

**6** WORLD

**8** NATION

- Russian missiles target Kyiv after Ukraine fires US-made missiles
- 'India-US defence relationship advancing in terrific, exciting ways'
- Amid din, Lok Sabha sends ONOE bills to joint committee of two Houses
- This was just a trailer: Jairam on rejected 'no-confidence notice'

Police prevents Cong leaders from taking part in 'protest' ● No stir planned, clarifies state Youth Cong chief

## Bhupen taken into police custody, IYC chief detained

GUWAHATI, Dec 20: Top Assam Congress leaders, including state chief Bhupen Kumar Borah, were taken into police custody, and the party's youth wing national chief Uday Bhanu Chib was placed under preventive detention in Guwahati on Friday ahead of a planned 'protest' over the death of a party worker two days ago.

The opposition party, however, maintained that it had no agitation plan for the day and had instead organised an all-faith prayer meeting in memory of its leader Mridul Islam, who died during a 'Raj Bhawan Chalo' programme on Wednesday to protest various issues, including unrest in Manipur and alleged bribery charges against the Adani Group.

Chib, who arrived here on Thursday, was placed under preventive detention at the hotel while the other leaders were taken into custody from different locations as they were on their way to attend a party programme.

Borah was released from custody in the



evening but was taken back to the Assam Police 10th Battalion office within minutes. Chib remained under detention in his hotel.

"The Youth Congress had planned a 'Dispur gherao' programme, and Chib was here to participate in the event. But we cannot allow such a programme. He has been put under preventive

detention and told that he cannot leave the hotel," Guwahati police commissioner Diganta Barah told PTL.

However, state Youth Congress president Zubair Anam denied such a programme. He said, "Chib was here to participate in the all-faith prayer meeting, organised at the party's city office, Manabendra Sarma Complex in Dispur."

Anam added, "Our party leadership had decided to postpone all agitational programmes for three days because of Islam's death. Accordingly, our 'Dispur gherao' programme, which was scheduled for Thursday, did not take place. Our members were to participate only in the all-faith prayer meeting and offer 'shradhdhanjali' to Islam." Anam, who was not allowed to meet Chib at the hotel in the morning, said the IYC national president was still in detention.

State Youth Congress activists gathered in front of the hotel since (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Poverty should not pose hindrance to education: Himanta

GUWAHATI, Dec 20: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said the state government has been implementing numerous initiatives to ensure that poverty does not hinder access to education.

"We are committed to providing every student the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their financial background," Sarma said during the distribution of awards as part of the '12 Days of Development' initiative in Nagaon.

The CM highlighted that government schemes for students are aimed at empowering them to become responsible citizens through education. "These initiatives are not just about providing education but about shaping the future of our youth," Sarma said.

He further pointed out that nearly 150,000 youth had been provided government jobs over the past three years based on merit, ensuring that even children from underprivileged

families had opportunities to succeed.

"Assam is now embarking on a journey of development," Sarma declared, adding, "We are focusing on key industries such as semiconductors and making significant strides in infrastructure development, including the construction of bridges over the Brahmaputra and the establishment of medical colleges and universities in every district. All these efforts are contributing to the state's overall growth."

Sarma urged the youth to engage in intellectual, cultural, and sporting activities as part of the mission to build a new Assam.

"Our mission is to build a new Assam, and I urge every young person to contribute by participating in activities that foster intellectual growth, cultural exchange, and physical fitness," he said.

He also stressed the importance

of reading beyond textbooks. "A well-rounded education goes beyond just the syllabus. Explore topics of interest, like the life stories of great personalities and Assam's rich history. This will help you develop a deeper understanding of the world around you," Sarma advised the students.

In a forward-looking statement, Sarma pointed out that the future would be driven by technology. "The future will be shaped by fields like artificial intelligence, big data analytics, cloud computing, and robotics," he explained. "I urge all of you to embrace technology and acquire knowledge in these areas to prepare yourselves for the challenges of tomorrow."

Sarma motivated the students to chase their dreams and work hard to achieve their goals. "Success is not given; it is earned. Achieve your goals through effort and perseverance," he said. (PTI)

## Congress trying to create law and order problem in Guwahati: CM

GUWAHATI, Dec 20: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday alleged that the Congress was trying to create a law and order situation in Guwahati through its various agitations.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme in Nagaon, he said the people of Guwahati were being held "hostage" by the Congress as its leaders compete to outdo each other.

"Be it (state Congress chief) Bhupen Borah, (ex-state chief) Ripun Bora or whoever, they want a firing incident to happen in Guwahati. There is a competition between two-three leaders of the Congress on who is the bigger leader and in that competition, people of Guwahati have become hostage," he claimed.

The CM was referring to protest programmes being undertaken by

the Congress in the city, with party leader Mridul Islam dying during such an agitation on Wednesday.

Police had claimed that the Congress had called for a 'Dispur gherao' programme on Friday, but the party denied it. "If firing happens, it can hit the Congress people or BJP people, one never knows," the CM said, implying that the opposition party was trying to create a situation that would

compel the police to fire to control it.

Sarma, himself a former Congressman, maintained that a political party must not take the path of such agitations.

"For political parties, the 'andolan' (agitation) has to happen in the ballot box. They can come to power and do their will... We will ensure that they cannot create any disturbance," he added. (PTI)

## Ambedkar row: Oppn MPs hold protest against Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, Dec 20: Opposition MPs staged a protest at Vijay Chowk here on Friday demanding Home Minister Amit Shah's apology and resignation for allegedly "insulting" BR Ambedkar.

They also carried out a protest march from Vijay Chowk to Parliament.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also slammed the BJP over the FIR filed against the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, saying it "shows their desperation level".

"The entire country is watching, they have slapped several cases on Rahul Gandhi. They bring in new FIRs and lie... This shows their desperation level," she told reporters.

Priyanka Gandhi joined several other INDIA bloc MPs at Vijay Chowk to protest against Shah's remarks as they demanded Shah's apology and resignation over the issue.

She was seen carrying a placard,



which read 'Babasaheb ka apman nahi sahega Hindustan'.

The MPs raised slogans such as 'Jai Bhim', 'Amit Shah Maafi Mango', and 'istifa do'.

The protest comes a day after separate marches by the opposition and ruling party MPs over the alleged insult to Ambedkar led to jostling in Parliament premises, leaving BJP MPs Pratap Chandra

Sarang and Mukesh Rajput injured.

The BJP has accused Rahul Gandhi of pushing the senior member, a charge rejected by the Congress leader.

The opposition on Wednesday had seized on Shah's remarks on Ambedkar to corner the government and demanded his resignation for what they called an insult to the architect of the Constitution. (PTI)

## Two B'deshi infiltrators pushed back

GUWAHATI, Dec 20: Two Bangladeshis were pushed back by the Assam Police while they were trying to enter India illegally, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. He, however, did not specify the district where the two Bangladeshis made attempts to enter India.

"In a commendable operation near the International Border, @assampolice successfully apprehended two individuals identified as illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators," Sarma said in a post on X on Thursday. The two infiltrators have been identified as Beauty Begum and Jasmin Khatun.

"Both were promptly sent back across the border. Great work, team," the CM added. Over 170 infiltrators (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 2,200 cases of violence against Hindus, other minorities in B'desh: Govt

NEW DELHI, Dec 20: A total of 2,200 cases of violence against Hindus and other minorities have been reported in Bangladesh this year till December 8, and India's expectation is Dhaka will take necessary measures to ensure their safety, the government said on Friday.

Minister of state for external affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh gave the information in a written response to a query in Lok Sabha, citing data from minority and human rights organisations.

In Pakistan, the number of cases of violence against Hindus and other minorities in Pakistan this year stood at "112 till October 2024," the MoS said.

The corresponding figures for 2022 were 47 in Bangladesh and 241 in Pakistan, while in 2023 the



figures were 302 in Bangladesh and 103 in Pakistan, according to the data he shared.

The minister said the Indian government has urged "Pakistan to take steps to prevent religious intolerance, sectarian violence, systemic persecution, and attacks on minority communities and ensure their safety, security, and well-being."

He added, "India continues to highlight the plight of minorities in

Pakistan at appropriate international fora."

Cases of violence against Hindus and other minorities in other neighbouring countries (except Pakistan and Bangladesh) are "nil," the minister said.

Singh was asked about the total number of cases of violence against Hindus and other minorities reported in neighbouring countries during the last three years, country-wise and year-wise; and the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the ministry to protect minorities, including diplomatic interventions and relief measures.

The Union minister in his response also said the "government has taken serious note of these incidents and shared its concerns with the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## ONOE anti-democratic, will oppose 'tooth and nail': Congress

NEW DELHI, Dec 20: The Congress on Friday said "one nation, one election" was against the basic structure of the Constitution and asserted that it would oppose the idea "tooth and nail".

The opposition party also said the idea of 'one nation, one election' was anti-democratic and anti-federal.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh wondered how the government would muster the two-thirds majority required for a constitutional amendment when it could not even assemble 272 MPs at the time of introduction of the bills that lay down the mechanism to hold simultaneous elections.

"It has been referred to a joint committee of Parliament. Our view

is very clear, this is anti-democratic and anti-federal. It goes against the basic structure of the Constitution," Ramesh told PTL.

"This government could not even muster 272 MPs at the time of the introduction of the bills. How are they going to get two-thirds majority for amending the Constitution," he asked.

Ramesh said, "It ('one nation, one election') is anti-democratic completely. It is anti-accountability, anti-democratic and anti-federal and we will oppose 'one nation, one election' tooth and nail -- lock stock and barrel."

His remarks come days after two bills, including one requiring an amendment in the Constitution, that lay down the mechanism to hold simultaneous elections were

introduced in the Lok Sabha after a fiery debate. It has been sent to a joint committee of Parliament consisting of 39 MPs.

While the panel already includes the BJP's PP Chaudhury and Anurag Thakur, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of the Congress is another prominent member.

While 27 members on the panel will be from the Lok Sabha, 12 will be from the Rajya Sabha.

The Rajya Sabha on Friday adopted through voice vote a motion to nominate 12 of its members to the joint committee of Parliament that will scrutinise the two bills proposing simultaneous elections.

Soon after the Upper House met following an initial adjournment in the morning. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Pijush Hazarika presents awards to students in Sonitpur



HT Correspondent TEZPUR, Dec 20: Assam Minister Pijush Hazarika on Friday presented the Dr Banikanta Kakati Award and Anundoram Borooah Award to the students of Sonitpur district at a function held at Tezpur Collegiate Higher

Secondary School play ground.

As per the statement, a total of 1,641 students who secured 75 percent or above marks and 60 percent or above marks in the Higher Secondary Leaving Certificate Examination were distributed

scooters as Dr Banikanta Kakati Award under Prayan Bharati Scheme.

"A total of 737 students who secured 75 percent or above marks in the High School Leaving Certificate Examination were awarded 12,500 each through DBT under Anundoram Borooah Award," the statement added.

Further, under the Chief Minister's Special Scheme bicycles were distributed to 8,865 students studying in class IX in government institutions in the district of Sonitpur, the statement said.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that the state chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma is always committed to the comprehensive development of the students and students also benefited under various schemes.

## Country's future carbon emissions trajectory under global scrutiny India must leverage technology to decouple carbon emissions: EDF

NEW DELHI, Dec 20: As India experiences rapid economic growth, the need to decouple carbon emissions from economic expansion by leveraging technology has become increasingly urgent, according to Hisham Mundol, the chief advisor for the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) in India.

In an interview with PTL, Mundol stressed the transformative role technological innovation can play in achieving sustainable development while addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

India, the world's fifth-largest economy, is currently undergoing a period of swift industrialisation and economic expansion.

Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has consistently grown at rates that position it as one of the fastest-growing



major economies. However, this rapid progress comes with a surge in energy demand, predominantly fuelled by coal and other fossil fuels.

Although India's historical contribu-

tion to global carbon emissions remains modest -- at just 4 per cent -- its future emissions trajectory is under global scrutiny.

With the country's population sur-

passing 1.4 billion and urbanisation accelerating, balancing economic aspirations with environmental responsibility has become a critical challenge.

"India needs to grow. That is non-negotiable, and we are probably going to end up doubling our economy every 10 years," Mundol said. "There's a real risk that we will end up doubling emissions. One way that these emissions can be decoupled is through technology."

Mundol highlighted what he termed a "green bonus" for India. With its low historical emissions, India is uniquely positioned to leapfrog traditional carbon-intensive pathways by adopting green technologies early in its development.

He noted that responsible and sustainable practices could not only mitigate climate risks but also create economic (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

# GST Council to decide on cutting taxes on insurance premium

## Rate rejig on host of items

**JAISALMER, Dec 20:** The GST Council, in its meeting on Saturday, is likely to decide on reducing tax rates on life and health insurance premiums, while hiking it on high-end wrist watches, shoes and apparels, besides considering a separate 35 per cent tax slab for sin goods.

The 55th meeting of the GST Council, chaired by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and comprising state counterparts, is likely to discuss rate rejig in about 148 items, besides, it will also deliberate on bringing Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), a major component for airline industry's operation cost, in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) fold.

The GST rate is also proposed to be cut on food delivery platforms like Swiggy and Zomato, to 5 per cent (without input tax credit), from the current 18 per cent (with ITC).

However, the Fitment Committee (comprising tax officers from the Centre and states) is likely to have proposed a rate hike to 18 per cent on sale of used EVs as well as small petrol and diesel vehicles to 18 per cent from the current 12 per cent. This hike would bring used and old smaller cars and EVs at par with old larger vehicles, according to sources.

Also, the Group of Ministers (GoM) on GST compensation cess is likely to get a six month extension till June, 2025, to submit their report. The compensation cess regime comes to an end in March, 2026, and the GST Council has set up a panel of ministers, under Union minister of state for finance Pankaj Chaudhary, to decide the future course of the cess.

In the GST regime, compensation cess at varied rates is levied on luxury, sin and demerit goods over and above the 28 per cent tax. The



proceeds from the cess, which was originally planned for five years after GST roll-out or till June 2022, was used to compensate states for revenue loss incurred by them post the introduction of GST.

One of the major items on the agenda of the Council is to decide the GST rate on health and life insurance. A GoM set up by the Council under Bihar deputy chief minister Samrat Chaudhary, in its meeting in November had agreed on exempting insurance premiums paid for term life insurance policies from GST.

Also premium paid by senior citizens towards health insurance cover has been proposed to be exempted from the tax.

Besides, GST on premiums paid by individuals, other than senior citizens, for health insurance with coverage of up to ₹ 5 lakh is proposed to be exempted.

However, 18 per cent GST will continue on premiums paid for policies with health insurance cover of over ₹ 5 lakh.

Another major item before the Council is the GST rate rationalisation panel's report, which has suggested rate tweaks in 148 items.

The GoM on GST rate rationalisation earlier this month decided

to submit before the Council their recommendation to hike tax on sin goods, like aerated beverages, cigarettes, tobacco and related products, to 35 per cent from the present 28 per cent.

The four-tier tax slab of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent under GST will continue and a new rate of 35 per cent is proposed by the GoM only for sin goods.

The Group of Ministers on rate rationalisation under Bihar deputy chief minister, also decided to propose rationalising tax rates on apparels. As per the decision, ready made garments costing up to ₹ 1,500 would attract 5 per cent GST, those between ₹ 1,500 to ₹ 10,000 would attract 18 per cent.

Garments costing above ₹ 10,000 would attract 28 per cent tax. Currently, garments costing up to Rs 1,000 attract 5 per cent GST, while those above that attract 12 per cent.

The GoM also proposed hiking GST on shoes above ₹ 15,000/pair from 18 per cent to 28 per cent.

It also proposed hiking the GST rate on wrist watches above Rs 25,000 from 18 per cent to 28 per cent in the previous meeting on October 19.

The GoM had proposed reducing GST on packaged drinking

water of 20 litre and above to 5 per cent from 18 per cent, and reducing tax rate on bicycles costing less than ₹ 10,000 to 5 per cent, from 12 per cent. Also, GST on exercise notebooks would be reduced to 5 per cent from 12 per cent.

In total, the GoM on rate rationalisation has proposed tax rate tweaks in 148 items to the GST council. "The net revenue impact of rate rejigs will be positive," an official had said earlier.

Under GST, essential items are either exempted or taxed at the lowest slab, while luxury and demerit items attract the highest slab. Luxury goods like cars, washing machines, and demerit goods like aerated water and tobacco products attract cess on top of the highest 28 per cent slab.

With regard to bringing ATF in GST, the Council is likely to deliberate the timeline and build consensus among states.

When GST was introduced on July 1, 2017, amalgamating over a dozen central and state levies, five commodities -- crude oil, natural gas, petrol, diesel, and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) -- were included in GST law, but it was decided that it would be taxed under GST at a later date.

This meant that the central government continued to levy excise duty on them, while state governments charged VAT. These taxes, with excise duty, in particular have been raised periodically.

Including oil products in GST will not just help companies set off tax that they paid on input but will also bring about uniformity in taxation on the fuels in the country. Including ATF in GST has been a key ask by the aviation companies from the Finance Ministry, which the companies say would reduce cost as they can claim input tax credit (ITC). (PTI)

## Bharti Airtel partners with Zee5 for digital content

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** Bharti Airtel, one of India's leading telecommunications service providers, on Friday announced that it has entered into a partnership with Zee5, India's leading OTT platform to offer exciting digital content to its WiFi customers.

All customers on plans starting at Rs 699 or higher will have Zee5 included as part of their Airtel WiFi plan at no additional cost. Following this partnership, Zee5's exclusive content, that includes original shows, chartbuster titles, OTT movies and series across multiple languages will now be available on Airtel WiFi for viewers, giving them access to an exhaustive catalogue of digital content. From popular titles like Sam Bahadur, RRR, Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai, Manorathangal, Vikatakavi, The Chronicles of Amaragiri, Aindham Vedham, Gyaarah Gyaarah amongst many others, Airtel WiFi customers can now enjoy a vast repository of 1.5 lakh+ hours of content. Amit Tripathi, Chief Marketing Officer & EVP Customer Experience - Bharti Airtel said, "Partnerships are at the core of Airtel's DNA and we are delighted to partner with Zee5 in our endeavor to build a world-class digital content ecosystem. Zee5's rich library adds a lot of depth to our content portfolio, enhancing the overall experience for our users. We remain committed to building our content portfolio with a single agenda of delighting our customers with the very best".

## Rupee gains 10 paise to 85.03 against US dollar

**MUMBAI, Dec 20:** The rupee saw some recovery from its all-time low level and appreciated 10 paise to close at 85.03 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, on softening of the US dollar index and a potential intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Forex traders said the rupee is likely to remain in a weakening mode due to significant dollar demand. The Dollar Index (DXY) is expected to remain elevated, with resistance near the 110 level in the near-term amid a reduced likelihood of significant Fed rate cuts in 2025.

The Federal Reserve cut rates by 25 basis points on Wednesday, but its forward guidance for 2025 has softened, with expectations reduced from four rate cuts to just two. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.07 against the greenback. During the day it witnessed an intraday high of 84.95 and a low of 85.12 before ending the session at 85.03 (provisional) against dollar, higher by 10 paise over its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee depreciated 19 paise and breached the crucial 85 level to close at a fresh all-time low of 85.13 against the US dollar.

Traders said the rupee recovered from lower levels in the latter half of the day on softening of the US dollar index and a potential intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). A decline in crude oil prices also supported the rupee at

lower levels. "We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on weak domestic markets and overall strength in the US dollar amid a hawkish Fed and improved US economy," Anuj Choudhary - research analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said.

Choudhary further added that FII outflows may also weigh on the rupee. However, any intervention by the RBI or any further correction in crude oil prices may support the rupee at lower levels.

"Traders may take cues from core PCE price index, personal spending and revised consumer sentiment data from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 84.80 to 85.15," he said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.14 per cent at 108.26.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.99 per cent to USD 72.16 per barrel in futures trade. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 1,176.46 points, or 1.49 per cent, down at 78,041.59 points, while Nifty settled down 340.10 points, or 1.42 per cent to 23,611.60 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Thursday, as they offloaded shares worth ₹ 4,224.92 crore, according to exchange data. (PTI)

## NHPC to invest in Bihar for 1,000 MW solar project

### Project could be set up in 1.5-2 years from the date of land acquisition



**PATNA, Dec 20:** NHPC Ltd, India's largest hydropower company, will invest ₹ 5,500 crore in setting up a 1,000 megawatt solar power project in Bihar, its chairman and managing director Raj Kumar Chaudhary said Friday.

The firm signed an MoU with the state government for the investment at the Bihar Business Connect 2024 investor summit here.

"We have proposed to invest ₹ 5,500 crore in setting up a 1,000 MW solar power project," he said.

The project could be set up in 1.5-2 years from the date of land acquisition.

"Land is crucial for solar projects. And we would

urge the state government to facilitate land acquisition so that we could do the project on time," he said.

The company has almost 7 gigawatts of operational hydropower plants and 9.3 gigawatts of capacity is under construction, according to its website.

Chaudhary said NHPC is also proposing to set up a small solar plant, electricity from which would be used to make green hydrogen.

"The green hydrogen produced will be used to power passenger buses," he said.

Green hydrogen, produced by splitting water using green energy, is the cleanest known energy source as it produces no carbon and only water when burnt.

He said the green hydrogen-powered bus will be financed by NHPC. It will be provided to the state government for running as part of the government's initiative to promote clean energy sources.

NHPC is doing similar projects in Gujarat and other states.

"The government is keen that green hydrogen is promoted as fuel and our plan is in line with that," he added.

Initially, NHPC plans to run one bus on green hydrogen and the number could be doubled as more solar power is produced. (PTI)

## Adani Group plans super critical thermal power plant in Bihar

**PATNA, Dec 20:** Billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate plans to invest ₹ 20,000 crore in setting up a super critical thermal power plant in Bihar even as it expands its cement, food processing and logistics business in the state.

Speaking at the Bihar Business Connect 2024, Pranav Adani, director, Adani Enterprises Ltd, said the ports-to-energy conglomerate is invested in three sectors in Bihar - logistics, gas distribution and agri-logistics, where it has already invested around ₹ 850 crore.

"We are now going to invest another ₹ 2,300 crore in these sectors. This investment will not only massively increase our warehousing and handling capacity and expand our presence in the EV, city gas distribution (CGD) and compressed biogas (CBG) space but will also generate an additional 27,000 direct and indirect local job opportunities," he said.

The group is also looking to potentially invest another Rs 1,000 crore in developing strategic infrastructure in Bihar, like Gati Shakti Railway Terminals,

ICDs (Inland Container Depots) and Industrial Warehousing Parks.

"Another sector we are investing in is smart meter manufacturing. As Bihar migrates from conventional electric meters to smart meters, we will invest ₹ 2,100 crore to manufacture and install over 28 lakh smart meters to automate power-consumption-monitoring in five cities-- Siwan, Gopalganj, Vaishali, Saran and Samastipur-- and this will generate at least 4,000 local jobs in this technology segment," he said.

The cement plants in the state will be expanded to 10 million tonnes per annum capacity with an investment of ₹ 2,500 crore in multiple phases.

"We are also exploring investment avenues in Bihar's energy sector. Our plan is to invest around ₹ 20,000 crore to set up an ultra-supercritical thermal power plant," he said.

"We expect such a massive project to open up at least 12,000 job vacancies in the pre-commissioning phase and also lead to around 1,500 skilled jobs during the operational phase," he added. (PTI)

## Sun Petrochemicals pledges ₹ 36,700 cr investment in Bihar

**PATNA, Dec 20:** Sun Petrochemicals on Friday inked a pact with the Bihar government pledging ₹ 36,700 crore investment commitment in the renewable energy sector.

At the Bihar Business Connect 2024, leading companies such as NHPC (₹ 5,500 crore for renewable energy sector), SLMG Beverages (₹ 3,000 crore for food processing sector), Shree Cements (₹ 800 crore in general manufac-

turing category), and Haldiram Snacks Pvt Ltd (₹ 300 crore for food processing sector) also inked MoUs with the state.

"We are investing ₹ 36,700 crore in renewable energy and storage infrastructure. I wish to use this opportunity to appreciate the significant change in investor sentiment and environment in the state which encourages us to commit this and in subsequent projects," Dilip Shanghvi, MD, Sun Petro-

chemicals said.

He further said the projects in the pre-commissioning stage will create more than 30,000 jobs.

"... And it is something that helps us strengthen the focus of the central government also, in terms of renewable energy and infrastructure. So, I look forward to participating in the growth of Bihar and contributing to this growth, so that we can be a partner in this growth," he said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1.

## India must leverage technology

advantages, fostering innovation, and driving competitiveness in global markets. While Mundol lauded the potential of climate technologies, he cautioned against the risks of over-dependence on external innovations. "Climate technology is becoming increasingly weaponised," he warned.

He expressed concerns that a shift from fossil fuel dependency to reliance on monopolised climate technologies could leave developing countries like India vulnerable to geopolitical pressures and supply chain disruptions. To mitigate these risks, Mundol advocated self-reliance and investment in domestic capabilities, urging India to build robust technological ecosystems that are insulated from international monopolies.

Mundol also addressed the contentious issue of climate finance, a major sticking point in global climate negotiations. At COP29 in Baku, developing countries, including India, voiced frustration over insufficient and ambiguous commitments from wealthier nations.

"The finance side was disappointing, with commitments spread out over a long period and couched in diplomatic language that allows for multiple interpretations," Mundol said.

He criticised the preference for loans and investments over grants, arguing that these mechanisms are unsuitable for the needs of developing countries striving for sustainable growth.

Mundol emphasised the importance of concessional finance -- low-interest or no-interest funding with minimal bureaucratic hurdles -- as essential for enabling communities and businesses to transition effectively to low-carbon models.

He further said that India's transition to a low-carbon economy must be equitable, inclusive, and driven by technological innovation, ensuring that the country remains a beacon of sustainable development in a rapidly warming world. (PTI)

## ONOE anti-democratic

Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar asked Union law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to move a motion to nominate to the panel members of the Rajya Sabha.

Moving the motion, Meghwal said the Upper House resolved to nominate 12 members to serve on the joint committee. Minutes before the Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die on Friday, it adopted a resolution recommending the two bills to a joint committee of Parliament. (PTI)

## 2,200 cases of violence

government of Bangladesh." "India's expectation is that Bangladesh will take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and welfare of Hindus and other minorities. The same was also reiterated during the visit of the Foreign Secretary to Bangladesh on December 9, 2024," he added.

The High Commission of India in Dhaka "continues to monitor the situation" related to the minorities in Bangladesh "closely", the minister of state for external affairs said.

"The primary responsibility for the protection of life and liberty of all citizens, including minorities, rests with the government of the country concerned," he said.

Ties between India and Bangladesh came under severe strain after deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to leave the country in the face of a massive anti-government protest in August. Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus came to power days after Hasina took shelter in India.

He heads Bangladesh's interim government as its Chief Advisor. Relations between the two nations deteriorated further in recent weeks over attacks on the Hindus and the arrest of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das. (PTI)

## Two B'deshi infiltrators

have been pushed back from Assam, and vigil along the 1885-km-long India-Bangladesh border in the North East region has been intensified since turmoil broke out in the neighbouring country. (PTI)

## 'Govt policies for public

competitors," it said. The top court observed it may be true that the mere non-floating of tenders or absence of a public auction or invitation alone, couldn't serve as sufficient grounds to term the actions of a public authority as arbitrary or mala fide.

The court noted it however did not absolve the state or its instrumentalities from their obligation to demonstrate due application of mind, and ensure transparency and fairness in their decision-making process.

"Turning to the events of the case in hand, it is a matter of record that the government made no efforts to issue tenders, invitations, or seek competitive bids from other interested entrepreneurs. There is no basis at all to claim that following such a procedure would have been detrimental to the proposed project," it said.

The apex court said on the contrary, Noida in collaboration with IL&FS, assigned the mammoth responsibility of constructing this novel infrastructure upon NTBCL.

"Interestingly, NTBCL was a nonexistent entity, as it came to be incorporated only on April 8, 1996, i.e., four years after the MoU was executed between the Delhi Administration, NOIDA, and IL&FS, to establish a bridge between Delhi and NOIDA," it said.

The justification rendered by NTBCL and NOIDA that there was no other infrastructure development company at the time which could have undertaken the construction of the DND Flyway was said to be "nothing but a self-serving claim" by an entity which was the sole beneficiary of the state largesse.

Another proposition that IL&FS, being the only institution or agency controlled by the public sector, was uniquely positioned to offer expertise in specialised infrastructure development and generate the necessary financing, did not justify the undue favour extended to NTBCL, the court said.

The bench found it "difficult to accept" that there was such a dearth of experienced companies offering better financial terms and solutions for developing the DND Flyway alongside IL&FS.

The selection of NTBCL without following proper procedure and without giving any opportunity to bid, to other competitors, was nothing but an opaque device resorted to, in contravention of Article 14 of the Constitution of India, the apex court said in its 54-page verdict. (PTI)

## Bhupen taken into police

morning and raised slogans demanding the release of their leader. They also alleged that Chib had not been given access to his lawyer and that his mobile phone had been confiscated by police. State party president Bhupen Borah, former president Ripun Bora, and several other leaders were detained near Hatigaon police station, about 4 km from the state capital Dispur, as they were en route to the Manabendra Sarma Complex.

Anam said, "They were coming to participate in the all-faith prayer meeting but were stopped midway and taken into police custody."

Police commissioner Barah was present at the site and was seen putting Congress president Borah inside a vehicle.

Authorities had earlier imposed prohibitory orders in the Dispur area, preventing any gatherings, an officer said.

Anam said, "We had no agitation planned. But heavy security deployment to thwart any democratic protest and the arrest of our leaders angered us, and we came to the streets to protest it."

The Youth Congress members broke through police barricades and raised slogans against the BJP government. As the police prevented them from proceeding further, they squatted on the road. The members were later taken into police custody and held at different locations, including the 10th Assam Police Battalion premises, along with the senior leaders. A party leader said that although all detained persons had signed bonds for release, they had not yet been set free. (PTI)

## realme 14x 5G launched

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** realme, the most popular smartphone brand among Indian youth, on Friday announced the launch of the realme 14x 5G, a groundbreaking addition to its smartphone portfolio.

The realme 14x 5G features segment's first IP69 Dust & Water Resistance and Military-Grade Shock Resistance, combined with a massive 6000mAh battery + 45W charging and innovative features like SonicWave Water Ejection and Rainwater Smart Touch.

realme reiterated its commitment to providing cutting-edge technology and quality at accessible price points. With the launch of the realme 14x 5G, the brand continues to push the boundaries of what's possible in the mid-range smartphone segment.

Commenting on the launch, a realme spokesperson said, "We are excited to introduce the realme 14x 5G, a testament to our dedication to providing exceptional value and exceeding conventional standards for rugged smartphones. With its industry-first IP69 rating under 15K, massive battery, and innovative features, the realme 14x 5G offers an unparalleled experience for users seeking a durable and reliable device."

"The Dimensity 6300 delivers powerful performance and seamless connectivity, enabling a variety of use cases on the realme 14x 5G for all productivity and entertainment needs. We are confident that this new addition to our portfolio will resonate with our young users, empowering them to explore their world without limits," he further said.

## NAME CORRECTION

I, Abhisekh Gupta S/o Rajendra Prasad Gupta, resident of Ward No. 7, Sukhanjan, P.O. & P.S. Bokajan, district Karbi Anglong, has declared through an affidavit that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhar Card bearing No. 608120056666 as Kamal Gupta instead of Abhisekh Gupta. Hence from now onwards I shall be known as Abhisekh Gupta in all purposes.

## 'It was a peaceful procession, police personnel should not have taken such drastic steps'

# KADCC organises sit-in-demonstration against the death of Mridul Islam

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Dec 20:** In a protest against the unfortunate death of Mridul Islam, who died during a demonstration 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' in Guwahati, Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee (KADCC) has organised a sit-in-demonstration in front of its office here on Friday.

Islam, an advocate by profession, was the secretary of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee's (APCC) legal cell, and a resident of Boko in southwestern Assam, had participated in 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' programme on December 18 last at Guwahati.

During the protest police personnel fired tear gas shells against the protesters, where Mridul Islam was hit by the tear gas shell and collapsed on the ground. He later died at the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital.

In the protest demonstration the Congress members and workers shouted slogans against chief min-



ister Himanta Biswa Sarma led BJP government in Assam and the high handedness of the police. Participating in the protest was general secretary, APCC and in charge KADCC, Nirmal Langthasa said Manipur crisis has directly or indirectly affected Kukis and Meites in Manipur. Manipur is an integral part of India and BJP being triple engine government has

failed to address the issues.

President, KADCC, Bidyasag Rongpi told media persons that on the fateful day of December 18 the APMC had taken out a peaceful procession in Guwahati. To control the protesters police fired tear gas shells and unfortunately hit Islam. It would not have been so hard had the tear gas not been fired from close range. Due to suffocation

Islam fell to the ground. He died later in Guwahati Medical College and Hospital.

"It was a peaceful procession, police personnel should not have taken such drastic steps. The BJP government in India is depriving the democratic rights of its people by attacking peaceful protesters. Judicial enquiry should be constituted and compensation should be granted by the government, he demanded," said Rongpi.

The KADCC president also mentioned that smart meters installed by APCL in several homes for reading electric bills have received more complaints and the government should do away with them.

Later, a memorandum addressed to the Governor of Assam, Lakshman Prasad Acharya, on the alleged fraudulent activities involving Adani Group, failure of Manipur government to stop violence and smart metre issue in Assam was presented to the DC.

## SBI donates two body carrying vans to Pathik



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** State Bank of India (SBI) on Friday donated

## Dipok Kumar Barthakur road inaugurated

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** In a ceremony befitting the occasion, Guwahati Municipal Corporation's mayor, Mrigen Sarania, inaugurated the Dipok Kumar Barthakur Road on Friday.

The event was held in front of the New Art Players (NAP) building, situated near the northern side of Ambari Traffic Rotary. The road has been dedicated to the memory of Dipok Kumar Barthakur, a revered cultural icon of Assam and the former president of New Art Players, on the occasion of his 87th birth anniversary.

The program, hosted by NAP general secretary Rathindra N Bhattacharya, began with floral tributes to a portrait of the Late Barthakur by dignitaries, including Ajoy Kumar Dutta, president of NAP, and other club members. Dutta welcomed the august gathering.

two body carrying vehicles to Pathik after getting impressed with their initiative named MUKTI-

## FIR filed against bank officials and woman in Ledo for alleged loan embezzlement

**HT Correspondent**

**MARGHERITA, Dec 20:** A First Information Report (FIR) has been filed against the officials of Bandhan Bank in Ledo and a woman for allegedly being involved in a funds embezzlement case at the Margherita police station. The FIR was filed by the All Assam Tea Tribes Students' Association (ATTSA) Margherita branch committee following a protest over the issue. This development comes after a woman named Rinku Gogoi reportedly misled over a hundred women from Amritgaon in Ledo with a false promise of providing loans in October.

According to sources, Gogoi secured loans of ₹ 70,000 each in the names of women from the Adivasi Tea Tribe Community but failed to hand over the money to them.

"Instead, Rinku Gogoi allegedly embezzled the funds, as on Wednesday, only ₹ 38,000 was credited to the accounts of the affected women," the

PATH, said an official statement.

As per the statement, the launching ceremony of the dead body carrying vans occurred at Guwahati Medical Ground (GMC) Dispur 11 am. "Observing the service of Pathik through project MUKTIPATH SBI had donated two numbers of Dead body Carrying Vans, for the service of the community," the statement added.

PATHIK's ongoing and well-known initiative named MUKTIPATH - which is a project for the poor and needy people at their last journey of their inmates or loved ones. Presently this Muktipath is taken to all parts of Assam covering all community of people.

sources added.

Following this, Bandhan Bank Ledo branch manager Abhijit Dutta reportedly called some of the women to the bank and asked them to withdraw the funds and transfer the amount to Gogoi.

This incident of Manager asking women to transfer fund to Gogoi led to speculation about a potential nexus between Rinku Gogoi and the bank's authorities. The situation escalated when members of the All Assam Tea Tribes Students' Association (ATTSA) Margherita branch committee staged a protest, surrounding the bank and demanding answers.

"On Thursday, we lodged an FIR at Margherita police station against both Rinku Gogoi and employees of Bandhan Bank Ledo branch, and we hope that all arrested persons will receive stringent punishment under the law," said Pranjal Baraik, joint publicity secretary of the ATTSA central executive committee.

## Cachar gears up for ceremonial distribution of new ration cards

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** The Cachar district administration is gearing up for the ceremonial distribution of new ration cards which is going to be scheduled on December 22.

The event will take place simultaneously across various locations such as Lakhipur block development complex, Fulertal, DNHS school playground udharbond, Lakhipur G P office field, Katigorah, Dalu H S school playground, Borkhola, Gandhi Mela Math, Trunk Road, Silcha, Moinal Haque Choudhury Smriti Mukta Mancha, Sonai, 'Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Mukta Mancha, Dholai.

Each venue will witness the presence of distinguished dignitaries, including ministers, members of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha), MLAs, and other eminent personalities.

The event reflects a crucial step toward enhancing the efficiency, transparency, and equity of public service delivery. Thousands of beneficiaries are expected to participate, embodying the hope and optimism tied to this initiative. By distributing new ration cards, the administration seeks to ensure that essential resources reach society's most vulnerable sections, fostering a transparent, inclusive, and accountable governance model.

This effort aligns with the broader vision of sustainable development, prioritising equitable resource distribution and improved living standards for all.

## Vidya Bharati All India Alumni meet held

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** The All India Meeting of Vidya Bharati's Alumni was held successfully at The Adingiri Tribal Hostel Project at Malegaon (Sewa Bharati) in Guwahati. The event was attended by All India organising minister of Vidya Bharati Govind Mahanta, in-charge of All India East Students Council of Vidya Bharati, Vijay Nadda, organising secretary of North Eastern Region, Dr Pawan Tiwari, organising secretary of North Assam, Nirav Geelani, Shishu shiksha Samiti, Assam's president Kulendra Kumar Bhargava, Shishu shiksha Samiti Assam's secretary Jagannath Rajbanshi and other office bearers of Vidya Bharati. Representatives of alumni from across the country participated in a two-day event under the supervision of regional coordinator Swapna Devi. According to Mukteswar Goswami, publicity head of Shishu Shiksha Samiti North Assam Region, about 45 alumni including former student coordinators, co-coordinators and former students working abroad of Vidya Bharati from different states across India participated in the event.

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** The Dima Hasao Forest Division (West) and biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak have jointly published a coffee table book titled 'Dima Hasao - Explore the Wonders of Nature', an official statement said on Friday.

The book focuses on the faunal and floral resources of the region as well as the related cultural practices and sustained efforts for biodiversity conservation.

This is the first attempt of its kind to compile biodiversity-focused information in an intuitive manner for the Dima Hasao district. The book is edited by Dr M Firoz Ahmed, Tuhin Langthasa, and Dr Dipankar Lahkar.

The book covers the diversity of plants, orchids, edible insects, butterflies, fishes, reptiles and amphibians, birds, and mammals. It contains information on 213 species of wild fauna and flora, including 59 species of birds, 41

species of mammals, 33 species of amphibians and reptiles, 22 species of fishes, 18 species of butterflies, 18 species of other insects, 22 species of orchids, and some important trees and shrubs of Dima Hasao. Each species is coded to emphasise the significance of the Dima Hasao ecosystem and its natural history. Newly described species from the district are also highlighted, along with all relevant information.

In addition, the book includes natural history notes on the endemic, locally extirpated, and extinct animals of Dima Hasao. It also highlights elements of the Indigenous people's culture and their harmonious way of life with nature, along with traditional mythology surrounding Tortoise Lake, the contributions of Veer Demalik Kemprai, and interesting facts about hornbills and Amur falcons.

The information on all the featured species is illustrated with high-quality photographs. Contrib-

## CM Sarma distributes Dr Banikanta Kakoti and Anundoram Borooh Award in Nagaon

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Dec 20:** Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma participated in the ceremonial distribution of Dr Banikanta Kakoti and Anundoram Borooh awards in Nagaon on Friday.

The programme was organised at the Dawson Higher Secondary School and Multi Purpose School playground in Nagaon.

While addressing the occasion, Dr Sarma emphasised that Assam has undergone significant transformation, with a shift from violence, hatred, and negativity to development and progress.

"Our government is committed to building a new Assam, where every individual has access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. He encouraged students to work hard, pursue their dreams, and contribute to building a brighter future for Assam," CM Sarma stated.

He also stressed on the importance of education, self-reliance, and the need to stay away from



social media addiction. He advised students to focus on acquiring knowledge, developing skills, and building character.

Further he expressed his commitment to providing quality education and creating opportunities for the youth.

"His government has taken several initiatives to promote education, including the establishment of medical colleges, universities,

and technical institutions in every district," he added.

The event was attended by various dignitaries, including ministers Keshab Mahanta and Bimal Bora, MLAs Rupak Sarma, Jitu Goswami, and Dipu Ranjan Sarma, Nagaon district commissioner Narendra Kumar Shah, superintendent of police Swapnanil Deka and inspector of schools, Nagaon Mridul Kr Nath.

## CIT Kokrajhar celebrates third convocation

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Dec 20:** The Central Institute of Technology (CIT) of Kokrajhar celebrated its 3rd Convocation on Friday in Kokrajhar. It marked a significant milestone in the academic journey of 464 graduates across Diploma, Undergraduate, Masters, and PhD programs. The grand ceremony was held at the Bodofa Cultural Complex, Chandamari in Kokrajhar, and was a moment of immense pride for the institute and the Bodoland region.

Pramod Boro, the chief executive member (CEM) of Bodoland Territorial Council graced the occasion as guest that added prestige and inspiration to the event.

The ceremony began with the National Anthem, an invocation, and the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, followed by Prof (Retd) Nishikant V Deshpande, Chairman of the Board of Governors (BoG) of CIT Kokrajhar, formally declaring the convocation open.

Prof A Srinivasan, Director of CIT Kokrajhar, presented the institute's annual report, providing an overview of its progress and achievements during the 2023-2024 academic year. In his address, Prof Srinivasan congratulated the graduates and urged them to uphold the values of academic curiosity and excellence while contributing to the social and intellectual development of the Bodoland region.

The chairman of the BoG delivered an inspiring address, drawing lessons from the lives of great leaders such as Swami Vivekananda, Steve Jobs, APJ Abdul Kalam, and Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

Prof Deshpande emphasised the need to address skill gaps in higher education and encouraged the graduates to dream big and become the leaders of tomorrow.

"The importance of research, innovation, and accreditation, while stressing the need to improve the institute's NIRF ranking to enhance its academic prominence," Prof Deshpande said.

Pramod Boro, the CEM of Bodoland Territorial Council, congratulated the graduates for their hard work, dedication, and achievements. Reflecting on the aspirations that led to the establishment of CIT Kokrajhar, CEM Boro remembered the sacrifices made by visionary leaders such as Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma, who carried forward the vision of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, a prominent social reformer and advocate for education. In his speech, CEM Boro emphasised the importance of education in building a progressive society and reaffirmed the BTC's commitment to the region's development.

"BTC's investments in agriculture, sericulture, education, healthcare, and tourism, Boro stated that the region is primed for growth and innovation," Boro said. He urged the graduates to apply their knowledge and skills to contribute to the prosperity and development of the region by addressing contemporary societal needs through technology and innovation.

Prof Amitava Nag, Dean of Academic Affairs and Convener of the third convocation, presented the list of degree and diploma recipients to Prof. Nishikant V. Deshpande, chairman of the Board of Governors, who formally admitted the graduates. This was followed by the conferment and ceremonial distribution of diplomas and degrees to the graduates.

While honouring their outstanding achievements, CEM Pramod Boro presented medals to the top-performing students from each programme.

"I am delighted to attend the 3rd Convocation Ceremony of the Central Institute of Technology (CIT) of Kokrajhar. CIT, Kokrajhar has been at the forefront of upskilling the youth of BTR, and continues to be a cornerstone of our mission to impart technical know-how and training to our young boys and girls. My heartfelt congratulations to all the new graduates for a stellar career ahead," Boro added.

## Book launched at Assam Sahitya Sabha, Ahmedabad branch meeting



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** A general meeting of Assam Sahitya Sabha, Ahmedabad Branch was held at Chandkheda, Ahmedabad where a book of poems by ONGC senior officer Dilip Kumar Sharma, and a novel 'Cocktail, The life (House Wife's Diary)' by Nayana Pathak Shaikha was launched.

The meeting was chaired by the vice-president of the Ahmedabad Branch Sahitya Sabha, Prafulla

Mahanta. The meeting was attended by the secretary of Ahmedabad Branch Sahitya Sabha Ashok Kumar Bora who presented the complete work of their two-year tenure in his editorial report.

The meeting started with a Ganesh Vandana dance by classical dancer Prangana Kashyap and included literary discussions, poetry recitations and other cultural programmes.

The meeting was conducted by

the announcer Pori Gogoi from the beginning to the end. The meeting was attended by hundreds of Assamese families living in Ahmedabad. The Ahmedabad Branch Sahitya Sabha has been providing free training to Assamese children in different parts of India through an online program called "Let's Learn Assamese". The Ahmedabad Branch Sahitya Sabha has been publishing an e-magazine called "Shashat" regularly every six months since its inception.

The book was launched by Bela Goswami, who delivered a rich speech on the history of Assamese language and Assam Sahitya Sabha and Rishipal Dhiman delivered an interesting speech in Hindi including poetry and Shayari. Several speakers from the community also made fruitful speeches. After the remarks of the President, Rita Gogoi concluded the meeting with a vote of thanks.

## Coffee table book titled 'Dima Hasao - Explore the Wonders of Nature' published

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** The Dima Hasao Forest Division (West) and biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak have jointly published a coffee table book titled 'Dima Hasao - Explore the Wonders of Nature', an official statement said on Friday.

The book focuses on the faunal and floral resources of the region as well as the related cultural practices and sustained efforts for biodiversity conservation.

This is the first attempt of its kind to compile biodiversity-focused information in an intuitive manner for the Dima Hasao district. The book is edited by Dr M Firoz Ahmed, Tuhin Langthasa, and Dr Dipankar Lahkar.

The book covers the diversity of plants, orchids, edible insects, butterflies, fishes, reptiles and amphibians, birds, and mammals. It contains information on 213 species of wild fauna and flora, including 59 species of birds, 41

species of mammals, 33 species of amphibians and reptiles, 22 species of fishes, 18 species of butterflies, 18 species of other insects, 22 species of orchids, and some important trees and shrubs of Dima Hasao. Each species is coded to emphasise the significance of the Dima Hasao ecosystem and its natural history. Newly described species from the district are also highlighted, along with all relevant information.

In addition, the book includes natural history notes on the endemic, locally extirpated, and extinct animals of Dima Hasao. It also highlights elements of the Indigenous people's culture and their harmonious way of life with nature, along with traditional mythology surrounding Tortoise Lake, the contributions of Veer Demalik Kemprai, and interesting facts about hornbills and Amur falcons.

The information on all the featured species is illustrated with high-quality photographs. Contrib-



utors to the text include Dr Anwaruddin Choudhury, Dr Sarbojit Thaoson, Dr Ron Kemprai, Nirrendu Kemprai, Khyanjiet Gogoi, Dr Jintu Sarma, Dr Aparajita Datta, Dr Monsoon Jyoti Gogoi, Dr Jayanta Kumar Roy, Nitul Kalita, Jayanta Kumar Sarma, Dr Robindra Teron, and Dr

Sabina Langthasa. More than 50 photographers contributed photographs for the book.

Dr Anwaruddin Choudhury, Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Bijay Sankar Bora, and Jayanta Kumar Pathak provided valuable guidance as editorial advisors for the book.

The book also includes check-

lists of animal and plant species of Dima Hasao, which might serve as a benchmark for scholars, environmental enthusiasts, and planners.

The coffee table book was unveiled as part of the Falcon Festival on December 13, 2024, at Umrangso. During the launch ceremony, the chief executive member (CEM) of the NC Hills Autonomous Council, Debobal Gorlosa, mentioned, "Dima Hasao has a long legacy of wildlife explorations that began during the colonial era and has continued immensely to this day through the documentation of numerous new species. However, compiling all this valuable information and making it available to the general public in the form of such a book is an important step. The government of Assam and the North Cachar Autonomous Council are committed to conserving all of its pristine bio-resources as well as the cultural regimes that intersect and are passed down through generations."

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*Forgiveness is the final form of love*  
- Reinhold Niebuhr

## Modi govt's new agri policy

The Union Ministry of Agriculture recently circulated a new draft for a policy framework concerning agricultural marketing. The proposed universal tax on agricultural produce will increase farmers' incomes. The committee has suggested replacing the state-supported market yards, laws on bulk storage, and regulations governing direct purchases by large private entities with a new framework for agricultural marketing mechanisms. A committee comprising state agricultural ministers, similar to the empowered GST committee, will be established to facilitate the direct collection of taxes from the Union government. The new proposals will eliminate existing public market yards, enable corporations to engage directly in bulk buying and storage. Critics, however, argue that the proposed policy is anti-farmer and will facilitate the backdoor entry of the aborted 'three Farm Bills' which had triggered the farmer's protests. The Union government developed a marketing framework based on 12 market reforms recommended by a committee established in 2003 by the NDA government. The 12 reforms include the establishment of private wholesale markets, wholesale direct purchases by processors, e-exporters, organised retailers, and bulk buyers at the farm gate, declaring warehouses, silos, and cold storage facilities to replace the current market yards, implementing a onetime levy of market fees across the state, and introducing a single unified trading license that is valid throughout the state.

The draft trade reforms aim to undermine stable, supported market yards and weaken the Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs), providing price protection for small farmers against manipulation by private trader syndicates. The reforms will encourage the reintroduction of large corporate market players, such as ITC, Adani, and other major exporters. According to the clauses in the new draft, these private companies will be allowed to purchase directly from farmers at the farm gate. Furthermore, transferring produce warehouses and cold storage units, previously managed by APMC market yards, to private companies eliminates crucial provisions for storing produce—especially perishables like tomatoes, fruits, and onions—during price crashes and other difficult situations. Farmers are not allowed to negotiate for the minimum support prices (MSP) set by the government, contributing to their disadvantage regarding bulk purchases by corporate players directly at the farm gate. The provision for unlimited bulk purchases allows large companies to hoard agricultural produce without adhering to the Essential Commodities Act. Major corporations such as Reliance and Adani have established significant warehouse facilities and private railway lines in areas like Sirsa, Haryana, Ludhiana, and Punjab.

These regulations encourage supermarkets and online grocery platforms, like Big Basket and Amazon, to buy directly from farmers during harvest, often at artificially low prices, circumventing the MSP. In the following months, these companies sell the hoarded produce to consumers at much higher prices, leading to volatile market conditions. For instance, tomatoes were around ₹ 60 per kilogram a month ago, but they plummeted to ₹ 1 per kilogram during the harvest in Madapalli, Andhra Pradesh. The proposed draft agricultural market framework reintroduces three previously rejected farm laws and seeks to hand over the markets, storage, and distribution sectors to a few corporate players.

## NEP 2020 and early childhood care

Recently, the New Education Policy 2020 has been introduced in our country by changing the education policy of 1986. The Union Cabinet of India approved the National Education Policy 2020 on 29 July, 2020. The Cabinet also decided to change the name of the Ministry of Human Resources and Development to the Ministry of Education. The new National Education Policy have been come into force from April 2022. After a long hiatus, the Government of India wanted to introduce a new National Education Policy with major changes. The new National Education Policy 2020, chaired by former ISRO scientist Kasturi Ranjan, will replace the old 10+2 system with 5+3+3+4. Accordingly, the first five years will be called the 'Foundation Stage.'

Children aged 3 years will be enrolled in this foundation level and children will learn through play without any examination for 8 years. This means that the children will spend the first three years in full play and the last two years in primary education without taking exams. The next stage will be called the Preparatory Stage. There will be classes from third to fifth at this level. There will be some activities along with reading and listening. The children can be educated in the regional language or English medium. This is followed by the Middle Stage. The level will be taught from class VI to class VIII. Computer Code, Vocational, Mathematics, Science, Arts, etc. will be included in the curriculum at this level. Students can take any Indian language at this level. This is followed by the Secondary Stage. This means that there will be classes IX to XII at this secondary level. There will be no Science, Arts or Commerce branches at this level (No Stream).

Students will have to progress to the next grade through a total of eight semesters. There will be Multiple Subjects and the topics will be discussed with Critical Thinking. Students can take a Foreign Language as a subject.

## Early Child Care &amp; Education (ECCE)



There will be a four-year course at the undergraduate level. There will be no such thing. Passing the first year will be called Graduate with Certificate. Similarly, the second year is called Graduate with Diploma, the third year is called Graduate with Degree and the fourth year is called Graduate with Research. Every year will have a value. This means that if a student has to leave the college for any reason after graduating with the certificate and re-enrolls after one/two years, the student can enroll directly in the second year ie Diploma course.

Completion of a three-year degree course will qualify you for any government job or competitive examination.

Postgraduate education will be one or two years. There will be a one-year postgraduate course for students who have completed a four-year undergraduate course and a two-year course for those who wish to pursue a postgraduate course after completing a three-year course. There will be no 'Stream'. There will only be Post Graduate. The new system will include the existing M.Sc. M Phil. There will be none. Four-year-old P.S. H.S. degree will be in the new National Education Policy-2020 As far as we know, the curriculum development is currently in full swing.

We have seen many positive aspects of this education policy which will be prepared at a cost of 6 per cent of the country's GDP. It is our view and belief that the vocational or practical education sys-

tem will provide practical knowledge and career orientation to our students so that they will be free from the consequences of unemployment they are currently suffering from. In addition to the marks obtained in the results, there will be self-assessment, grades given by friends, grading by the teachers, etc. In addition, under the proposed new National Education Policy, 50 world-class universities will be able to open their branches

DEGREE OF THOUGHT  
Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

in India. That will be a challenge for us. There will be four departments under this historical education policy. These include (i) Syllabus Preparation Section, (ii) Regularities of Teachers and students Section, (iii) Salary, Scholarship and Research Section, and (iv) Result Preparation Section.

The proposed new education policy recommends four-year teacher training to provide quality education. The new education policy will also ensure extra-curricular activities like sports, martial arts, dance, gardening and yoga at all levels of schools. It is believed that if the decisions taken by the new National Education Policy to provide quality and practical education are implemented in practice, not only will there be a radical change in our educational world, but our lost rhythm will be restored.

Early Childhood Care  
The National Education Policy

(NEP) 2020 in India offers a comprehensive approach to transforming the education system that emphasizes inclusion, flexibility, and holistic development of the personality. An important aspect within this framework is Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), which will play a vital role in laying the foundation for a child's lifelong learning journey. Early childhood education care covers the early years of a child's life, a critical stage that typically lasts from three to eight years. Children's cognitive, emotional, and social development during this period greatly affects their overall growth. Therefore, the NEP 2020 recognizes the significance of this period and places greater emphasis on it.

One of the key pillars of NEP 2020 is the universalization of child care and education, which aims to provide quality primary education to all children. This is accompanied by the provision of anganwadi centres, pre-schools, and primary child care facilities across the country. The NEP integrates early childhood care and education into the formal education system envisions a seamless transition from childhood to primary education, helping children achieve continuity and coherence in their learning journey. The National Education Policy 2020 plans for the successful completion of school education through the introduction of 5+3+3+4 system. While the first 5 years of education are considered to be the Foundation Stage or child care and education, the first three years are included in pre-primary education. The Education Policy recognizes the need for experiential learning in the early years with an emphasis on play-based and activity-oriented pedagogies for child-care and education in childhood. This approach to learning plays a particular role in increasing cognitive ability, creativity, and socio-emotional competence in adjustment on contemporary research. The National Education Policy 2020

advocates a curriculum that promotes critical thinking, curiosity, and problem solving, where the child develops a love of learning from an early age.

In addition, the NEP 2020 will focus on the need for trained and qualified teachers in early childhood care and education. One of its objectives is to ensure that professional development programs for teachers and caregivers have the skills and knowledge needed to create a stimulating and nurturing environment for young children. The main objective of this curriculum and child care and education is to promote the holistic development of children through the application of advanced child development practices in different countries of the world with emphasis on teacher training. Inclusion NEP 2020, and this policy extends to early childhood education care. The policy focuses on providing specialized support for children with different needs, to ensure that every child, regardless of socio-economic background or ability, has access to quality primary education.

In conclusion, the National Education Policy 2020 brings about a significant change in recognizing the importance of child care and education in childhood. Prioritizing universal access, play-based learning, teacher training, and inclusion, NEP 2020 aims to build a strong foundation for children's educational journey. As India moves forward with the implementation of these reforms, a focus on early childhood child-care and education will play an important role in shaping a generation of learners who are curious, creative, and well-prepared for the challenges of the future. The National Education Policy 2020 is a very important and commendable step in planning for child education care at the primary level. Therefore, let us all work together to address the potential challenges of this policy as well as strengthen child care and education. (The Writer is CRCC of Nalbari Block, Biswanath Education Cluster, Education Department, Assam)

## Pushed and shoved when making a fashion statement in Parliament

*The way the story goes, Sarangi went down in a heap of legs and arms as Mukesh Rajput took the brunt of Rahul Gandhi's shove and slammed into Sarangi without even a "May I?" All this because Union Home Minister Amit Shah made a "fashion statement" and linked it to "Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar..."*

By Sushil Kuttly

When push comes to shove, there's no beating LoP in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, the only muscular MP in Parliament who can stand up to the '56' ki Chaati' though there are pictures of Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju flexing his muscles in a gym. But Rahul Gandhi's push can be deadly to those in the way.

Like the two BJP MPs, Prakash Sarangi and Mukesh Rajput, both of whom landed at the ICU of the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, hardly 10 minutes' drive from the new Parliament, after getting knocked out of contention allegedly by Rahul Gandhi at the 'Makar Dwar' of the New Parliament House, where a brawl broke out between ruling party MPs and the MPs of Opposition parties.

Pratap Sarangi was admitted to the ICU with a "head wound" that required stitches to stem the bleeding and Mukesh Rajput was "equally seriously" wounded. No one had imagined Rahul Gandhi carrying such a wallop in his biceps, clad in a blue t-shirt instead of the white that took his Bharat Jodo Yatra south-north and east-west.

The way the story goes, Sarangi went down in a heap of legs and arms as Mukesh Rajput took the brunt of Rahul Gandhi's shove and slammed into Sarangi without even a "May I?" All this because Union Home Minister Amit Shah made a "fashion statement" and linked it to "Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar..."

Amit Shah's "fashion-statement" linking Constitution-stylist BR Ambedkar to God did not go down well with the Opposition, spearheaded by the Congress. Now there is a chorus clamouring for Amit Shah's head and on Thursday morning, the ruckus and the din shifted "outdoors" after the Lok Sabha was adjourned till 2pm.

Outdoors, MPs climbed atop the 'Makar Dwar'. Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi also among them. LOP in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, who is 83, couldn't resist making a statement of his own and he too complained of being "pushed".



The evening before Amit Shah had held a presser, alleging that the Opposition had put up a "12 seconds clip" cut from his entire statement on Ambedkar, not playing the clip to the "full", afraid that the rest of what he said about Ambedkar would have told the truth of how badly the Congress had treated Ambedkar, including the despicable manner in which Nehru dealt with Dr. BR Ambedkar.

The fact is, the Congress, failed to comprehend the import of Amit Shah's statement in the Rajya Sabha, but the next morning it dawned on them this was a God-given opportunity to hit out at the BJP. Amit Shah had insulted both God in Heaven and God-on-Earth BR Ambedkar by reducing God to Ambedkar and by reducing Ambedkar to God!

Now, it is about how Amit Shah could speak of Ambedkar as if Ambedkar was less than God? For the Congress, this was unacceptable and Shah had broken the trance with his "fashion statement" linking Ambedkar to God. Amit Shah had crossed a Rubicon, the Lakshman Rekha.

But the Union Home Minister was not amused and nor was Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Before Amit Shah's evening presser, Prime Minister Modi shot off "six 'X' posts" blasting the Congress. The next morning, the BJP was asking "X" to post the "full clip" of Amit Shah's ref-

erence to Ambedkar.

This time the BJP and the Modi government aren't in the mood to give in to the "Opposition's duplicity", like during the election campaigning for the 2024 general elections. An FIR has been lodged against Rahul Gandhi for "pushing Sarangi and Mukesh Rajput" and causing them injury. The BJP and the Congress are also accusing each other of forcibly stopping each other's MPs from entering Parliament.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju tore into Rahul Gandhi, asking, "How can he use force in Parliament? Under which law does he have the power to physically assault other MPs?" Rahul Gandhi holds a black belt in Aikido, a Japanese martial art and Rijiju wanted to know if Rahul had learned karate and kung fu, to beat other MPs?

"Parliament is not a wrestling arena," Rijiju pronounced, demanding that Gandhi say "sorry", but Rahul says it was he who was "pushed and shoved" by the BJP MPs blocking the main entry. The moral of the story: "Never mess with the man in a Burberry t-shirt" with biceps bulging. And if that isn't a fashion-statement, linking BR Ambedkar to "fashion" is deadlier than sin! Also, not everybody gets a shove from a Rs 41,000 Burberry t-shirt! That is what's called 'a fashion statement.' (IPA Service)

## Indian economy with its possible 6.6 percent growth rate in 2024-25 is not doing too badly

By: Anjan Roy

Within the span of this week, we have got two completely different and contrasting views of the Indian economy — one from the finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, and the other from the leader of the opposition Rahul Gandhi. Both could not be true at the same time; both could be false. They look like containing fragments of the truth.

Intervening in a parliament debate, Nirmala Sitharaman said that the highly discussed dip in second quarter growth figure was just a blip and the state of the economy was healthy. Growth momentum should pick up in no time and India was on a high growth trajectory.

On Wednesday, Rahul Gandhi put a post on his Twitter account which tellingly speaks of the dumps the economy is currently in. Gandhi posted: "What happens when a government priorities crony businesses over play-fair businesses".

Gandhi provides the reply: "Weakened manufacturing sector, depreciating currency, record high trade deficits, high interest rates, failing consumption and soaring inflation". For sure, some of the latest figures bear out the Opposition viewpoint. But there is more in the data than immediately meets the eye.

Let us grant a little more hearing space to Sitharaman about what she said in parliament in reply to a debate on the economy. There is little doubt that the manufacturing sector had suddenly slumped. Manufacturing growth collapsed to 2.2% in the second quarter affecting overall industrial sector performance. Growth was at a meagre 5.4%, which many had expected to be around 6.8%.

However, she denied that this was a fore-taste of what was to come. Let us not pick out one sector performance and predict a growth collapse on that basis. She could not, as a finance minister, sound pessimistic and placed her hope on a growth rebound in a short period.

In between, some of the leading Indian industrialists and businessmen aired their confident view at a gathering in the capital recently that the fall in recent growth rates was mainly in the nature of a "blip" rather than a structural or more fundamental shift. But then, when have industrialists and businessmen gone against the government view, however much revolting in the face of facts!

When two diametrically opposite political camps are fighting, it is sensible to go to a neutral judge. Who can be a better judge of economic matters than the Reserve Bank of India. In its latest statement accompanying the monetary policy the central bank had observed that the near term growth prospects for the Indian economy have somewhat darkened, mainly because of the persistent high inflation levels.

That rising prices are a problem, one need not go to economists and experts. Who will not testify to the rising prices. Food items prices are soaring and the households are struggling to meet costs. Food prices have increased substantially, despite the fact that



at this time of the year, when winter crops arrive in the market, the prices tend to soften. Not this time.

The CPI headline inflation increased from average 3.6% during July-August to 5.5% in September and further to 6.2% in October 2024, which was the highest in more than a year, since September 2023. This is way ahead of the Reserve Bank's inflation target of 4%. Why is inflation count so Germane

*On Wednesday, Rahul Gandhi put a post on his Twitter account which tellingly speaks of the dumps the economy is currently in. Gandhi posted: "What happens when a government priorities crony businesses over play-fair businesses"*

to the growth prospects as well as overall economic stability.

Indian economy is growing on the back of domestic consumption, unlike many other countries, including China. RBI has noted that the rising price levels are affecting the principle growth engine of the economy, consumption.

"Persistent high inflation reduces the purchasing power of consumers and adversely affects both consumption and investment demand. The overall implication of these factors for growth is negative." Therefore, price stability is essential for sustained growth. A good Rabi crop and its arrival in the markets would be key to inflation stabilisation, according to the central bank's analysis.

The early indications are that the forthcoming crop should be ample and these should be a helpful factor. "Early indications

point to adequate soil moisture content and reservoir levels, conducive for rabi sowing. The estimates of a record kharif production should bring relief to the elevated prices of rice and dal. Vegetable prices are also expected to see a seasonal winter correction.

With prices stabilising, it is the performance of the industrial sector — particularly mining and metals and manufacturing — which will set the pace of the economy.

High frequency indicators available, according to the RBI, suggest that the slowdown in domestic economic activity bottomed out in the second quarter of 2024-25, and has since recovered, aided by strong festive demand and pick up in rural activities.

Industrial activity is expected to normalise and recover from the lows of the previous quarter. The end of the monsoon season and the expected pick up in government capital expenditure may provide some impetus to cement and iron and steel sectors.

Mining and electricity are also expected to normalise post the monsoon-related disruptions. The purchasing managers' index (PMI) for manufacturing at 56.5 for November indicated elevated levels of activity in the industrial sector. The supply chain pressures eased in October-November and fell below the historical average. The services sector continues to grow at a strong pace. PMI for the services remained steady at 58.4 in November, indicating continued expansion.

Yes, while the Indian economy had suddenly witnessed a road bump and had slowed down, with a bit of luck, we might witness another spurt in growth in the next year.

On the demand side, rural demand is trending upwards while urban demand shows some moderation on a high base. Government consumption is improving. Investment activity is also expected to improve. On the external front, merchandise exports expanded by 17.2 per cent in October 2024, while services exports continue to post upbeat growth (22.3 per cent in October).

On its considered and cautious view, the real GDP growth for 2024-25 is now projected at 6.6 per cent, which is not as buoyant as previously estimated. However, that is none too bad for a big economy like India's. (IPA Service)

# Careers in the mountains for a sustainable future

By: Ranjan K Baruah

Life in the cities and metros or urban areas is not similar with that of areas which are nearer to the mountains. Mountains are a storehouse of resources which have been used by human beings since ages. We should learn that of the 20 plant species that supply 80% of the world's food, six originated and have been diversified in mountains: maize, potatoes, barley, sorghum, tomatoes, and apples. Mountain ecosystems are under threat from pollution. Microplastics have even been found as high as the summit of Mt. Everest. The challenge is that up to 84 per cent of endemic mountain

species are at risk of extinction, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Mountains are natural jewels we should treasure. They are home to 15% of the world's population and host about half of the world's biodiversity hotspots. They provide freshwater for everyday life to half of humanity, helping to sustain agriculture and supply clean energy and medicines.

There are solutions too which need to be used and practised in a sustainable manner. Over centuries, mountain communities have developed solutions to adapt to their harsh environments, deal with climate change, reduce poverty and protect or

store biodiversity.

This year's International Mountain Day 2024 (IMD 2024) which is observed on 11th December focuses precisely on the capacity and needs of its people through a triple approach: "Mountain solutions for a sustainable future – innovation, adaptation and youth."

There is no doubt that innovation is essential for addressing complex mountain-related issues. It encompasses technological advancements as well as creative problem-solving such as climate-smart agriculture. It brings opportunities for young people to choose careers which are related to mountains and by doing so we may also contribute

for the best usage of the mountains without hampering the ecosystem.

The active participation of youth is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of mountain solutions. IMD 2024 promotes decent work and quality employment for young persons, accessible training, and entrepreneurship opportunities that contribute to the sustainable use of mountain resources.

As the global climate continues to warm, mountain glaciers melt affecting freshwater supplies downstream, and mountain people — some of the world's poorest — face even greater struggles to survive. Working in the field of combating climate change is one of the best career

choices for young people.

Like taking up careers for combating climate change one may also choose to study life sciences and then may get themselves engaged in the conservation of flora and fauna from the mountain ecosystem. For promoting the importance of mountains, one may also choose adventure sports activities as their careers like mountaineering. Adventure activities could be organised which also raises awareness amongst the public about the importance of conservation and protection of natural resources available in the mountain ecosystems.

One may also choose ecotourism as career options and contribute to sustainable devel-



opment by utilising the mountains in a sustainable way through which tourists explore them without hampering nature. There are many other opportunities which may be explored by our young people. This year's theme of the IMD focusses on youths' participation means it brings more opportunities for the young people to get engaged

voluntarily as well as professionally when it comes to safeguarding our mountains. (The author is a career mentor and skill trainer and currently the Advisor of the Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department of Bodoland Territorial Region and can be reached at 8473943734 or bkrjan@gmail.com)

## NIACL Assistant Recruitment 2025 – 500 Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 01/01/2025

The New India Assurance Company Ltd. (NIACL) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 500 Assistant posts in Class III cadre. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Assistant

No of posts: 500 posts

No of posts in Assam: 6 posts

Category-wise vacancy:

# UR: 260  
# SC: 91  
# ST: 51  
# OBC: 48  
# EWS: 50

Pay scale: Rs.22405-1305(1)-23710-1425(2)-26560-1605(5)-34585-1855(2)-38295-2260(3)-45075-2345(2)-49765-2500(5)-62265

Eligibility Criteria of NIACL Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidates age must be between 21 to 30 years as on 1st December 2024.

Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as follows

# SC/ST: 5 years  
# OBC-NCL: 3 years  
# PwBD: 10 years

Educational Qualification: A candidate must possess the minimum qualification of Graduation in any discipline from a recognized University or any equivalent qualification recognized as such by the Central Government. The candidate should have passed in English as one of the subjects at SSC / HSC / Intermediate / Graduation level. Candidate should possess certificate in proof of passing the qualifying examination as on 01/12/2024.

Language Proficiency: Knowledge of Reading, Writing and Speaking of Regional Language of the State / UT against the vacancies for which a candidate wishes to apply, is essential. To ascertain the candidate's familiarity with the Regional Language of the State / UT, a language test will be conducted before final selection. Candidates not found to be proficient in the Regional Language Test would be disqualified.

Application Fee (Non-Refundable):

# SC/ST / PwBD: Rs. 100/- (Intimation charge only)  
# Others: Rs. 850/- (Application fee including intimation charges)  
# Payment mode: Debit Cards (RuPay/Visa/MasterCard/Maestro), Credit Cards, Internet Banking, IMPS, Cash Cards/ Mobile Wallets

How to Apply for NIACL Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official NIACL Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for NIACL Assistant Vacancy.

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

# Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "Register Now".

# Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.

# Next, pay the application fee as per your category and submit the form.

# At the end, take a print out of the application form .

Important Dates of NIACL Recruitment 2025

# Starting date to apply online & fee payment: 17th December 2024  
# Closing date to apply online & fee payment: 1st January 2025  
# Tier I Online Examination (Preliminary Exam): 27th January 2025  
# Tier II Online Examination (Main Exam): 2nd March 2025  
# Download of Call Letters: 7 days prior to the date of each examination.

Selection Process of New India Assurance Assistant Recruitment

The selection process of New India Assurance Assistant Recruitment consists of following stages -

Tier I: Preliminary Examination

Preliminary Examination consisting of Objective Tests for 100 marks will be conducted online. This would consist of 3 sections (with separate timings of 20 minutes for each section) as follows:

Section/s	Max. Marks
Test of English Language	30
Test of Reasoning	35
Test of Numerical Ability	35

Exam centres in Assam: Dibrugarh, Guwahati, Jorhat, Silchar and Tezpur

Tier II: Main Examination

The Main Examination for 250 marks, would be of tentatively 2 hours duration (separate time for each test / section or composite time) and will consist of 5 sections as follows with 40 questions each.

Section/s	Max. Marks
Test of Reasoning	50
Test of English Language	50
Test of General Awareness	50
Test of Numerical Ability	50
Computer Knowledge	50

Exam centre in Assam: Guwahati

Tier III: Regional Language Test

Candidates shortlisted in the online Main Examination will subsequently be called for Regional Language Test to be conducted by the Company, at select centres. Candidates applying for vacancy under State / UT other than their domiciled State / UT, have to appear and qualify the Regional Language Test in the language of State / UT for which they have applied.

The Regional Language Test will be of qualifying nature only. No Scores will be allotted for the same.

The scores obtained by the candidates in the Online Main Examination will be considered while arriving at the Final Ranking subject to their qualifying the Regional Language Test. Candidate should be sufficiently high in the Merit List to be shortlisted for subsequent Recruitment process.

## Indian Air Force Recruitment 2025 – Agniveer Vayu Online Application

Last Date: 27/01/2025

Indian Air Force has released the official notification for the recruitment of Agniveer Vayu vacancy for Agniveer Vayu Intake 01/2026 under Agniveer Vayu or Agniveer Vayu Scheme across the country. Interested and eligible candidates who want to enter Indian Air Force as a soldier may apply online.

Name of post: Agniveer Vayu  
No of posts: To be updated later  
Name of batch: Agniveer Vayu Intake 01/2026  
Name of scheme: Agniveer Vayu Scheme  
Duration of service: 4 Years  
Name of department: Indian Air Force  
Name of ministry: Ministry of Defence, India  
Date of launch of the scheme: 14th June 2022  
Job location: All India

Mode of application: Online

Helpline: For queries pertaining to filling up of online application form, candidates may also contact on Telephone No. 020-25503105/25503106.

Eligibility Criteria of Indian Air Force Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidates born between 01 January 2005 and 01 July 2008 (both days inclusive) are eligible to apply for Agniveer Vayu posts. In case, a candidate clears all the stages of the Selection Procedure, then the upper age limit as on date of enrollment is 21 years.

Educational Qualification:

Science Subjects: Candidates should have passed Intermediate/ 10+2/ Equivalent examination with Mathematics, Physics and English from an Education Board recognised by Central, State and UT with minimum 50% marks in aggregate and 50% marks in English.

OR

Passed Three years Diploma Course in Engineering (Mechanical/ Electrical/ Electronics/ Automobile/ Computer Science/ Instrumentation Technology/ Information Technology) from a Central, State and UT recognized Polytechnic institute with 50% marks in aggregate and 50% marks in English in diploma course (or in Intermediate/Matriculation, if English is not a subject in Diploma Course).

OR

Passed Two years Vocational Course with non-vocational subject viz. Physics and Maths from State Education Boards recognised by Central, State and UT with 50% marks in aggregate and 50% marks in English in vocational course (or in Intermediate/ Matriculation, if English is not a subject in Vocational Course).

Other Than Science Subjects: Candidates should have passed Intermediate/ 10+2/ Equivalent examination in any subject approved by Education Boards recognised by Central, State and UT with minimum 50% marks in aggregate and 50% marks in English.

OR

Passed two years vocational course from Education Boards recognised by Central, State and UT with minimum 50% marks in aggregate and 50% marks in English in vocational course or in Intermediate/Matriculation if English is not a subject in Vocational Course.

Mandatory Medical Standards of Agniveer Vayu

General Medical Standards for Agniveer Vayu are as follows:-

# Height: Minimum acceptable height is 152 cms (For Male candidates) and 152 cms (For Female candidates). For candidates belonging to North East or hilly regions of Uttarakhand, a lower minimum height of 147 cms will be accepted. In case of candidates from Lakshadweep, the minimum height will be 150 cms.

# Chest:

Male Candidates: The chest wall should be well proportioned and well developed. Minimum chest circumference should be 77 cms and the chest expansion should be atleast 05 cms.

Female Candidates: The chest wall should be well proportioned and should be with minimum range of expansion of 05 cms.

# Weight: Proportionate to height and age.

# Gynaecological Examination (For female candidates): The examination covers external genitalia, hernia orifices and the perineum, any evidence of stress urinary incontinence or genital prolapse outside introitus.

# Pregnancy (For female candidates): Any candidate, if found pregnant shall be disqualified and her candidature will be rejected.

# Hearing: Candidate should have normal hearing i.e. able to hear forced whisper from a distance of 6 meters with each ear separately.

# Dental: Should have healthy gums, good set of teeth and minimum 14 dental points.

# General Health: Candidate should be of normal anatomy without loss of any appendages. He should be free from any active or latent, acute or chronic, medical or surgical disability or infection and skin ailments. Candidate shall be physically and mentally FIT to perform duty in any part of the world, in any climate and ter-

rain.

# Body Tattoo: Permanent body tattoos are not permitted. However, tattoos only on inner face of the fore arms (inside of elbow to the wrist), back (dorsal) part of the hand/reverse side of palm and Tribals with tattoos which are as per custom and traditions of their tribes may be considered. Offensive, obscene, indecent, sexist or racist tattoos are prohibited regardless of location on the Body.

However, right to consider a tattoo acceptable or unacceptable will rest with the Selection Centre. Candidates with permanent body tattoos are to submit two postcard size photographs (close up and distant view) with details of size and type of the Tattoo.

Year	Customized Package	In Hand (70%)
1st Year	Rs 30,000	Rs 21,000
2nd Year	Rs 33,000	Rs 23,100
3rd Year	Rs 36,500	Rs 25,550
4th Year	Rs 40,000	Rs 28,000
Exit after 4 year	Rs 10.04 lakhs plus accrued interest	
Life Insurance Cover	Rs 48 lakhs	

Examination Fee: Examination fee of Rs.550 plus GST is to be paid by the candidate while registering for the online examination. The payment can be made by using Debit Cards/ Credit Cards/ Internet Banking through payment gateway. The examination fee can also be paid by Challan payment at any Axis Bank Branch.

How to Apply for IAF Recruitment ?

The application mode for Agniveer Vayu Recruitment is online. Interested and eligible candidates must apply online here.

Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply online.

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .  
# Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "New User? Register".  
# In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.  
# Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.  
# Next, pay the examination fee and submit the form.  
# At the end, take a print out of the application form .

Important Dates of Indian Air Force Agniveer Vayu Recruitment 2025

Starting date of submission of online application: 7th January 2025  
Last date of submission of online application: 27th January 2025  
Date of issue of Admit Card: 19th March 2025 Onwards  
Date of exam: 22nd March 2025 Onwards  
Release of provisional select list: 14th November 2025.  
Release of final enrollment list: 01st December 2025.

## UPSC NDA & NA (II) Recruitment 2025 – Online Apply for 406 Posts

Last Date: 31/12/2024.

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has released the employment notification for the recruitment of 406 vacancy through National Defence Academy & Naval Academy Examination (I), 2025. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of exam: National Defence Academy & Naval Academy Examination (I), 2025

No of posts: 406 posts  
Vacancy Breakup:

# National Defence Academy: 370  
# Naval Academy (10+2 Cadet Entry Scheme): 36

Eligibility Criteria of UPSC NDA & NA (II) Recruitment

Educational Qualification:

Army Wing of National Defence Academy: 12th Class pass of the 10+2 pattern of School Education or equivalent examination conducted by a State Education Board or a University.

Air Force and Naval Wings of National Defence Academy and for the 10+2 Cadet Entry Scheme at the Indian Naval Academy: 12th Class pass with Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics of the 10+2 pattern of School Education or equivalent conducted by a State Education Board or a University.

Candidates who are appearing in the 12th Class under the 10+2 pattern of School Education or equivalent examination can also apply for this examination  
Age Limit: Only unmarried male/female candidates born not earlier than 2nd July, 2006 and not later than 01st July, 2009 are eligible to apply for National Defence Academy & Naval Academy Examination (I), 2025.

Application Fee of UPSC NDA & NA (I) Exam 2025

+ Others: Rs. 100/-  
+ SC/ST Candidates/Sons of JCOs/NCOs/ORs: Nil  
+ Women: Nil  
+ Payment Mode: Online/ Offline

How to Apply for UPSC NDA & NA Recruitment ?  
Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for UPSC Recruitment by visiting at official recruitment portal of UPSC. They may follow below mentioned steps

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .  
# Click on Online Application Form link .  
# A new webpage will be opened.  
# Enter all your personal and educational details as required .  
# Upload your passport sized photograph and signature and other required documents.  
# Pay the application fee as per your category and at the end click on submit button

# Don't forget to take a print of submitted application form .

Important Dates of UPSC NDA & NA Exam 2025

+ Starting date of online application submission: 11th December 2024  
+ Last date of online application submission: 31st December 2024 till 6 PM  
+ Release date of Admit Card: To be updated later  
+ Date of written exam: 13th April, 2025

## India-US defence relationship advancing in terrific, exciting ways: Pentagon



**WASHINGTON, Dec 20:** The defence relationship between India and the US is accelerating and advancing in terrific and exciting ways, the Pentagon has said amidst the transition from the Joe Biden administration to that of President-elect Donald Trump.

"The US-India defence relationship stands on its own. It is accelerating and advancing in terrific and exciting ways, both as it relates to defence industrial base cooperation as well as operational cooperation across the services," Ely Ratner, Assistant Secretary of Defence for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, told reporters at a news conference here.

"It (the India-US defence ties) is a continuing growth area, even as the India-China relationship waxes and wanes," Ratner said in response to a question.

India has been accorded the status of the Major Defence Partnership by the United States. Biden

administration officials have described the defence ties as one of the key pillars of this relationship.

In October, India concluded an agreement with the US for the procurement of 31 General Atomics MQ-9B (16 Sky Guardian and 15 Sea Guardian) remotely-piloted aircraft and their associated equipment, which will enhance the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities of India's armed forces across all domains.

India and the US concluded the Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA) this year, enhancing the mutual supply of defence goods and services.

During their meeting in September, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Biden committed to advancing ongoing discussions on aligning their respective defence procurement systems to further enable the reciprocal supply of defence goods and services. (PTI)

## 8 dead, 18 rescued as speedboat carrying migrants capsizes near Greek island of Rhodes

**ATHENS, Dec 20:** A speedboat carrying migrants capsized Friday morning off the eastern Greek island of Rhodes, leaving eight dead, Greek authorities said.

The coast guard said the incident occurred while the speedboat was carrying out "dangerous maneuvers" to try and evade a patrol vessel, causing migrants to fall into the sea. Eighteen of the migrants were rescued.

Rescue workers on three coast guard vessels and a helicopter were working near the resort area of Afantou Beach in the northeast of the island. It was unclear whether other passengers were missing, authorities said.

Eight of the survivors have been hospitalized, local officials said, with one of them in critical condition, according to state-run television.

Rhodes, one of several large Greek islands located near the coast of Turkey, is on a busy illegal smuggling route in the eastern Mediterranean.

At the main port of the island, police and ambulance workers held up sheets of gray tarp as the recovered bodies were carried into an ambulance.

It was the second deadly incident involving migrants in the past week, as authorities in Athens brace for a spike in arrivals as a result of wars in the Middle East.

Seven migrants were killed and dozens are believed to be missing after a boat partially sank south of the island of Crete over the weekend — one of four rescue operations during which more than 200 migrants were rescued.

The search south of Crete around the tiny island of Gavdos was called off Wednesday.

The number of migrants traveling illegally to Greece is expected

to top 60,000 this year, with Syrians making up the largest number, followed by Afghans, Egyptians, Eritreans and Palestinians, according to government data. (AP)

Sri Lanka to soon formulate national policy on visits by foreign research vessels: Foreign Minister

**COLOMBO, Dec 20:** Sri Lanka will soon formulate a national policy on allowing visits by foreign research vessels, Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath said here on Friday, amidst frequent docking requests from Chinese surveillance ships which raised concerns in India.

Herath's comments came days after Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's visit to India.

In January, Sri Lanka enforced a year-long moratorium on foreign marine scientific research survey vessels operating in its waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone after strong security concerns were raised by India and the US following frequent docking requests from hi-tech Chinese surveillance vessels.

Sri Lanka's moratorium on allowing research vessels is still in force which would be reviewed appropriately, Herath said.

Upon his return to Colombo from India, Dissanayake held a meeting with a top Chinese government official who expressed China's wish to see Chinese research ships resuming their visits to Colombo.

Asked if India had raised concerns over such visits during Dissanayake's stay in India, Herath said Indian concerns were based on their national security and regional security threats.

"We assured that we will not allow any action to threaten Indian security concerns by using our land," Herath said. (PTI)

## Russian missiles target Kyiv after Ukraine fires US-made missiles across the border

'We ask citizens to immediately respond to reports of ballistic attack threats'

**KYIV, Dec 20:** A Russian ballistic missile attack on Ukraine's capital Kyiv early Friday killed at least one person and injured nine others, officials said. Moscow claimed it was in response to a Ukrainian strike on Russian soil using American-made weapons.

At least three loud blasts were heard in Kyiv shortly before sunrise. Ukraine's air force said it intercepted five Iskander short-range ballistic missiles fired at the city. The attack knocked out heating to 630 residential buildings, 16 medical facilities, and 30 schools and kindergartens, the city administration said, and falling missile debris caused damage and sparked fires in three districts.

"We ask citizens to immediately respond to reports of ballistic attack threats, because there is very little time to find shelter," the air force said.

During the almost three years since the war began, Russia has regularly bombed civilian areas of Ukraine, often in an attempt to



cripple the power grid and unnerve Ukrainians.

Meanwhile Ukraine, struggling to hold back Russia's bigger army on the front line, has attempted to strike Russian infrastructure supporting the country's war effort.

The Russian Ministry of Defence said the strike was in response to a Ukrainian missile attack on Russia's Rostov border region two days earlier. That attack used six American-made Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, missiles and four Storm Shadow air-launched missiles pro-

vided by the United Kingdom, it said.

That day, Ukraine claimed to have targeted a Rostov oil refinery as part of its campaign to strike Russian infrastructure supporting the country's war effort.

The use of Western-supplied weapons to strike Russia has angered the Kremlin. Ukraine fired several American-supplied long-range missiles into Russia for the first time on November 19 after Washington eased restrictions on their use.

That development prompted

## Chinese national charged with acting as Beijing's agent in local California election

**WASHINGTON, Dec 20:** A Chinese national was arrested on Thursday on charges of acting as an illegal agent for Beijing when serving as the campaign manager for an unnamed politician elected to a city council in Southern California two years ago.

The arrest of Yaoning "Mike" Sun, 64, came at a time of rising concerns that the Chinese government has cultivated a network of operatives to influence local elections in the US to install politicians who are friendly to Beijing and can help promote Chinese interests.

According to a complaint filed on Tuesday in the US District Court for the Central District of California, Sun is accused of conspiring with Chen Jun, who was sentenced to 20 months last month for acting as an illegal agent of the Chinese government.

Chen, 71, also a Chinese national, pleaded guilty in July to using Chinese money to bribe federal agents to undermine the anti-Beijing spiritual group Falun Gong. The charge against Sun shows that Chen also conspired to interfere with local elections.

It was not immediately clear if Sun had a lawyer who could speak on his behalf.

Sun was instructed by Chen to write up a report in 2023 to recount to Chinese officials how they helped the local politician get elected, according to the affidavit. Subsequent writings between the two men described the city councilperson as a "new political star" and included a request for USD 80,000 to fund more pro-Beijing activities in the United States, according to the court documents.

## Ohio State House and Senate designates October as Hindu Heritage Month

**WASHINGTON, Dec 20:** The Ohio State House and Senate has passed a bill to designate October as Hindu Heritage Month.

"This is a huge win for Hindus across Ohio and the country. Now, every October, we will be able to officially celebrate our Hindu heritage in Ohio," State Senator Niraj Antani said after the passage of his bill to designate October as Hindu Heritage Month in Ohio.

Antani is the first Hindu and Indian American State Senator in Ohio's history and the youngest Hindu and Indian American state or federal-elected official in the

country. "This was the culmination of a lot of work by Hindu advocates here in Ohio and across the country and I was very happy to partner with them to get this passed," Antani said. A day earlier, he amended his bill into HB 173 on the Senate floor. Both chambers subsequently passed the legislation unanimously.

"Ohio is home to millions of unique individuals, each with their own background and story," State Representative Adam Mathews said. Mathews was the House sponsor and champion of the bill and represents most of Warren County, where many Cincinnati area Hindus reside. (PTI)

Russia to use a new hypersonic missile, called Oreshnik, for the first time. President Vladimir Putin suggested the missile could be used to target government buildings in Kyiv, though there have been no reports of an Oreshnik being used for a second time.

Answering the Ukrainian attack on Rostov on Wednesday, the Defence Ministry said it carried out a group strike with "high-precision, long-range weapons" on the command centre of Ukraine's military intelligence agency and another location where it said Ukraine's Neptune missile systems are designed and produced.

The attack also targeted Ukrainian ground-based cruise missile systems and US-made Patriot air defence systems, the Defence Ministry said.

"The objectives of the strike have been achieved. All objects are hit," the defence ministry said in a Telegram post.

Its claims could not immediately be verified. (AP)

## Pakistan's ballistic missile programme emerging threat to US: White House

**WASHINGTON, Dec 20:** Asserting that Pakistan developing sophisticated missile technology will give it the capability to strike targets well beyond South Asia, including in the US, a top White House official said on Thursday that the Asian country's actions are an emerging threat to the United States.

Such a remark by the top White House official comes a day after the US slapped sanctions on four Pakistani entities, including the state-owned flagship aerospace and defence agency -- National Development Complex (NDC) -- on charges of them contributing to Pakistan's ballistic-missile programme. The other three entities are Akhtar and Sons Private Limited, Affiliates International and Rockside Enterprise. All three are based in Karachi. Based in Islamabad, the NDC is responsible for the ballistic-missile programme. It has worked to acquire items to advance Pakistan's long-range ballistic missile programme.

"As a result, the (Joe) Biden administration has implemented a series of steps to contend with further development of long-range missile systems. Over the last year, we have issued three rounds of sanctions against non-Pakistani entities that have provided support to Pakistan's ballistic-missile programme," Principal Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer told a think-tank here.

"And yesterday, we issued sanctions directly against Pakistan's state-owned National Development Complex, which the United States assesses is involved in the development and production of Pakistan's long-range ballistic missiles, the first time we have sanctioned a Pak-

## Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty initiative is in India's favour: Climate activist Harjeet Singh

**DHULIKHEL (NEPAL), Dec 20:** The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty initiative is in India's favour and the country should endorse it, the campaign's global engagement director Harjeet Singh has said.

Singh's comments came during the first Asia meeting of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty initiative in Nepal on Thursday.

Eleven Asian countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand participated in the event.

Speaking to PTI, Singh said that the action plan of the treaty will go in favour of India as the group and the Indian government share similar concerns.

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is an initiative to create a legally binding mechanism to halt the expansion of coal, oil and gas exploitation and manage a fair transition towards renewable energy resources. So far, 16 countries across four continents, including Pakistan and the Bahamas have endorsed the initiative. "It will be in India's favour because we are making the same demands that the Indian government is -- that rich countries have to do more, and they have to transition away from fossil fuel the fastest," Singh told PTI.

"Kolkata has already endorsed this treaty initiative; we are also reaching out to places like Sikkim and cities like Indore -- that have demonstrated that leadership and they acknowledge the importance of protecting the environment," he said.

Acknowledging that certain climate negotiations did not materialise on the global stage, Singh said that it would be "challenging for the

## Croatian police say 7-year-old girl died and 6 other people wounded



**ZAGREB (CROATIA), Dec 20:** A 7-year-old girl died and a teacher and five other students were wounded in a knife attack at a school in the Croatian capital, Zagreb, authorities said Friday.

Police said the attack happened at 9:50 a.m. at the Precko Elementary School in the neighborhood of the same name. They described the attacker as a "young male" and said he had been detained.

Health Minister Irena Hristic said the attacker was over 18, while media reported he was 19.

Video footage published by Croatian media showed children running away from the school building. (AP)

## Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain laid to rest in San Francisco

Percussionist Sivamani pays musical tribute

**NEW YORK, Dec 20:** Zakir Hussain was laid to rest on Thursday at a San Francisco cemetery as renowned percussionist A Sivamani and other artists performed on their drums a little distance away in a tribute to the tabla maestro.

Hussain, one of the world's most accomplished percussionists, died at a San Francisco hospital on Monday due to complications arising from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, a lung disease. He was 73.

He was laid to rest at the Fernwood cemetery in San Francisco on Thursday. Hundreds of his admirers gathered at Hussain's funeral to pay their last respects. Sivamani and several other musicians played drums a little distance away to pay him a tribute.

Sivamani told PTI Video, "Rhythm is God, that is you Zakir bhai. I learned a lot in our journey from 1982 till now. Every moment you are here with us in the rhythm. Every time I hit the rhythm, you are there. We love you Zakir Bhai. Have a lovely journey. Please give my pranam to all the masters."

Consul General of India in San



Francisco Dr K Srikr Reddy also paid tributes to Hussain.

"The mortal remains of legendary Tabla maestro and Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Zakir Hussain were laid to rest this afternoon at Fernwood Cemetery, Mill Valley, near San Francisco," Indian Consulate in San Francisco said in a post on X.

"On behalf of the Government and people of India, Consul General Dr K Srikr Reddy paid tribute by draping the mortal remains of the Ustad Zakir Hussain with the Indian national flag, offered con-

dolences to his wife Antonia Minneola and his family members," the post read.

They also "read out the condolence message (tweet) of Hon'ble Prime Minister. Around 300 persons, including his family, friends, musicians (Sivamani and others), music lovers, and diaspora members, paid their last respects," the post read.

Hussain is survived by his wife Antonia Minneola and daughters Anisa Qureshi and Isabella Qureshi. Hussain received the Padma Shri in 1988, the Padma Bhushan in 2002, and the Padma Vibhushan in 2023.

The celebrated musician, one of India's most well-known, received four Grammy Awards in his career spanning six decades, including three at the 66th Grammy Awards earlier this year.

Hussain is survived by his wife Antonia Minneola and daughters Anisa Qureshi and Isabella Qureshi. Hussain received the Padma Shri in 1988, the Padma Bhushan in 2002, and the Padma Vibhushan in 2023.

In his career spanning six decades, the musician worked with several renowned international and Indian artists, but it was his 1973 musical project with English guitarist John McLaughlin, violinist L Shankar, and percussionist TH 'Vikku' Vinayakram that brought together Indian classical and elements of jazz in a fusion hitherto unknown.

Sivamani after Hussain's death in a Facebook post said he would go to San Francisco to see him for the last time.

"No Zakir Bhai, you cannot leave us like this. This is just unbelievable...I'm on the way to San Francisco. I want to see you...one

last time...I want to hold your hands...my brother, my Guru...I'm devastated...life will never be the same again," Sivamani had said.

Messages of condolence poured in on social media as the news of Hussain's demise spread.

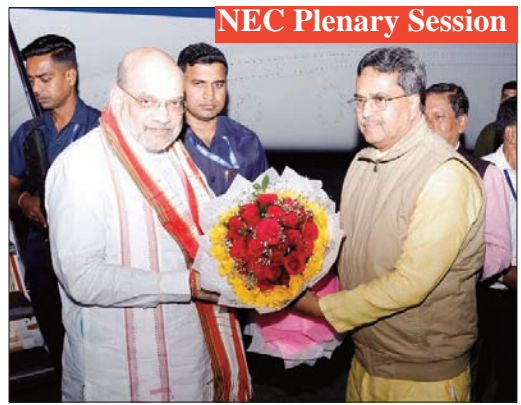
Prime Minister Narendra Modi called him a true genius who revolutionised the world of Indian classical music.

Grammy winner musician Ricky Kej remembered Hussain for his "immense humility, approachable nature".

"One of the greatest musicians and personalities India has ever produced. Along with being the best himself, Zakirji was known for...being responsible for the careers of numerous musicians, who are now forces to reckon with themselves.

He was a treasure trove of skill and knowledge and always shared and encouraged the entire music community through collaborations and his actions. His legacy will live on forever, and his influence will be felt for generations. He left us too soon." Kej had written on X after his demise. (PTI)

## Union Home Minister, Scindia arrives in Tripura



NEC Plenary Session

**HT Correspondent**  
AGARTALA, Dec 20: Agartala is abuzz with preparations as Union Home Minister Amit Shah, DoNER minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, and a host of dignitaries gather for the 72nd North Eastern Council (NEC) Plenary Session.

The high-profile meeting, slated for December 20 and 21, will focus on the region's developmental roadmap.

This evening, Shah and Scindia will arrive in the Tripura capital, joined by five Governors, three chief ministers, and other senior officials. Sukanta Majumdar, Union minister of State, will also be present, adding to the roster of influential leaders committed to advancing the Northeast's growth agenda.

Confirmed attendees include Governors K.T. Parnaik (Arunachal Pradesh), Lakshman Prasad Acharya (Manipur), La Ganesan (Nagaland), Om Prakash (Sikkim), and Hari Babu Kambhampati (Mizoram). Chief ministers Pema Khandu (Arunachal Pradesh), N. Biren Singh (Manipur), and Prem Singh Tamang (Sikkim) will contribute to the discussions, alongside other key stakeholders.

Chief minister Pema Khandu, upon arriving in Agartala with Governor KT Parnaik and senior officials, praised the host state's allure. "Tripura is a treasure trove of history, culture, and natural splendor. This is the perfect setting for deliberations aimed at uplifting the Northeast," he remarked.

The NEC plenary provides a platform for collaborative policymaking among northeastern states, aligning efforts for inclusive and sustainable development. Delegates will deliberate on pressing challenges and explore innovative solutions to accelerate progress across the region.

The two-day session is expected to conclude with actionable strategies to address the Northeast's unique developmental needs, strengthening the foundation for a prosperous future.

## Villagers misinformed against Siang project: Arunachal CM

**ITANAGAR, Dec 20:** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu claimed that misinformation was being circulated to brainwash villagers against the proposed Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP).

People who have been allegedly instigating the protesters against the project are confused about the capacity of the hydropower facility, he said.

"Being the chief minister I am not aware of the exact wattage of power the project will generate. Even NHPC is not aware of that. How do you know the capacity of the project when the survey and investigation process has not even begun?" Khandu asked at the "Thanks Giving" programme of local legislator and Panchayati Raj Minister Ojing Tasing on his electoral victory at Boleng in Siang district.

"If you don't want a dam, if you don't want a hydropower project, there won't be no project...Chapter closed," the chief minister said while addressing at the function.

Khandu also asserted that the project is not all about generating hydropower.

"It is a multipurpose project and is of national importance and has been envisioned by the Government of India and the Niti Aayog...Hy-

dropower generation is a by-product of the multipurpose project. The real objective of the project is to save Siang (river) and the society connected with the river since time immemorial," he said.

According to a release issued by CMO on Thursday, Khandu said that China has already approved the construction of a project that would generate a massive power of about 60,000 MW on the river just before entering India through Tuting in Upper Siang.

The river is known as Yarlung Tsangpo in the Tibet region. "In such a scenario, it is inevitable that the volume of water in the Siang river will drastically get reduced so much so that during winters you will be able to cross the mighty Siang on foot. Would you like such a situation? I certainly won't," Khandu said at the programme.

The other reason for the Siang multipurpose project is that in case the Chinese authorities release water from its dams, a trail of destruction will sweep through the Siang belt, Assam and Bangladesh, he said.

"Yes we are optimistic that relations will improve with the progress being made through bilateral talks with China but we cannot remain complacent," he pointed out. (PTI)

## Amit Shah to launch 8 co-operative projects in Tripura

Micro ATMs to be distributed to 50 primary cooperative societies under the Tripura State Cooperative Bank

**HT Correspondent**  
AGARTALA, Dec 20: Union Home Minister and minister for Cooperation Amit Shah is set to visit Tripura for a two-day trip, during which he will launch and inaugurate eight cooperative projects and schemes at the Cooperative Conference 2024.

The event is scheduled to take place on December 22 at Rabintra Shatabarshiki Bhavan in Agartala.

Addressing the media, Tripura Cooperative Minister Shukla Charan Noatia revealed that Shah's visit will coincide with the 72nd Plenary Session of the North Eastern Regional Council, where he will preside as the Chairperson.

Highlighting the significance of the conference, Noatia mentioned that 2025 has been declared the International Year of Cooperatives by the United Nations, making the Cooperative Conference 2024 an important



event for the state.

"A total of 18 stalls showcasing achievements in the cooperative sector will be set up to create public awareness. Union Minister Amit Shah will inspect these stalls and flag off two mobile vans—one Bharat Brand van from the National Co-operative Consumers' Federation Ltd. (NCCF) and another Rural Mart van from NABARD," Noatia said.

During the event, Shah will

also distribute micro ATMs to 50 primary cooperative societies under the Tripura State Cooperative Bank.

Among the key inaugurations are a new petrol pump constructed by the Tripura State Co-operative Consumers Federation Ltd. (TSCCF) in Udaipur, Gomati District, a consumer store for the Kta Bru Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd. in the Bru Settlement area of Hadukulu, Dhalai District, the Daldoli

Lamps Fertilizer Sales Center in Katlamara, Mohanpur subdivision, West District, a Smart Training Center under the Tripura State Cooperative Union in Arundhutinagar, Agartala.

Additionally, Shah will inaugurate the distribution of mini dal seeds through the National Co-operative Consumers' Federation Ltd. (NCCF). An MoU will also be signed between the National Co-operative Organics Federation (NCOF) and the Tripura State Organic Development Agency.

All these initiatives will be virtually inaugurated from the event venue, Tripura Chief Minister Prof. Dr. Manik Saha, MP Biplob Kumar Deb, Agartala Mayor and MLA Dipak Majumdar, Union Ministry of Cooperatives Secretary Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani, and Tripura Chief Secretary Jitendra Kumar Sinha will join the Union Minister on stage for the occasion.

## Smuggled Burmese areca nuts, foreign cigarettes seized in Mizoram



**AIZAWL, Dec 20:** Assam Rifles personnel have recovered smuggled foreign cigarettes and Burmese areca nuts with a combined value of ₹ 8 crore in two separate operations near the India-Myanmar border in east Mizoram's Champhai and the state's southernmost Lawngtlai district, an official said on Friday.

During an operation in Lawngtlai district's Cherhlu area on

Wednesday, troopers of the paramilitary force, assisted by the Mizoram Police, seized 600 cases of foreign cigarettes smuggled from Myanmar, she said.

The seized cigarettes worth ₹ 7.8 crore were handed over to the state police in Thingsai village in the neighbouring Hnahthial district on the same day, she said.

In another operation, the joint team of Assam Rifles and Customs officials seized 4,400 kg of smuggled Burmese areca nuts at Hmuh-meltha in Champhai district on Wednesday, the officer said.

The consignment worth ₹ 30.8 lakh was handed over to the Customs preventive force in Champhai for further legal proceedings, she added. (PTI)

## Mizoram govt making efforts to implement Protected Area Regime

**AIZAWL, Dec 20:** The Mizoram government is making efforts to implement the Protected Area Regime (PAR) following the directive of the Centre to reimpose the same in the northeastern state after 13 years of its relaxation, a senior home department official said on Friday.

Mizoram home secretary Vanlalnwawia said the state government is yet to process the reinstatement of the PAR as it received the Centre's notification notifying the reimposition of the same only on Thursday.

"We are making efforts towards the reimposition of the PAR and training officials of Foreigner Registration Office on the matter, including issuance of permits through e-portal, was conducted on Thursday and Friday," he told PTI.

Vanlalnwawia said that a notification informing the general public about the reimposition of PAR will be issued if necessary.

The Home secretary said that Protected Area Permit (PAP) and Restricted Area Permits (RAP) required for foreigners visiting the state are yet to be demanded from foreigners at the Lengpui airport and other entry points of the state.

Although PAP and RAP were relaxed for the past 13 years, foreigners entering the state used to report and register themselves at the Foreigner Registration Office manned by CID (Special Branch) of Mizoram police in Aizawl within 24 hours of their arrival in the state, he said.

The whole of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram, and parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand are defined as protected areas.

In 2011 the Centre had relaxed the PAR from Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram to boost tourism and exempted all foreigners except Afghanistani, Pakistani and Chinese from the PAP.

This relaxation was later extended for five years at a time, with the latest order issued in December 2022 and valid until December 2027. (PTI)

## Efforts called to address declining livestock, milk availability

District Veterinary Officers (DVOs) presents progress reports on the livestock census, FMD vaccination

**ITANAGAR, Dec 20:** Arunachal Pradesh animal husbandry minister Gabriel D. Wangsu on Friday expressed concern over the state's declining livestock numbers and milk productivity and urged department officials to work sincerely to reverse the trend.



Wangsu stressed the need for accurate data collection and timely reporting, urging district officers to ensure the efficient completion of the census and vaccination coverage. "Without correct data, we cannot effectively address challenges or secure necessary resources," he said.

The minister also directed the department to speed up the setting up of dairy cooperative societies (DCS) and identify dairy farmers for targeted interventions. "Every new development plan must align with a comprehensive master plan to ensure efficiency and sustainability," he added. He also stressed strict adherence to vaccination schedules under the National Animal

reports on the livestock census, FMD vaccination, disease monitoring, and programmes such as the National Livestock Mission (NLM) and Atma Nirbhar Pashu Palan Yojana (ANPPY). They also highlighted challenges like manpower shortages, logistical issues, and infrastructure gaps.

Acknowledging these challenges, Wangsu assured officials that the state government is committed to revamping the livestock and dairy sector under chief minister Pema Khandu's vision.

"The Pema 3.0 government is focused on enhancing the animal husbandry sector. We are preparing an action plan, but success depends on accurate data and collective effort. Let us elevate Arunachal Pradesh as a model state in livestock management and animal health," he said.

Animal husbandry, veterinary, and dairy development secretary Hage Tari urged officials to prioritise fieldwork and provide daily updates from each district. (PTI)

**भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण**  
**AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA**

**!!! CAUTION: BE AWARE OF FAKE RECRUITMENT !!!**

It has been reported to AAI that unscrupulous elements/fraudsters/touts/agents have created false identity for themselves and have tried to deceive by pretending themselves as recruiters of Airports Authority of India, offering fictitious job opportunities through fake recruitment notices/messages/mobile phone calls for lucrative career in AAI.

Airports Authority of India urges potential job seekers to exercise caution and due diligence by verifying the authenticity of any job advertisement/messages/call letters/appointment letters on the careers section of AAI website [www.aai.aero](http://www.aai.aero) and no other website.

All details regarding recruitment such as detailed advertisement, Application Verification/Interview Schedule, Final results, etc. are published on AAI's website [www.aai.aero](http://www.aai.aero).

Application fees is payable only at the time of online application submission which is clearly mentioned in the advertisement and is payable only by male candidates belonging to Unreserved and OBC(NCL) categories. No other payments are sought at any stages of recruitment by AAI.

Any person dealing with such unscrupulous elements/agents/messages/mobile phone calls will be doing so at his/her own risk and cost. Airports Authority of India shall in no way be responsible for the consequences thereof.

If anyone falls prey to such fraud/fake recruitment racket, they are advised to file an FIR against the fraudsters with the local Police Station. For Hindi version please click on under mention weblink: [https://www.aai.aero/sites/default/files/aaiupload/AAI\\_NIT\\_%20No-03\\_Hindi\\_Dec\\_12\\_2024\\_0.pdf](https://www.aai.aero/sites/default/files/aaiupload/AAI_NIT_%20No-03_Hindi_Dec_12_2024_0.pdf)

NIT No-03/2024-25 **Executive Director (HR)**  
**CBC 03111/12/0003/2425**

**शिक्षण अभियान**  
**AXOM SARBA SIKSHA ABHIJAN MISSION**  
**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT MISSION CO-ORDINATOR,**  
**KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL, DIPHU ASSAM**

**NO.SSA/KAAC/CW/Construction/Veriousactivities/2024-25/75/731 Dated 20/12/2024**

**TENDER NOTICE**

The District Mission Co-ordinator, SSA, KAAC Diphu invites fresh bids for the following works from the registered Contractor [A, B under PWD Bid.] having experience of similar nature of work.

Details of the bid may be seen at the e-procurement portal website i.e. [www.assam-tenders.gov.in](http://www.assam-tenders.gov.in) and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours 20th Dec/2025(11:00AM) to 28th Dec/2024(3:PM)

Name of work	Package Nos.	Place of construction works	Approx. Value of work	Time of completion	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	EMD to be withdrawn in favour of	Tender cost
Construction of New School Building for upgradation from upper primary to Secondary school under Samagra Shiksha at Bhanu Bhakta English ME School	4D	NSB at Bhanu Bhakta English ME School	Rs. 1,61,65,000.00	18 month	Rs. 3,23,300.00 (For General) and Rs. 1,61,650 (For reserved category)	The District Mission Co-ordinator, Samagra Shiksha, KAAC, Diphu	Rs. 10,000/-

**Note:**

- Pre-bid meeting: Date and time 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec/2024 at 11.00 AM
- Venue: Office of the District Mission Co-ordinator, SSA, KAAC, Diphu, online mode of submission for both Technical and Financial Bid is mandatory.
- A hard copy of Technical bid submitted online is also to be submitted at the office chamber of the undersigned on or before 28<sup>th</sup> Dec/2024 upto 15:00 hours for evaluation purpose. For any discrepancy between the online bid and the hard copy of the bid, the online bid will govern and will be considered for evaluation.
- Alongwith the hard copy of the Technical bid, the following documents (in original) must also be submitted on or before 28<sup>th</sup> Dec/2024 upto 15:00 hours:-
  - Original power of Attorney for signing the BID, if any.
  - Bid Security in the form of Original TDR/FDR/DCR from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank,
  - Original DD/Banker's Cheque of the specified amount against the works should be in favour of the District Mission Co-ordinator, Samagra Shiksha, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu towards cost of Bid documents for the job.
- Bidders are advise to scan their Technical papers at the resolution of 100 dpi (Black & white made) in pdf format for multiple pages with maximum file size of 25 MB. If the file

**No.KDB-448/2023-2024/10773 Dated Gurufela the 18/12/2024**

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Sealed tender affixing a non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight and twenty five rupees) only with a validity period of 180 days, which will subsequently be covered and drawn up in the printed of F-2 form are invited from the registered contractor Class-I (A, B, C) & Class-II Categories Assam P&RD and BTC, according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the works under SOPD-G fund for the year 2024-25 as stated below. The tender will be received by the undersigned upto 2.00 PM of 09/01/2025 and will be opened on same day at 3.PM.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Location	Estimated value (Rs. In lakh)	Cost of bid document	Amount of bid security	Time of completion
1	Community based Tourism Scheme (Pt-I) under Bodoland Home Stay initiative at Raimona	Raimona	Rs. 10.00 L	0.03%	SC/ST= 1% OTH = 2%	3 months
2	Community based Tourism Scheme (Pt-II) under Bodoland Home Stay initiative at Raimona	Raimona	Rs. 10.00 L	0.03%	SC/ST= 1% OTH = 2%	3 months

Details N.I.T may be seen in all working days during office hours in the office of the undersigned tender will be issued to the contractors of their authorized agent from 20/12/2024 to 09/01/2025 in the office of the undersigned on payment in the form of demand draft/banker's cheque from any Nationalized bank, duly pledged in favour of the BDO, Kachugaon Dev. Block, Gurufela.

Sd/- Block Development Officer, Kachugaon Dev. Block, Gurufela

**IPR(BTC)-2023-24/1145**

## Lok Sabha adjourns sine die

**NEW DELHI, Dec 20:** Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die on Friday amid protests by opposition and treasury benches over the alleged insult to B R Ambedkar and directions by Speaker Om Birla to members against holding demonstrations at any gate of Parliament.

As soon as the Lok Sabha convened for the day, the Speaker called Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to present a resolution for setting up a joint committee of Parliament to examine the bills related to 'one nation, one election'. Slogans of 'Jai Bhim' reverberated in the House as the Speaker read out directions barring demonstrations and protests at the gates of Parliament. As the protests continued, the Speaker adjourned the House sine die. Even before the House proceedings began, Congress members started raising slogans "Jai Bheem, Jai Jai Bheem". Amid the slogans by the opposition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi entered the Lok Sabha chamber. As Meghwal moved the resolution, Congress members led by Manickam Tagore stormed the Well raising slogans. (PTI)

## Police to record statement of 2 injured MPs, call Rahul for questioning

**NEW DELHI, Dec 20:** A day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was booked in connection with a scuffle on the Parliament premises, sources said police are likely to record the statements of the two injured MPs on Friday and may also call the opposition leader for questioning.

They said that the Delhi Police was also likely to write to the Parliament secretariat, seeking access to CCTV footage of the area where the alleged incident occurred.

An official said senior police officers may also consider transferring the case to the crime branch from the local police.

A case under sections 115 (voluntary causing hurt), 117 (voluntary causing grievous hurt), 125 (act of endangering life or personal safety of others), 131 (use of criminal force), 351 (criminal intimidation) and 3(5) (common intention) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita was registered at the Parliament Street police station on Thursday.

Gandhi was booked hours after the BJP filed a complaint, accusing him of physical "assault and incitement" during the scuffle in which its two MPs Pratap Chandra Sarangi and Mukesh Rajput were

## Cong protests for second day in Jammu demanding Amit Shah's resignation

**JAMMU, Dec 20:** Intensifying its agitation against the BJP, the Jammu and Kashmir Congress continued protests for the second consecutive day by organizing a protest rally here on Friday and demanded Union Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation over his remarks on B R Ambedkar in the Rajya Sabha.

The Congress reiterated its demand for a public apology from Shah over his remarks, which it claimed were an "insult" to Ambedkar, and called for his resignation.

Led by Jammu and Kashmir Congress president Tariq Hamid Karra, scores of party workers, leaders, former ministers and ex-legislators marched at Satwari Chowk to protest against Shah's re-

## Former Haryana CM Om Prakash Chautala passes away

**GURUGRAM, Dec 20:** Indian National Lok Dal president and five-time Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala died here on Friday at the age of 89.

Chautala, who was former deputy prime minister Devi Lal's son, suffered a cardiac arrest at his house here and was immediately rushed to a hospital but could not be saved, a party spokesperson told PTI.

He breathed his last at around 12 noon in Medanta hospital, a senior police officer said. Chautala, who came from a prominent political family in Haryana and was face of a prominent regional outfit, had been facing age-related health issues in the recent past.

He is survived by two sons and three daughters. His wife Sneha Lata had passed away over five years ago.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini were among a host of leaders who condoled the demise of Chautala.

Expressing grief, Modi said on X, "He (Chautala) was active in the state politics for many years and strove constantly to advance the work of Devi Lal."

Saini said the demise of the INLD supremo is extremely sad.

"My humble tribute to him. He served the state and society throughout his life. This is an irreparable loss for the politics of the country and Haryana state," Saini said on X.

Former chief minister and senior Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda recalled that when Chautala was the chief minister, he was the Leader of Opposition in the Haryana assembly.

## 'Resolution adopted by a voice vote amid noisy scenes' Amid din, Lok Sabha sends ONOE bills to joint committee of two Houses

**NEW DELHI, Dec 20:** Amid uproar over Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks related to B R Ambedkar, the Lok Sabha on Friday referred the two bills on simultaneous polls to a joint committee of Parliament.

Opposition members were raising slogan hailing Ambedkar and slamming Shah when the House met for the day.

Instead of taking up the Question Hour, Speaker Om Birla asked Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to move the resolution to refer the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024 and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 referred to Joint Committee of Parliament comprising 27 members from the Lok Sabha and 12 from the Rajya Sabha.

The resolution was adopted by a voice vote amid noisy scenes.



The Lok Sabha was then adjourned sine die (indefinitely), bringing to an end the Winter session which began on November 25.

The two 'one nation, one election' (ONOE) bills, including one

requiring an amendment in the Constitution, lay down the mechanism to hold simultaneous elections and were introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday after a fiery debate.

BJP MP Bhartruhari Mahtab is

being considered to head the joint committee of Parliament that will scrutinise the two bills proposing simultaneous elections, sources said on Thursday.

With the BJP set to get the position of the chair for the crucial panel, official sources said Mahtab's parliamentary experience may weigh in his favour.

The strength of the committee was increased from 31 MPs to 39, giving representation to more parties.

While the panel already includes BJP's P P Chaudhury and Anurag Thakur, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of the Congress is another prominent member on the committee.

Among the Lok Sabha members, 17 are from the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, including 12 from the BJP. (PTI)

## Rahul to be blamed for Congress' isolation among allies: Prahlad

**KOLKATA, Dec 20:** Union Minister Prahlad Joshi on Thursday alleged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is responsible for the grand old party's "growing isolation" in the opposition bloc, citing leaders like Mamata Banerjee, Sharad Pawar, and Uddhav Thackeray are distancing themselves from it.

"It is unfortunate and reflects a low level of behaviour. Leaders such as Mamata Banerjee, Sharad Pawar, Abhishek Banerjee, and Uddhav Thackeray are staying away from the Congress, and the reason is Rahul Gandhi," Joshi, the Minister of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) said on the sidelines of a review meeting here on the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana in West Bengal and the Northeast.

The Delhi Police on Thursday registered an FIR against Rahul Gandhi, hours after the BJP filed a complaint, accusing him of "physical assault and incitement" during a scuffle in Parliament premises.

## Himachal: First zero hour held in state assembly

**DHARAMSHALA (HP), Dec 20:** The first ever zero hour was held in the Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha on Friday during which 7 legislators raised issues of public concern. Congress MLA from Lahaul and Spiti, Anuradha Rana was the first legislator to raise an issue during the zero hour, held between 12:00 and 12:30 pm in the state assembly.

She talked about two toll tax barriers in her constituency. Other lawmakers who raised issues during the zero hour included BJP MLAs Janak Raj, Sukhram Chaudhary, and Trilok Jamwal, as well as Congress MLAs Kewal Singh Pathania, Sanjay Rattan, and Hardip Singh Baba.

They spoke about various issues like the burial of water canals due to NHAI construction in Shahpur, cloudbursts, the construction of a freedom fighter memorial, criteria for forming new gram panchayats, and a bottling plant affecting water schemes.

The zero hour allows MLAs to raise public interest issues and must notify the assembly secretary at least 90 minutes before the session begins if they wish to participate, said Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania.

The initiative was also praised by Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur, who requested guidance for members, while Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi called it a milestone in the state's legislative history and urged members to use the platform effectively.

Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri congratulated the Speaker for introducing NeVA (National e-Vidhan Application) and the zero hour during the winter session.

The four-day winter session of the Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha commenced on Wednesday at the Tapovan campus in Dharamshala.

The question hour and zero hour were not held on the first two days of the winter session due to discussions on corruption under the Rule 67 adjournment motion brought by the opposition in the assembly on Wednesday. (PTI)

## This was just a trailer: Jairam on rejected 'no-confidence notice' against Dhankhar



**NEW DELHI, Dec 20:** Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Friday said the opposition parties could again submit a notice to move a motion of no-confidence against Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar in the Budget Session, asserting the notice that was rejected was "only a trailer".

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh on Thursday dismissed the impeachment notice moved by the opposition seeking removal of Vice-President Dhankhar while ruling it as an act of impropriety, being severely flawed and drawn in haste to mar his reputation.

"Our notice for motion of no confidence against the chairman has not been accepted. There is no limit that has been put in the Constitution on how many times you can bring a motion of no confidence. So, the Budget Session will begin on January 30, we will see," he told PTI.

Asked about the possibility of the opposition parties submitting the notice again in the next session, Ramesh answered, "Bilkul (yes)."

"This was the first step, as far as the motion of no confidence is concerned, this was just a trailer," the Congress general secretary and Rajya Sabha MP said.

The notice on the no-confidence

motion was rejected on "laughable" and "childish" grounds that his name was not spelt properly, Ramesh said.

More substantive grounds were not given, he added.

In his three-page ruling, tabled in the House by Rajya Sabha Secretary General PC Mody, the deputy chairman said the impeachment notice was part of a design to denigrate the nation's constitutional institutions and malign the incumbent vice-president.

At least 60 opposition members signed the notice for the removal of Dhankhar from his post on December 10, alleging they did not have trust in him and that he was "biased".

The notice was moved by the opposition members under Article 67(b) of the Constitution as intention of a no-confidence motion against the vice-president of India.

The deputy chairman ruled that the opposition parties submitting the notice again in the next session, Ramesh answered, "Bilkul (yes)."

"This was the first step, as far as the motion of no confidence is concerned, this was just a trailer," the Congress general secretary and Rajya Sabha MP said.

The notice on the no-confidence

## Bhagwat should ensure cases filed against people in Sambhal are withdrawn: Samajwadi Party

**NEW DELHI, Dec 20:** The Samajwadi Party on Friday appreciated RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's remarks on resurgence of mosque-temple disputes and said that he should take "disciplinary action" against his "disciples", who are not following his guidance.

The Samajwadi Party also asked Bhagwat to ensure that "false cases" filed against people in connection with the Sambhal violence in Uttar Pradesh are withdrawn and adequate compensation is given to the kin of those killed in the incident.

This came a day after Bhagwat expressed concern over resurgence of several temple-mosque disputes and said certain individuals after the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya seem to believe they can become "leaders of Hindus"

by raking up such issues.

"We read in newspapers today. After five people were killed (Sambhal Violence), false cases were filed against people...He is now saying that not every temple should be dug out," Yadav said in an apparent reference to Bhagwat's remarks.

"So when such an important person has given this statement, it becomes his responsibility and his party leaders' responsibility to ensure that all those people in Sambhal against whom false cases have been filed are withdrawn," the Samajwadi Party chief told reporters in Parliament complex.

Yadav said the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief and people in his organisation should also ensure that the Uttar Pradesh government helps the fam-

ily members of those killed in the violence and provides adequate compensation to them.

"No one can bring back anyone's life. But they can at least provide the government's help to their family members (of those killed)," he said.

The RSS chief and his organisation should also ensure that the Uttar Pradesh government helps the family members of those killed in the violence and provide adequate compensation, Yadav added.

Samajwadi Party secretary general Ram Gopal Yadav said Bhagwat has done the right thing by giving such a statement but his "disciples" are not accepting it.

"He should take disciplinary action against his disciples," Yadav, a Rajya Sabha MP, told PTI in Parliament complex when asked for comment. (PTI)

### GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER P.W.D. (B&NH) DIPHU BUILDING CIRCLE, DIPHU

No.SEBC/TECH/KASA/36/2024-25/02

Dated Diphu the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024

#### PRESS NOTICE

The Superintending Engineer, P.W.D. (B&NH) Diphu Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bids from Govt. registered eligible Contractors having experience in similar nature of works for the following works.

Details of bid may be seen at e-procurement portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

Sl. No.	Name of Work	LAC	District	Bid Security drawn in favour of	Approx value of work (Bid value in Lakh)	Completion Period	Bid Security	Cost of Bid (in Rs.)
1	Construction of 11 KV line and Installation of 1000 KVA DTR using 11 KV 1 CX241 sq.mm AAC covered conductor and Shifting of 750 KVA DTR for power supply in existing consumer no. 158000000314 of Langkung Habe Sports Complex at KASA Stadium.	Diphu	Karbi Anglong	E.E, PWD Karbi Anglong District Territorial Building Division, Diphu.	Rs. 1,24,25,329.00	3 Months (Three Months)	2 % of Bid value for General category and 1% of Bid value for Reserved category	Rs. 2500

N.B.:- 1. Value of work may vary according to the detail NI 1.

2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document.

Sd/-

Superintending Engineer, P.W.D (B&NH),  
Diphu Building Circle, Diphu

Memo No.SEBC/TECH/KASA/36/2024-25/ 02-A

Dated Diphu the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

# 8 dead, over 35 injured in fire after LPG tanker crash

'Flames were visible from a kilometre away and there was panic and chaos on the highway'

**JAIPUR, Dec 20:** An LPG tanker collided with a truck on Friday, sparking a massive fireball that turned a stretch of the Jaipur-Ajmer highway into an inferno in which at least eight people were killed and nearly 40 vehicles engulfed in flames.



Of the about 35 people injured, nearly half are "very critical", Rajasthan Health Minister Gajendra Singh Khimsar said. Jaipur Police Commissioner Biju George Joseph, who was at the crash site with several officers of his department, said an outlet nozzle of the LPG tanker was damaged in the collision, leading to a gas leak that caused the blaze. The crash occurred around 5.45 am, when it was still dark, in front of a school, according to officials.

"Vehicles behind the tanker were engulfed in flames. Other vehicles coming from the opposite directions also caught fire and the vehicles collided," he said.

The gas leak also spread the fire in a flash, leaving no scope for those in nearby vehicles to come out. People were seen rushing and taking off clothes engulfed in flames. The injured were rushed to the SMS hospital in Jaipur in more than 25 ambulances. Dr Deepak Maheshwari, principal of the SMS Medical College, said eight people have died.

He said 43 people were brought to the hospital. Five

of them were pronounced dead and three succumbed to injuries during treatment, he said, adding that seven people are on ventilator support.

Officials at the spot indicated that the casualty count may go up. Police suspect some people could not get out of their vehicles in time and got burnt.

The Rajasthan government announced financial assistance of ₹ 5 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and ₹ 1 lakh for the injured.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagade, Chief Minister Bhanjanlal Sharma and his predecessor Ashok Gehlot expressed grief over the loss of lives in the crash.

In a post on X, Modi announced an ex gratia of ₹ 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund to the next of kin of the deceased and ₹ 50,000 to the in-

jured. Earlier in the day, eye-witnesses reported spotting flames from nearly a kilometre away as thick black smoke filled the sky and ambulances and fire brigade vehicles rushed towards the crash zone. A school van driver on his way to pick up students recounted with horror the sight of a man engulfed in flames on the road.

The crash initially affected a nearly 300-metre stretch of the highway, leading to a long queue of vehicles. The traffic congestion grew rapidly with time and by the afternoon, choked the arterial road and traffic had to be diverted to alternative routes.

Authorities were clearing the highway of the burnt vehicles to resume vehicular movement.

After news of the accident spread, chief minister Sharma and Khimsar rushed to the SMS hospital. Sharma spoke to administration officials and doctors and issued directions to ensure proper treatment

was facilitated. He also visited the accident site and spoke to police officials.

"I visited the hospital as soon as I got the incident. This is a very unfortunate incident. Instructions have been given to ensure proper treatment and other arrangements," he told reporters at the crash site.

Khimsar told reporters at the hospital that all doctors, resident doctors and nursing staff of the medical facility have been called in to manage the situation and another ward opened to accommodate patients. A 'green corridor' was set up from the accident site to the SMS hospital, he added.

An official said a private sleeper bus headed for Jaipur from Rajsamand was behind the gas tanker when the accident occurred and efforts were underway to find the details about the passengers on board. A fire department official said, "A few fire tenders from Mansarovar were rushed to the spot based on primary information, but later more were sent from other stations as well."

A team from the regional transport office also reached the spot to investigate the incident and Forensic Science Laboratory teams collected evidence.

Local people complained of itching in the eyes and breathing problems due to the smoke. Some said a few birds were found dead nearby. (PTI)

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.W.D. (B&NH)**  
**DIPHU BUILDING CIRCLE**

No.SEBC/TECH/KASA/36/2024-25/03 Dated Diphu the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**Detail Notice Inviting Bid**

The Superintending Engineer, P.W.D. (B&NH) Diphu Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bid for the following works from APWD (Building) Registered eligible contractors having experience of similar nature of works. Details of bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

Sl. No.	Name of Work	LAC	District	Bid Security drawn in favour of	Approx value of work (Bid value in Lakh)	Completion Period	Bid Security	Cost of Bid (in Rs.)
1	Construction of 11 KV line and Installation of 1000 KVA DTR using 11 KV 1 CX241 sq.mm AAAC covered conductor and Shifting of 750 KVA DTR for power supply in existing consumer no. 158000000314 of Langkung Habe Sports Complex at KASA Stadium.	Diphu	Karbi Anglong	E.E, PWD Karbi Anglong District Territorial Building Division, Diphu.	Rs. 1,24,25,329.00	3 Months (Three Months)	2 % of Bid value for Ceneral category and 1% of Bid value for Reserved category	Rs. 2500

**The Bidders may submit bid for be work as follows:**

- The Contractors / Bidders must be registered with the E-tendering system provider for participating in the bidding process. The Bidding document may be downloaded through the P.W.D portal [assamtenders.gov.in](http://assamtenders.gov.in) by using own user ID.
- Online submission of Technical & Financial Bid is mandatory. Manual submission of Technical Bid (without online submission) of bid will be considered as non-responsive. Bidders are to submit the required papers for technical bid by scanning and uploading the same before the expiry of the sequence- 'Bid submission' in the activity schedule mentioned below at S1-4.
- The bidder shall submit the Cost of the bid document by online method through net banking or RTGS/NEFT as per office memorandum no. FEB.269/2017/27 dtd: 21<sup>st</sup> August'2019 (copy enclosed) and bid security/EMD through an Interest-bearing instrument in Account No.100223860075, IFSC Code- INDB0000001, INDUSIND BANK, DIPHU BRANCH in favour of EE, PWD KA Dist. Territorial Building Division Diphu.
- The bidder shall submit the Trading License/ Temporary Trading permit and P/Tax issued by the Department of Taxation KAAC, Diphu vide KAAC Notification No. KAAC/Tax/Miscellaneous/2022-23/24/86 Dated. 20.11.2023. Diphu which will be a part bidding document.
- The activity schedule for tendering process of the above-mentioned packages shall be as per the schedule shown below.

Stage No	APWD Stage	Start		End	
		Date	Time	Date	Time
1	Publishing Date	19.12.2024	01.30 PM	06.01.2025	12:00 PM
2	Download of Tender	19.12.2024	3:00 PM	06.01.2025	12:00 PM
3	Bid Submission (online)	20.12.2024	11:00 AM	06.01.2025	12:00 PM
4	Technical Bid Opening	08.01.2025	01:00 P.M		
5	Financial Bid Opening	TO BE NOTIFIED LATER			

**Pre bid Meeting will be held as per following time & venue.**

Starting Date & Time	Closing Time	Venue
21/12/2024 13:00 firs	16.00 hrs.	O/o the Superintending Engineer, P.W.D (B&NH), Diphu Building Circle, Diphu

- In the event of any holiday in the sequence of the Activity Schedule, the activities will take place on the next working day.
- Original Copy of the following documents must be submitted within 48 hours after the last date and time of online submission at the office chamber of the undersigned along with the hard copy of the technical bid.
  - Original Power of Attorney for signing the BID.
  - Scan copy of online payment receipt of Cost of bid & BID Securities.
  - Original copy of banker certificate for Credit facility.
- A hard copy of the technical bid submitted online is to be submitted up to **07.01.2025 up to 2:00 PM**. For any discrepancy between the online bid and the hard copy of the bid, the online bid will govern and will be considered for evaluation.
- Bidders are advised to scan their Technical Papers at 100 dpi (In Black & White mode) in pdf format for multiple pages with maximum file size of 5MB. If numbers of pages exceed, the bidders are advised to create multiple files and upload the same in c-procurement website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) only. For any assistance for Online Bidding, Bidders may write to [assamtenders.gov.in](mailto:assamtenders.gov.in)
- The Detail Notice Inviting bid will be a part of the bidding Documents.
- Survey Report of work location and geotagged photograph duly signed by the EE, KADT Building Division, Diphu to be submitted along with the tender documents.
- The bidder must have experience in Installation of 5 MVA with sub-station under KANCH Electrical Circle.

**Sd/-**  
**Superintending Engineer, P.W.D.(B&NH)**  
**Diphu Building Circle, Diphu**

**Memo No. SEBC/TECH/KASA/36/2024-25/03-A** **Dated Diphu the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

## World Bank approves USD 800 mn loan for Amaravati construction



**AMARAVATI, Dec 20:** The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has approved USD 800 million Amaravati Integrated Urban Development Program for building Andhra Pradesh's greenfield capital city Amaravati, the international development said on Friday.

The Bretton Woods institution's Board of Executive Directors met in Washington, USA on Thursday and approved the loan. "The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors yesterday approved the USD 800 million Amaravati Integrated Urban Development Program aimed at establishing the city as a well-managed, climate-resilient growth center in Andhra Pradesh that generates jobs and improves the lives of its current and future residents, especially the most vulnerable," a World Bank press release said.

According to the World Bank, the Government of India re-

quested the USD 800 mn loan to develop Amaravati as an economic hub and the state capital of Andhra Pradesh.

The loan has a final maturity period of 29 years, including a grace period of six years, said the World Bank, adding the government has decided to avail the financing in Japanese Yen. Auguste Tano Kouame, World Bank's Country Director for India, said the multilateral institution will bring global expertise to support the design of city institutions and infrastructure that can create economic opportunities for residents, including women, youth and vulnerable groups.

"With its urban population expected to double to 950 million by 2050, India aims to build sustainable and liveable cities as growth hubs, and Amaravati offers an exciting opportunity to model this urban transformation," Kouame said. (PTI)

## Navy chief holds meet on craft-ferry crash

**MUMBAI, Dec 20:** Two days after an Indian Navy speedboat collided with a ferry packed with passengers off the Mumbai coast, Navy chief Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi on Friday visited the Western Naval Command headquarters and held a meeting with top officials over the crash. Admiral Tripathi also conducted an aerial inspection of the place where the incident occurred on late Wednesday afternoon, an official said.

Fourteen people, including a sailor, died when the Navy speedboat rammed into the ferry which was sailing to the Elephanta Island, a popular tourist attraction which has a collection of ancient caves, from the Gateway of India. The ferry, "Neel Kamal", was carrying more than 100 passengers and capsized due to the impact of the crash.

The Navy on Thursday instituted a 'Board of Inquiry' to probe the collision. In July, Tripathi had also visited Mumbai after a fire on warship INS Brahmaputra (PTI)

## Shah lauds SSB

**SILIGURI (WB), Dec 20:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday lauded the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) for its pivotal role in securing the country's borders with friendly nations such as Nepal and Bhutan and its contribution to combating Naxalism in Bihar and Jharkhand.

Addressing the 61st Raising Day celebrations of the SSB in West Bengal's Siliguri, Shah said, "The Sashastra Seema Bal has played a key role in securing our borders with friendly nations such as Nepal and Bhutan. Its alertness and presence have ensured a sense of security in the Siliguri Corridor and the Eastern region."

Referring to the SSB's efforts in tackling left-wing extremism, the Home Minister noted, "The SSB has played an important role in ending the menace of Naxalism in Bihar and Jharkhand. Their proactive approach along with other security agencies and local police has significantly weakened naxalism activities in Chhattisgarh." On the occasion, Shah urged the force to curb the activities of anti-national elements during border movements and ensure that they are handed over to law enforcement agencies. (PTI)

## Path cleared for Adani Group to redevelop Dharavi slums

HC upholds tender award

**MUMBAI, Dec 20:** The Bombay High Court on Friday cleared the decks for redevelopment of Dharavi slums as it upheld the tender awarded to the Adani Group for the project by the Maharashtra government, ruling there was no "arbitrariness, unreasonableness or perversity" in the decision.

A division bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar dismissed a petition filed by UAE-based Seclink Technologies Corp challenging the state government's decision to award the mega redevelopment project in Mumbai to Adani Properties Pvt Ltd, which had made a ₹ 5,069-crore offer.

The bench rejected the contention made by the petitioner that the tender was "tailor made" to suit a particular firm of the private conglomerate, noting three bidders had participated in the process.

Seclink Technologies had emerged as the highest bidder for the project in 2018, but the tender issued in that year was later scrapped by the government.

The bench noted Seclink Technologies' petition lacks force and hence stands dismissed. "The grounds urged in support of the petition lack force and accordingly, the challenge to the impugned action on the part of the authorities, whereby the earlier tender process was cancelled and fresh tender process has been resorted to, fails," the HC observed.

The Adani Group had emerged as the



highest bidder for the 259-hectare Dharavi Redevelopment Project in the heart of Mumbai and bagged it with its ₹ 5,069-crore offer in the 2022 tender process.

In the first tender issued in 2018, the petitioner company had emerged as the highest bidder with its ₹ 7,200-crore offer. The government had, however, cancelled the 2018 tender and issued a fresh one in 2022 with additional conditions.

Seclink Technologies first challenged the cancellation of the 2018 tender and subsequently the 2022 tender award to the Adani Group. It had alleged the fresh tender was "tailor made" for the ports-energy conglomerate.

The court, in its judgment, noted that except for noticing that the petitioner company was the highest qualified bidder in the 2018 tender process, no final decision was taken by the government.

"Though the petitioner's bid was declared to be the highest, however, no decision was taken on selection of the

successful bidder, neither any letter of award was issued nor any agreement was signed," the HC maintained.

The court further held it is a well settled principle that a bidder participating in a tender process cannot insist that its tender should be accepted only because of it being the highest or the lowest.

The bench noted the reasons given by the state government for cancelling the 2018 tender process, in its opinion, cannot be said to be "non-existent or unjustified or based on any perversity".

The decision taken by the government does not suffer from the "vice of arbitrariness, unreasonableness or perversity", it emphasised.

The court also refused to accept the petitioner's contention that the 2022 tender conditions were tailor made to suit a particular company and noted that at that time, three bidders had participated of which two were found to be technically qualified. The state government had submitted to the HC that the tender was awarded in a transparent manner and no undue favour was shown to the highest bidder, Adani Group.

The government had said the 2018 tender was cancelled and a fresh one was issued four years later because of several factors like the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war which affected the financial and economic state of affairs. (PTI)

# Happy 'Emergency' got clearance; Kangana has made it with a lot of passion: Shreyas Talpade

**MUMBAI, Dec 20:** Shreyas Talpade says "Emergency" by actor-filmmaker Kangana Ranaut is a fantastic film and he is happy that the movie has been cleared for release by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

The political drama, written, directed, and co-produced by Ranaut, was earlier scheduled to be released on September 6 but missed the date as it failed to get a clearance from the CBFC.

It was also caught up in controversy after Sikh organisations, including the Shiromani Akali Dal, accused the film of misrepresenting the community and getting facts wrong.

"I'm very happy for 'Emergency' that finally we got clear-

ance because it's a good film being made on a good subject. Kangana has made the film with a lot of hard work and passion and the film should come out," Talpade told PTI in an interview.

"It's difficult for the producers to think, 'Forget all that has happened' be-

cause they faced finan-

cial loss. I'm passionately looking forward to the film getting released and watching it because it is a fantastic film," he added.

Also starring Ranaut as former prime minister Indira Gandhi, "Emergency" delves into the emergency that was imposed by her for 21 months from 1975 to 1977 and its aftermath.

Talpade plays the role of the former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the film, which will now release in theatres on January 17.

For the actor, "Emer-

gency" turned out to be a rare opportunity where he got to showcase his versatility. He recalled being stereotyped by the industry during the earlier years of his career.

"I was launched with a film like 'Iqbal' and when the era of comedy and multi-starrer films started at that time, I was not cast in them. I was told said, 'You've a serious image because of 'Iqbal', so we are not sure if people will accept you in comedy roles or you will be able to do it or not.'

"Luckily, 'Golmaal' happened and things changed for me.

Today, after a spate of comedy films people are like, 'Will I be able to do a serious role or not,'" said Talpade, who has also been part of movies like "Dor", "Om Shanti Om", "Welcome to Sajjanpur", "Housefull 2", and "Chandu Champion".

Talpade's latest work is the animated film "Mufasa: The Lion King". The actor has lent his voice to the fan-favourite character of Timon for the Hindi-version of the movie.

The film, directed by Barry Jenkins, serves as both a prequel and sequel to the "The Lion King", the 2019 remake of the 1994 animated movie. It explores the journey of Mufasa from an orphaned cub to becoming a king.

"What is most important is what we are teaching kids through this film. Like, a story like this will always stay relevant, the story of the triumph of the underdog, so all the kids will feel, 'Even I can achieve whatever I want despite all the obstacles,'" he said.

Superstar Shah Rukh Khan has voiced the title role of Mufasa in the Hindi version along with his son Aryan Khan lending his voice as Simba and youngest son AbRam Khan as Mufasa (cub).

"Mufasa: The Lion King" released in theatres on Friday. (PTI)



## ORGANISERS ADD EXTRA SHOW FOR FAST-SELLING ED SHEERAN CONCERT IN BENGALURU

**BENGALURU, Dec 20:** Good news to Ed Sheeran's fans in Bengaluru who weren't able to get affordable tickets the first time round. An extra show is added to the four-time Grammy award winner's The Mathematics Tour in Bengaluru.

Now Sheeran will be performing on February 8 and February 9, the organisers said on Friday.

For the February 8 show, tickets priced between ₹ 4,000 and ₹ 10,000 were already sold out and the ones priced between ₹ 11,000 and ₹ 30,000 are fast filling. February 9 tickets went live today at 12 noon.

Owen Roncon, Chief of Business (Live Events), BookMyShow, which is organising The Mathematics Tour in India, said, "The response has been truly phenomenal, and we are thrilled to announce an additional show in Bengaluru to meet the extraordinary demand from his fans."

Bengaluru will be the only city in India to host back-to-back performances of Sheeran, added Roncon.

The tour will see Sheeran spotlighting his signature acoustic brilliance, with just his guitar and Loop Station, said Owen Roncon, Chief of Business (Live

Events), BookMyShow.

BookMyShow is organising the tour with AEG Presents Asia, a live entertainment company that has presented uber popular pop stars like Taylor Swift and the K-Pop phenomenon Blackpink in recent times.

Sheeran's setlist in India will include iconic tracks from his decade-spanning career such as 'Shape of You', 'Thinking Out Loud', 'Perfect', 'Shivers' and 'Castle on the Hill', alongside tracks from his latest chart-topping album, added Roncon.

He also said Sheeran and his team have a strict stance against anyone using unofficial secondary ticketing sites to try and stop fans being exploited when trying to buy tickets for his shows.

"We will be monitoring the sales transactions in co-operation with local law enforcement authorities to identify purchases that are in contravention of the terms and conditions for the sale of Ed Sheeran tickets. All ticket purchases that contravene these terms and conditions will be subject to possible cancellation," added Roncon. The Mathematics Tour in India will visit six cities. (PTI)

## 100<sup>th</sup> Tansen Sangeet Samaroh establishes Guinness World Record

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** The 100th Tansen Sangeet Samaroh, a grand celebration of Hindustani classical music, etched its name in history by creating a Guinness World Record for the Largest Hindustani Classical Band with 546 musicians.

Held at the iconic Gwalior Fort, the event witnessed an awe-inspiring performance by the musicians, who played three of Tansen's iconic ragas: Rag Malhar, Rag Mia ki Todi and Rag Darbari. Organised by the Cultural Department of Madhya Pradesh government, this milestone event also celebrated Gwalior's recent recognition as a UNESCO City of Music, highlighting its global significance in the world of classical music. The record-setting performance was presided over by Madhya Pradesh chief minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, and attended by dignitaries, music lovers and international guests. The performance left the audience mesmerised. The record-setting performance was meticulously executed by Guinness World Record consultant Nischal Barot, marking his 53rd successful Guinness record execution. Commenting on the achievement, Nischal Barot said, "This Guinness World Record reflects the enduring spirit of Indian classical music and flawless teamwork. The incredible talent of the participating musicians and the Madhya Pradesh government's vision has truly put Gwalior on the world map as a hub for cultural and musical excellence. I am deeply honoured to be part of such a historic event." The Tansen Samaroh, a festival that has been celebrated for the last 99 years, is a tribute to the legendary musician Tansen, whose contributions to Hindustani classical music remain unparalleled. Today's achievement not only honoured his legacy but also brought global attention to the beauty and depth of Indian classical music.

A spokesperson for the Cultural Department hailed the event as a moment of pride for the nation, saying, "This achievement reflects not only the artistic excellence of our musicians but also their unity in celebrating Tansen's timeless legacy. It is a proud day for Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh and the entire nation, and will be remembered in the annals of India's cultural history."



## Bengali film 'Bohurupi' becomes biggest blockbuster with over ₹ 17.25 crore revenue

**KOLKATA, Dec 20:** Bengali film 'Bohurupi' has crossed ₹ 17.25 crore of revenue at the box office after screening for 68 days, setting a record as the "biggest blockbuster" in the state, an industry body official said on Friday.

The success of the film is a "reflection of cinegoers' unwavering love for authentic storytelling", one of the directors said. "The box office collection from single screens and multiplexes in the country was pegged at ₹ 17.25 crore after the screening of the film for 68 days," the industry body official said.

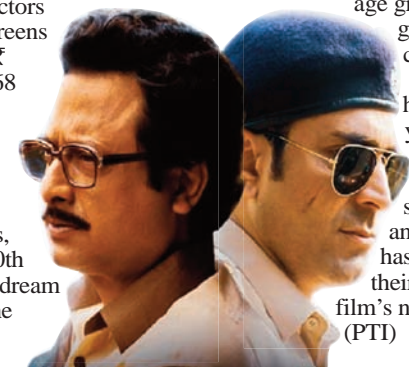
The film completed its 75th day at the box office on December 19 and the figure will exceed the ₹ 17.25 crore-mark if the revenue for the subsequent days is added, he said.

Shiboprosad Mukherjee, one of the directors, said, "Theatres remain houseful even on the 10th Sunday since the release of the film and it is a dream come true. It shows that Bengali cinema has the power to stand tall amidst big-ticket releases."

Another director Nandita Roy added, "The success of 'Bohurupi' is a reflection of the cinegoers' unwavering love for authentic storytelling. It's heartwarming to see people of all age groups coming together to celebrate cinema."

The impact of 'Bohurupi' extends beyond boundaries, she claimed.

"With packed shows in multiplexes and cinema halls, it has united audiences in their admiration for the film's narrative," Roy said. (PTI)



## Celebrate culture, adventure & serenity at Assam's Brahmaputra Carnival!

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Dec 20:** The vibrant Brahmaputra Carnival has begun, transforming the banks of the majestic Brahmaputra River at Lachit Ghat, here, into a hub of cultural and adventurous festivities.

This unique three-month extravaganza has kicked off from December 15, and will run until March 15 next year.

It promises an immersive experience that blends rich cultural traditions with thrilling adventures and luxurious accommodations.

This grand carnival features a range of exciting activities, such as glamping, water sports, live concerts, and showcases of culinary heritage and handicrafts. Thrill-seekers can enjoy exhilarating activities like speedboat rides, kayaking on serene waters, tackling challenging terrains on ATVs, river rafting, water rollers, archery, bungee jumping, jet skiing, and many more fun-filled experiences. The event also offers a platform for local artisans, musicians, and performers to showcase their talents through traditional music and dance, enriching the cultural experience.

Relaxation seekers can enjoy a luxury glamping experience with Royal, Premium, and Deluxe Tents, complete with modern amenities and breathtaking views of the Brahmaputra. Meanwhile, the carnival's proximity to Guwahati's iconic attractions—such as Kamakhya Temple, Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, and Umananda Temple—makes it a perfect gateway

for exploration.

Easily accessible, the venue is just 22.5 km from Guwahati Airport and 2.4 km from Guwahati Railway Station, ensuring a hassle-free journey for visitors.

Assam minister for tourism Ranjeet Kumar Dass said, "Majestic, mighty, and mesmerising - the Brahmaputra is more than a river; it's the heartbeat of Assam's culture and heritage. The Brahmaputra Carnival is not just an event; it's a grand celebration of Assam's vibrant culture, exquisite cuisine, thrilling adventures, and the timeless allure of the mighty Brahmaputra River, the heartbeat of our state's culture and heritage. This festival marks a pivotal step in showcasing our state's rich heritage and welcoming travellers from across the globe. With its immersive experiences in river tourism, the carnival promises to create unforgettable memories while contributing to the growth of Assam's tourism ecosystem. I warmly invite everyone to be a part of this enchanting festival and uncover the wonders of our beautiful state."

IRS managing director, Assam Tourism Development Corporation, Padmapani Bora said, "Brahmaputra Carnival is a vibrant celebration that unites adventure and culture along the mighty river Brahmaputra. This one-of-a-kind event combines exciting activities to create a thrilling experience that will never be forgotten. Embark on a journey with your loved ones to create memories for a lifetime."



# Khel Maharan 2.0 for Diphu LAC gets underway

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Dec 20:** The Khel Maharan 2.0 for Diphu Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC) organised under the department of Sports and Youth Welfare, was kicked off here at Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) stadium on Friday.

The events include athletics, Kabadi, football, chess and road cycling with a traditional cycle.

Diphu MLA Bidyasing Englang inaugurated the sports meet, where he pointed out that Khel Maharan has been introduced under the initiative of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma with an aim to promote sports in rural areas of Assam.

The talented sports persons from Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) level to LAC then district level and upto state and national levels can be achieved if they have the dedication and hardwork.

"Our children in the village are busy the whole day with schools and helping their parents in paddy fields. But in the evening they take time to play games in open fields. Our children can play well, but have no scope to play in the district and state levels. The BJP government has come up with Khel Maharan, a platform where our children can get the opportunity to play at various levels," Englang said.

The inaugural programme

was joined by Executive Member (EM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Bili Mohon Khaklary; MAC Johny Timung; District Commissioner, Nirola Phangchopi; District Sports Officer, Rilip Ronghang; KASA general secretary, Dr. Pankaj Teron and KASA officials.

On the inaugural day, athletic events like 100 metre, 200 metre and 400 metre race for both boys and girls and long jump were conducted.

In the evening, a football match between Langfer MAC and Langhin MAC was played. Langhin MAC team won 2-1.

Prizes for athletic events were distributed by the MLA alongwith dignitaries present.

Results :

In the Under-17 Girls 100-metre race, Samika Ronghangpi of Dhanisri MAC won first place, followed by Riya Keot and Rengka Rengso Intgipi of Lumbajong MAC. In the 200-metre race, Larlyn Timungpi of Lumbajong MAC secured first, with Samika Ronghangpi and Rengka Rengso Intgipi taking second and third, respectively. The 400-metre race saw Larlyn Timung of Lumbajong MAC win first, followed by Kajir Millikpi and Riya Keot, both from Lumbajong MAC. In the Under-17 Girls category, Diya Basumatary of Lumbajong MAC topped the 100-metre race, with Sobita Gour of

Langhin MAC and Sanjita Jig-dung of Singhason MAC in second and third. Lakshmi Bepi of Dhanisri MAC won the 200 and 400-metre races, followed by Diya Basumatary and Sobita Gour in the 200-metre, and Martina Marak and Alsina Hansapi in the 400-metre. In long jump, Cuna Basumatary took first place, with Dika Enghpi second and Hainary Baglary third. In the Under-17 Boys 100-metre race, Little Das of Lumbajong MAC came first, followed by Diring Hasnu of Dhanisri MAC and Borlongki Ronghang of Singhason MAC. In the 200-metre race, Diring Hasnu won, with Bijoy Chetri second and Ronaldo Boro of Lumbajong

MAC third. The 400-metre race was won by Erisim Taro of Lumbajong MAC, followed by Anjalu Basumatary of Langhin MAC and Sarkiri Rongpi of Lumbajong MAC. Under -17 boys 100 metre race first Anand Das and second Pritom Boro of Lumbajong MAC respectively and third Newson Difusa of Dhanisri MAC.

In 200 metre race first Rahul Keot and second Manosh Gil of Lumbajong MAC respectively and third Newson Difusa of Dhanisri MAC and in 400 metre race first Rahul Keot and second Sarchehon Kro of Lumbajong MAC respectively and third Newson Difusa of Dhanisri MAC. In long jump first Sarchinghon Engti, second

Anand Das and third Serbong Ronghang.

In Kabadi : For under 20 boys Dhanisri MAC bagged the champion and Langfer MAC as runners up. Rahul Nag of Dhanisri was the best player.

For under 16 boys Lumbajong bagged champion and Dhanisri as runners up. Deep Rai of Lumbajong was the best player.

For under 20 girls, Langhin bagged the champion and Lumbajong was runners up. Ritumoni Devi of Lumbajong was the best player and for under 16 girls Dhanisri was the champion and Singhason as runners up. Pratikha Rajiyoung of Dhanisri was the best player.

## Tough task awaits Chennaiyin FC against Mumbai City

**MUMBAI, Dec 20:** Seeking to bridge the gap with the top six, visiting Chennaiyin FC will have their task cut out when they take on fancied hosts Mumbai City FC in their Indian Super League match here on Saturday.

The Islanders have an impressive record against Chennaiyin FC, being unbeaten in their last nine ISL meetings.

Mumbai have won and drawn twice in their last five matches, and are currently occupying the seventh spot with 17 points from 11 games.

Chennaiyin FC are ninth in the table, having garnered 15 points from 12 matches but their previous five outings have seen them succumb to a loss thrice.

Neither of them are too far off the sixth-placed Jamshedpur FC, who have 18 points from 10 matches.

The Petr Kratky-coached team have struggled offensively, scoring the fourth-least goals in the season (14) so far, whereas the Marina Machans better them in this metric with 17 strikes.

Mumbai City have fared better at the back, keeping the third-most clean sheets (4) in the league, conceding only 13 goals, as opposed to the 18 of the Chennaiyin FC.

Mumbai City FC have not conceded in their last three ISL



games. If they manage another clean sheet, it will mark their longest streak since 2018. Interestingly, Chennaiyin have netted merely once in their previous three games in the competition.

Mumbai City have hit the woodwork seven times this season, the second-highest tally behind Odisha FC (9 times). Last season, they set a single-season

high of 10.

While it does show that they are constantly on the lookout for creating chances in the final third, the frontline will have to come together to convert these opportunities with greater consistency.

Chennaiyin FC have lost their last two away games, failing to score in both. The last time the Marina Machans went on a

longer losing run away from home was a stretch of four games between December 2023 and February 2024, which included a 0-3 loss to Mumbai City FC (December 28, 2023).

To get their season back on track, a positive result here would be important.

Chennaiyin FC have conceded just four goals in the first half of their ISL games this sea-

son, the lowest in the league. However, they conceded 14 goals in the second half, the joint most with Kerala Blasters FC. The Marina Machans will have to ensure that they do not continue to lose their shape at the back once the game enters its second essay.

In Kolkata, Jamshedpur FC will eye their first-ever league double over East Bengal FC when they face off at the Salt Lake Stadium.

The Men of Steel secured a 2-0 victory in the reverse fixture on October 5 and another clean sheet this weekend would mark the first time they achieve back-to-back shutouts against the Red & Gold Brigade in the competition. Jamshedpur FC snapped their three-game losing streak and will come into this match on the back of consecutive victories in their last couple of outings. They have, however, given away the second-most goals in the ISL 2024-25 (21), only behind the 10th-placed Kerala Blasters FC.

A strong start and recent recovery mean that they find themselves within the playoffs spots (6th) right now, but the visitors will have to be at the top of their game since the tables can turn around immediately given the slim margins separating teams in the table. (PTI)

## Guiu hat trick helps Chelsea rout Rovers 5-1 to extend Conference League dominance



**LONDON, Dec 20:** Marc Guiu's first-half hat trick helped Chelsea ease past Shamrock Rovers 5-1 to complete the league phase of the UEFA Conference League with a 100% record.

The 18-year-old forward, who netted twice in a 3-1 win over Astana in the previous round, opened the scoring in the 22nd minute with a header from close range at Stamford Bridge.

Markus Poom equalized for the Irish visitors, but Guiu restored Chelsea's lead with an angled shot from the left in the 34th.

Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall made it 3-1 six minutes later before Guiu completed his first hat trick for the Blues with a header in stoppage time.

"I've never seen anyone press like him," Dewsbury-Hall told TNTSports about Guiu. "He doesn't slow down, he'll keep working hard. You forget how young he is. He's only 18, I'm happy that he got his hat trick, he deserves it."

Guiu, who joined Chelsea from Barcelona this summer, has scored six goals in six games in the third-tier competition. Marc Cucurella finished off the rout in the second half.

It's now eight straight wins in all competitions for Enzo Maresca's team, which equals the club's record set in December 2016.

Of the 36 clubs involved in the revamped competition, the

top eight in the standings go directly to the round of 16 in March. Teams ranked ninth to 24th go into the knockout playoffs in February. The bottom 12 teams are eliminated.

Unlike the new-look Champions League and Europa League, teams in the Conference League face six opponents, not eight, in the league phase that replaced the traditional group stage.

Chelsea was the only team that stayed perfect, the only team that qualified to the round of 16 with a game to spare, and it scored 26 in six games, by far the most goals.

Despite its first defeat in the competition, Rovers finished 10th and became the first Irish club to advance to the knock-out stage of a European competition.

Rolando Mandragora netted for Fiorentina three minutes from time to salvage a 1-1 draw at Vitória, a result that gave the Portuguese team second place with 14 points. Fiorentina, runner-up in the previous two editions, was a point back in third.

Rapid Vienna beat Copenhagen 3-0 to advance from fourth place on 13 points. Djurgården was fifth with 13 points after a 3-1 win over Legia Warsaw, which was seventh place. Lugano finished sixth after being held 2-2 at home by Pafos from Cyprus.

Cercle Brugge's 1-1 draw against Basaksehir was enough to finish eighth. (AP)

## Trying our best to resolve the IOA issue: Junior Sports Minister Khadse

**NEW DELHI, Dec 20:** The government is trying its best to resolve the differences in the Indian Olympic Association in order to ensure a strong and successful bid for the 2036 Olympic Games, said Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Raksha Nikhil Khadse here on Friday.

IOA president PT Usha has been engaged in a raging fight with 12 EC members who have refused to ratify the appointment of Raghuram Iyer as the IOA CEO made by her in January. The ongoing tussle is not portraying the right image of the country before the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as India seeks to host the Summer Games and Paralympic Games in 2036.

India has submitted a 'Letter of Intent', expressing its desire to host the Games, to the IOC's Future Host Commission, taking the first concrete step in an ambitious plan after months of informal dialogue with the international body.

"I think everyone is trying to work together and we are trying our best to resolve the issues of IOA. The ministry is trying hard to solve all the differences and issues so that our target of hosting a big event in India is fulfilled," the junior Sports Minister said. "For that we all need to work together. We need to take this (Olympic) bid forward on a positive note," she said.

With the submission of a 'Letter of In-

tent', India has progressed from "Informal Dialogue" to the "Continuous Dialogue" stage of the host election process.

In this stage, the IOC conducts a "feasibility study" of the progress of projects associated with the Games in the aspiring host nations. The next phase of the process would be "Targetted Dialogue", which would require the submission of an edition-specific formal bid, which would be assessed by the Future Host Commission.

The process will end with the host nation being selected.

Khadse said the Narendra Modi-led government is committed to enhancing the profile of Indian sports and a successful 2036

Olympics bid will provide a big boost to the country. "It takes a lot of time for the (Olympic bid) procedure to be complete. The final decision is with the IOC. We have put forward our bid through the National Olympic Committee, which is the IOA. It's a start, we have taken a step forward. We are trying because the Olympics is big platform," Khadse said.

"If we get the hosting rights, then definitely it will a proud moment for India. India is no longer lagging in any sector, and especially in sports sector we want to do more work in the coming days. The government is committed to bringing Indian sports to the forefront." (PTI)

## India should have a hard approach against West Indies in ODIs: Richa Ghosh

**NAVI MUMBAI, Dec 20:** Wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh has urged the Indian women's team not to take the foot off the pedal after their T20I series victory, but to adopt a more aggressive approach when they face West Indies in the upcoming three ODIs.

Ghosh smashed a world record-equaling fastest fifty, reaching the milestone in just 18 balls. The 21-year-old, who scored 54 off 21 balls, including five sixes and three fours, joining an exclusive club, that features New Zealand's Sophie Devine and Australia's Phoebe Litchfield. Her innings helped India pile on 217 runs in the third T20I on Thursday.

"We will look to carry the momentum and approach the ODI series and not go easy, our approach should be much harder. It is a new ground and we will try to assess the situations first and plan accordingly," Ghosh told the media here after India won

the series 2-1.

Ghosh said she always has had the mindset to play aggressively. "The mindset (to play aggressively) is there in every game which comes from the practice sessions. If we have done something in the practice session, it feels easier to do to it in a match. I had prepared in that manner and that helped me," she said.

"I have always loved power hitting. I have also seen my father hit big shots. I have worked hard on my fitness and in the practice sessions," Ghosh added.

Ghosh also credited her experiences in the Women's Big Bash League and Women's Premier League for her exploits with the bat. "I spoke with Sophie Devine and Deandra Dottin during the WBBL and WPL. I have also discussed a lot about hitting with Harry di (Harmanpreet Kaur), she is also one of the finest hitters," she said.

The wicketkeeper-batter said India wanted to put their ODI se-



ries loss to Australia behind and start afresh.

"We wanted to forget the past and start afresh. We had come into this game to give our absolute best and not worry about the result and everyone gave their best," she said.

Hayley Matthews rued the West Indies were not good enough in execution but said her

side has a lot of positives to carry forward. "It just probably came down to execution again today. Like I said, we had really strong plans, but India also went back and obviously did some homework as well. Kudos to the way their players came out and batted," Matthews said after India recorded their highest-ever total of 217/4 in the format.

With stand-in India skipper Smriti Mandhana hitting consecutive fifties to notch scores of 54, 62 and 77 in the series, Matthews picked her innings in the final T20I as her best.

"Smriti obviously had a great series, but her knock today to me was probably the best one," she said. "Having to bowl at Richa at the end was quite difficult as well. You felt almost as if you didn't land it on a penny. It was going to be pretty hard to stop her from scoring," Matthews added. With the official attendance claiming to be in excess of 47,200 for the final T20I — the official capacity of DY Patil Stadium is 45,000 — Matthews said it was the reason she loves playing in India.

"Yeah, it was great to see. I have experienced massive Mumbai close before playing down here in the WPL. Obviously, when I am down here playing, usually they're on my side in that tournament," she said. (PTI)

**MANCHESTER, Dec 20:** The organization that represents European soccer leagues rejected latest proposals for a breakaway super league. Detailed plans for a new rival to the Champions League — the Unify League — were released this week by Madrid-based A22 Sports Management.

It was not clear what support there was for the proposed competition, but A22 said it had held discussions with clubs, leagues and "other parties."

The European Leagues, which represents 39 leagues and associations, said in a statement that it rejects "any suggestion that a consultation took place with our organization."

It reaffirmed leagues' commitment to the current system by which teams qualify for UEFA competitions like the Champions League, Europa League and Conference League.

"The A22's competition model,

which is not requested and unsubstantiated, would increase the number of international matches in an already congested calendar," it said.

"Supporters and stakeholders across the game have consistently made it clear that any attempt from existing or new international club competitions to expand their calendars at the expense of domestic competitions will be rejected."

Attempts to launch a Super League in 2021, in which 15 top clubs were protected from relegation, collapsed in the face of angry fan protests.

A22 launched a revised format last year with promotion, relegation and exit from the competition — as well as a women's tournament. The latest plans would include 96 clubs with qualification "based on annual performance in domestic leagues," the company said. (AP)



Driving growth and progress in every district of Assam, through the initiatives of the Education, Industry, Finance and Revenue Departments

# 12 Days of Development

From 11 December 2024 onwards






The Assam Government remains steadfast in its commitment to the state's comprehensive development and the enhancement of its people's quality of life. As part of its relentless pursuit of progress, the '12 Days of Development' initiative stands as a testament to this dedication. This endeavor will usher in a new era of growth, redefining Assam's future."

**Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma**  
Chief Minister, Assam




## Programme for 21 December

- Nagaon District**
  - Dawson HS & MP School Field, Nagaon
  - 12:00 Noon
  - Chief Guest** **Shri Keshab Mahanta**  
Minister, Revenue and Disaster Management etc., Assam
- Biswanath District**
  - Kamalakanta Kshetra, Biswanath Chariali
  - 11:00 AM
  - Chief Guest** **Shri Ashok Singhal**  
Minister, Health and Family Welfare etc., Assam
- Hojai District**
  - Kachari Maidan, Srimanta Sankardev Nagar, Hojai
  - 11:00 AM
  - Chief Guest** **Shri Pijush Hazarika**  
Minister, Water Resources etc., Assam
- Barpeta District**
  - Chhayaram Girls' High School Field
  - 11:00 AM
  - Chief Guest** **Shri Chandra Mohan Patowary**  
Minister, Environment and Forest etc., Assam
- Lakhimpur District**
  - Chukulibharia, Near Lakhimpur Commerce College Playground, North Lakhimpur
  - 11:00 AM
  - Chief Guest** **Shri Rupesh Gowala**  
Minister, Labour Welfare etc., Assam
- Dibrugarh District**
  - Mancotta Puja Field, Dibrugarh
  - 11:00 AM
  - Chief Guest** **Shri Prasanta Phukan**  
Minister, Power etc., Assam

Finance | Industries, Commerce & Public Enterprise | Revenue and Disaster Management Department

Schemes	Biswanath District	Dibrugarh District	Hojai District	Nagaon District
 <b>Ceremonial Distribution of 'No Dues Certificate' under Assam Microfinance Incentive and Relief Scheme to Category-III Phase-II Borrowers</b>	<b>1,351</b> <small>(Total Borrowers)</small>	<b>8,351</b> <small>(Total Borrowers)</small>	<b>2,623</b> <small>(Total Borrowers)</small>	<b>3,992</b> <small>(Total Borrowers)</small>
 <b>Seed Capital Support to SHGs (individually or Group) under Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>177</b>
 <b>Financial assistance to beneficiaries affected by disasters</b>	<b>9,854</b>	<b>1,290</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>1,655</b>

Education Department

	 <b>Distribution of Scooters under Dr Banikanta Kakati Merit Award of Pragyan Bharati Scheme</b> <small>From next year, only students who score 80 percent or above in the Higher Secondary Examination will be given scooters under this scheme</small>	 <b>Distribution of Bicycles to class 9 students under CM's Special Scheme</b>	 <b>Anundoram Barooah Cash Award through DBT to students scoring 75% and above in HSLC examination</b>
<b>Barpeta District</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>18,477</b>	<b>1,290</b>
<b>Lakhimpur District</b>	<b>1,984</b>	<b>14,824</b>	<b>1,079</b>