small business owners or families who rely on local trade, the disruption caused by demolitions can have long-term economic effects. The threat of bulldozing can impact the real estate market, as potential buyers may avoid areas where bulldozer-based justice is more common. This, in turn, affects the local tax base and can lead to a decline in public revenue, which can

hurt the funding for public services that benefit the community.

Despite these concerns, supporters of the Bulldozer Concept argue that decisive action is essential in the fight against crime, particularly when conventional legal channels are insufficient. They view the Bulldozer Concept as a practical response to deep-rooted issues that may otherwise continue unchecked. For instance, in cases where individuals have accumulated wealth or property through illegal means, bulldozing these assets is seen as a form of justice that strips them of the benefits they gained through wrongdoing. By taking away their illegally acquired properties, authorities are signaling that crime does not pay and that the benefits of criminal activity will be removed in a visible, impactful way.

For the Bulldozer Concept to be truly effective, it is crucial that it operates within a framework of accountability and transparency. While bulldozing illegal properties may have immediate benefits, it is essential that these actions are conducted with respect for the law and the rights of individuals. A transparent process that includes proper investigations, fair hearings, and justifiable reasons for demolition can help ensure that bulldozer-based actions are not only effective but also fair. When people understand that these measures are part of a legitimate effort to protect society and uphold the law, there is likely to be greater public support for the Bulldozer Concept.

Additionally, authorities implementing the Bulldozer Concept should be mindful of its long-term implications for society. Justice is not only about punishing wrongdoers but also about building trust be-

tween the government and its citizens. When people see that justice is served fairly and that authorities are committed to upholding the rights of all citizens, they are more likely to have confidence in the system. On the other hand, if bulldozer-based actions are perceived as unfair or biased, public trust in the government and legal institutions may weaken. This can lead to a society where people feel alienated or marginalized, which is ultimately harmful to social stability and cohesion.

Ultimately, the Bulldozer Concept in justice is a powerful symbol of decisive action against crime, but it must be applied carefully to ensure that it aligns with the principles of fairness, transparency, and accountability. By using bulldozers to demolish properties associated with criminal activity, authorities send a strong message that crime will not be tolerated.

However, the effectiveness of this approach depends on its responsible implementation, with safeguards in place to prevent misuse or abuse of power. In the pursuit of justice, it is essential to balance the need for swift action with the values of a just and lawful society, ensuring that all citizens are treated fairly and that justice is served in a way that respects individual rights and promotes social harmony.

As we reflect on the Bulldozer Concept, it is clear that it reflects a larger debate about the nature of justice in modern society. In a world where crime and corruption can often seem overwhelming, many people want visible, decisive action to restore a sense of order. The Bulldozer Concept represents a demand for justice that is swift and impactful, a justice that not only punishes but also serves as a warning to others. While it may not be a perfect solution, the Bulldozer Concept has become a powerful symbol of the fight for a safer, more accountable society, one that stands firm against those who seek to harm the public good.

The Bulldozer Concept is both a practical and symbolic method of enforcing justice, but it requires careful consideration to be truly effective. By ensuring transparency, accountability, and respect for the law, authorities can use this approach to create a safer, more just society.

## Manipur's crisis: A test of constitutional integrity and governance

By: Dipak Kurmi

The essence of the Indian Constitution, and indeed that of any democratic nation's foundational document, lies in safeguarding the rights of the weak and ensuring justice is upheld, whether in the dynamic between the citizen and the state or among various societal groups. The Constitution empowers the state with both the authority and the duty to uphold the laws that represent the collective will of the people. When this core principle is ignored, justice is denied, leading to potential unrest and unlawful behavior by those marginalized.

The state of Manipur, a part of the Indian Union, has been a glaring example of constitutional failure over the past 18 months. The situation has escalated to the point where basic constitutional guarantees - the right to equality, the right to life, and the right to seek legal redress - have been persistently compromised.

Since the onset of ethnic violence in May 2023, the state machinery has shown signs of complete collapse, a fact underscored by the Supreme Court's pronouncement on August 1, 2023, when it explicitly stated that there was an "absolute breakdown of the state machinery in Manipur." Yet, despite this stark acknowledgment, conditions on the ground remain dire.

Recent incidents have only reinforced this grim reality. The murder of a woman, followed by a retaliatory killing, has escalated tensions further, culminating in the

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) engaging in an encounter that left 11 armed militants dead. The CRPF's actions might seem justified in terms of immediate tactical success - no casualties among their ranks - but the broader implications are troubling. These slain individuals, claimed by the ethnic Kuki community to be village protection volunteers carrying licensed arms, highlight a deeper crisis: the necessity for citizens to defend themselves in what were once peaceful areas.

This tragic cycle of violence is not just an isolated event but a symptom of a broader malaise - the failure of governance at both the state and central levels. The Kuki community, which has endured significant violence and loss, remains marginalized and unheard.

Accusations of the Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh's partisan behavior have further eroded trust. Statements from Kuki legislators, including the accusation that the solicitor general misrepresented the Chief Minister's outreach efforts to the Supreme Court, deepen this mistrust. The Chief Minister's administration has been widely criticized by multiple fact-finding teams for discriminatory practices, yet there has been no meaningful shift in his approach or in the central government's stance.

The paradox here is stark. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has positioned India as a potential mediator in international conflicts, such as the Israel-Hamas confrontation and the Russia-Ukraine war, yet he has

not personally intervened in the escalating crisis within Manipur, a state under his direct purview. His failure to visit or actively address the unrest signifies a concerning disconnect. This inaction is not just an oversight; it carries significant consequences. India has historically paid a high price for allowing regional conflicts to fester unchecked, and Manipur is poised to become another example unless urgent steps are taken.

The narrative of violence has been relentless. The violence in paddy fields are targeted by snipers, and civilians face brutal killings, such as the shooting of a Meitei woman in her field and the horrific murder of a Kuki woman. These acts underscore the audacity and cruelty of militants who have capitalized on the absence of effective governance.

More than 200 people have died, and thousands have been displaced since May 2023 in clashes between the Meitei and Kuki communities. Despite this, the state's leadership has failed to restore peace. The ruling "double-engine" government - implying both state and central BJP leadership - has shown itself unable or unwilling to act decisively.

The Chief Minister's troubles have only grown, with Kuki organizations demanding a Supreme Court-monitored Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into his alleged role in inciting violence. This demand is bolstered by leaked audio recordings that purportedly implicate him. While the veracity of these recordings must be proven,

the very fact that such accusations are made highlights the crisis of confidence in the current leadership.

Attempts by the central government to broker peace have been ineffective, further alienating the local population. Contentious policy decisions, such as the construction of fences along the India-Myanmar border and the abolition of the Free Movement Regime, have exacerbated tensions. These measures, opposed by various tribal groups for threatening social and economic ties across borders, illustrate the disconnect between policy makers and the lived realities of Manipur's communities.

The implications of allowing Manipur's crisis to persist are severe, not just for the state but for the entire North-East region, which has long grappled with insurgency. Stability in this region is essential for national security, and leaving Manipur to navigate its current turmoil without adequate intervention risks deeper unrest.

The Indian Constitution's promise of justice and protection must be made real in Manipur. The government must act with urgency to reestablish the rule of law, address the grievances of all communities, and restore peace. This could involve bold measures such as the imposition of President's rule to bring neutrality and rebuild public trust. Without decisive action, the state risks further descending into violence, taking with it the principles of justice and equality that are the bedrock of Indian democracy. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

## POST BAG

## Revive Bharalu

Sir/Ma'am

Bharalu River, which gulps tons of waste materials from Guwahati city, is now among the country's most polluted rivers. Such titles are not desirable. Mainland India deems the Northeast as the land of pristine rivers and blue hills that are species-rich, we have to live up to our visitors' expectations. Duckedwee is a wonder plant that can thrive in the most polluted environments and can absorb all the pollutants of the water thus helping to restore the water quality to its desirable pH levels. This method can help Bharalu get the undesirable "among the most polluted rivers" tag removed from its back.

Noopur Baruah, Tezpur barooahnoopur@gmail.com

## Importance of an Integrated Assam Agricultural University

Sir/Ma'am

Through the esteemed columns of your newspaper, I wish to bring attention to the crucial importance of maintaining the integrated structure of Assam Agricultural University (AAU), encompassing agriculture, veterinary, fishery, and community science, rather than establishing a separate veterinary university.

As highlighted in D.O. No. 23/2/2012-EQR(Pt-1)/... dated the 62nd of September, 2024, the National Agricultural Research and Education System (NARS), which includes the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), has played a pivotal role in transforming India into a food surplus nation and improving the quality of agricultural higher education.

However, recent trends of carving out new universities from existing ones

without proper planning, infrastructure, and resources have adversely impacted their performance.

In Assam's diverse agricultural ecosystem, fields such as agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, and rural development are deeply interconnected.

An integrated university structure allows these disciplines to collaborate effectively, fostering holistic solutions to the region's agricultural challenges.

AAU's interdisciplinary approach enables better resource optimization, shared infrastructure, and a collective environment that promotes synergy among these fields.

Moreover, splitting AAU to create a standalone veterinary university would increase financial burdens by duplicating resources like infrastructure and faculty.

It would also disrupt the collaborative research environment, which is essential for addressing Assam's

multifaceted agricultural issues.

ICAR, as the apex body overseeing agricultural universities, emphasizes quality control and minimum staff requirements, as per UGC Rules 1975, for undergraduate and postgraduate education, research, and extension.

Following this model ensures that students receive comprehensive education, which is vital for their future roles in addressing the state's agricultural needs.

Therefore, maintaining AAU as an integrated entity is imperative for fostering a collaborative, resource-efficient, and innovative environment. I trust this matter will receive careful consideration, ensuring that Assam's agricultural future remains secure and progressive.

Mowsam Hazarika Kumarpara, Guwahati mowsam200@yahoo.co.in



**By: Ranjan K Baruah**

The diversity of language around the world is truly incredible. Different nations and communities speak different languages. There are languages which are used by millions and there are languages which are used by a few individuals. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights holds the Guinness World Record as the most

translated document as it exists in more than 500 languages.

The United Nations is one of the world's largest employers of language professionals and we should be aware that there are six official languages of the UN - Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. A delegate may speak in any official UN language. The speech is interpreted simultaneously into the other official languages of the UN.

## Translation as a career choice

We are talking about this because we see the importance of translation and it can be another career for many young people. Translation is often the essential prerequisite for accessing a universal, multiple, diverse culture. It translates ideas and experiences of one community to another.

There is an importance of language professionals or translators. International Translation Day which is observed on 30th September is meant as an opportunity to pay tribute to the work of language professionals, which plays an important role in bringing nations together, facilitating dialogue, understanding and co-operation, contributing to development and strengthening world peace and security.

Transposition of a literary or scientific work, including technical work, from one language into

another language, professional translation, including translation proper, interpretation and terminology, is indispensable to preserving clarity, a positive climate and productiveness in international public discourse and interpersonal communication.

Thus, on 24 May 2017, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/288 on the role of languages professionals in connecting nations and fostering peace, understanding and development, and declared 30 September as International Translation Day. 30 September celebrates the feast of St. Jerome, the Bible translator, who is considered the patron saint of translators. St. Jerome was a priest from North-eastern Italy, who is known mostly for his endeavor of translating most of the Bible into Latin from the Greek manuscripts of the New Testa-

ment. He died near Bethlehem on 30 September 420.

There is growing awareness that languages play a vital role in development, in ensuring cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, but also in attaining quality education for all and strengthening cooperation, in building inclusive knowledge societies and preserving cultural heritage, and in mobilizing political will for applying the benefits of science and technology to sustainable development.

Job profiles for the translators can be editorial and desktop publishing assistants, content writer, interpreters, précis-writers, production editors and desktop publishers, translators, etc. United Nations translators handle all kinds of documents, from statements by Member States to reports prepared by expert bodies.

The documents they translate cover every topic on the United Nations agenda, including human rights, peace and security, and development. Aspirants may get jobs in government agencies in India or in the private sector or different media houses and event management companies.

From the perspectives of the career we find that translators transmit cultural references, publication, and others literally or orally. In India, we see the importance of different people speaking different languages. There is a natural requirement for Indian and foreign language translators, both in the private and public segment. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in the translation business is expected to grow by 20% till 2029.

Due to the boom in internet and

digital media there is more demand for content in regional languages in India. We have seen the importance of contents in different languages for social awareness or commercial publicity of any products.

Despite the entry of AI in the field, there is a need for human translators. We know that machines cannot restrain the nuances of language and the culture it represents. In domains like Healthcare, bad translations can have serious consequences. This brings more opportunities for the aspirants who are planning to be in this sector. *(The author is a career mentor and skill trainer and currently Adviser of Skill Employment and Entrepreneurship Department of Bodoland Territorial Council, Kokrajhar and can be reached at 8473943734 or krnanjan@gmail.com)*

### Learnet Skills Limited recruitment – Marketing Manager post

Last Date: 20/11/2024

Learnet Skills Limited, Guwahati has released an employment notification for the recruitment of Marketing Manager Post under Learnet Skills Limited. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

**Name of post: Marketing Manager: Skill Development**

**No of posts: 1**

**Pay: Negotiable**

**Age Limit: Up to 45 years**

**Educational Qualification: MSW/ MBA.**

**Experience:** At least 3-4 years of proven experience in marketing management, business development preferably in the education or skill development sector.

**Other Skills:**

# Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to collaborate effectively with clients.

# Creative thinking and problem-solving skills, with a results-oriented mindset

# Proficiency in marketing analytics tools and platforms for performance tracking and reporting. Have high degree of integrity and accountability

# Plan and execute offline marketing initiatives such as events, workshops, seminars, and partnerships to reach target audiences and promote the institute.

# Conduct market research and competitor analysis to identify trends, opportunities, and potential areas for growth.

# Collaborate with internal teams, including admissions, academic departments, and faculty, to ensure marketing efforts align with the institute's goals and objectives

# Develop strategic planning and collaborations with other innovative organizations, academic and non-academic institutes, market linkages with successful entrepreneurs in Skill Development Sector

**Application fee if any: No**

**How to Apply for Learnet Skills Limited Recruitment?**

Interested and eligible candidates may apply and send email to [Bornali.Saikia@learnetskills.com](mailto:Bornali.Saikia@learnetskills.com).

**Last date of submission of application: 20th November 2024**

### Oil India Limited recruitment – 21 Pharmacist & Nurse posts

Last Date: 25 & 27/11/2024

Oil India Limited has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 21 Contractual Pharmacist & Nurse Posts purely on contractual basis for immediate engagement for Field Headquarters, Duliajan in Oil India Limited. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

**1. Contractual Pharmacist**

**No of posts: 04**

**Contractual Emolument per month (₹):**

Fixed emolument: ₹ 19,500.00 (Rupees Nineteen Thousand and Five Hundred) only per month based on attendance including paid leave, holiday, if any  
Variable emolument: ₹ 750.00 (Rupees Seven Hundred and fifty) only per day for each working day

**Age Limit:**

# **Minimum:** 22 years

# **Maximum age limit:**

**General:** 40 years

**OBC (NCL):** 43 years

**SC/ST:** 45 years

**Educational Qualification:**

(i) 10+2 in science stream from a government-recognized Board/University.

(ii) 02 (two) years Diploma course in Pharmacy from an institution recognized by the Government of India and the Pharmacy Council of India.

(iii) Must have registered with Assam Pharmacy Council and should possess valid professional Pharmacist License.

(iv) Minimum 02 (two) years post qualification relevant work experience as a Pharmacist

**2. Contractual Nurse**

**No of posts: 17**

**Contractual Emolument per month (₹):**

Fixed emolument: ₹ 19,500.00 (Rupees Nineteen Thousand and Five Hundred) only per month based on attendance including paid leave, holiday, if any  
Variable emolument: ₹ 750.00 (Rupees Seven Hundred and fifty) only per day for each working day

**Age Limit:**

# **Minimum:** 18 years

# **Maximum age limit:**

**Gen:** 40 years

**OBC (NCL):** 43 years

**SC/ST:** 45 years

**Educational Qualification:**

(i) Passed 10+2 in the science stream from a government-recognized Board/University.

(ii) Passed 04 (4) years of B.Sc. (Nursing) from an Institute/University recognized by an Indian

Nursing Council, Government of India.

(iii) Must have registered with the State Nursing Council.

(iv) Must have minimum 02 (two) years post-qualification relevant work experience as a Nurse in a Government Hospital or well-equipped private hospital of repute.

**Or**

(i) Passed 10+2 in any stream from a Government Recognised Board/ University.

(ii) Passed 03 (three) years Diploma in General Nursing and Midwifery (GNM) from an institution recognized by the Indian Nursing Council, Government of India.

(iii) Must have registered with the State Nursing Council. Must have a minimum 02 (two) years post-qualification relevant work experience as a Nurse in a Government Hospital or well-equipped private hospital of repute.

**Age Limit: Minimum 20 years & Maximum 35 years.**

**Age Relaxation:** (For all above posts) The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

# **SC/ ST:** 5 years

# **OBC:** 3 years

**How to Apply for Oil India Limited Recruitment?**

# Interested candidate(s) should fill the Personal Bio-Data (given on the last two pages of this advertisement) and bring it along with the following documents on the above scheduled date(s) for the Walk-in-Practical/Skill Test cum Personal Assessment(s):

(i) 01 (One) recent 3cm X 3cm coloured photograph.

(ii) Original and self-attested photocopy of documents/certificates/testimonials as under:

# Valid Identity Proof and valid Address Proof from Competent Government Authority.

# Admit Card, Marksheet and Pass Certificate of Class 10 issued by the concerned Government Recognized Education Board; Document(s)/Certificate(s)/Testimonial(s) of essential qualification, as applicable; relevant work experience certificate, as applicable; valid Caste Certificate (SC/ST/OBC) from Competent Government Authority, if applicable; valid Non-Creamy Layer Certificate from Competent Government Authority, if applicable; valid Income and Asset Certificate to be produced by Economically Weaker Sections issued by the Competent Government Authority, if applicable; valid Disability Certificate from Competent Government Authority, if applicable; valid Discharge Book/Service and Release Certificate for Ex-Servicemen (Pages containing Personal Particulars and Service Particulars), if applicable and any other documents/certificates/testimonials from Competent Authority in support of candidature.

# No-Objection Certificate from concerned employer, in original, in case the applicant is working in any organization.

**Walk-in schedule:**

**Date:**

# **Contractual Pharmacist:** 25/11/2024

# **Contractual Nurse:** 27/11/2024

**Time:** 07:00 A.M. to 09:00 A.M.

**Venue:** Occupational Health Centre, OIL Hospital, Duliajan.

**GMCH Guwahati recruitment 2024 – 8 Doctor, Nurse & other posts**

Last Date: 27/11/2024

Cardiothoracic & Neurosciences Center (CN Center) of Gauhati Medical College Hospital has released an advertisement for the recruitment of 8 Cardiac Anesthesiologist, General Duty Medical Officer (MBBS), Staff Nurse, ANM, and Physician Assistant posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

**1. Cardiac Anesthesiologist**

**No of posts: 01**

**Educational Qualification:** DM/Fellowship in Cardiac Anaesthesia from a recognized institute and must have 1 year of experience in that field.

**Pay:** Pay will be negotiable

**2. General Duty Medical Officer (MBBS)**

**No of posts: 01**

**Educational Qualification:** MBBS degree from any recognized University under MCI/NMC and the candidate must be registered under Assam Medical Council and minimum of 2 years experience in a reputed hospital.

**Pay:** ₹ 55,000

**3. Staff Nurse**

**No of posts: 04**

**Educational Qualification:** B.Sc. Nursing/GNM Course Passed and Registered with Assam Nurses Midwives and Health Visitors Council and Minimum 1 year experience.

**Pay:** ₹ 20,000

**4. ANM**

**No of posts: 01**

**Educational Qualification:** Completed the ANM Nursing course from a recognized institution and valid registration with Assam Nurses Midwives and Health Visitors Council and minimum 1 year experience.

**Pay:** ₹ 18,000

**5. Physician Assistant (OT)**

**No of posts: 01**

**Educational Qualification:** HS (Science) with a Diploma in Physician Assistant and minimum 2 years experience.

**Pay:** ₹ 19,800

**How to Apply for GMCH Guwahati Recruitment?**

# Interested and eligible candidate shall have to submit their CV at the Drop box in Administrative block of the Director Office CN Center, GMCH on or before 27.11.2024.

# The schedule of Interview/ selection test for the respective posts will be communicated through E-mail or phone within a week of last date.

### Cotton University recruitment 2024 – Multi-Tasking Assistant vacancy

Last Date: 27/11/2024

Cotton University has released an employment notification for the recruitment of Multi-Tasking Assistant Vacancy at Cotton University. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

**Name of post: Multi-Tasking Assistant**

**No of posts: 1 post**

**Age Limit: Below 42 years**

**Pay: Consolidated fixed amount ₹ 15,000 per month**

**Essential Qualification:**

# Graduate/Post Graduate in any discipline.

# At least 1-5 years of relevant work experience preferably in the Academic Section/Department of any Higher Educational Institution/University of repute;

# Good Command of the English Language;

# Computer Proficiency which includes inter alia Office packages;

# Adequate exposure to the Physical Office Filing System and also administrative duties preferably pertaining to the Academic Section/Department of a Higher Educational Institution/University.

**Desirable Qualification:**

# PGDCA/DCA (1-Year Duration) from a Government recognized Institute or also BCA/BSc-IT/MCA/MSc-IT or MSc-CS from a UGC recognized University;

# Organizing skills with the ability to stay focused on assigned jobs with also a multitasking capability.

**How to Apply for Cotton University Recruitment ?**

**Candidates must submit the following:**

# **Hard copies of -** (i) the requisite Application Form (available on the website [www.cottonuniversity.ac.in](http://www.cottonuniversity.ac.in)) after being duly filled up, (ii) the Resume, (iii) a set of self-attested photocopies of all Certificates, Marks-sheets and/or Grade-sheets, Testimonials and other relevant documents in support of their credentials - in a Sealed Envelope duly super-scribed as "Application for the contractual position of Multi-Tasking Assistant at Cotton University: Job Advertisement No. Recruitment/CU/2024/14 Dt.14-11-2024" addressed to "The Registrar, Cotton University, Administrative Building, Panbazar, Guwahati-781001, Assam".

# **Soft copies of -** (i) the scanned Application Form after being duly filled up, (ii) the scanned recent passport-sized color photograph, and (iii) the scanned signature - at the designated spaces to be uploaded through the Online Form [by clicking on the virtual link provided on the University's website.

# The deadline for submission of both online & offline application is 5:00 PM of 27-11-2024 and both the hard copy format & the soft copy format of the Application Form must be mandatorily submitted within the stipulated deadline for the candidature to be considered for evaluation.

# The deadline for submission of both online & offline application is 5:00 PM of 27-11-2024 and both the hard copy format & the soft copy format of the Application Form must be mandatorily submitted within the stipulated deadline for the candidature to be considered for evaluation.

### Dhubri Medical College recruitment – 2 Laboratory Technician & DEO posts

Last Date: 27/11/2024

Dhubri Medical College & Hospital (DMCH), Dhubri has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 2 Laboratory Technician & DEO Vacancy in Dhubri Medical College. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

**1. Laboratory Technician**

**No of posts: 01**

**Educational Qualification:**

# Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technician

# Experience in ELISA, Molecular Laboratory etc and

# Knowledge of Computer.

**Pay:** ₹ 30,000 Per Month

**2. Data Entry Operator**

**No of posts: 01**

**Educational Qualification:**

# Bachelor Degree with minimum 6 months Diploma in Computer Application

# Experience in Data Entry related to research organization/health programme.

**Pay:** ₹ 20,000 Per Month

**How to Apply for Dhubri Medical College Recruitment?**

# Interested and eligible candidates may appear in a walk-in interview as per details mentioned below.

**Date:** 27.11.2024

**Time:** 10.00 AM Onwards

**Venue:** Conference Hall, 1st floor, Academic Building, Dhubri Medical College, Jhagarpar-783325 (Assam).

# Candidates are requested to bring all the relevant documents in Original and one set of photocopies of the same along with CV and their recent passport size photograph.

# Candidates with computer knowledge will be given preference.

*It will be Biden's last check-in with Xi - someone the Democrat saw as his most consequential peer on the world stage*

# In final talks, Biden to press China's Xi on North Korea's ties with Russia

**LIMA (PERU), Nov 16:** President Joe Biden is expected to use his final meeting with China's leader, Xi Jinping, to urge him to dissuade North Korea from further deepening its support for Russia's war on Ukraine. Saturday's talks on the sidelines of the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Peru come just over two months before Biden leaves office and makes way for Republican President-elect Donald Trump. It will be Biden's last check-in with Xi — someone the Democrat saw as his most consequential peer on the world stage.

With the final meeting, officials say Biden will be looking for Xi to step up Chinese engagement to prevent an already dangerous moment with North Korea from further escalating. Biden on Friday, along with South Korean President Yoon Seok Yul and Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, condemned North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's decision to send thousands of troops to help Moscow repel Ukrainian forces who have seized territory in Russia's Kursk border region. Biden called it "dangerous and destabilising cooperation". White House officials also have expressed frustration with Beijing, which accounts for the vast majority of North Korea's trade, for not doing

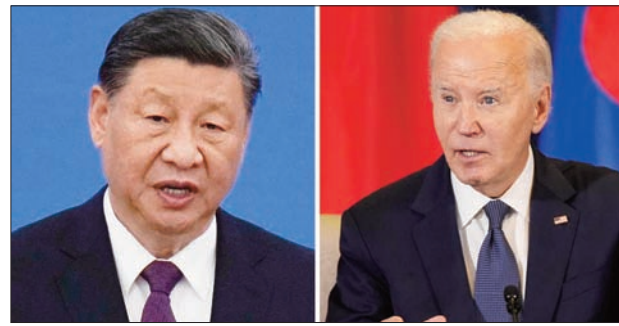
more to rein in Pyongyang. Biden, Yoon and Ishiba spent most of their 50-minute discussion focused on the issue, agreeing it "should not be in Beijing's interest to have this destabilising cooperation in the region", according to a senior administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss their private conversations.

The North Koreans also have provided Russia with artillery and other munitions, according to US and South Korean intelligence officials. And the US, Japan and South Korea have expressed alarm over Pyongyang's stepped-up cadence of ballistic missile tests. Kim ordered testing exercises in the lead-up to this month's US election and is claiming progress on efforts to build capability to strike the US mainland.

Biden and Xi have much beyond North Korea to discuss, including China's indirect support for Russia, human rights issues, technology and Taiwan, the self-ruled democracy that Beijing claims as its own.

There's also much uncertainty about what lies ahead in the US-China relationship under Trump, who campaigned promising to levy 60 per cent tariffs on Chinese imports.

Already, many American companies, including Nike and eyewear retailer Warby Parker, have been diversifying their



sourcing away from China. Shoe brand Steve Madden says it plans to cut imports from China by as much as 45 per cent next year. "When Xi meets with Biden, part of his audience is not solely the White House or the US government," said Victor Cha, an analyst at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "It's about American CEOs and continued US investment or trying to renew US investment in China and get rid of the perception that there's a hostile business environment in China." White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Biden administration officials will advise the Trump team that managing the intense competition with Beijing will likely be the most significant foreign policy challenge they will face. Administration officials are concerned that tensions between China and Taiwan could devolve into all-out war if there is a miscalculation by ei-

ther side, with catastrophic consequences for the world. Sullivan said the Trump administration will have to deal with the Chinese military's frequent harassment of its regional neighbors. Skirmishes between the Philippine and Chinese coast guards in the disputed South China Sea have become a persistent problem. Chinese coast guard ships also regularly approached disputed Japanese-controlled East China Sea islands near Taiwan.

Ishiba met with Xi on Friday. Afterward, the Japanese prime minister said he told Xi he was "extremely concerned about the situation in the East China Sea and escalating activity of the People's Liberation Army".

The White House worked for months to arrange Saturday's meeting between Xi and Biden, something the Democrat badly wanted to do before leaving office in January. Sullivan travelled to Beijing in late August to meet with his Chinese counterpart and also

sat down with Xi. Beijing agreed to the meeting earlier this week.

It's a big moment for Biden as he wraps up more than 50 years in politics. He saw his relationship with Xi as among the most consequential on the international stage and put much effort into cultivating that relationship.

Biden and Xi first got to know each other on travels across the US and China when both were vice presidents, interactions that both have said left a lasting impression.

But the last four years have presented a steady stream of difficult moments.

The FBI this week offered new details of a federal investigation into Chinese government efforts to hack into US telecommunications networks. The initial findings have revealed a "broad and significant" cyberespionage campaign aimed at stealing information from Americans who work in government and politics.

US intelligence officials also have assessed China has surged sales to Russia of machine tools, microelectronics and other technology that Moscow is using to produce missiles, tanks, aircraft and other weaponry for use in its war against Ukraine.

And tensions flared last year after Biden ordered the shooting down of a Chinese spy balloon that traversed the United States. (AP)

# Israeli troops reach deepest point in Lebanon since Oct 1 invasion, Lebanese media say

**BEIRUT, Nov 16:** Israeli ground forces reached their deepest point in Lebanon since they invaded six weeks ago, before pulling back on early Saturday after fierce battles with Hezbollah militants, Lebanese state media reported.

Israeli troops captured a strategic hill in the southern Lebanese village of Chamaa, about 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the Israeli border early Saturday, the state-run National News Agency reported. It said Israeli troops were later pushed back from the hill.

It added that Israeli troops detonated the Shrine of Shimon the Prophet in Chamaa as well as several homes before they withdrew, but the claim could not be immediately verified. Israel's military said in a statement that its troops "continue their limited, localized, and targeted operational activity in southern Lebanon." The military did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the Lebanese media reports.

The push on the ground came as Israeli warplanes pounded Beirut's southern suburbs as well as several other areas in southern Lebanon including the port city of Tyre.

The morning strike in Beirut hit an area known as Dahiyeh, which the Israeli military called a Hezbollah stronghold, saying its planes had hit multiple sites used by the militant group. Residents were given advance warning by Israel, and it was not immediately clear whether there were any casualties.

The increase of violence came as Lebanese and Hezbollah officials are studying a draft proposal presented by the U.S. earlier this week on ending the war.

Since late September, Israel dramatically escalated its bombardment of Lebanon, vowing to cripple Hezbollah and end its barracks in Israel. More than 3,400 people have been killed in Lebanon by Israeli fire - 80% of them in the eight weeks - according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

On Friday, Lebanon's caretaker prime minister apparently urged Iran to try and convince Hezbollah to agree to a cease-fire deal with Israel, which would require the group to pull back from the Israel-Lebanon border. The proposal is based on U.N. Security Council resolution 1701, which ended the last Israel-Hezbollah war in the summer of 2006.

A copy of the draft proposal was handed over earlier this week by the U.S. ambassador to Lebanon to Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, who has been negotiating on behalf of Hezbollah, according to a Lebanese official. The official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the secret talks said Berri is expected to give Lebanon's response on Monday.

Another Lebanese politician said Hezbollah officials had received the draft, were studying it and would express their opinion on it to Berri. The politician also spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media about the ongoing talks.

Berri told the pan-Arab Asharq Al-Awsat daily newspaper that the draft does not include any item that allows Israel to act in Lebanon if the deal is violated.

"We will not accept any infringement of our sovereignty," Berri was quoted as saying. He added that one of the items mentioned in the draft that Lebanon does not accept is the proposal to form a committee to supervise



the agreement that includes members from Western countries. Berri added that talks are ongoing regarding this point as well as other details in the draft, adding that "the atmosphere is positive but all relies on how things will end."

There is also a push to end the war between Israel

and Hamas, which began after Palestinian militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing about 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting 250 others. The U.N. Security Council's 10 elected members on Thursday circulated a draft resolution demanding "an immediate, unconditional and permanent cease-fire" in Gaza.

The U.S., Israel's closest ally, holds the key to whether the U.N. Security Council adopts the resolution. The four other permanent members — Russia, China, Britain and France — are expected to support it or abstain.

Israel's bombardment and ground offensives since the initial Hamas attack have killed more than 43,000 people in Gaza, Palestinian health officials say. The officials don't distinguish between civilians and combatants but say more than half of those killed have been women and children. (AP)

## Japan's minister visits Ukraine to stress mutual concern over N Korean troops



**KYIV, Nov 16:** Japan's foreign minister arrived in Kyiv on Saturday to discuss North Korea's deepening military alliance with Russia, including the deployment of thousands of troops to support Moscow's war in Ukraine. Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwata will meet his Ukrainian counterpart, Andrii Sybaha, to reaffirm Japan's "strong support" for Ukraine against Russia's invasion and to discuss further sanctions against Moscow, Japan's Foreign Ministry said.

High on the agenda was Tokyo's "grave concern" over growing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, the ministry said.

According to US, South Korean and Ukrainian intelligence assessments, up to 12,000 North Korean troops have been sent to Russia as part of a major defence treaty between the countries.

Last week, Ukrainian officials said Ukraine and North Korean troops engaged in small-scale fighting while Ukraine's army fired artillery at North Korean soldiers in Russia's Kursk border region, where Ukraine launched a surprise push on August 6.

The agreement requires both countries to use all available means to provide immediate military assistance if either is attacked.

Iwata's visit comes after the Ukrainian capital was attacked overnight by Russian drones, damaging residential buildings and infrastructure in Kyiv's Obolon district. No casualties were reported.

Ukrainian air defences neutralised up to a dozen drones, said the head of Kyiv's military administration, Serhii Popko.

Russia attacked Ukraine with 83 Shahed drones in the early hours of Saturday morning, the Ukrainian air force reported. Of those, 55 were shot down, while another 30 veered off course or were lost after electronic jamming, it said.

Meanwhile, Russia's Ministry of Defense said that it had destroyed 35 Ukrainian drones, including 20 over the western Kursk region and 11 over the Bryansk region. (AP)

# Protesters gather at UN climate talks in global day of action as progress on a deal slows

**BAKU (AZERBAIJAN), Nov 16:** Hundreds of activists formed a human chain outside one of the main plenary halls at the United Nations climate summit on what is traditionally their biggest protest day during the two-week talks.

The demonstration in Baku, Azerbaijan will be echoed at sites around the world in a global "day of action" for climate justice that's become an annual event.

Activists waved flags, snapped their fingers, and hummed and mumbled chants in a silent protest, with many covering their mouths with the word "Silenced."

Demonstrators held up signs calling for more money to be pledged for climate finance, which involves cash for transitioning to clean energy and adapting to climate change.

It comes as negotiators at the venue try to hammer out a deal for exactly that — but progress has been slow and observers say the direction of any agreement is still unclear. Lidy Nacpil said protesters like her are "not surprised" about how negotiations are going. But past wins — like a loss and damage fund that gives developing nations cash after extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change — keep organisers going, said Nacpil, a co-ordinator with the Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development.

"The role we play is to increase the pressure," she said of the action. "We know we're not going to get the results that the world needs in this round of negotiations, but at least to bring us many steps closer is our hope, is our aim."

She added: "I think we have no option but to keep fighting ... It's the instinctive

response that anyone, any living being, living creatures will have, which is to fight for life and fight for survival."

Tasneem Essop said she was inspired by the action, which was challenging to organise. "To be able to pull off something where people feel their own power, exercise their own power and get inspired in this creative way, I'm super excited about this," she said.

Essop says she's "not very" optimistic about an outcome on finance, but knows next week will be pivotal. "We can't end up with a bad deal for the peoples of the world, those who are already suffering the impacts of climate change, those who need to adapt to an increasing and escalating crisis," she said. "We fight until the end."

Negotiators at COP29, as the talks are known, are working on a deal that might be worth hundreds of billions of dollars to poorer nations. Many are in the Global South and already suffering the costly impacts of weather disasters fueled by climate change. Several experts have said USD 1 trillion a year or more is needed both to compensate for such damages and to pay for a clean-energy transition that most countries can't afford on their own.

Samir Bejanov, deputy lead negotiator of this year's climate talks said in a press conference that the climate finance talks

were moving too slowly.

"I want to repeat our strong encouragement to all parties to make as much progress as possible," he said. "We need everyone to approach the task with urgency and determination."

Observers were also disappointed at the pace of progress.

"This has been the worst first week of a COP in my 15 years of attending this summit," said Mohamed Adow, of climate think tank Power Shift Africa. "There's no clarity on the climate

finance goal, the quality of the finance or how it's going to be made accessible to vulnerable countries." "I sense a lot of frustration, especially among the developing country blocks here," he said.

Panama environment minister Juan Carlos Navarro agreed, telling The Associated Press he is "not encouraged" by what he's seeing at COP29 so far. "What I see is a lot of talk and very little action," he said, noting that Panama is among the group of countries least responsible for warming emissions but most vulnerable to the damage caused by climate change-fueled disasters.

"We must face these challenges with a true sense of urgency and sincerity," he said. "We are dragging our feet as a planet." (AP)



# Over 1,400 antiquities valued USD 10 million returned to India by US



**NEW YORK, Nov 16:** A sandstone sculpture looted from Madhya Pradesh in 1980s and another in green-grey schist, looted from Rajasthan in 1960s are among the over 1,400 antiquities collectively valued at USD 10 million that the US returned to India.

More than 600 more antiquities looted from India are scheduled to be repatriated in coming months.

The pieces were returned at a ceremony with Manish Kulhary from the Consulate General of India here and Alexandra deArmas, Group

Supervisor from the Homeland Security Investigation of New York Cultural Property, Art, and Antiquities Group, according to a statement from Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L Bragg, Jr.

At least 1,440 antiquities collectively valued at USD 10 million were returned to India at the event, Bragg said in a statement.

The sandstone sculpture depicting a celestial dancer was looted from a temple in Madhya Pradesh in the early 1980s. The looters had cleaved the sculpture into

two halves to facilitate smuggling and illicit sale and by February 1992, the two halves were illegally imported from London into New York, professionally re-assembled, and donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met).

It remained on display at the Met, until it was seized by the Antiquities Traffic Unit (ATU) in 2023.

The second sculpture, Tanesar Mother Goddess, carved from green-gray schist, was looted from a village of Tanesara-Mahadeva in Rajasthan.

First documented in the late 1950s by an Indian archaeologist along with 11 other sculptures of mother goddesses, the Tanesar Mother Goddess and her fellow mother goddesses were stolen one evening in the early 1960s, the statement said on Wednesday.

By 1968, the Tanesar Mother Goddess was in a Manhattan gallery and after passing through two other collectors in New York, the

# Sri Lanka president to present policy statement at parliament's inauguration

**COLOMBO, Nov 16:** President Anura Kumara Dissanayake will be presenting his government's policy statement at the inaugural session of the new parliament on November 21, it was announced on Saturday.

Dissanayake's address to the inaugural session of the new parliament — the 10th parliament since the 1978 presidential constitution — will be at 3 pm on November 21, the parliament's press office announced.

The ruling National People's Power (NPP) of Dissanayake won a landslide victory in Wednesday's parliamentary election gaining absolute control of the House with 159 seats — well over the 150 mark for two thirds majority.

Dissanayake, who had announced the snap polls shortly

after his election as president in September, will appoint a new Prime Minister and a 25-member cabinet on Monday with scientific allocation of subjects for the ministries, his party said.

The president's statement — to be made from the Speaker's chair as per the tradition — would be delivered after all the members have taken oath under the chairmanship of the Secretary General of Parliament Kushani Rohanadheera and the new speaker, the deputy speaker and other relevant authorities are appointed.

Parliament has also announced an induction session for new MPs on November 25, 26 and 27 for the over 150 new faces in the new 225 member assembly.

This was the first parliamentary election since Sri Lanka

plunged into an economic crisis when the island nation declared sovereign default in mid-April of 2022, its first since gaining independence from Britain in 1948.

Almost civil-war-like conditions and months of public protests led to the fleeing of the then president Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Since assuming office, Dissanayake has stayed on course with his predecessor Ranil Wickremesinghe's International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout programme.

The country is still in the process of recovering from its worst economic crisis in history as the Dissanayake government faces the challenge of meeting the IMF targets on revenue in the third review of the USD 2.9 billion programme. (PTT)

# Georgia election chief doused in paint as protests continue after divisive parliamentary vote

**TBILISI, Nov 16:** The head of Georgia's Central Electoral Commission was doused with black paint on Saturday at a meeting to confirm the results of the country's divisive Oct. 26 parliamentary elections.

Protesters gathered outside the commission's building in Tbilisi, where officials announced that the ruling Georgian Dream party had won 53.93% of the vote.

Opposition supporters have rejected the results amid allegations that the vote was rigged, an accusation that Georgian Dream denies.

The Saturday session was interrupted when David Kirtadze, a commission member from the opposition United National Movement party, threw black paint at commission chairman Giorgi Kalandarishvili.

Before the incident, Kirtadze told Kalandarishvili that the official results of the vote did not reflect voters' "true choice."

Kalandarishvili responded by saying that the use of "pressure, bullying and personal insults" proved that there was no evidence of vote rigging.

When the meeting resumed, Kalandarishvili was seen with a bandaged eye.

"It once again becomes evident that there is no tangible proof indicating that the elections were manipulated," he told the audience.

European election observers have described the Georgian parliamentary elections as taking place in a "divisive" atmosphere marked by instances of bribery, double voting and physical violence.

Many Georgians viewed the vote as a pivotal referendum on the country's effort to join the European Union. The bloc suspended Georgia's membership application process indefinitely in June after the country's parliament passed a "foreign influence law" that critics say mimics Moscow's crackdown on civil society.



Critics have accused the ruling Georgian Dream, established by Bidzina Ivanishvili, a shadowy billionaire who made his fortune in Russia, of becoming increasingly authoritarian and tilted toward Moscow. It has recently adopted laws similar to those used by the Kremlin to crack down on freedom of speech and LGBTQ+ rights.

President Salome Zourabichvili, who has rejected the official results, says Georgia has fallen victim to pressure from Moscow against joining the European Union. Zourabichvili, who holds a mostly ceremonial position, has urged the United States and EU to support the demonstrations.

Officials in Washington and Brussels have urged a full investigation of the election, while the Kremlin has rejected the accusations of interference. (AP)

# Security forces directed to restore order, peace in Manipur

## Fresh order came after the Manipur government imposed AFSPA in the entire state on October 1

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: All security forces deployed in Manipur have been directed to take necessary steps to restore order and peace in the state as the security scenario remained “fragile” in the past few days, the Union Home Ministry said Saturday.

A fresh cycle of violence erupted in Manipur last Monday after 11 suspected militants, who allegedly attacked a police station and adjoining CRPF camp with sophisticated weapons in Manipur’s Jiribam district, were killed in an exchange of fire.

A day later, six civilians, including women and children were abducted by armed militants from the same district.

“The security scenario in Manipur has remained fragile for the past few days. Armed miscreants from both communities in conflict have been indulging in violence leading to unfortunate loss of lives and disruption in public order,” the ministry said on Saturday.

The home ministry said strict action would be initiated against anyone trying to indulge in violent and disruptive activities. It said important cases have been handed over to the NIA for effective investigation.

## One human trafficker held in Tripura

**HT Correspondent**  
AGARTALA, Nov 16: The Government Railway Police (GRP) arrested a suspected human trafficker from the Belabar area of Agartala city, near the Indo-Bangladesh border, on Friday. Speaking on the issue, GRP Officer-in-Charge Tapas Das said that the arrest followed an ongoing investigation into a human trafficking case, which led them to identify the suspect, Raju Mia. “We arrested Raju Mia from the Belabar area in a joint operation conducted by the Tripura Police, BSF, and the GRP. He has been apprehended for his involvement in facilitating illegal crossings of the India-Bangladesh border. During the preliminary interrogation, he disclosed the names of other individuals involved in the trafficking network. The accused has been produced before the court,” he stated.

## Empower marginalised communities: Sikkim CM

GANGTOK, Nov 16: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Saturday appealed to journalists to play an active role in the empowerment of marginalised communities by highlighting the virtues of social justice. Addressing a function to mark National Press Day, he said that the media enlightens the society by informing the public and also holds the government accountable. “The press plays a vital role as a pillar of democracy,” he said. Tamang said that his government is committed to inspiring future generations of journalists by recognising distinguished individuals in various fields. He addressed the Press Club’s request for pensions by allocating funds as ‘grant-in-aid’. The chief minister announced a new health insurance scheme for journalists and also reaffirmed the state government’s commitment to providing free healthcare for over a dozen journalists referred outside the state. (PTI)

## CM thanks Japan for putting up the ‘Japan Arena’ at the Cherry Blossom festival

# Skywalk project to be launched in Meghalaya’s East Khasi Hills

SHILLONG, Nov 16: Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma announced that a ‘skywalk project’ would be launched at Mawdok in East Khasi Hills district.

Mawdok is a popular viewpoint and a must-stop destination for tourists visiting Sohra tourism circuit. At Mawdok, one can witness the spectacular view of valley formed by lush green hills on either side.

The skywalk project is a flagship initiative of the government to further boost tourism in the region.

“Tourism is a very important part of our overall strategy for the region. We are hopeful that the DoNER Ministry would continue to support the region to promote tourism”, the chief minister said on Friday evening at the Cherry Blossom festival.

Stating that the government aims to promote Meghalaya to the world, the chief minister said that the partnership with Japan is very special and would take the festival to a new level. He remarked that partnership with Japan will enable the world to learn about Meghalaya, its culture and its close affinities with other Asian nations.

The chief minister thanked Japan



“The security forces have been directed to take necessary steps to restore order and peace. Strict action would be initiated against anyone trying to indulge in violent and disruptive activities,” it said. The Union home ministry requested the people to maintain peace, not believe in rumours and cooperate with the security forces to maintain law and order in the state.

Seeing the fragile situation, the

Centre reimposed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in Manipur’s six police station areas, including the violence-hit Jiribam on Thursday.

The fresh order came after the Manipur government imposed AFSPA in the entire state on October 1, barring 19 police station areas that include these six.

The police stations excluded from the Manipur government’s October 1 order were Imphal,

Lamphal, City, Singjamei, Sekmai, Lamsang, Patsoi, Wangoi, Porompat, Heingang, Lamlai, Irilbung, Leimakhong, Thoubal, Bishnupur, Nambol, Moirang, Kakching, Jiribam.

An area or district is notified as “disturbed” under AFSPA to facilitate the operations of the armed forces. AFSPA gives armed forces operating in disturbed areas sweeping powers to search, arrest and open fire if they deem it necessary for the “maintenance of public order”.

The police station areas where AFSPA has been reimposed are Sekmai and Lamsang in Imphal West district, Lamlai in Imphal East district, Jiribam in Jiribam district, Leimakhong in Kangpokpi and Moirang in Bishnupur. More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year.

The ethnically diverse Jiribam, which was largely untouched by the clashes in Imphal Valley and the adjoining hills, witnessed violence after the mutilated body of a farmer was found in a field in June this year. (PTI)

## CM Sangma launches GREEN Meghalaya Scheme

**HT Correspondent**

DIMPAPUR, Nov 16: Forerunners Nagaland, in collaboration with the Nagaland tourism department, will organise a one-day cultural confluence and extravaganza at the Agri Expo site in Dimpapur on November 23, as a prelude to the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the upcoming 10-day Hornbill Festival at Kisama, near Kohima, from December 1. Forerunners is a seven-member event management team, with three patrons including Nagaland tourism and higher education minister Temjen Imna Along, that promotes young talents in various fields in the state. Addressing a press conference here on Friday, president of the organisation Imlibenla Wati Nienu said the event is being organised to promote Nagaland’s culture and tradition globally.

Detailed the features of the cultural extravaganza, Nienu said the event would feature a tribute runway honouring the former beauty queens of Nagaland from the 1990s to the present, supermodels, women who brought laurels to the state and nation, live concert and DJ, singers, dance troupe and other activities such as indigenous games and food stalls. Besides the artists and performers from Nagaland, national and international

talents, prominent and renowned faces such as Bombay Vikings, DJ Kaos Kitten, and Julia Gama, the 1st runner-up of Miss Universe Brazil 2020.

She urged all to be part of the cultural confluence to promote Naga culture and traditions, the entry ticket for which has been fixed at ₹ 500. Forerunners secretary general Sentimiren Pongon and coordinator, indigenous games, Moanyanger Jamir briefed about the indigenous games to be held during the day such as pork-eating, king chilly-eating, and bamboo climbing competitions, and traditional bamboo walking race.

## Jaswantgarh, Nyukmadung war memorials to host events honouring 1962 war heroes

ITANAGAR, Nov 16: As tributes to the courage and sacrifice of the Indian Army during the 1962 war with China, commemorative events are being planned to be organised at Jaswantgarh and Nyukmadung war memorials in Arunachal Pradesh, a defence spokesperson said.

An event would be organised at Jaswantgarh War Memorial in Tawang district on Sunday, while another function would be held at Nyukmadung War Memorial in West Kameng district on Monday, Guwahati-based Defence spokesperson Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said.

The events will honour the heroic soldiers and resilient local citizens who stood united during the India-China War of 1962, symbolising a legacy of bravery and unity that continues to inspire generations, he said.

The commemorations

would focus on two pivotal battles of the war, the Battle of Nuranang (November 17, 1962) and the Battle of Nyukmadung (November 18, 1962).

The Battle of Nuranang is a testament to the courage of the 4 Garhwal Rifles, led by Rifleman Jaswant Singh Rawat (Mahavir Chakra, Posthumous), Lance Naik Trilok Singh Negi (Vir Chakra, Posthumous), and Rifleman Gopal Singh Gusain (Vir Chakra). “These soldiers displayed extraordinary bravery, with Rifleman Jaswant Singh Rawat famously delaying the enemy’s advance for 72 hours, inflicting heavy casualties and defending his post with unyielding determination. Their sacrifice has left an indelible mark on Indian military history,” Lt Col Rawat said.

The Battle of Nyukmadung, known for its fierce combat and steadfast

resistance, highlighted the exemplary leadership and resilience of the Indian Army. With unwavering support from local citizens, the soldiers demonstrated remarkable camaraderie and resolve, he added.

In the run-up to the main commemorations, a series of community-focused events such as painting and lecture competitions in local schools, motorcycle and bicycle rallies and a medical camp for community welfare, have been organised to strengthen civil-military relations.

The celebrations will conclude with a cultural programme featuring traditional dances and patriotic songs performed by SELA Brigade troops and students from Jang and Dirang schools.

A live re-enactment of the historic battles would also be featured during the concluding event, the spokesperson said. (PTI)



for putting up the ‘Japan Arena’ at the Cherry Blossom festival venue that showcased the cultural diversity, food, music and sports.

Declaring the Japan Arena open, DoNER Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said, “It is great to be here in Meghalaya and witness the energy and vibrancy of the people of Northeast. I am glad to see that Cherry Blossom Festival is taking on a new manifold

proportion. Thank Japan for their close relationship with India”.

Scindia also lauded chief minister for his leadership in promoting festival like Cherry Blossom. “I have not seen this level of energy in any concerts in India. Hats off to Conrad and the people of Meghalaya,” Scindia added.

He said that Meghalaya should not just be the capital of music in India,

but for Asia.

International fame and R&B icon Akon and legendary Boney M performed at the festival on Friday at Bhoiryong in Ribhoi district and enthralled the audience with a scintillating performance.

Hundreds of people protested in different parts of Imphal valley on Saturday after three bodies suspected to be of six persons missing were found from Jiribam district.

The protesters mostly women blocked the main roads in Kwaekithel area in Imphal West district, Sagolband Tera in Imphal West district by burning tyres to prevent vehicular movement, police said.

At Khwairamband market, the main market of Manipur, women vendors staged a protest rally against the killing even as huge security forces were deployed in Imphal, the police said.

As news of the recovery of three bodies spread, business establishments and markets closed down.

Locals also came out on the streets at Ningthoukhong in Bishnupur district and Lamlong in Imphal East district to stage protests against the killing. (PTI)

# UMPC condemns killings of children, women in Manipur violence



**HT Bureau**

GUWAHATI, Nov 16: The UMPC Manipur strongly condemns killings of innocent children and women in ongoing violence in Manipur.

The UMPC lamented by stating that the recent brutal killings of three children and three women in Jiribam District are a tragic reminder of the horrors faced by innocent civilians.

“We, the United Meitei-Pangal Committee (UMPC), Manipur, an amalgamation of all Meitei-Pangal (Muslims) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the region, express our deep outrage and grave concern over the ongoing violence in Manipur. These heinous acts, among numerous others since the

eruption of violence on May 3, 2023, have exacerbated the suffering of the people of Manipur. The inaction and lack of accountability from the Modi Government over the past 18 months have allowed this crisis to worsen. The failure of the Centre and State Government - which we have dubbed the Double Engine Government - to ensure the security and well-being of its citizens has led to the escalation of violence, placing innocent lives in jeopardy.” The UMPC stated through a press release.

“This situation is intolerable, and it is imperative that the government be held accountable for its failure to maintain peace and ensure the safety of the people in the region. We believe that all citizens

of Manipur, regardless of ethnicity or community, have an inherent right to live in peace, dignity, and safety. The current state of lawlessness, violence, and bloodshed is both unacceptable and unsustainable. We demand immediate and effective intervention from both the State and Central Governments to restore peace, uphold justice for the victims, and address the root causes of this crisis. It seems that there is no rule of law in Manipur, where the Kuki and Meitei communities are fighting with sophisticated weapons, and the other communities, including Muslims (Meitei-Pangal) and Christians (Nagas), are helpless, merely demanding the authorities to restore peace. The violence must stop. The lives of innocent civilians remain at great risk, and we implore the government to take swift and effective measures to halt the ongoing conflict and protect the people of Manipur. The current situation must be resolved through Political Dialogue, Peacebuilding, and the delivery of justice to the victims and their families. We, the UMPC Manipur, stand firmly in solidarity with the victims and their families. We call for justice, peace, and accountability, and urge the authorities to act decisively to bring this senseless violence to an end,” It further stated.

## Tripura Cong MLA accuses BJP of playing divisive politics

**HT Correspondent**

AGARTALA, Nov 16: Tripura Pradesh Congress MLA Sudip Roy Barman recently accused the ruling BJP of playing divisive politics to increase its vote share.

Roy Barman made these remarks while leading a solidarity march organized by the Congress in the Mandvi constituency under West District on Friday.

State Congress president Ashish Kumar Saha, Congress MLA Sudip Roy Barman, and other leaders participated in the padayatra.

Speaking to reporters, Roy Barman said the solidarity marches have been organized statewide since October 31.

“The politics of division is happening across the country, as well as in the states, purely to gain votes. This weakens the nation. The ruling group is looting the country. In this scenario, the Congress cannot sit idle. That’s why Congress has taken to the streets. The country will move forward only when people of all regions unite and take it forward,” he said.

Sudip Roy Barman further stated that it seems the ruling group does not want unity among the people or genuine development.

He also remarked that not only in Tripura but across the country, a “looting regime” prevails. Commodity prices are spiraling out of control, the unemployed are losing direction, and education has stagnated.

“Where is the administration? The government and the administration are acting as silent spectators. They seem indifferent. The state’s administration has fallen flat on its face and is being controlled by a handful of multimillionaires. The poor are becoming poorer, while some people’s bank balances are soaring. Congress is fighting against this to wake the people up,” he said.

He added that Congress regards those who raise divisive slogans in the name of nationalism as anti-state.

“The mentality of these anti-state groups is to pit people against each other and extract political benefits at the cost of bloodshed. Congress is urging people to speak out against this. This program will continue until November 19,” he concluded.

## Don’t hamper NH projects with land issues: Nagaland Dy CM Zeliang

**HT Correspondent**

DIMPAPUR, Nov 16: Nagaland deputy chief minister TR Zeliang urged the public not to hamper National Highway projects in the state with land issues.

Addressing the media after undertaking a four-day tour to five districts of Phek, Kiphire, Shamator, Tuensang and Mokokchung from November 11 here on Friday, Zeliang, who is also the minister in charge of National Highway, said he reviewed and assessed the National Highway projects, covering an approximate length of 750 km, in the districts. He added that he inspected and reviewed the ongoing projects and those that were completed in the recent past and under the defect liability period/maintenance period. During the tour, Zeliang called upon the stakeholders to cooperate with the state government in respect of land acquisition for construction of national highways. Zeliang noted that there are many projects that are delayed and stalled because of land acquisition and compensation demand.

Seeking cooperation on the land rates fixed by the state government, he observed that there are

hundreds of houses constructed just by the road in anticipation of compensation.

He said these illegal structures are from 159 km to 173 km and also structures are visible from 176 km to 206 km under Phek district.

“This is highly unethical and can lead to delay or even failure to sanction the project,” Zeliang said. He also said the state government would recommend that those projects which are being stalled due to the land issue be foreclosed as there is no provision to pay for land compensation other than National Highway projects.

He added that land compensation matter in the state has been one major issue in the failure and delay of projects.

Zeliang said during the four-day tour, he was overwhelmed by the support of the public for the government. He solicited the same support when a project is sanctioned and work commences so that the appointed contractors do not face any hurdle and the public gets to enjoy good roads. He also asked contractors to maintain quality work and complete the projects as per the scheduled date for their completion.

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## জাননী

“মু্য্যম্মত্ৰী বিশেষ বৃত্তি আঁচনি”-২০১৭ ৰ অধীনত প্ৰদান কৰা **Term Deposit Receipt (Fixed Deposit)** সমূহ ২০২৪ বৰ্ষৰ নৱেম্বৰ মাহত পৰিপক্ক (Matured) হৈছে। HDFC বেংকৰ গুৱাহাটীৰ খানাপাৰা শাখাৰ লগত ঘোৰা আলোচনামাৰ্ফে ভলত দিয়া ব্যৱস্থা সমূহ গ্ৰহণ কৰা হৈছে।

(১) অসমৰ সকলো জিলাৰ HDFC বেংকৰ শাখাসমূহত বৃত্তি-প্ৰাপ্ত শিক্ষাৰ্থীসকলৰ পৰা **Term Deposit Receipt (Fixed Deposit)** সমূহ গ্ৰহণ কৰা হ'ব আৰু শিক্ষাৰ্থীৰ বেংক একাউন্টত সম্পূৰ্ণ টকা জমা কৰাৰ ব্যৱস্থা HDFC বেংকৰ ফালৰ পৰা কৰা হ'ব। শিক্ষাৰ্থী সকলে নিজ নিজ জিলাত থকা HDFC বেংকৰ শাখালৈ গৈ **Term Deposit Receipt (Fixed Deposit)** সমূহ ০১-১২-২০২৪ তাৰিখৰ পৰা জমা কৰিবলৈ অনুৰোধ জনোৱা হ'ল।

(২) শিক্ষাৰ্থী/অভিভাৱকসকলে ভলত দিয়া স্ব-প্ৰত্যায়িত নথিসমূহ নিজ নিজ জিলাৰ HDFC বেংকৰ শাখা সমূহত জমা দিব লাগিব -

- 1) Term Deposit Receipt (Fixed Deposit)
- ২) ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰী সকলৰ বেংক একাউন্টত থকা মবাইল নং জমা দিব। যদিহে ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰী গৰাকী নাৰালক হয়, সেইক্ষেত্ৰত অভিভাৱকৰ মবাইল নং জমা দিব।
- ৩) ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰী সকলে ভলত উল্লেখিত নথি সমূহৰ (KYC) যিকোনো এখন জমা দিব লাগিব। যদিহে ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰী গৰাকী নাৰালক হয়, সেইক্ষেত্ৰত অভিভাৱক গৰাকীৰ KYC নথি জমা দিব লাগিব।
  - ক) আধাৰ কাৰ্ড / ই-আধাৰ / e-KYC (Biometric) / OTP মুক্ত আধাৰৰ PVC কাৰ্ড
  - খ) পাহুপট
  - গ) স্থায়ী ড্ৰাইভিং লাইচেন্স
  - ঘ) ভোটাৰ কাৰ্ড
  - ঙ) জব কাৰ্ড (NREGA ই প্ৰকাশ কৰা আৰু অসম চৰকাৰৰ বিষয়াৰ স্বাক্ষৰ থকা)
  - চ) National Population Register (NPR) প্ৰকাশ পোৱা তালিকা

৪) ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰী সকলৰ -  
ক) বেংক পাহু বুকৰ প্ৰথম পৃষ্ঠাৰ প্ৰতিলিপি  
খ) বেংক একাউন্ট নং / বেংকৰ নাম / বেংকৰ IFSC কোড জমা দিব লাগিব।  
ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰী গৰাকী নাৰালক হলে অভিভাৱক গৰাকীৰ নথি জমা দিব লাগিব।

৫) ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰী সকলে নিজ নিজ জিলাত থকা জিলা প্ৰাথমিক শিক্ষা বিষয়া সকলৰ পৰা নিৰ্দিষ্ট **APPLICATION FORMAT** খন সংগ্ৰহ কৰি নিজ নিজ জিলাত থকা HDFC বেংকৰ শাখালৈ গৈ ওপৰত উল্লিখিত নথি সমূহৰ সৈতে **Term Deposit Receipt (Fixed Deposit)** খন জমা দিব লাগিব।

৬) বিস্কল বৃত্তি-প্ৰাপ্ত ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰী য়ে **Term Deposit Receipt (Fixed Deposit)** খন এইপৰ্যন্ত পোৱা নাই বা **Term Deposit Receipt (Fixed Deposit)** খনৰ সংশোধনৰ আৱশ্যক, সেইসকল বৃত্তি-প্ৰাপ্ত ছাত্ৰ-ছাত্ৰীয়ে নিজৰ বিদ্যালয়ৰ প্ৰধান শিক্ষকৰ বা নিজ নিজ জিলাত থকা জিলা প্ৰাথমিক শিক্ষা বিষয়াৰ (District Elementary Education Office) কাৰ্যালয়লৈ গৈ উপযুক্ত নথি-পত্ৰৰ সৈতে নিজৰ নিজৰ বেংক একাউন্ট ৰ সবিশেষ (বেংক একাউন্টত লিপিবদ্ধ নাম / বেংক একাউন্ট নং / বেংকৰ নাম / বেংকৰ IFSC কোড) জমা দিব লাগিব।

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# Defeat those who spoiled cultured politics of Maha by breaking parties: Sharad Pawar

**MUMBAI, Nov 16:** With only four days left for the Maharashtra assembly elections, NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar has urged voters to reject those who have spoiled the state's cultured politics by breaking parties and families and engineering a social divide.

In a public appeal published in Marathi newspapers on Saturday, the veteran politician stated that restoring the state's pride and glory was the need of the hour.

He flagged the sustainability of popular welfare schemes, farm distress, "growing" crime against women, farm distress, and dwindling employment opportunities as issues impacting the electoral outcome on November 23, when votes will be counted.

The ruling Mahayuti alliance of BJP, Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, and NCP headed by Deputy CM Ajit Pawar, is locked in a tight contest with the Maha Vikas Aghadi, comprising Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress, and NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar).

Sharad Pawar alleged corruption grew under Mahayuti's tenure, punching holes in the Shinde government's decision to waive tolls on vehicles entering Mumbai.

"The main question is about the toll (read corruption) in government offices. When will this prac-

...tion stop? Official bungalows near the state secretariat have become facilitation centres for corruption," he alleged.

He accused the rulers (BJP, Shiv Sena, and NCP headed by his nephew Ajit Pawar) of being involved in communal and caste politics while the law and order situation is in dire straits, unemployment rising, and farm distress growing due to the lack of adequate price for crops.

"Maharashtra is a cultured, progressive, strong and self-respecting state. It didn't just show the path to the nation but stood by it during crises. However, incumbent rulers have become pawns in the hands of Delhi," Pawar said.

He accused Mahayuti leaders of being "hell-bent" on insulting state's icons like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, whose statue collapsed in August this year, and Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule.

"A person holding a Constitutional post made derogatory comments on the married life of Savitribai and Jyotiba Phule. The corruption caused the collapse of the statue of Shivaji Maharaj (in coastal Sindhudurg district)," Pawar said.

Speaking to reporters at Satara, the former chief minister said the people would ensure change (of



regime in Maharashtra).

"People want change and they will bring about a change. They will stand with Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)," he added.

The 83-year-old politician, known for keeping his ears close to the ground, claimed the overall atmosphere in the state reminds him of the 2019 elections when "people remained silent but reacted on voting day". Pawar said welfare schemes announced by the ruling coalition won't have much impact on electors.

Referring to the course correction by BJP and allies after their dismal performance in the 2024

tween Mahayuti's promises and the ground reality, claiming that crimes against women are on the rise.

"67,000 cases of violence against women had been registered over the last two years. The data suggests around 64,000 women and girls have gone missing in the state, including in Nagpur, which is home to the state Home Minister (Devendra Fadnis)," he claimed.

He said the government's claims about caring for women fall flat as they have failed to protect them.

"This contradiction (in government's claim and act) will have some impact (on electoral outcome)," he added.

The former Union agriculture minister also said that farmers were suffering due to risk to their crops. "Soybean and cotton are crucial crops in some regions. Farmers, however, are frustrated by high input costs, pushing them to commit suicide," Pawar said.

According to him, the lack of jobs is another pressing issue in the state. "While the number of educational institutions grew, the number of jobs is dwindling. Youths are struggling with unemployment and the lack of opportunities. Our job is to raise these issues, while the government abuses its power," Pawar added. (PTI)

# Rahul makes promises, flies abroad: Amit Shah

**MADHUPUR (JHARKHAND), Nov 16:** Taking potshots at the Congress, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday claimed that the party's leader Rahul Gandhi believes in flying abroad after making promises, while it is only the BJP that fulfils what its guarantees.

Addressing a rally at Madhupur in Deoghar district, the Union Home Minister said that while terrorists not only attacked India but also enjoyed biryani after killing people during the UPA rule, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wiped out terrorists through surgical and air strikes.



"Rahul baba makes promises one after another, but after making promises he flies abroad... But on the other hand, PM Modi's promise is like one etched on stone (pathar ki lakeer). He fulfils what he promises. BJP fulfils its guarantees and only we can shape Jharkhand. The Congress, JMM and RJD can never work in the interest of the state," he said.

Alleging that the ruling JMM-led coalition has turned infiltrators into its 'vote-bank', Shah declared that illegal immigration will be checked once the BJP is voted to power in the state.

"Infiltrators are posing a threat not only to the tribals but also to the state's youth by snatching jobs and fuelling crime. The Jharkhand High Court had directed to iden-

tify and deport infiltrators. While the Centre agreed, the Hemant Soren government in the state didn't," he claimed.

Shah said that the Jharkhand elections are not to change MLAs, the chief minister or the government but to shape the future of youth and poor and to check corruption.

He said that while Jharkhand powers the nation with coal, the people of the state have remained poor. Shah claimed that if the BJP is voted to power in Jharkhand, the party will make it the most prosperous state in the country in five years. India will become the third-largest economy in the world before December 2027, he asserted. (PTI)

## Focus on winning polling booths: PM

**MUMBAI, Nov 16:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked BJP workers to concentrate their strength on winning polling booths in the November 20 Maharashtra assembly elections.

During a virtual interaction with BJP workers as part of "Mera Booth Sabse Mazboot" programme, Modi also asked them to hold booth-level meetings of women, youth and farmers, and suggested that they circulate videos of BJP-led government's schemes. Modi asked BJP booth workers to involve professionalists like doctors in propagating the party's message among voters.

Accusing the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi in Maharashtra of spreading lies, Modi said the BJP workers should make this fact known to the voters. "Wherever I went, I saw the hard work of our workers," Modi said. "All of you are strong soldiers of the BJP, you people are direct representatives of Modi. People feel reassured by telling you their hopes and aspirations. They feel that if they tell you, they have told Modi," he said.

"I also try to ensure that the ground reality reaches me through the workers. The vision of our government is that we together develop so much that everyone gets an opportunity to progress," he said. Modi said the Congress knows its history. "Till the time SCs, STs and OBCs in the country were unaware, Congress used to form government with full majority at the Centre," he said.

"But ever since these communities have united, the position of the Congress has been weakening. Therefore, the Congress now wants to break the SCs, STs and OBCs to such an extent that there is no power left to counter the Congress," Modi said. The Mahayuti government in Maharashtra is trying to empower every section of the society, Modi said. "This is the difference between our government and the Maha Vikas Aghadi government and people are feeling this difference," he added. (PTI)

## PDP chief seeks NC's clarification after Kharge's remarks on Article 370

**SRINAGAR, Nov 16:** People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti Saturday sought a clarification from Jammu and Kashmir government after Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's remarks that his party never talked about restoration of Article 370.

Mehbooba was reacting to Kharge's remarks on the return of Article 370 during a press conference in Pune on Thursday. "This government has been given a huge mandate by the people. They have reposed huge faith in it. (Article) 370 is an emotional issue for the people of J-K, and people's sentiments are connected to it," Mufti told reporters in Beerwah area of central Kashmir's Budgam district.

During the Pune press conference, Kharge said, "Amit Shah, in his poll rallies, accuses the Congress of spreading lies. (But) He (himself) is saying the Congress wants to bring back Article 370 (in J&K). Tell me, who said that and when?"

"You are raking up an issue. If it (resolution to repeal Article 370) had been already passed in Parliament, why are you raking up the issue again? It means you want to keep the issue alive to divide. If you want to say this, go to Kashmir and say it. Elections are over in Kashmir," the Congress president said.

The PDP chief said the resolution passed by the ruling National Conference (NC) in the J-K assembly asking the Centre to work out a mechanism for restoring special status of the erstwhile state, was vague and not clear on the restoration of Article 370. "The NC and Congress government should clarify. PDP had also said that the resolution was not clear (on Article 370) and it was mentioned vaguely. This government has 50 members, they should have said this while holding their head high," she added. The former J-K chief minister said the resolution should have condemned what was done on August 5, 2019 -- when the Centre abrogated Article 370. (PTI)

## BJP claims some Muslim bodies asking community to vote for INDIA bloc



**NEW DELHI, Nov 16:** The BJP on Saturday alleged that some Muslim bodies are trying to vitiate the poll atmosphere in Maharashtra and Jharkhand by appealing to their community members to vote for the INDIA bloc on the lines of religion, and urged the Election Commission and the Supreme Court to take action in the matter.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said All India Muslim Personal Law Board's functionary Maulana Sajjad Noman has said that the outfit has decided to support Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) on 269 seats and other non-BJP parties on a few seats in Maharashtra

Assembly polls.

He said that Noman has appealed to the Muslims to vote for the MVA, saying the outcome of the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly elections will have an impact not only on the future of the state but also on the future of the entire country.

Earlier the Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind's Lohardaga unit appealed to the Muslims to vote en bloc for the Congress-JMM-RJD-CPI (ML) Liberation combine in Jharkhand, Bhatia claimed.

"This is called vote jihad," he said, adding, "This is the height of appeasement politics" by the MVA in Maharashtra and Congress-JMM in Jharkhand.

Bhatia said that an appeal for votes made on the basis of religion amounts to corrupt practices.

"It can not be tolerated in a democracy like ours where elections have to be as pure as Mother Ganges. It's a very worrisome trend that we have seen that for the lust of power, the Congress, Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray are ready to appease, adopt infiltrators and say 'I love you' to illegal immigrants," he said.

He said illegal immigrants can be a threat to national security but it doesn't matter to the INDIA bloc parties.

Bhatia said when Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a "positive slogan" for national unity, saying "ek rahoge toh, safe rahoge", the INDIA bloc raised objections even though "a wise person, even a child would say this is the mool mantra for the progress of the country". "When Ulema, All India Muslim Personal Law Board and other (Muslim) outfits come out in the open and appeal to all Muslims to come together, it's our appeal to the Election Commission and the Supreme Court to ensure that no political party vitiates the elections. Take cognisance of the matter and take strict action against them," the BJP spokesperson added. (PTI)

## Modi, Shah spreading lies that Rahul is against reservation, alleges Priyanka



**SHIRDI, Nov 16:** Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union minister Amit Shah of spreading lies about her brother Rahul Gandhi that he is against reservation.

She said these leaders are scared of Rahul Gandhi because he wants a caste census to be conducted in the country.

Addressing a poll rally in the temple town of Shirdi in Ahilyanagar district of Maharashtra, she said projects worth ₹ 10 lakh crore were snatched away from Maharashtra.

## Kharge claims not allowed into reserved airport lounge

**RANCHI, Nov 16:** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, accusing them of delaying helicopters of his and Rahul Gandhi in Jharkhand, and alleged that despite holding cabinet minister rank, the opposition leaders were not given access to reserved airport lounge.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's helicopter, which was supposed to take him from Mahagama in Jharkhand's Godda district after he addressed an election rally there, was grounded for about two hours on Friday, prompting allegations from the Congress that the delay was politically motivated.

Prime Minister Modi was stranded at De-

oghar airport for nearly two hours on Friday and a 'no-fly zone' was declared in the region's airspace as the PM waited for the issue to be resolved, officials said.

"Yesterday, our leader Rahul Gandhi's helicopter was deliberately delayed by two hours as the PM was sitting in his plane. Today, my chopper was delayed by 20 minutes as Union Home Minister Amit Shah was landing. His path was separate and mine was separate."

"Rahul Gandhi ji, who is the leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha, holds a cabinet minister's rank, and so do I. But in airport's reserved lounge, they (officials) say it is for Prime Minister Modi, I want to ask can even a toilet be reserved for the PM," Kharge alleged, without

mentioning the name of the airport. Attacking the BJP over the infiltration issue raked by the party, he alleged that Modi and Shah are frightening people despite having the power to check it. "Are PM Modi and Amit Shah sleeping? Why can't they check infiltration despite being in power? When they can stop a helicopter, why can't they stop infiltrators?" he questioned.

Kharge also accused the Centre of using ED, CBI, I-T against those who help the Congress and its allies. He alleged that the BJP wanted to form the government in Jharkhand to loot its natural resources. Further attacking the BJP, he said, "They say 'bant gaye toh kat gaye' (if divided, we will be wiped out), I say 'dar gaye toh mar gaye' (if you are afraid, you die)." (PTI)

## Constitution is country's DNA, but it is a blank book for BJP and RSS: Rahul

**AMRAVATI, Nov 16:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said his party considers the Constitution as the country's DNA, while for the ruling BJP and the RSS it is a "blank book".

Addressing an election rally here ahead of the November 20 assembly polls, the Leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha targeted the BJP, saying nowhere in the Constitution it is written that governments can be toppled by purchasing MLAs as was done in Maharashtra, and Rs 16 lakh crore debt of top businessmen can be waived. "Congress considers the Constitution as the country's DNA, while for the ruling BJP and the RSS it is a blank book," he alleged. His retort came after PM Modi and the BJP recently claimed that the Congress leader was showing a copy of the Constitution with blank pages inside at his campaign rallies. "My sister told me that these days Prime Minister Narendra Modi was speaking about the same issue that I have been raising." (PTI)

## Cong built Maha brick by brick, state economy in decline under current govt: Chidambaram

**MUMBAI, Nov 16:** Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram said on Saturday that his party built Maharashtra brick by brick to make it India's top state but its economy is now declining under the current Mahayuti government.

Addressing a news conference ahead of the November 20 assembly polls, he said Maharashtra was leading in the country in industry and services and was among the top-ranking states in agriculture. He said the state was and still is the commercial capital of India.

"But I don't know for how long it will remain the commercial capital of India," he said.

In the last eight to ten years, the Congress was not in power, barring the two-and-a-half year of Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) rule, he said, adding that the government is now being helmed by BJP and its allies.

Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) are partners in the MVA, while BJP, NCP and Shiv Sena are constituents of the ruling coalition. "The decline (in the state's economy) is visible under the BJP gov-



ernment," said the Congress leader.

"Maharashtra was built brick by brick to be the number one state of India by the Congress," Chidambaram added.

Referring to 2022-23 and 2023-24, Chidambaram said Maharashtra's GDP growth has declined from 9.4 per cent to 7.6 per cent. The fiscal deficit increased from ₹ 67,000 crore to ₹ 1,12,000 crore,

the former Union finance minister said.

The state's agriculture growth plunged from 4.5 per cent to 1.9 per cent, while the growth in the services sector fell from 13 per cent to 8.3 per cent, he said, claiming that capital expenditure has remained stagnant at ₹ 85,000 crore.

"This decline has to be arrested. It can't be arrested by those who

caused the decline," said the senior Congress leader.

There are no jobs in Maharashtra, which is why there are other social evils. Unemployment is the biggest problem in the state, but the present government has no answer to it, he said.

He said industries wooed by the state had signed MoUs or letters promising investment and their locations (to set up units) had also been identified, but it didn't materialise.

"Those industries have gone to, you know where," Chidambaram said, alluding to Gujarat.

He said the unemployment rate among Maharashtra's youth is 10.8 per cent and about 47 per cent of them are self-employed.

The figure for those who receive salaries every month has come down from 40 per cent to 31 per cent, Chidambaram claimed. He said 11 lakh people applied for 18,300 posts for constables and drivers in Maharashtra and Mumbai police, adding that 11.5 lakh youth applied for 4,600 talati (revenue official) posts. (PTI)



## Looking forward to meaningful discussions at G20: PM

*'I will also pay my respects to one of the oldest Indian diaspora'*

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said he is looking forward to "meaningful" discussions at the upcoming G20 summit in Brazil that laid out the broad agenda for the grouping building upon the legacy of India's presidency of the bloc last year.

Modi made the comments in a statement before embarking on a five-day visit to Nigeria, Brazil and Guyana.

The Prime Minister's first destination will be Nigeria from where he will travel to Brazil.

"In Brazil, I will attend the 19th G-20 Summit as a troika member. Last year, India's successful presidency elevated the G-20 to people's G-20 and mainstreamed the priorities of the Global South into its agenda," the Prime Minister said.

Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden will be among the leaders to attend the summit in Rio de Janeiro on November 18 and 19.

India is part of the G20 troika along with Brazil and South

Africa.

"This year, Brazil has built upon India's legacy. I look forward to meaningful discussions in keeping with our vision of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. I will also use the opportunity to exchange views on furthering bilateral cooperation with several other leaders," the Prime Minister said.

Induction of the 55-nation African Union as a permanent member of the G20 and managing to produce a leaders' declaration overcoming deep divisions over the Ukraine conflict were seen as major milestones of India's presidency of the G20 last year.

On his trip to Nigeria, Modi said it will be an opportunity to "build upon our strategic partnership that is based on shared belief in democracy and pluralism".

The Prime Minister is travelling to the country on a two-day visit from November 16-17 at the invitation of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. This will be his first visit to Nigeria, which is our close partner in the West African region, Modi said.



"I am also eagerly looking forward to meeting the Indian community and friends from Nigeria who have sent me warm welcome messages in Hindi," he said.

In the third and final leg of his trip, Modi will visit Guyana from November 19 to 21 at the invitation of President Mohamed Irfaan Ali. It will be the first ever visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Guyana in over 50 years.

"We will exchange views on

giving strategic direction to our unique relationship, which is based on shared heritage, culture and values," Modi said.

"I will also pay my respects to one of the oldest Indian diaspora, who migrated more than 185 years ago, and engage a fellow democracy, as I address their Parliament," he said.

Modi also referred to the India-CARICOM summit in Guyana. The Caribbean Community

(CARICOM) is an intergovernmental organisation of 15 member states in the Caribbean region having the primary objective to promote economic integration and cooperation among the members.

"I will also join leaders from the Caribbean partner countries for the second India-CARICOM Summit. We have stood together through thick and thin.

The Summit will enable us to renew historical ties and expand our cooperation into new domains," Modi said.

Modi also made brief mention of his three-nation visit in a post on X. "Over the next few days, I will be in Nigeria, Brazil and Guyana. I will have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of programmes, both bilateral and multilateral, which will add momentum to India's ties with various nations," he said.

"I will take part in the G20 Summit in Brazil and will meet Caribbean leaders in Guyana. I will also be interacting with the Indian community during this visit," he added. (PTI)

## Army Chief Gen Dwivedi to visit Nepal next week



**NEW DELHI, Nov 16:** Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi will embark on a four-day visit to Nepal next week to explore ways to further expand the already close defence and strategic relationship between the two countries.

General Dwivedi is set to be conferred the honorary rank of "General of the Nepal Army" by Nepalese President Ramchandra Paudel during his visit in continuation of an age-old tradition that first started in 1950, reflecting the strong ties between the two militaries.

The Army Chief's visit to Nepal next week will mark another significant chapter in the evolving military diplomacy between the two nations, sources in the defence establishment said.

It is expected to strengthen the defence ties paving the way for continued collaboration on multiple fronts, including military exercises, training programmes and strategic discussions on regional security concerns, they said.

General Dwivedi is set to hold extensive talks with his Nepalese counterpart General Ashok Raj Sigdel besides meeting the top political leadership of the Himalayan nation.

Nepal is important for India in the context of its overall strategic interests in the region and the leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old "Roti Beti" relationship.

Land-locked Nepal relies heavily on India for the transportation of goods and services. Nepal's access to the sea is through India and it imports a predominant proportion of its requirements from and through India.

India and Nepal share a special relationship, reinforced by cultural, historical and geographical factors. This bond has evolved into a robust military partnership that plays a key role in enhancing regional security, the sources said.

General Dwivedi is also likely to visit the Shri Muktinath temple in Mustang region of Nepal.

It is learnt that India's first Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat also wanted to visit the temple. In his memory, a Bell named 'Bipin Bell' was installed in the

temple in February 2023.

Nepal has continued its close ties with India, with regular exchanges of military training, visits and defence modernisation.

India and Nepal are critical partners in enhancing mutual military capabilities, particularly through training programmes.

General Dwivedi's visit is expected to focus on the ongoing defence modernisation in both militaries, through various initiatives.

Both countries offer courses to military personnel in reputed military institutions. This collaboration has seen over 300 Nepali Army personnel trained in India this year alone, in specialised fields.

Similarly, the India Army personnel also undergo courses in Nepal.

A key pillar of India-Nepal military cooperation is the annual 'Surya Kiran' joint military exercise, which enhances interoperability between the two armed forces.

This exercise, which focuses on counterterrorism, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, will see its 18th edition in December in Nepal, the sources said.

The scope and complexity of this exercise are set to be expanded, providing an opportunity to further improve the operational synergy between the two armies, they said.

India has been supporting Nepal in its military modernisation by supplying various forms of military hardware, including small arms, vehicles and advanced training simulators.

Through the Nepal-India bilateral consultative group on security issues, the two countries have held 15 meetings to discuss defence cooperation and several equipment needs have been met under this forum, the sources said.

General Dwivedi's visit will provide an opportunity to further enhance these engagements, including discussions on improving disaster response mechanisms and expanding regional security cooperation, they said. The large population of Indian ex-servicemen in Nepal also plays an important role in strengthening the ties between the two countries. (PTI)

## Firefighting equipment at Jhansi hospital 'completely fine': UP Dy CM



**LUCKNOW/JHANSI, Nov 16:** Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak on Saturday dismissed media reports that the Jhansi Medical College, where a blaze claimed the lives of 10 newborns, had expired fire extinguishers.

In a statement, Pathak said a fire safety audit was carried out at the medical college in February and a mock drill was conducted in June.

At least 10 children died on Friday night in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of the Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College, one of the largest government hospitals in the state's Bundelkhand region, possibly due to an electrical short circuit. Another 16 children are battling for life after being injured in the incident. Some media reports have claimed that the hospital had expired fire extinguishers and faulty alarms.

"The Yogi Adityanath government is standing with the children and their families. Our staff, doctors, and rescue team have worked bravely to save the children. All the firefighting equipment in the medical college was completely fine. A fire safety audit was conducted here in February and a mock drill was also conducted in June," Pathak said in the statement. Principal of the medical college, Dr Narendra Singh Sengar, also termed as "baseless" the allegations that the hospital had expired fire extinguishers.

"A total of 146 fire extinguisher systems are installed in the medical college. At the time of the accident, the fire extinguisher of the NICU ward was also used. All these equipment are also audited from time to time. During this, the deficiencies are removed," Sengar said.

"All these were audited in February while a mock drill was conducted in June. The claim of fire extinguishers being faulty in the medical college is completely baseless. The fire broke out in the ward due to a short circuit. The accident is being investigated," he added.

Meanwhile, Senior Superintendent of Police Sudha Singh told reporters that the 16 injured children are being treated. All the doctors are available for them with adequate medical facilities, she said. Singh said there were reports that some parents took their kids home after the fire erupted in the NICU. She said efforts were underway to find out the exact number of children who were in the NICU when the fire broke out and their current status. "The medical college has informed that 52 to 54 children were admitted at the time of the incident and 10 of them have died while 16 are undergoing treatment... verification for others is ongoing," Singh said. The rescue operation in the NICU was completed at around 1 am, she added. (PTI)

## Appointment of CPS: Himachal Pradesh govt moves SC against HC order

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16:** Himachal Pradesh has moved the Supreme Court seeking authorisation of the appointment of six parliamentary secretaries which was recently quashed by the high court recently for being illegal and unconstitutional.

The Himachal Pradesh High Court had on November 13 quashed the appointment of six chief parliamentary secretaries by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhlu government and declared the law under which they were appointed void.

In its appeal before the top court, the state government said the high court order was "bad in law" and sought a stay on the HC direction.

"The legal consequence would be that six parliamentary secretaries, who are also MLAs, are likely to face disqualification under Article 192 of the Constitution as the protection granted to them from the office of profit norms has been taken away, without adjudication, causing political instability," the appeal filed by the state government said. While quashing the appointment, the high court had also directed that all the facilities and privileges of the six chief parliamentary secretaries be withdrawn with immediate effect.

The high court had declared the Himachal Pradesh Parliamentary Secretaries (Appointment, Salaries, Allowances, Powers, Privileges and Amenities) Act, 2006 as void. Pronouncing the verdict, the high court had said the officials are users of public office and all facilities extended to them be withdrawn with immediate effect.

Sukhu had appointed the six chief parliamentary secretaries -- Sanjay Awasthi, the MLA from the Arki Assembly constituency, Sunder Singh from Kullu, Ram

Kumar from Doon, Mohan Lal Barakta from Rohru, Ashish Butail from Palampur and Kishori Lal from Baijnath -- on January 8, 2023 ahead of his cabinet expansion.

"The impugned Act is quashed as being beyond the legislative competence of the state legislature and consequently, all subsequent actions, including the appointments of the six CPS are held and declared illegal, unconstitutional, void ab initio and, accordingly, set aside," the high court order had said. "Since the Act is void ab initio, the respondents (CPS) are users of public office right from their inception and thus, their continuance in the office, based on illegal and unconstitutional appointments, is completely impermissible and from now onwards, they cease to be holders of the office of the CPS with all the consequences," it added.

The protection granted to such appointments to the office of chief parliamentary secretary or parliamentary secretary according to Section 3 read with Section 3(d) of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly Members (Removal of Disqualifications) Act, 1971 is also declared illegal and unconstitutional and thus, a claim of such protection under Section 3(d) is inconsequential, and natural consequences and legal implications whereof shall follow forthwith in accordance with law, the order had said.

Two separate pleas were filed by Sat Pal Singh Satti, 10 other Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLAs and Kalpana Devi, demanding quashing of the Act.

The BJP MLAs had contended that no such post of the CPS exists under the Constitution or any Act passed by Parliament. It was also averred in the petition filed



by the BJP leaders that according to the 91st constitutional amendment, the number of ministerial berths was capped at 15 per cent of the House strength and the maximum number of ministers in case of Himachal Pradesh was 12, but after the induction of the six chief parliamentary secretaries, it had increased to 18.

Sukhu said the judgement would be studied and the cabinet would decide the next step after discussions. It was for the second time that the appointments of the chief parliamentary secretaries or parliamentary secretaries have been quashed in the hill state. On August 18, 2005, the high court had quashed the appointments of eight chief parliamentary secretaries and four parliamentary secretaries.

Those affected by the verdict in 2005 were Mukesh Agnihotri, Thakur Singh Bharmouri, Anita Verma, Prem Singh, Tek Chand, Harsh Wardhman Chauhan, Lajja Ram and Harbhajan Singh (chief parliamentary secretaries) and Jagat Singh Negi, Surinder Kumar, Sudhir Sharma and Raghuvir Singh (parliamentary secretaries). (PTI)

## Industrialist out on bail in Morbi bridge collapse case honoured

**MORBI, Nov 16:** Industrialist Jaysukh Patel, the main accused in the 2022 Gujarat suspension bridge collapse that claimed 135 lives, received criticism after he was felicitated at an event organised by the Patidar community in Morbi district.

While the victims' kin expressed anguish over the event, the organisers said that Patel, currently out on bail, was honoured in his capacity as the son of late OR Patel, a philanthropist who founded the Ajanta Group.

Patel was weighed in "modak" (sweet dumpling) on a scale at the function organised by Kadva Patidar Kanya Kelavani Mandal on the outskirts of Morbi town on Friday to mark the 'Pran Pratishtha' of the Uma Sanskardham temple. The modak will be packed in 60,000 boxes and distributed among Patidar families, the organisers said.

"It is a matter of sadness for us to see the main accused in the Morbi suspension bridge collapse being honoured like that," said Narendra Parmar, a member of the association representing victims and their families.

A court recently relaxed Patel's bail condition barring him from entering the Morbi district, making it possible for him to attend the event. His firm Oreva Group was responsible for the operation and maintenance of a British-era suspension bridge on river Machchhu in Morbi town that collapsed on October 30, 2022, killing 135 persons, including women and children, and injuring 56 others.

"I learnt about Patel's felicitation through a news report and felt sad. He was barred from entering Morbi but secured the court's permission for the event. The incident and losing a child is not something one forgets in his lifetime," said Parmar, whose 10-year-old daughter was killed in the tragedy.

AK Patel, a member of the organisation that held the programme, said they honoured Jaysukh Patel to pay respects to his late father OR Patel, who founded the Ajanta Group, describing him as "the father of wall clocks". "We decided to felicitate Jaysukh Patel and his brothers at the event as a tribute to their father OR Patel's service to society," he said. (PTI)

## Own-source revenue for panchayats remains low at ₹ 59 per capita

**NEW DELHI, Nov 17:** Own Source Revenue (OSR) generation for panchayats remains low, with the income through tax collected by the rural local governance bodies on an average being just ₹ 59 per capita between 2017 and 2022, according to government data. Even as the generation of OSR for panchayats has come into focus to give these rural bodies more financial autonomy, according to the data compiled by the Panchayati Raj ministry, between 2017 and 2022, only an amount of ₹ 5,118.98 crore was raised as OSR by the panchayats.

This comes down to ₹ 59 per capita and ₹ 2.27 lakh per panchayat over the five-year period for 2.25 lakh gram panchayats across the country. The total population coming under these panchayats was more than 86.95 crore in the said period.

Among the states, Gujarat collected the highest amount as OSR at ₹ 829.75 crore, while Kerala came second collecting ₹ 802.95 crore.

Andhra Pradesh, which raised ₹ 791.93 crore, occupied the third position, followed by Karnataka (₹ 627.56 crore), Tamil Nadu (₹ 516.3 crore) and West Bengal (₹ 435.17 crore).

In terms of the per capita OSR raised by the pan-

chayats, Goa topped the list with ₹ 1,635 raised in taxes per person, followed by Puducherry, which raised ₹ 757 per capita. At a one-of-its-kind conclave organised by the Panchayati Raj ministry recently, in which representatives from the 16th Finance Commission participated along with officials from the ministries of Panchayati Raj, rural development, finance, housing and urban affairs, experts and representatives from the state finance commissions and other relevant institutions, the issue of panchayats raising their own resources was discussed.

However, according to the information shared by the ministry at the conclave, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep are among the states and Union territories that do not have OSR rules.

Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and Puducherry, meanwhile, have framed these rules. (PTI)

India's emergence as a global fertility hub has made advanced vitrification techniques accessible and provided hope to women across different communities

## Govt needs to recognise fertility preservation as essential healthcare right: Top IVF chain founder

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16:** The government needs to be proactive in addressing the issue of declining reproductive rate and recognising preservation of fertility as a healthcare right is a step in that direction, said Dr Ajay Murdia, the man behind Indira IVF, one of largest fertility chains in India.

A Lancet study projects that India's Total Fertility Rate will dip to 1.29 by 2050, well below the replacement level of 2.1.

"Women are born with about 1 million eggs and unlike other cells in the body, these eggs are neither regenerated nor can they be replaced," Dr Murdia, founder and chairman of Indira IVF told PTI.

By the age of 25, the total number of eggs falls to around 300,000. After 35 years, the decline becomes more rapid.

"This biological clock, ticking away like a one-way bank account with only withdrawals and no deposits, has long dictated the timeline of motherhood.

"Yet, in this evolving landscape, a revolutionary solution has emerged, one that is transforming the very essence of family planning: 'Egg freezing', a technology that has now become accessible to women across India," he said.

Dr Murdia said the need for such solutions is clear in India's shifting reproductive paradigm.

As women across different segments of society race against time to harmonize family planning with personal and professional aspirations, fertility preservation has become not just important, it has become imperative, the founder and chairman of Indira IVF said.

"What we are witnessing is a societal transformation that demands immediate governmental intervention," he said.

"When women choose to freeze their eggs, they're investing in their future. While we have made strides with initiatives like our partnership with SafeTree to introduce India's first-ever infertility insurance plan offering comprehensive support to couples under 35, we urgently call upon the government to recognize fertility preservation as an essential healthcare right for all Indians."

India's emergence as a global fertility hub has made advanced vitrification techniques accessible and provided hope to women across different communities, he said. "However, without government support, many families still



find themselves unable to access these life-changing procedures."

"We need policy frameworks that recognise fertility preservation under existing healthcare schemes. This isn't just about medical pro-

cedures, it is about protecting the reproductive rights of millions of Indian women, especially in the face of today's growing healthcare challenges affecting them," Dr Murdia said.

"Every day of delay impacts countless women's chances of motherhood," he added.

Egg freezing is also an option for women facing medical treatments, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy for cancers, that could affect their fertility. He said that by preserving their eggs before treatment, these women can maintain the possibility of having biological children in the future.

The evolution in fertility choices mirrors India's changing social dynamics. Egg-freezing technology addresses uniquely Indian realities -- from later marriages to cultural expectations -- that often influence family planning timelines, Dr Murdia said.

"Through Indira IVF's nationwide network of over 150 centres, predominantly in tier-2 and tier-3

cities, we've witnessed first-hand how crucial government support could be in transforming lives across the nation," he said.

"Our country stands at a crucial turning point. The private sector has shown what's possible, but imagine the impact if the government introduced fertility coverage under national health policies. We strongly urge our policymakers to recognize that supporting fertility preservation isn't just a healthcare decision -- it's an investment in our nation's future."

Dr Murdia said that the future of fertility care isn't just about preserving eggs -- it is about preserving hope. "It is time for our government to join this crucial mission to make the dream of motherhood accessible to every Indian woman," he added. (PTI)



# Subhash Ghai was like a Dronacharya to me, learnt a lot from his films: Imtiaz Ali



**MUMBAI, Nov 16:** Filmmaker Imtiaz Ali says he has always considered Subhash Ghai his Dronacharya as the veteran director's films played an important role in teaching him the art of storytelling while growing up in Jamshedpur.

Ghai launched his memoir, titled "Karma's Child" and co-written by journalist and author Suvleen Sinha, at the National Centre for the Performing Arts here on Friday evening. It is published by HarperCollins.

"You know about the music of Subhash Ghai films. Music from his films is very popular and touched your heart. He has maintained a beautiful balance between good and popular music.

"You keep learning good things from visible or invisible gurus. Subhash Ghai was like a Dronacharya when I was like an Ekalavya in Jamshedpur and learnt from his films," Ali told reporters. Ali said he hasn't fully read the book, but the chapters he has completed teach beautiful things about films and life.

"Karma's Child" is a must-read for every movie enthusiast, he added.

Ali, known for films such as "Jab We Met", "Rockstar", "Tamasha", and "Love Aaj Kal", said Ghai's 1983 love story "Hero", starring Jackie Shroff and Meenakshi Sheshadri, had a huge impact on his life.

"I was in that age, watching all that, listening to that music and the way Subhash ji has made that film, it had a very strong impact on me. I always used to narrate the story of 'Hero' to my friends and slowly I was inclined towards drama in school," he said.

Ali also recalled his first meeting with Ghai. "Subhash ji came to watch my film 'Socha Na Tha'. He was such a huge personality, and I did not even dare to stand in front of him. Luckily, he liked my film. At that time, the film was in trouble, meaning it wasn't getting the release and needed some money.

"So, Subhash ji bought the TV rights so that the film could be released. His point of view was that the film is nice and lovely; it has to be released. Later, he signed me as well. When I saw him for the first time, he was like a deity who saved me

and released my film," he said.

Ghai, known for films such as "Karma", "Khal Nayak", "Ram Lakhan", "Hero", "Pardes" and "Taal", said he is happy as well as nervous about his memoir.

"Whenever you tell a story in films, sometimes there are good and bad things (attached). You have spoken against some people and you have to agree with some people. So, the era is high and low, the dilemma of the director. I have expressed my experience from my perspective," he said.

The 79-year-old filmmaker said it feels "good" when upcoming directors compliment his films and appreciate his work.

"When I was making those films, I was thinking it was nice, but when an upcoming generation compliments your films, you know it's not the market. Back then it was a market, and now it is real admiration. I feel the genuine admiration has started now," he added. (PTI)

## Ashutosh Gowariker named chairperson of International Jury for IFFI 2024

**MUMBAI, Nov 16:** Filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker has been appointed as the chairperson of the International Jury for the 2024 International Film Festival of India (IFFI).

Gowariker, known for films such as "Jodhaa Akbar", "Lagaan", and "Swades", said he is honoured to be associated with the prestigious film festival, which will be held in Goa from November 20 to 28. "Cinema is constantly evolving with the times, and there's no better place to witness this evolution than at a film festival. The International Film Festival of India stands as a beacon of this transformation, and I am honoured to be a part of it," the filmmaker said in a statement.

"I would like to thank the Festival Director, Mr. Shekhar Kapur, and the IFFI and NFDC team for thinking of me for chairing this year's International Jury. It is both a privilege and a delight to participate and immerse myself in the world of cinema," Gowariker said. Festival Director Shekhar Kapur, who also serves as the President of IFFI, praised Gowariker's body of work.

"The chairman must have a keen understanding of cinema, and also be able to see diverse points of view. Ashutosh's films have successfully exhibited a wide and varied form of storytelling," Kapur said.

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, in collaboration with the NFDC and ESG, will host the 55th edition of the festival. (PTI)



## Nayanthara slams Dhanush for sending ₹ 10 cr lawsuit over her documentary: All-time low for you



**NEW DELHI, Nov 16:** South cinema star Nayanthara on Saturday criticised actor Dhanush, who produced her 2015 Tamil movie "Naanum Rowdy Dhaan", for refusing permission to use footage from the film in her upcoming Netflix documentary.

In a three-page open letter posted on her Instagram page, the "Jawan" actor slammed Dhanush for sending a legal notice demanding Rs 10 crore in damages after the trailer of the documentary, titled "Nayanthara: Beyond The Fairy Tale", was released online.

"After two long years of battling it out with you for an NOC (No Objection Certificate) and waiting for your approval for our Netflix documentary release, we finally decided to give up, re-edit, and settle for the current version since you declined to permit the usage of 'Naanum Rowdy Dhaan' songs or visual

cuts—even the photographs, to say the least—despite multiple requests.

"The songs of 'Naanum Rowdy Dhaan' are appreciated to this day because the lyrics came from true emotions. Knowing that there's no better music we could use in our documentary, your refusal to give us the opportunity to use it, or even just lyrics from the songs, broke my heart," the letter read.

Released in 2015, "Naanum Rowdy Dhaan" was a romantic comedy written and directed by Nayanthara's husband, Vignesh Shivan. The actor starred opposite Vijay Sethupathi in the movie, which was produced by Dhanush's Wunderbar Films.

"The vengeance you have been harbouring against the film, my partner, and me doesn't just affect us but the people who have contributed their effort and time to this project.

"This Netflix documentary about me, my life, my love, and marriage includes clips of many of my industry well-wishers who have graciously contributed and memories from multiple films, but sadly does not include the most special and important film, 'Naanum Rowdy Dhaan'," Nayanthara said.

Dhanush has not yet responded to her letter. (PTI)

## Massey's 'The Sabarmati Report' collects ₹ 1.69 crore on day one

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16:** "The Sabarmati Report", headlined by actor Vikrant Massey, earned Rs 1.69 crore at the box office on its opening day, the makers announced on Saturday. Directed by Dheeraj Sarna, the film released on Friday and is inspired by true events. It also stars Raashii Khanna and Ridhi Dogra in pivotal roles.

Production banner Balaji Motion Pictures shared the opening day collection of the film in a post on Instagram.

The banner shared a poster which mentioned the day one numbers of the film and captioned it, "A story of truth, resilience, and courage, making waves at the Box Office." "The Sabarmati Report" is produced by Ektaa R Kapoor, Shobha Kapoor, Amul V Mohan and Anshul Mohan. (PTI)



## 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3' a different opportunity, was excited to work with Vidya Balan, says Madhuri

**MUMBAI, Nov 16:** Bollywood star Madhuri Dixit Nene says "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3" allowed her to step into the uncharted territory of a horror-comedy, an opportunity that was too good to let go.

In "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3", Balan and Dixit Nene appear in dual roles as Mallika and Manjulika, and Anjulika and ACP Rathore, respectively.

Dixit Nene said she met director Anees Bazmee a few months ago and told him that she loved "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2". Shortly after their meeting, Bazmee called her.

"He said, 'I want to narrate you something that I'm making, and there's a fantastic role in it'. He came and gave me a gist and told me what the story was about," she said.

"When I heard the script, I loved my role as it gave me something different to do. I've never played (a role) in this genre of filmmaking, like a horror comedy. I thought it would be something different for me. There was Vidya, Kartik (Aaryan) and the whole gang of fantastic actors, so I said, 'I'll do it'," the actor told PTI in

an interview.

Interestingly, Balan starred in the 2010 thriller "Ishqiya", and Dixit Nene was seen in its sequel, "Dedh Ishqiya" (2014). Balan was also the star of original "Bhool Bhulaiyaa", a film that Dixit Nene loved watching.

"Maybe there was a connection somewhere, she did 'Ishqiya', and I did 'Dedh Ishqiya', and now we are together in 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3'. It's been amazing. I've admired her as an actor," Dixit Nene said. "Getting to work together (with Vidya) was wonderful because we were feeding off each other's energy on the sets. Not only as an actor, I find her (to be) a nice and fantastic person. We got along very well and we enjoyed each other's company," she said.

Released on November 1, "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3" has quickly become a major hit, raking in an impressive box office collection of Rs 219 crore, according to the trade website Sacnilk.

Dixit Nene is elated with the commercial success and attributes it to the dedication of the entire team.

"All of us were good. Today they don't delegate the success of a movie to a particular person, they will acknowledge everybody because filmmaking cannot be 'I', it's always teamwork and collaboration," she said.

"When the collaboration is proper, then everything works (out). This has been a great collaboration between all the actors, and everybody wanted this film to be successful."

One of the talking points of "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3" is the dance-off between Dixit Nene and Balan on the fan-favourite track, "Ami Je Tomar 3.0", which is a mish-mash of Kathak and Bharatanatyam.

The popular song has been reimagined twice in the first and second parts of the franchise film already.

"This is the first time in life that the song was already iconic because of part one of 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa' and then it was used again in part two, and now in this film. They've called it '3.0' (version) because this is the third time the same song is used in a film. It was wonderful that I could be part of an already iconic song," Dixit Nene said.

In the past, the seasoned actor has had dance face-offs with actor-choreographer-filmmaker Prabhu Deva in

the song, "Que Sera Sera" from "Pukar", the hit song, "Dola Re Dola" from "Devdas", where she danced alongside Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, "Badi Mushkil" with Manisha Koirala from "Lajja", and the "Dance of Envy" with Karisma Kapoor in "Dil Toh Pagal Hain".

Dixit Nene, whose illustrious career of four decades has been punctuated by mesmerizing dance performances, said that dance duets are both a challenge and a joy.

"I remember all of them very fondly because I enjoyed working with Karisma, Manisha or Aish," she said.

Among all the songs, "Dola Re Dola" is a hallmark of dancing, which was brought to life under the masterful choreography of late Saroj Khan.

"The combination of Saroj ji (Khan, choreographer), Sanjay Leela Bhansali (director), Aish and me, was amazing. There were a lot of trolly shots that she (Saroj Khan) did which were iconic. Like, the whole movement of the camera, me and Aish, interchanging, turning, the camera turning..." (PTI)



# Women's ACT Hockey: Impressive India stun Olympic silver medallist China 3-0 to book semis berth

**RAJGIR (BIHAR), Nov 16:** Defending champions India stunned Olympic silver medallist China 3-0 to seal a semifinal spot at the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Saturday.

India scored two field goals through Sangita Kumari (32nd minute) and skipper Salima Tete (37th) before tournament's highest scorer Deepika (60th) converted a penalty corner in the final minute.

The win against world No. 6 China was India's fourth consecutive win in the tournament. The hosts are now on top of the standings with eight points from four games. China have dropped to the second place with six points from four matches.

India will square off their round robin campaign against Japan on Sunday.

The top four teams from the six team continental tournament will qualify for the semifinals.

India were the offensive from the word go and created most of the opportunities without any success as the Chinese defended deep into their own territory and relied on counter attacks.

India secured their first real chance in the opening minute of the game in the form of back-to-back penalty corners but wasted both the opportunities.

Minutes later, Sharmila Devi essayed a precision pass to Sunelita Toppo, whose first-touch opened up the Chinese defence,

giving Deepika a one-on-one situation with the opposition goalkeeper, who came out on top to deny the Indian forward.

China also secured a penalty corner in the first quarter but the Indian defence stood tall.

Both the sides were cagey in the first quarter with India making some silly mistakes after a bright start.

India secured their second penalty corner in the 21st minute but to no avail.

Five minutes later, India secured another penalty corner but Manisha Chauhan's flick was saved by second Chinese goalkeeper Ting Li and Lalremsiami's try from the rebound went wide as the deadlock continued after half



time. The Indians came out with the same tempo after the change of ends and controlled the proceedings of the match.

Their efforts finally bore fruit in the 32nd minute when Sangita deftly met with Sushila Chnanu's defence splitting pass from the midfield.

Five minutes later, the Indians doubled their lead with another fine field goal.

It was skipper Salima who found the target after she was neatly set up by Beauty Dung Dung and Preeti Dubey's combined effort.

The Indians continued their domination with relentless attacks on the Chinese citadel but was denied by the rival goalkeeper on several occasions.

The Chinese too tried their best but credit must go to the resolute Indian defence which stood firm.

Desperate for goals, China withdrew their goalkeeper with little over three minutes to go and the move backfired as India scored their third goal in the final minute of the game.

Sangita secured India's fourth penalty corner with her smart stickwork in the final minute and Deepika rose to the occasion flicking the ball to the right corner for her seventh goal of the tournament.

Meanwhile in other matches of the day, Japan beat Malaysia 2-1 while Korea defeated Thailand 4-0. (PTI)

## Gambhir's 'prickly' style of coaching 'not great fit' for Indian team: Tim Paine

**MELBOURNE, Nov 16:** Gautam Gambhir's "prickly" coaching style may not bode well for the Indian team, and it could be a "long summer" if they fail to start strong in the Perth Test on November 22, warns former Australian captain Tim Paine.

Jolted by an unprecedented 0-3 home series loss to New Zealand, the Gambhir-coached side now face the daunting task of defending the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in a five-match series against Australia, starting with the Perth Test.

"Their last two series wins out here they had Ravi Shastri who was fantastic. He created a great environment, the players were energised, they played with passion, he sold them the dream and motivated them in a really light-hearted enjoyable way," Paine said on SEN Radio.

"They (India) have gone to a new coach now that is really prickly, really competitive -- and that not to say that's not a good thing and a good way to coach -- but my concern is that it's not a great fit for the Indian cricket team."

"If your coach is the first one to crack in a press conference after being asked a simple question, it could be a really long summer for Gautam Gambhir if



India don't get off to a good start on Perth."

Paine's comments stemmed from a recent media interaction where Gambhir took issue with Ricky Ponting's remarks on Virat Kohli's struggling form, saying that the Australian legend need not be concerned about Indian cricket.

Ponting, in turn, described Gambhir "quite a prickly character".

"Gambhir, India's biggest concern"

Paine felt Gambhir's barb was a sign that he may not be able to stay calm under pressure which would be India's "biggest concern" -- even more than the

struggling form of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

"I don't love it. It's not a good sign I think, because all he was asked was a very simple question. I think he's maybe looking at Ricky still as someone he's playing against," Paine said.

"But Ricky is a commentator now -- he's paid to give an opinion, and his opinion was spot on. Virat has been sliding, it is a concern, absolutely."

"But for me now, the biggest concern for India right now isn't Rohit Sharma's batting, isn't Virat Kohli's batting, it's their coach and his ability to stay calm under pressure," he added. (PTI)

## Alcaraz misses out as Zverev and Ruud complete semifinal field at ATP Finals

**TURIN (ITALY), Nov 16:** Carlos Alcaraz was the big name missing when the last two semifinal spots were filled at the ATP Finals on Friday.

Alcaraz's 7-6 (5), 6-4 loss to Alexander Zverev meant the French Open and Wimbledon champion -- who has been sick this week -- was eliminated from the elite, eight-man tournament.

In Saturday's semifinals, Zverev will meet Taylor Fritz and top-ranked Jannik Sinner will play Casper Ruud.

"My goal," Alcaraz said, "(is) to be at the end (of tournaments) all the time. Every tournament that I'm going to play at least reach the semifinal, final. So I have to work. ... In 2025, I hope to be a better player and (have) more consistency."

Ruud advanced by beating Andrey Rublev 6-4, 5-7, 6-2.

Zverev finished with a perfect three victories to win his round-robin group. Ruud had two wins, Alcaraz had one and Rublev had none.

Alcaraz turned on the style in the final game but lost a crucial point when he couldn't fully reach a Zverev passing attempt and ended up sprawled on the court.

"He turns into a different person. He really plays his best at the most important moments," Zverev said. "The last game was the most entertaining game of the match."

Sinner won the other group

ahead of Fritz.

Alcaraz again wore a pink nose strip after struggling with breathing issues in his opening loss to Ruud.

Zverev leapfrogged Alcaraz to No. 2 in the rankings this week and took a 6-5 edge in their career meetings.

It was a measure of revenge for Zverev, who was beaten by Alcaraz in five sets in the French Open final.

Zverev has bigger goals than reaching No. 2 for next year.

"It's no secret, I'm searching for that Grand Slam title. I'm searching for world No. 1," he said. "If it's not Roland Garros, but it's Australia, I'll sign the paper right now."

Alcaraz was already looking ahead to Malaga and next week's Davis Cup finals, where he will play for Spain in Rafael Nadal's swansong.

"I really want him to retire with a title," Alcaraz said. "It's going to be really, really emotional and a really special tournament for me."

Ruud lost his opening match in six of his seven previous tournaments. But he's into the semifinals for the third time in three appearances at the finals.

"Tennis is interesting sometimes. I don't know what I'm doing better this week than the last weeks," Ruud said. "The only thing I can really feel is serving; I'm serving really good, so hopefully I can keep it going tomorrow -- I'm going to need it." (AP)

## Jake Paul beats 58-year-old Mike Tyson as the hits don't match the hype

**ARLINGTON (USA), Nov 16:** The boos from a crowd wanting more action were growing again when Jake Paul dropped his gloves before the final bell, and bowed toward 58-year-old Mike Tyson.

Paying homage to one of the biggest names in boxing history didn't do much for the fans that filled the home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys on Friday night.

Paul won a unanimous decision over Tyson as the hits didn't match the hype in a fight between the 27-year-old YouTuber-

turned-boxer and the former heavyweight champion in his first sanctioned pro fight in almost 20 years.

All the hate from the pre-fight buildup was gone, replaced by boos from bewildered fans hoping for more action in a fight that drew plenty of questions about its legitimacy long before it happened.

The fight wasn't close on the judge's cards, with one giving Paul an 80-72 edge and the other two calling it 79-73.

Tyson came after Paul immediately after the opening bell and landed a couple of quick punches but didn't try much else the rest of the way.



Even fewer rounds and shorter rounds, along with heavier gloves designed to lessen the power of punches, couldn't do much to generate action.

Paul was more aggressive after the quick burst from Tyson in the opening seconds, but the punching wasn't very efficient. There were quite a few wild swings and misses.

Tyson mostly sat back and waited for Paul to come to him, with a few exceptions. It was quite the contrast to the co-main event, another slugfest between

Katie Taylor and Amanda Serrano in which Taylor kept her undisputed super lightweight championship with another disputed decision.

It was the first sanctioned fight since 2005 for Tyson, who fought Roy Jones in a much more entertaining exhibition in 2020. Paul started fighting a little more than four years ago.

The fight was originally scheduled for July 20 but had to be postponed when Tyson was treated for a stomach ulcer after falling ill on a flight. (AP)

## Ranji Trophy: Gujarat pulls off thrilling draw after 3 centuries put Vidarbha on top

**NAGPUR, Nov 16:** Gujarat managed to log home a point despite Vidarbha being put on top by three centuries in a group B Ranji Trophy match on Friday.

Against the visitors' 343 in the first innings, the hosts managed to put on a commanding total of 545-9, with tons from Danish Malewar (115), Karun Nair (123) and skipper Akshay Wadkar (114 not out).

It was Vidarbha that resumed Day 4 at the overnight score of 512-8, with Wadkar unbeaten on 104, along with Praful Hinge on 26. After adding 21 runs to the day, Hinge was knocked over for 40 by Arzan Nagwaswalla before the hosts declared 12 runs later, possessing a lead of 202.

Tejas Patel grasped three wickets for the visitors in this innings, supported by Nagwaswalla and Siddharth Desai, who held a couple each.

As Gujarat came out to bat for its second innings, it did not have the best of starts -- losing openers Priyank Panchal (3) and Aarya Desai (7) for singles digit scores to Aditya Thakare.

At 50 for 3, the pair of Umang Kumar (50) and Jaymeet Patel (21) added 49 for the fourth wicket before the former was dismissed by Harsh Dubey.

At 134, Jaymeet became the fifth wicket to fall, with Akshay Wakhare cleaning him up.

The visitors kept losing wickets after every 30-odd-run part-

nership, while Het Patel (77) tried his best to hold the innings together, with his side reeling at 171-6.

When the scores were level, Gujarat lost its seventh wicket in the form of skipper Chintan Gaja (4), dismissed by Atharva Taide.

Nonetheless, the visitors took the lead before Het departed to Nair at 217 as the eighth wicket, followed by Arzan Nagwaswalla (0) off the next ball in the same over. At this time, the two teams decided to shake hands and share the honours as enough time wasn't left for an outright result.

Thakare was the star of the hosts' bowling, capturing three wickets, while Dubey and Nair managed two wickets each.

Vidarbha stays atop the group table, followed by Himachal Pradesh in second and Gujarat in third.

Brief scores:  
In Nagpur: Gujarat 343 & 237/9 (Umang Kumar 50, Het Patel 77; Aditya Thakare 3/26) drew Vidarbha 545/9 (Danish Malewar 115, Karun Nair 123, Akshay Wadkar 114; Tejas Patel 3/79). Vidarbha 3, Gujarat 1.  
In Dehradun: Rajasthan 660/7 (Mahipal Lomror 300, Deepak Hooda 113, Bharat Sharma 54, Swapnil Singh 2/84) drew Uttarakhhand 362 & 185/4 (Ravikumar Samarth 75, Yuvraj Chaudhary 78; Deepak Chahar 2/20). Rajasthan 3. Uttarakhhand 1. (PTI)

## Viktor Gyokeres outscores Haaland, Lewandowski, Kane as striker's price tag hits \$100M

**LISBON, Nov 16:** Viktor Gyokeres is the Swedish striker whose explosive goal-scoring has made him one of the hottest properties in Europe and could see him become soccer's next USD 100 million-plus player.

Yet, Premier League clubs seemingly missed his rare talent when it was right under their noses. Instead, Sporting Lisbon took a chance on Gyokeres and now stands to make a fortune after plucking him from the second tier of English soccer last year.

"He is ready for something bigger," Sweden coach Jon Dahl Tomasson told broadcaster Viaplay ahead of Gyokeres' hat trick against Manchester City in the Champions League last week. "Everybody likes a goalscorer."

Sporting bought Gyokeres from Coventry City for around USD 25 million. He has gone on to score 66 goals in 68 appearances -- including 23 goals in 18 this term -- and helped Sporting win the Portuguese title last season.

To put the 26-year-old forward's

club statistics into context, this season he is outscores Robert Lewandowski (19 in 17 games), Harry Kane (17 in 16) and Erling Haaland (15 in 16).

Gyokeres stretches defences with his direct runs and is deadly in front of goal with rasping shots that find the corner of the net with unerring precision.

His impressive numbers have sparked speculation he will soon be on the move again -- maybe during the January transfer window -- with clubs like Manchester United, City, Arsenal, Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) all reportedly interested. Links to United and City are understandable. Gyokeres' former coach at Lisbon, Ruben Amorim, has just taken over at United.

Hugo Viana, Lisbon's outgoing sporting director who signed him from Coventry City, is on his way to City. Gyokeres deflects comparisons to past Sporting greats Cristiano Ronaldo and Luis Figo.

"I try not to compare myself to them. I just want to be myself and



do that because he's so determined and focused and hard-working and stubborn. If he if he aims at something, he will achieve it."

Gyokeres' first chance in England came in 2018 when he joined Brighton -- a team that specializes in developing players and then selling them on for huge profit. Not on this occasion.

"Why has Viktor Gyokeres excelled after Brighton sold him?" read a recent headline in The Argus, the city's local newspaper.

It is a fair question. Brighton turned big profits on players like Moises Caicedo, Alexis Mac Allister and Marc Cucurella.

Yet, Gyokeres was loaned first to St Pauli in Germany, then Swansea and finally Coventry, where he sealed a permanent move for around USD 1 million in 2021.

His numbers at Brighton and during his loan spells didn't point to the heights he has gone on to achieve, with seven goals in 28 games for St Pauli his best return. (AP)

# Tilak walked the talk, says SKY, unveiling future India star

**JOHANNESBURG, Nov 16:** India skipper Suryakumar Yadav has hailed Tilak Varma for "walking the talk," as the youngster unlocked his potential as India's new No. 3 batter with sensational back-to-back centuries that powered their 3-1 T20 International series triumph in South Africa.

Various batters have been tried out in recent times for the crucial position once owned by Virat Kohli, with the team think-tank even experimenting with Rishabh Pant during the T20 World Cup, albeit with little success.

Since then, players like Ruturaj Gaikwad, Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson have all had stints at No. 3 before skipper Suryakumar Yadav took over the role.

However, after being entrusted with the crucial No. 3 spot in the last two T20Is of the series, the 22-year-old Varma has firmly grabbed the position with both hands.

Skipper Suryakumar Yadav, who sacrificed his spot for the Mumbai Indians all-rounder, couldn't agree more.

"It was actually running in my mind that there has been a time when one man has batted consistently at No. 3 and has done wonders for India," Suryakumar told reporters after India's massive 135-run win in the fourth T20I



that completed their 3-1 series triumph. "So, this was a perfect opportunity for a young guy, definitely for him, who is showing a lot of promise. We both actually spoke to each other and he took up the responsibility. He just walked and the talk. The way he batted at SuperSport and here was incredible. Hope he continues, not only in T20s but in all formats."

In an aggressive batting display, India posted a huge 283 for 1, the fifth-highest total in men's T20Is.

Tilak finished with an unbeaten 120 off 47 balls, while opener Sanju Samson, after two ducks in the last two games, slammed 109 not out off 56 to make it three hundreds in five outings.

Together, they hammered 210 runs off 86 balls for the second wicket -- the highest T20I partnership for India for any wicket.

"Even before the (winning) the T20I WC, we played a few T20Is. We spoke about what brand and what type of cricket we wanted to play going forward," Suryakumar said.

"We play IPL for different franchises, but when we come together, we wanted to do the same thing we do for our franchise, be on the same page, and play a different brand of cricket. Post T20I WC, we just followed the same thing we did there."

The victory underlined India's new-found dominance in T20I

cricket, even after the retirement of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja and especially without many of their regulars like Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill. What does it mean about Indian cricket?

"I think it says a lot about how strong the base of Indian cricket is. Guys playing a lot of domestic cricket for their respective states. Guys wanting to go back and play for their states, that speaks a lot about their urge to play for their state, deliver, and keep that run," the T20I skipper said.

Samson has also showcased his dominance in the opening role, and when asked about his place once Shubman Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal return, Suryakumar called it a "good headache" for the team.

"I haven't thought that far ahead. I like to live in the moment because this is a special win, a special series victory," he said.

"When they come back, we'll discuss it calmly (aram se). It will be tough, but it's a good headache to have going forward."

"Having 20-25 players in the squad and needing to pick 11 is a challenge, but it's a great situation for any team. We'll see, the team management, selectors, and BCCI will handle that headache. Koi dikkat nahin hai (no issues at all)," he said.

Rinku Singh, India's designated finisher, had a quiet series with just 28 runs from three innings.

"Even I didn't have a good series," Suryakumar said firmly backing the Kolkata Knight Riders player. "If you're playing a team sport and 8 batters are batting, it wouldn't be easy for every batter to score runs straight away. Teams would score 400 runs if every batter has their day."

"I have seen his hard work. Someone said good things happen to good people. It takes time and definitely comes along the way. He has delivered for India in difficult situations, and going forward, I'm sure when there is a crunch situation, he will deliver," he said.

For Varma, it was an "unbelievable feeling" and he's yet to fully grasp the enormity of his achievement. "I can't express my feelings right now. It's unbelievable. Can't imagine scoring back-to-back hundreds, that too in SA. Right now, I can't express my feelings," he said.

Asked whether he would look to bat at No. 3 in future, he said: "It's not in my hands. I got the opportunity from Surya bhai, and whatever the team needs, I try to fulfil it. I love playing at No. 3, but I'm ready for any role," he said. (PTI)

# ICC begins Trophy Tour for Champions Trophy in Pakistan, POK cities dropped



**ISLAMABAD, Nov 16:** Cities in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) found no mention in the Champions Trophy tour unveiled by the ICC on Saturday as the world body moved in swiftly to have them dropped from the host country's itinerary following India's strong objection.

The Trophy Tour will now comprise Karachi, Rawalpindi and Islamabad, apart from Abbottabad in the Khyber Pakhtunwala Region.

The Trophy Tour starts in Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan, and will travel to other cities of the nation -- Taxila and Khanpur (November 17), Abbottabad (November 18), Murree (November 19) and Nathia Gali (November 20) before concluding in Karachi (November 22-25). Most of these cities are tourist attractions.

Earlier, on November 14, the PCB had announced the Trophy Tour, which included cities like Skardu, Hunza and Muzaffarabad, which fall in the PoK region, a disputed territory between India and Pakistan.

The PTI reported on Friday that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah had raised strong objections with the ICC to PCB's Trophy Tour plans in the PoK region.

However, the global body took swift action to eliminate those cities from the tour as revealed on Saturday.

Following the Trophy Tour in Pakistan, it will tour Afghanistan (November 26-28), followed by Bangladesh (December 10-13), South Africa (December 15-22), Australia (December 25-January 5), New Zealand (January 6-11),

# Pant's recovery was a miracle, never thought he would play again: Ravi Shastri

**MELBOURNE, Nov 16:** Former India coach Ravi Shastri was uncertain about the cricketing future of Rishabh Pant when he visited him at the hospital a few days after that horrific car accident, and termed the wicket-keeper's recovery a "miracle."

Pant made a comeback to white ball cricket during the IPL before returning to red-ball cricket through the Duleep Trophy and he was also part of India's recent home Test series against Bangladesh and New Zealand.

"Honestly, if you had seen him you would not have given him a hope in hell to play cricket again," Shastri was quoted as saying by news.com.au.

"I will never forget it. He was in terrible shape. I went to see him in hospital a month after he was injured. He was battered and bruised, scarred all over."

"He had a massive operation and had stitches all over the place. From there to simply recover and play cricket was a miracle. To then go on and play in a World Cup-winning team and be a part of the Test team is a truly remarkable achievement," he added.

Pant averaged 62 on his two tours of Australia and has been in incredible form since his return to the game.

"He returns to Australia for this tour in form and a man Australia fears, an unthinkable prospect when he was bailed up in hospital unable to walk," Shastri said.

"When you speak to him now the respect he has for the game is even more. He was nowhere. Suddenly he is back and he values that. But I have seen him work really, really hard over the past few months to get in the shape he is to play Test cricket."

Pant had a horrific car accident in December 2022 while returning to his home town Roorkee from New Delhi.

If not for some good Samaritans and his own presence of mind which prompted him to break the windshield of his car, the accident could have turned fatal for him.

"First time in my life I had that feeling of letting it go. I felt my time in this world was over," Pant had told Star Sports.

"When my accident happened I felt something spiritual saved me. I can't even imagine how much worse it could have been. Doctors even spoke to me about amputation."

Pant was later airlifted to Mumbai where he underwent reconstruction in three knee ligaments.

"I asked the doctor how long it would take for me to recover. He said it would take 16 to 18 months," Pant said.

"I told the doctor that whatever timeline he gave me, I would reduce six months from it." (PTI)

considerable pain and immediately left the field for further scans.

According to a BCCI source privy to the development, Gill has indeed fractured his left thumb and with less than a week left for the Test to start, it will be near impossible for the stylish right-hander to get fit in time for the opening match.

A thumb fracture generally takes around 14 days to heal after which one is expected to start his regular net sessions. Since the second Test in Adelaide starts from December 6, there remains a possibility that he will get fit in time for that match.

# Blow for India as Shubman Gill fractures left thumb, all but out of Perth Test

**NEW DELHI/PERTH, Nov 16:** India were dealt a telling blow on Saturday after star top-order batter Shubman Gill sustained a left thumb fracture which is likely to rule him out of the opening Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy at the Optus Stadium in Perth, starting November 22.

Gill, one of the young heroes of India's last Border-Gavaskar Trophy triumph, is a batting mainstay and in case skipper Rohit Sharma opts out of the first Test, India's top-order could look very thin.

Gill got hurt while fielding on the second day of the intra-squad match simulation. He was seen in

Gill's absence could be massive for the national team as he is not only a stable number three batter but in case of Rohit's absence, he could be considered for opening the innings with Yashasvi Jaiswal.

The other man in contention, Lokesh Rahul, has a bruised elbow after getting hit by a Prashidh Krishna short ball on the opening day of the intra-squad match and was forced to leave the field.

Rahul's bruised area needed icing and he didn't take the field on the second day of the match simulation on Saturday although it is being seen more as a precautionary measure. (PTI)

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# PCB drops Nida Dar, Aliya Riaz from central contracts in a major shake-up

**LAHORE, Nov 16:** Senior players, including former captain Nida Dar, were excluded from the new list of central contracts as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) awarded deals to only 16 women cricketers on Saturday.

Veterans Nida Dar, Aliya Riaz, and Sidra Nawaz were dropped alongside other players such as Anusha Nasir, Eymen Fatima, and Shawaal Zulfiqar.

Nida, the senior-most player in the squad, and Aliya, a consistent performer for over five years, were notable omissions.

Last year the PCB had awarded contracts to 20 players for 12-months.

An official PCB source attributed the move to the team's recent poor performances, emphasizing a shift towards nurturing young talent in line with the ICC Women's Future Tours Programme 2025-29.

Prominent players Muneeba Ali and skipper Fatima Sana were elevated to Category A, while spin all-rounder Sadia Iqbal also received a promotion.

PCB COO Sumair Ahmad Syed reiterated the board's focus on grooming new players.

"We are committed to recognizing consistent performances and rewarding talent," he said.

Youngster Tasmeera Rubab earned her first contract, while Rameen Shamim and Gull Ferroza returned to the central contract list for the first time since 2018 and 2022-23, respectively.

**List of centrally contracted players:**

**Category A:** Fatima Sana, Muneeba Ali, Sidra Amin

**Category B:** Nushra Sundhu, Sadia Iqbal

**Category C:** Diana Baig, Omaira Sohail

**Category D:** Ghulam Fatima, Gull Ferroza, Najiha Alvi, Rameen Shamim, Sadaf Shamas, Syeda Aroob Shah, Tasmeera Rubab, Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani. (PTI)

# T20I series win in SA special: Laxman



**JOHANNESBURG, Nov 16:** India head coach for South Africa tour VVS Laxman has hailed the T20 International series triumph as "a special effort" after his team secured a massive 135-run win in the last match here.

India won the four-match T20I series 3-1, with the likes of batters Tilak Varma and Sanju Samson, and bowler Varun Chakravarty making big impact.

"Really proud of our guys for the

spirit with which they played this entire series. 3-1 win is a special effort, brilliantly led by @surya\_14kumar, @lamSanjuSamson and Tilak were unstoppable with the bat and V arun Chakravarty was outstanding with the ball," Laxman posted on his "X" account.

"... the entire team the way they played and enjoyed each others success, couldn't be prouder of the boys. Congratulations on a memo-

able win," the batting great said in a post on X.

Captain Suryakumar also described the series win as a "special" one.

"Well done boys, congratulations to all. Everybody knows how difficult it is to win series overseas. The last time when we came here, it was 1-1," he said while addressing the team at the dressing room after the series win.

"This time, even after we led 2-1 in the series, we decided how to play the last match (aggressively), everybody stepped up. Credit goes to everybody. We won this series as a team."

He also thanked the non-playing members of the team -- Vijaykumar Vyshak, Jitesh Sharma and Yash Dayal -- for their support. He also thanked the support staff for their valuable inputs.

"It's a special win and I am sure everyone must be happy. At the same time we take a lot of learning and will go back and reflect. All the best to all those who are turning up in domestic matches, I am also going (for that)." (PTI)

# Impressive India stun Olympic silver medallist China 3-0 to book semis berth

**RAJGIR (BIHAR), Nov 16:** Defending champions India stunned Olympic silver medallist China 3-0 to seal a semifinal spot at the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Saturday. India scored two field goals through Sangita Kumari (32nd minute) and skipper Salima Tete (37th) before tournament's highest scorer Deepika (60th) converted a penalty corner in the final minute.

The win against world No. 6 China was India's fourth consecutive win in the tournament. The hosts are now on top of the standings with eight points from four games.

China have dropped to the second place with six points from four matches. India will square off their round robin campaign against Japan on Sunday.

The top four teams from the six team continental tournament will qualify for the semifinals.

India were the offensive from the word go and created most of the opportunities without any success as the Chinese defended deep into their own territory and relied on counter attacks. India secured their first real chance in the opening minute of the



game in the form of back-to-back penalty corners but wasted both the opportunities.

Minutes later, Sharmila Devi essayed a precision pass to Sunelita Toppo, whose first-touch opened up the Chinese defence, giving Deepika a one-on-one situation with the opposition goalkeeper, who came out on top to deny the Indian forward.

China also secured a penalty corner in the first quarter but the Indian defence stood tall.

Both the sides were cagey in the first quarter with India making some

misses after a bright start.

India secured their second penalty corner in the 21st minute but to no avail. Five minutes later, India secured another penalty corner but Manisha Chauhan's flick was saved by second Chinese goalkeeper Ting Li and Lalremiami's try from the rebound went wide as the deadlock continued after half time.

The Indians came out with the same tempo after the change of ends and controlled the proceedings of the match.

Their efforts finally bore fruit in the 32nd minute when Sangita deftly

met with Sushila Chanu's defence splitting pass from the midfield.

Five minutes later, the Indians doubled their lead with another fine field goal.

It was skipper Salima who found the target after she was neatly set up by Beauty Dung Dung and Preeti Dubey's combined effort.

The Indians continued their domination with relentless attacks on the Chinese citadel but was denied by the rival goalkeeper on several occasions.

The Chinese too tried their best but credit must go to the resolute Indian defence which stood firm.

Desperate for goals, China withdrew their goalkeeper with little over three minutes to go and the move backfired as India scored their third goal in the final minute of the game.

Sangita secured India's fourth penalty corner with her smart stick-work in the final minute and Deepika rose to the occasion flicking the ball to the right corner for her seventh goal of the tournament. Meanwhile in other matches of the day, Japan beat Malaysia 2-1 while Korea defeated Thailand 4-0. (PTI)