

**6** WORLD

- Russia targets Ukrainian infrastructure with a massive attack
- Biden watching situation in Bangladesh very closely: White House

**8** NATION

- RS proceedings adjourned till Monday over no confidence notice against Dhankhar
- 'Cong always chose power over Constitution, tried to destroy constitutional principles'

জনেজান চব্বাকাল myGov মই সৰকাৰ

Government of Assam

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 14 December**

**Golaghat District**

- Samannay Kshetra, Golaghat
- 11:00 AM

**Chief Guest**  
Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma  
Chief Minister, Assam

**Guests of Honour**  
Shri Atul Bora  
Minister, Agriculture etc., Assam

Smt. Ajanta Neog  
Minister, Finance etc., Assam

**Bajali District**

- Bhagabati Kshetra, Pathshala
- 11:00 AM

**Chief Guest**  
Shri Ranjeet Kumar Dass  
Minister, Panchayat and Rural Development etc., Assam

**Baksa District**

- Mushalpur HS School Playground, Mushalpur
- 11:00 AM

**Chief Guest**  
Shri Urkhao Gwra Brahma  
Minister, Handloom, Textiles and Sericulture etc., Assam

**Cachar District**

- Gandhi Mela Field, Silchar
- 12:00 Noon

**Chief Guest**  
Shri Krishnendu Paul  
Minister, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary etc., Assam

**Dima Hasao District**

- Auditorium, Haflong Govt College, Haflong
- 11:00 AM

**Chief Guest**  
Shri Debolal Garlosa  
CEM, NC Hills Autonomous Council

**Kokrajhar District**

- Bodofa Cultural Complex, Kokrajhar
- 11:00 AM

**Chief Guest**  
Shri Pramod Boro  
CEM, BTC, Kokrajhar

**Tamulpur District**

- Community Hall, Mahaprabhu Sri Sri Gopal aru Jagannath Than Satra, Kachubari
- 12:00 Noon

**Chief Guest**  
Shri Jayanta Mallabaruah  
Minister, Public Health Engineering etc., Assam

**Tinsukia District**

- Industrial Training Institute Playground, Borguri, Tinsukia
- 10:00 AM

**Chief Guest**  
Shri Rupesh Gowala  
Minister, Labour Welfare etc., Assam

**Hailakandi District**

- Dr. Shashi Bhushan Institute of Education, Boalpar, Hailakandi
- 11:00 AM

**Chief Guest**  
Shri Kaushik Rai  
Minister, Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs etc., Assam

**Morigaon District**

- Tarun Ram Phookun Playground, Morigaon
- 11:00 AM

**Chief Guest**  
Shri Keshab Mahanta  
Minister, Revenue and Disaster Management etc., Assam

Schemes	Bajali District	Baksa District	Cachar District	Dima Hasao District	Golaghat District	Kokrajhar District	Morigaon District
Ceremonial Distribution of 'No Dues Certificate' under Assam Microfinance Incentive and Relief Scheme to Category-III Phase-II Borrowers	48 (Total Borrowers)	225 (Total Borrowers)	1,834 (Total Borrowers)	-	5,119 (Total Borrowers)	119 (Total Borrowers)	3,925 (Total Borrowers)
Seed Capital under Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme	128	97	354	151	189	331	95
Financial assistance to beneficiaries affected by disasters	15	8	256	193	2,091	15	17

Schemes	Hailakandi District	Tinsukia District	Tamulpur District
Distribution of Scooters under Dr Banikanta Kakati Merit Award of Pragyan Bharati Scheme <small>From next year, only students who have scored 80 percent or above in the Higher Secondary Examination will be given scooters under this scheme.</small>	742	1,742	468
Distribution of Bicycles to class 9 students under CM's Special Scheme	6,780	10,158	5,420
Anundoram Barooah Cash Award through DBT to students scoring 75% and above in HSLC examination	559	604	398



## EPFO subscribers will receive dedicated cards that can be used at ATMs EPFO members may soon withdraw PF claims through ATMs

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** Members of the retirement fund body EPFO may soon be able to withdraw their provident fund (PF) money directly from ATMs after the settlement.

Currently, subscribers of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) have to wait for 7-10 days for the settlement of their claims online. After the settlement, the money is transferred to the beneficiaries' bank accounts.

Under the plan, EPFO subscribers will receive dedicated cards that can be used at ATMs to withdraw savings, a top official said, adding that the EPFO is mulling providing services at par with the banking system to its more than 7 crore subscribers.

Union Labour Secretary Sumita Dawra told PTI that the focus right now in EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) is to improve the IT infrastructure.

"While improvements are being



seen in the last few months, in January 2025 we will see more improvement coming in as a result of hardware upgradation," she said.

The secretary said that efforts are being made to bring systemic reforms that make processes easier and more efficient.

"As part of this modernisation drive, we also aim to compare EPFO systems with the banking systems in India that are in place and are working well. For ease of living, bringing more transparency and ease of claims is also part of the plan," she said.

Under the new system, claimants, beneficiaries or insured individuals will be able to access their claim amounts through ATMs.

A maximum of ₹ 7 lakh is provided under the Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance (EDLI) scheme run by the EPFO to the heirs of deceased subscribers.

In the new system, the heir of the deceased EPFO subscriber may also be able to use ATMs to withdraw the money after claim settlement.

The new system is expected to be rolled out after completion of a hardware upgrade by the EPFO.

The body is also likely to issue dedicated cards for use by EPFO subscribers to withdraw claim amounts through ATMs.

Presently, the EPFO has about seven crore contributing members covered under EPF, pension and group insurance schemes of the retirement fund body. (PTI)

## Sensex, Nifty stage strong comeback amid easing inflation, buying in telecom stocks



**MUMBAI, Dec 13:** Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended sharply higher on Friday amid heavy buying in telecommunication stocks and encouraging domestic inflation data.

After falling 1,207.14 points in morning trade, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex recovered all the lost ground later and jumped 843.16 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 82,133.12. During the day, it surged 923.96 points or 1.13 per cent to 82,133.92.

The NSE Nifty climbed 219.60 points or 0.89 per cent to settle at 24,768.30 after falling 367.9 points in intra-day trade.

Among the 30-share Sensex blue-chip pack, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Titan, UltraTech Cement, HCL Technologies, and

Power Grid, were the biggest gainers.

Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, JSW Steel and Bajaj Finserv were the laggards.

Retail inflation declined in November to 5.48 per cent and came within the Reserve Bank's comfort zone mainly due to easing food prices, creating headroom for a rate cut at the central bank's rate-setting panel meeting under new Governor Sanjay Malhotra in February.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based headline inflation was at 6.21 per cent in October and 5.55 per cent in November 2023.

India's industrial production (IIP) growth slowed to 3.5 per cent year-on-year in October 2024, mainly due to poor performance of mining, power and manufacturing,

as per official data released on Thursday.

"The domestic market smartly recovered from the day's low and moved out of the consolidation path led by index heavyweights. A gradual easing in food inflation and a price hike by FMCG companies, along with a recent correction in valuation, supported the sector to outperform. Currently, the market is anticipating a revival in consumer spending, driven by the festive season and year-end holidays, adding to the sentiments.

"Additionally, expectation of an increase in US spending is propelling the IT sector," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower while Seoul ended higher.

Markets in Europe were trading higher. Wall Street ended in the negative territory on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 3,560.01 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.54 per cent to USD 73.77 a barrel.

The 30-share BSE benchmark declined 236.18 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at 81,289.96 on Thursday. The Nifty dropped 93.10 points or 0.38 per cent to 24,548.70. (PTI)

## ICICI Pru Life settles 99.04% of claims in just 1.2 days in Q2-FY2025

**HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Dec 13:** ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has declared a claim settlement ratio of 99.04%, the highest in the industry, for the period from July 2024 to September 2024, said an official statement on Friday.

As per the statement, importantly, the average time to settle a death claim was just 1.2 days.

Mr Amish Banker, chief operations officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance said, "Claims is the ultimate moment of truth, and we handle every claim with utmost sensitivity. In Q2-FY2025, we had a claim settlement ratio of 99.04% while our average claim settlement turnaround time for non-investigated claims from last document received date was just 1.2 days".

He further said that ICICI has settled death claims totalling over ₹ 451 crore in the same period.

"Under our 'Claim for Sure' initiative, we promise to settle eligible claims in one-day after all documents are submitted. We have settled death claims amounting to ₹ 71.24 crore in Q2-FY2025 under this initiative. We have consistently had an industry leading claim settlement ratios; in Q1-FY2024 it was 97.94%, in Q2-FY2024 it stood at 98.14%, in Q3-FY2024 it was 98.52% and for FY2024 it was 99.17%," he added.

## Switzerland scraps MFN status to India, dividend income to face higher tax

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** Switzerland has withdrawn the MFN status granted to India following an adverse court ruling against Nestle, a move that will result in adverse tax implications for Indian entities operating in the European nation. With this, from January 1, 2025, Indian companies will be subject to a higher withholding tax on income generated in Switzerland.

In a statement, Switzerland announced suspension of the application of the most favoured nation (MFN) clause of the protocol to the agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the Republic of India for the avoidance of double taxation with respect to taxes on income. Switzerland cited a ruling by Indian Supreme Court in a case relating to Vevey-headquartered Nestle for its decision to withdraw the MFN. This means that Switzerland will tax dividends that Indian entities will earn in that country at 10 per cent from January 1, 2025. (PTI)

## Rupee recovers 10 paise to end at 84.78 against US dollar

**MUMBAI, Dec 13:** The rupee rebounded from its all-time low level and settled with a gain of 10 paise at 84.78 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, buoyed by a strong recovery in domestic equity markets and easing inflation data.

However, a strengthening American currency overseas and foreign fund outflows restricted the positive bias in the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.87 and touched the intra-day high of 84.77 against the greenback. The unit finally ended the session at 84.78 (provisional) against the dollar, logging a gain of 10

paise from its previous closing level.

On Thursday, the rupee fell 5 paise to settle at the lowest-ever level of 84.88 against the US dollar. The previous record low closing level was recorded on December 9, when the unit settled 20 paise lower at 84.86 against the dollar.

The latest official data released on Thursday showed India's retail inflation eased in November to 5.48 per cent and came within the Reserve Bank's comfort zone mainly due to lower food prices, creating headroom for a rate cut at the central bank's rate-setting panel meeting under new Governor Sanjay Malhotra in February. (PTI)

## Delhi-Dehradun expressway to be completed within three months: Gadkari

*'The travel time is expected to reduce to 12 hours'*

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday said that the Delhi-Dehradun expressway, which is expected to reduce travel time between the two cities to two hours, will be completed within the next three months.

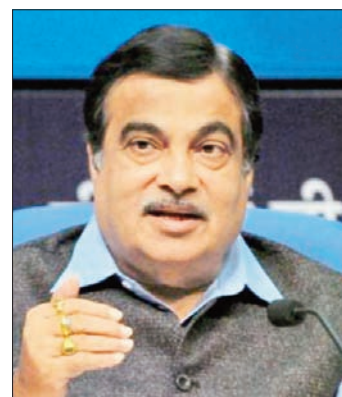
Currently, the travel time between the two cities is five to six hours.

Addressing 'Times Network India Economic Conclave 2024', Gadkari further said that construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is expected to be completed within two months.

The travel time between the two metropolitan cities is expected to reduce to 12 hours with the completion of the expressway from the present 24 hours. The road transport and highways minister said Delhi-Dehradun highway project has two packages.

"A ₹ 10,000 crore project has been approved for Delhi's Kalindi Kunj, extending to Faridabad. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the project within the next 15-20 days," Gadkari said.

Gadkari also said that the Modi government is working to reduce air pollution, lower the import of



fossil fuel and enhance farm income.

"The transport ministry is responsible for 40 per cent of the air pollution... While a huge part of pollution is due to stubble burning in neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana, road construction and fossil fuels also add to the annual problem," he said.

The minister also pointed out that the problem of stubble burning will be solved in two years as the government is working on 400 projects that will convert 200 lakh tonnes of rice straw every year to alternate fuels.

Gadkari said that his ministry is

## Ontario to restrict electricity exports to US and bar American-made alcohol if Trump tariffs applied

**TORONTO, Dec 13:** Canada's most populous province may bar American-made alcohol in addition to restricting electricity exports to Michigan, New York and Minnesota if US President-elect Donald Trump imposes sweeping tariffs on all Canadian products, a senior official has said.

The official in Ontario Premier Doug Ford's government said on Thursday that it's contemplating restricting Ontario's liquor control board from buying American-made alcohol.

Ontario is also considering restricting exports of critical minerals required for electric vehicle batteries and preventing US-based companies from the government's procurement process, the official said on condition of anonymity because the functionary wasn't authorised to speak publicly about the potential measures.

Ford confirmed on Wednesday evening that Ontario is contemplating restricting electricity exports to the three states. He reiterated that on Thursday and said it would make electricity unaffordable for Americans.

"It's a last resort," Ford said. "I don't think President-elect Trump wants that to happen. We're sending a message to the US if you come and attack Ontario, you attack the livelihoods of people in Ontario and Canadians, we are going to use every tool in our tool box to defend Ontarians and Canadians. Let's hope it never comes to that."

Trump has threatened to impose a 25 per cent tax on all products entering the United States from Canada and Mexico unless they stem the flow of migrants and drugs. Ontario powered 1.5 million homes in the US in 2023.

"That's OK if he does that. That's fine," Trump told CNBC when asked about Ford's remarks on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

"The United States is subsidizing Canada and we shouldn't have to do that," Trump said. "And we have a great relationship. I have so many friends in Canada, but we shouldn't have to subsidize a country."

The CNBC reporter said Trump told him off camera that they hope they can work something out with Canada. The premier of the oil rich Canadian province of Alberta ruled out cutting off oil exports.

"Under no circumstances will Alberta agree to cut off oil and gas exports," Alberta Premier Danielle Smith said. "Instead, we're taking a diplomatic approach and we're meeting with our allies in the US. We're making the case for Alberta oil and gas to be part of the solution to energy affordability and energy security."

Canada supplies more oil to the US than any other country, nearly 4.5 million barrels a day. About 60 per cent of US crude oil imports are from Canada and a fifth of the crude refined in the US comes from Canada. (AP)

Contd. from Page 3...

## Significant milestone for Gaganyaan

mission, is one of the projects approved by the Union Cabinet. Gaganyaan project envisages a demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching a crew of three members to an orbit of 400 km for a three-day mission and bringing them back safely to Earth, by landing in Indian sea waters. (PTI)

## CM lays base for ambitious potable

Incentive and Relief Scheme. The CM said that in Jorhat district, 12647 women who had taken loans from banks and micro-financial institutions up to Rs 50000 and could not return the money would get No Dues certificates with the government paying their loans to the banks from the State coffers under the Category 3 scheme in which ₹ 220 crore had been allotted.

He also said that Jorhat district had the highest number of women who had availed of loans in this category, followed by Dibrugarh with more than 8000.

Jayanta Malla Baruah, minister for PHED, housing and urban development, along with Jorhat and Mariani MLAs were present on the occasion.

## Jaishankar raises concern about

in this," the minister said during the Question Hour. He said a "different set of problems" have been raised for West Asia, the Gulf and the Middle East, "where we have a situation" of underpayment or non-payment of wages and maltreatment of Indian professionals and workers.

Jaishankar asserted that the Indian embassies are very active and carry out regular reviews.

He further highlighted the treatment of minorities in Bangladesh, terming the situation as a matter of concern for India. The minister said India hopes that the new dispensation in Bangladesh will settle down to a mutually beneficial stable relationship with India.

"We have drawn their attention to our concerns. Recently the foreign secretary visited Dhaka. This subject came up in his meetings. And it is our expectation that in its own interests, Bangladesh will take action for the safety of minorities," he said during the Question Hour.

The minister said India has a good history of development projects in Bangladesh.

"In fact when we speak about the neighbourhood first policy, almost every neighbouring country with the exception of Pakistan and China, we have had important development projects and that is the case with Bangladesh as well," he said. (PTI)

## 3 Indian students killed in Canada;

400,000 Indian students are studying in Canada. Asked about reports of instances of the Indian high commission not granting visas in Canada, Jaiswal described them as a "disinformation" campaign.

"We have seen the said media report. It is yet another example of Canadian media's disinformation to malign India," he said.

"Granting of Indian visas is our sovereign function and we have the legitimate right to deny visas to those who undermine our territorial integrity," he said.

"The commentary that we see in the Canadian media on this matter is akin to foreign interference in India's sovereign affairs," Jaiswal added. (PTI)

## Parliamentary panel recommends

associated with the raw material, transportation cost, labour cost etc, constructing a new house of the requisite area under PMAY-G for poor and needy beneficiaries with such assistance amount seems to be an arduous task," the report said.

"Moreover, there are instances wherein houses remain incomplete for want of finance and thereby keeping the target lagging," it added.

The committee noted that against an initial target of 2.95 crore houses to be constructed by March next year, 2.66 crore were constructed as of October 22 and 29 lakh were yet to be completed.

A target of constructing an additional two crore houses in the next five financial years -- 2024 to 2029 -- has been approved by the government, the report said.

"The committee finds it utmost necessary that a review of per-unit assistance be done on a priority basis, particularly when the scheme has been extended to March 2029," the panel said and recommended revision of the per-unit assistance through a suitable hike.

The committee also recommended that the Department of Rural Development urge the agencies involved to explore all means to complete the construction of the houses within the target fixed by the government.

The panel expressed concern over landless beneficiaries getting assistance for land to build their house and, citing Union rural development ministry data, said that of 5,73,311 (5.73 lakh) landless beneficiaries identified under PMAY-G, 59 per cent or 3,60,837 (3.60 lakh) had been provided land for the construction of houses.

"The issue of landlessness is affecting the progress of PMAY-G and may also cause delay in the completion of the target," the report said and recommended that the department frame a policy within a specified period.

On the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) -- a 100 per cent centrally-funded centrally-sponsored scheme under which pensions are given to the elderly, widows, disabled persons, and bereaved families on the death of the primary breadwinner belonging to BPL households -- the panel said the pensions ranged from Rs 200 to Rs 500 per month, which was a cause of concern for a long period of time.

"The committee noted this amount as abysmally low when the cost of living has increased during the last couple of years," the panel said. (PTI)

## 'PM Modi hasn't understood

results not come as they have, the government would have started work on changing the Constitution," Priyanka Gandhi said.

"The truth is that they are chanting 'Constitution' because they realise the people of this country will keep the Constitution alive."

According to her, people were demanding a caste-based census and even the ruling party was talking about it because of the election results.

"When the entire opposition called for a caste-based census, they talked about cattle and 'mangalsutra' getting stolen," the Congress MP said in an apparent reference to the Lok Sabha election campaign.

Priyanka Gandhi said the Constitution has given the message of unity to the nation, and accused the BJP-led government of pursuing divisive politics.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won 293 seats in the Lok Sabha elections earlier this year. The BJP won 240 seats on its own against the halfway mark of 272. (PTI)

## UN chief urges rich nations

change. Guterres said in South Africa on Wednesday that he hoped that Africa would have at least two permanent members of the Security Council by the time his term ends in December 2026, although he acknowledged it would be difficult. In Lesotho, he said it was another "injustice" against Africa that a continent of more than 1.4 billion still had no permanent representation in that body.

"When a continent that is home to nearly a fifth of humanity remains systematically excluded from global decision-making, we must call this what it is, a relic of colonialism that has no place in today's world," Guterres said.

On Friday, Guterres is due to visit the Katse Dam, which is part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. The project aims to build a series of dams and tunnels to redirect some of Lesotho's water into South Africa's river system to help ease its neighbour's water shortages. (AP)

### NAME CORRECTION

I, Golapi Bewa, W/O-Dudu Mondal, R/O-VIII, Pub-Padokhat, P.O-Shyamtila, P.S-Dhula, Dist. Darrang (Assam) do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I am a permanent resident of the above noted address and citizen of India by birth.

That my actual and correct name is Golapi Bewa. That my name has wrongly been recorded in my SBI Kiosk Banking Identity Card vide A/C No.34054988721 as Gulesa Bewa in place of Golapi Bewa. That Golapi Bewa and Gulesa Bewa are one and the same person.

Sd/-

Golapi Bewa  
W/O-Dudu Mondal  
R/O-VIII, Pub-Padokhat  
P.O-Shyamtila, P.S-Dhula  
Dist. Darrang (Assam)

### AFFIDAVIT

The correct name of my mother is Mom Maya Chauhan as in all other documents and it was wrongly recorded as MON MAYA CHAUHAN in an online appointment receipt bearing application Reference No. 24-003476946 (ARN) Appointment ID-100026610300924 under Ministry of External Affairs Govt. of India.

Krishna Chauhan,  
S/o- Subhas Chauhan,  
Vill.- Durbintila, PO and  
PS- Jirkinging,  
Dist.- West Karbi Anglong, Assam



## Over 40 families evicted • Security forces foil resistance bid Govt carries out eviction drive in Goalpara

**GOALPARA, Dec 13:** More than 40 families were evicted in an anti-encroachment drive in Assam's Goalpara district on Friday, an official said.

They were served eviction notices in advance, he said.

The eviction drive was carried out with the help of excavators since morning in the Pancharatna area, under the Balijan revenue circle of the district.

Security forces were also deployed for the operation, which faced resistance from the encroachers.

Many of those evicted claimed they had been living there for at least three generations and attempted to prevent the administration from carrying out the operation.

"I was born in this house, and now my grandchildren are here. We cannot be asked to leave just like that," a woman claimed.

Another senior resident said that the administration failed to make any alternative arrangements for them.



"Where will the people live now?" he asked.

Some women tried to prevent the excavators, but police moved them away and cleared the way.

A total of 44 families, belonging to different religions and linguistic groups, were evicted during the operation, the official said.

Senior officials, including additional District Commissioner

Nabajyoti Pathak, Balijan circle officer Puja Das and the additional Superintendent of Police Anita Hazarika, oversaw the drive. (PTI)

## Jaishankar raises concern about online job fraud

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told the Lok Sabha on Friday that his ministry has requested to block certain websites offering fraudulent jobs abroad and also recommended the prosecution of those involved in such scams.

Responding to the supplementaries, Jaishankar said the government has brought back 1,167 Indians from Cambodia and another 497 from Myanmar, who were taken there on the pretext of getting them jobs.

He said people are made to work illegally by those running such online scams.

"In India, we have requested for the blocking of sites which promote such jobs. We have recommended prosecution in certain cases for people who have been involved (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 8 held for raping woman in Garchuk

**GUWAHATI, Dec 13:** Eight people were arrested on Friday for allegedly raping a woman on a temple premises in Guwahati, police said.

The arrests were made after a purported video of the incident in the Garchuk area was found circulating among locals, a senior police officer said.

While seven of the accused were apprehended initially, the eighth person was arrested later in the day.

Guwahati Police Commissioner Diganta Barah said the video of the alleged gang rape was received from a newsperson early on Friday.

"Based on information received and thorough analysis of the video, police teams immediately conducted raids at various locations under the jurisdiction of Garchuk and Jalukbari police stations, and



seven people identified in the video were arrested," Barah said.

All the arrested accused are aged between 18 and 23 years, he said.

"The identity of the woman is yet to be established. Further investigation is on," the CP said.

Barah later said that an eighth accused, who was initially on the run, had also been apprehended.

Another police official said the incident occurred on November 17 when the Raas festival was being celebrated in the area.

"As per our information so far, one of the accused had taken the woman to the temple premises, which is in a hilly area. She was raped there and the incident was videographed by them," he said. The authenticity of the video could not be verified by PTI independently.

Nine people have been identified from the purported video, and one of them is absconding, the official said.

Local residents have alleged that drug addicts regularly loiter around the temple and adjoining areas, especially after dusk. (PTI)

## Parliamentary panel recommends increasing assistance under PMAY-G

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** With the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin being extended till March 2029 with an aim to construct two crore additional homes, a Parliamentary Standing Committee has recommended the assistance provided under the scheme be suitably hiked.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, headed by Congress MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, pointed out that the assistance under the scheme had remained stagnant at ₹ 1.2 lakh for a considerable period of time, often leading to cases in which the houses remained incomplete.

In a report tabled in the Lok Sabha on Thurs-



day, the panel said the "Housing for All" vision might not achieve its target until the beneficiaries were provided "proper hand-holding" in

terms of financial assistance of right value and at the right juncture.

The report also highlighted that more than two lakh landless beneficiaries were still waiting to get land or assistance from state governments to construct homes, which might also cause a delay in hitting the target.

The panel said the per-unit assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G) for plain areas was ₹ 1.2 lakh and ₹ 1.3 lakh for hilly areas and it had remained static for a considerable period of time. "With rising inflation having a detrimental effect on the cost factor (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Priyanka biggest threat to Rahul's political career: BJP's Amit Malviya

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** BJP IT department head Amit Malviya on Friday said Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra could be "the biggest threat" to the political career of her brother and leader of opposition Rahul Gandhi if her maiden speech in Lok Sabha was any indication.

In her 32-minute speech in Hindi in the Lower House, Priyanka Gandhi was combative yet restrained, never raising her voice, as she raised the Opposition's key planks. These included the BJP's alleged attempts to change the Constitution, "growing monopoly" of the Adani Group, atrocities on women, incidents of violence in Sambhal and Manipur, and the demand for a nationwide caste census.

Commenting on her speech, Malviya said in a post on X, "If Priyanka Vadra's maiden speech is any indication, she poses the biggest threat to Rahul Gandhi's political career, not just in terms of her in waiting, but someone who can out-match him in raising the levity quotient in public discourse."

Participating in a debate on the Constitution in Lok Sabha, the

newly elected member of Parliament from Kerala's Wayanad launched a blistering attack at the BJP and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not understood that it is "Bharat ka Samvidhan" not "Sangh ka Vidhan".

She said the Constitution is a protective shield of justice, unity and freedom of expression, but the BJP-led government has made every effort to break it in the last 10 years.

Had it not been for the Lok Sabha poll results, the ruling BJP would have started changing the Constitution, she claimed.

Asked about the speech, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi told reporters in the Parliament complex, "Wonderful speech... Better than my maiden speech, let us put it like that."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also praised the Wayanad MP's speech, saying it was "excellent".

"All the facts she put before the government... We are very happy about her performance," he told reporters when asked for his comments. (PTI)

## 'Relic of colonialism has no place in today's world' UN chief urges rich nations to meet new commitments on climate finance

**MASERU (LESOTHO), Dec 13:** United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has urged rich nations to honour their commitments to help the world's poor countries fight climate change in a speech to Lesotho's Parliament and repeated his hope that Africa would soon have permanent seats on the UN Security Council.

Guterres is on a three-day visit to southern Africa and was in South Africa on Wednesday. His two-day trip to neighbouring Lesotho, a small landlocked mountainous kingdom, will also see him visit the Katse Dam, an integral part of the country's plans to harness its water reserves.

A focus of Guterres' visit has been the money-poor nations in Africa and elsewhere need to deal with the impact of a warming planet. While Africa contributes a tiny amount to global warming, it is one of the worst affected continents.



Countries adopted an agreement at the UN climate talks in Azerbaijan last month to inject at least USD300 billion a year to help developing nations cope with global warming. It was far short of the more than USD1 trillion developing countries were calling for.

"Developed countries must meet their commitments ... and deliver

## Significant milestone for Gaganyaan prog

**BENGALURU, Dec 13:** ISRO announced on Friday that it has achieved a significant milestone for the Gaganyaan programme with the first solid motor segment moved from the production plant to the launch complex.

The announcement came days after the space agency conducted 'well deck' recovery trials of the Gaganyaan with the Indian Navy on December 6.

The space agency said the well deck in a ship can be flooded with water so that boats, landing crafts, and recovered spacecraft can be taken inside to dock within the ship.

Taking to the social media platform 'X,' the space agency stated, "A significant milestone for the Gaganyaan Programme! The first solid motor segment has been moved from the production plant to the launch complex, marking a key step towards the HLV3 G1 flight. India's human spaceflight dreams are taking shape!" Gaganyaan, India's first human space (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## CM lays base for ambitious potable water scheme in Jorhat

**JORHAT, Dec 13:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma laid the foundation stone and performed the bhoomi puja ceremony of the ambitious ₹ 220 crore Jorhat Town Water Supply Scheme on the northwestern outskirts here on Friday.

The project aims to provide potable and uninterrupted water supply to the residents of all 19 wards spread across the Jorhat town area and up to Assam Agricultural University, by channelling water from the Brahmaputra.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarma said that the proposed scheme is part of the government's all-round development initiatives, which is expected to be completed within one and half years.

"The water supply project will be fully automatic, so issues like water pressure or pipe leakages

will be immediately detected and fixed. This is part of our broader vision to ensure access to basic amenities for all," said Sarma during his address.

The chief minister said that the project would be both Centre and state-funded with ₹ 170 crore from the Centre and ₹ 50 crore from the State.

"Our government is committed to improving people's lives by upgrading and developing infrastructure and providing access to amenities," he said.

Later, the chief minister took part in a public meeting at Jorhat Stadium under the state government's '12 Days of Development', an initiative, to connect beneficiaries with Government schemes.

Sarma launched the distribution of 'No Dues' certificates to women beneficiaries as part of the Assam Microfinance (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 3 Indian students killed in Canada; India takes up safety issue with Ottawa

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** Three Indian students were murdered in Canada last week as the Indian high commission in Ottawa has taken up the matter of the safety of Indians with the Canadian authorities, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday.

"The safety, security, and welfare of Indian nationals in Canada remains of utmost importance to us," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"In the last week or so we have had unfortunate tragedies. Three Indian students have been murdered. We are saddened at these terrible tragedies that have struck our nationals in Canada," Jaiswal said.

"We extend our deepest condolences to the grieving families. Our High Commission and Consulates in Toronto and Vancouver are extending all possible help in the matter," he said.



Jaiswal said the Indian missions in that country are in touch with the local authorities for a thorough investigation of the incidents.

"Issues faced by them, especially Indian students, are raised by our high commission and Consulates with the relevant Canadian authorities on a regular basis," he said.

"We have also issued an advisory for our nationals and Indian students to exercise extreme caution and remain vigilant in view of the deteriorating security environment in Canada as a result of the growing incidence of hate crimes and criminal violence," Jaiswal added. According to official data, over (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 'PM Modi hasn't understood Constitution is not Sangh rule book'

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was moved over the incidents of violence in Sambhal and Manipur and had not understood that the Constitution was not the Sangh's rule book.

Participating in a debate on the Constitution in the Lok Sabha, Priyanka Gandhi said the Constitution is a protective shield of justice, unity, and freedom of expression but the BJP-led government has made every effort to break it in the past 10 years.

"The Prime Minister touches his

forehead to the Constitution but when there are cries for justice from Sambhal, Hathras, and Manipur, there is not a wrinkle on his forehead," the newly elected Wayanad MP said in her maiden speech in Parliament.

"It seems that Prime Minister Modi hasn't understood that it is 'Bharat ka Samvidhan' not 'Sangh ka Vidhan'," Priyanka Gandhi said.

The government, she said, is working to weaken the reservation policy through lateral entry and privatisation. "Had the Lok Sabha election (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## HT BRIEFS

### Power shutdown

**DIPHU:** The Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL), Diphu Electrical Sub-Division-I, has announced a temporary shutdown of power supply in various areas due to ongoing road widening work on the Diphu-Lumding Road. The affected areas include the 33kV Lumding Feeder, 33kV DMCH Feeder, 11kV Barlangfer, 4-kilo, Nilalung, Diphu-1, Diphu-2, Chandmani, and VIP localities. The power supply will be disrupted daily during two specific timeframes: from 5:00 AM to 7:00 AM and from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM. This schedule will continue until the completion of the required shifting of existing power lines to accommodate the road development work. APDCL urges residents and organizations in the affected areas to make necessary arrangements and apologizes for any inconvenience.

### Book released

**GUWAHATI:** Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein released *The Buddhist Catechism*, a profound book on Buddhist teachings authored by Bhikkhu A. Pañāsāra, an esteemed monk and scholar, Mein announced on Friday. The ceremony marked a significant contribution to the dissemination of Buddhist philosophy and the promotion of mindfulness and compassion. The deputy chief minister on the micro-blogging site X expressed his delight at unveiling the book, which he described as a "remarkable and insightful work" divided into four comprehensive parts. Meanwhile, the structure of the book ensures accessibility for readers seeking to understand the essence of Buddhist philosophy. "This book is a testament to Bhikkhu A. Pañāsāra's dedication to spreading the timeless wisdom of the Buddha through simple yet profound teachings," Mein stated.

change "must be operationalised swiftly and funded generously by those most responsible for climate destruction."

Southern Africa is in the grip of one of its worst droughts, triggering a hunger crisis that has affected more than 27 million people, according to the UN. Lesotho is one of several countries to declare national disasters because of the drought's devastating impact on crops.

The drought has been blamed on the naturally occurring El Niño weather phenomenon, but other crises like recent deadly cholera outbreaks and floods across the East African region have been attributed to climate change.

A report this year by the World Meteorological Organisation said African nations are losing up to 5 per cent of their gross domestic product every year and bearing a heavier burden than others from climate (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*We live in the world when we love it*  
- Rabindranath Tagore

## Hope for survival of secularism

**H**alt all fresh suits, proceedings, and orders in relation to the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act 1991, ordered a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India on December 12, implications of which will be far reaching since it would transcend beyond the legal boundaries to the social and political life of the people of the country. The order has kindled a new hope of survival of secularism in its battle with communalism being attacked socially, politically, and legally by the Hindutva forces, though the Places of Worship Act has a bar against raising such issues. Altogether 18 cases filed by the Hindutva forces claiming as many as 10 Mosques or Dargahs were pending in various courts across the country, despite the Ayodhya Verdict of 2019 had upheld the Places of Worship Act with the ultimate objective of not allowing the incidents of the distant past in the history going back to the 16th Century AD any destruction of the present and future of the people now. An oversight of the real objective of the Places of Worship Act by a former CJI D Y Chandrachud in 2022 paved the way for mushrooming growth of cases against the Mosques and Dargahs, because he said that there was no bar on ascertaining the nature of places of worship under the said Act, though it bars changing their character with a cut-off date of August 15, 1947, when India became independent. In the current order, CJI Sanjiv Khanna led three-member bench has corrected the error.

Since the ruling establishment at the Centre have been pursuing the Hindutva agenda, the halt order of the Supreme Court is significant, especially given Centre's attitude in this matter that has been exposed in the court. What is lying ahead is a matter of imagination. When the senior advocate Vikas Shing sought a reference to a five-judge bench, Chief Justice Khanna said that the court would consider this case in the light of the five-judge bench which delivered the Ayodhya Verdict of November 2019. Ayodhya verdict had not only upheld the Places of Worship Act but had also observed that "for any person who seeks solace or recourse against the actions of any number of ancient rulers, the law is not the answer". The freeze order that bars courts registering fresh suits or passing orders in pending cases seeking to "reclaim" Hindu temples destroyed by Mughal "invaders" in the 16th century was passed amidst interruptions by the petitioners representing Hindutva forces is also significant. The order will remain in force until the bench hear the petitions challenging the validity of the Places of Worship Act.

By the halting order, the Supreme Court bench, comprised of CJI Sanjiv Khanna, Justice P V Sanjay Kumar, and Justice K V Vishwanathan, has not only protected the Places of Worship Act but the 'basic structure' of the Constitution of India which stands on secularism. At this point of time, Supreme Court order has just given a little hope to secularism to survive the onslaught of communalism in India, but there is a long social, political, and legal battle ahead.

## Gunotsav and its impact on Assam's education

**I**nadequate infrastructure, heterogeneity in the quality of teaching and, above all, a large disparity in educational results across urban and rural schools. Gunotsav, an ambitious initiative launched by the Assam government in 2017. However, Gunotsav is not only a tool for assessment, but is a general master plan for the development of a continuous process of education and a culture of responsibility and excellence in its schools. The core or whole of Gunotsav is the combined or complete assessment of the school. Traditional models relied heavily on standardized test scores as the sole indicator of school performance. But, on the other hand, Gunotsav elevates this perspective by integrating multiple layers (such as the strategy for instruction, students' engagement, the quality of facilities, and community involvement). This multifactorial appraisal has been a revolution, allowing us to see what weaknesses and strengths schools have and how to apply interventions that are focused and relevant to the local context. The program has been instrumental in demystifying the technical aspect of the problems schools face, and in developing solutions that are as well as responsive to school needs, thereby delivering significant and sustainable improvements.

One of the focuses of Gunotsav has been an improvement in the quality of instruction. It is generally agreed that teaching effectiveness plays a significant role in positive student learning. Just prior to the introduction of Gunotsav, teaching quality in parts of Assam was inconsistent with, in fact, often with the negative impact of lack of training and exposure to modern teaching practices. Evaluations performed by Gunotsav have brought to light the deficiencies and prompted governmental intervention (and educational courses for professionals) with which to guarantee that the teachers have the competences necessary to keep pace with



pedagogical techniques. As interactive and student centred approaches to teaching and learning, these courses have, moving beyond the traditional rote drudgery in the classroom, inspired curiosity and critical thinking and the creation of knowledge and knowledge work as well as the development of understandings. The outcome is an educational environment where the student is the final learner and, as a result, achieves a higher cognitive development and a higher learning outcome.

They construct a teaching-and-learning dependent context, higher proportion of attendance and a beneficial effect on education and child development. Gunotsav has also played a major role in encouraging motivations for community involvements as a desirable component in learning process achievement. One of its more peculiar characteristics is the fact that school assessment might involve the local parents and other stakeholders. Even the participatory concept implies that, when it comes to education, it is not the school's entitlement, like that of a family and community. But if the parents and community leaders rise then it is possible to provide a supportive context in which the students can see that education is truly the means to give value to their lives. In this activity, the student learning is systematically valued and progressed to a reverberation that reaches beyond the classroom walls. Schools now

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT

Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

and offer a degree of educational route more broadly by considering how potential developmental students of skills might be acquired outside of the classroom setting. This also covers the acquisition of co-curricular activities, reinforcement of problem-solving abilities and more general ability promotion that are of highest concern in the development of the individual and in the specific profession. As it promotes a healthy equilibrium between academic difficulty and holistic growth, Gunotsav develops its students to be better equipped to face the challenging real life problem situations and produces an adaptable, resourceful and very intelligent generation of thinkers. This model conforms to global educational trends, which do not emphasize memorization and test results, but rather focus on the development of skills and personal growth, continually expand-

ing and adapting to the life experiences accumulated on the road.

Despite the success of Gunotsav, the presence of implementation has resulted in the lack of uncomplicated progress without some challenges. Due to the variability of Assam socio-economic context, it is a considerable hurdle since schools are spatially diverse in the various parts of the state with varying school-community-community-resource-spread and thus varying access to and use of resources. Although urban schools have apparently better access to resources and equipment, rural schools have for generations been trying to finish the essential task of daily functioning. Implementation of the program relies on correcting this imbalance and ensuring that benefits from the change are fairly shared and uniformly distributed. Ongoing monitoring, financial and political support are all needed in alluding these challenges and keeping the program viable. This may be constrained by the limitations of resource delivering a very low increase rate, nevertheless by taking this approach it could be hoped that encourage a platform of transparency and accountability at least will give a base from which agile steps can be taken even if funding is tight.

The approach of Gunotsav model has implications that extend beyond Assam itself, and might serve as a model for other regions which are challenged by an education dilemma as challenging as that posed by Assam itself. The study points to the necessity of a counterbalancing approach to school assessment - an assessment that gives equal prominence to qualitative and quantitative data. That it is an inclusive, situationally appropriate and combined paradigm, which gives equal prominence to the following dimensional elements teaching-learning quality, infrastructural and community involvement in the approach, is theorized, to however, arise, due to its particular attention to teaching-learning

quality, infrastructural and community involvement. It demonstrates that it is possible to produce substantial change when the evaluations are comprehensive and the interventions are unique and when all those who contribute to the process of change are involved.

Gunotsav has fundamentally re-defined educational standards in Assam. The shift from a narrow interpretation of test scores to a more encompassing, integrative interpretation of the school itself has established a new standard of what school improvement should entail. Changes in pedagogical practice, indedction, and in community involvement have played their own significant role in the evolution of a school system able to respond to the needs of the students. With this unifying plan, the school reforms developed by Gunotsav have been ensured that it is not an isolated project but it has been used to foster continuous change. The experience in its application offers relevant teaching experiences on the ways in which educational tasks can be adjusted in order to address the demands of a changing society, but also includes the unique features of heterogeneous educational systems.

Overall, Gunotsav has not only served as a means of evaluation, i.e., albeit Gunotsav functions as such, in itself, but rather as a movement, which in its own right advocates for the continual development and a shared commitment to educational quality. The effect is that of the wider lesson that educational quality is not single-dimensional, and that it is addressed by more than just the delivery of academic learning, but also by in-building learning, teacher provision, and community provision. Advancing a legacy that began with Gunotsav, the initiative is a lasting example that educational reform is a process that has bloomed from collaboration, innovation, and deep and persistent commitment to renewal. (The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-magazine SAMPROTIK)

## One Nation, One Election: Transforming India's democracy

By: Satyabrata Borah

**O**ne Nation, One Election is an idea that has been widely discussed in India for many years. It aims to hold simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha (the national Parliament) and all State Legislative Assemblies across the country. This proposal suggests that instead of having elections frequently in different states and at the national level, a single, synchronized electoral process should take place once every five years. This concept has been proposed as a way to save time, money, and resources, and to make governance more stable and effective. It is an ambitious idea that could bring significant changes to the Indian political and administrative system if implemented.

India is the largest democracy in the world, with elections playing a vital role in shaping its future. The country has elections at different levels, including the national level, state level, and local level. Each election requires extensive preparation, such as the deployment of security forces, arrangement of polling stations, printing of ballot papers, and training of election officials. These activities demand significant financial resources, manpower, and time. The concept of One Nation, One Election suggests that these efforts can be streamlined by conducting elections simultaneously, thereby reducing the frequency of election-related work and saving resources.

Frequent elections have their own set of challenges. They often lead to the implementation of the Model Code of Conduct, which puts a temporary halt on new government schemes and policies. This affects the pace of development work and delays important decisions. Politicians and officials also get occupied with election campaigns, which diverts their focus from governance. Additionally, frequent elections can lead to political polarization, where parties are more focused on short-term gains rather than long-term development. One Nation, One Election aims to address these issues by reducing the number of elections and ensuring a more stable governance environment.

The idea of simultaneous elections is not new to India. After gaining independence in 1947, the country conducted its first general election in 1951-52, followed by state assembly elections. For the first two decades, elections at both levels were conducted together. However, over time, due to the dissolution of some state assemblies and other political changes, the election cycles became unsynchronized. This led to the current situation where elections are held at different times in different states, resulting in a continuous election cycle.

One Nation, One Election seeks to bring back the practice of synchronized elections. Proponents of this idea argue that it will bring several benefits. One of the main advantages is the reduction in



election expenditure. Organizing elections is a costly affair, and simultaneous elections can significantly cut down these costs. It will also save time and effort for the Election Commission of India, which can focus more on improving the electoral process rather than constantly conducting elections.

Another benefit of One Nation, One Election is the reduction in political disruptions. During elections, there is often a lot of political activity, including rallies, speeches, and debates. While these are important for democracy, they can sometimes disrupt normal life and governance. With fewer elections, such disruptions will be minimized, allowing governments to function more smoothly. It will also give politicians more time to focus on their responsibilities rather than being in a constant election mode.

This idea could also strengthen national unity. Simultaneous elections can create a sense of collective participation, as people across the country will vote at the same time. It can promote a broader discussion on national issues, rather than just local concerns. This can lead to a more unified approach to addressing the challenges faced by the nation.

Despite its potential benefits, implementing One Nation, One Election is not without challenges. India is a diverse country with different states having their own unique political, social, and economic situations. Aligning all state elections with the national election will require significant changes to the Constitution and electoral laws. It will also require a consensus among all political parties, which can be difficult to achieve.

Another challenge is the possibility of unforeseen political situations. In a democracy, governments can fall due to

lack of majority or other reasons. If this happens mid-term, it could disrupt the synchronized election cycle. A mechanism will need to be put in place to address such situations, such as interim governments or other temporary arrangements.

The opposition to this idea also raises concerns about the impact on federalism. India follows a federal structure, where states have significant autonomy. Critics argue that One Nation, One Election could centralize power and reduce the importance of state-level issues. There is also the concern that simultaneous elections might overwhelm voters with too many choices at once, leading to confusion or voter fatigue.

Despite these challenges, the idea of One Nation, One Election continues to be discussed and debated. Several committees and experts have been tasked with studying its feasibility. In recent years, the government has expressed a strong interest in exploring this concept further. Efforts are being made to understand its implications and to address the concerns of various stakeholders.

One Nation, One Election is a bold and ambitious idea that has the potential to bring significant changes to India's electoral system. It promises benefits such as cost savings, reduced disruptions, and more efficient governance. However, it also poses challenges that need to be carefully considered and addressed. For this idea to become a reality, it will require extensive planning, widespread consensus, and a commitment to preserving the democratic values of the country. While the debate continues, it is clear that this concept has sparked an important conversation about how to make India's democracy more efficient and effective.

## After techie suicide, top court sets eight points for correct alimony

By Sushil Kuttv

**F**inally, the cat is out of the bag and hopping mad on the hot tin roof! Techie Atul Subhash, 34, strung himself up like a ceiling fan and left a placard with the three words 'Justice Is Due'. Atul Subhash also left a 24-page suicide note and an audio-video explanation on why he killed himself and who abetted the suicide, bringing into focus the female-male divide into sharp focus? Nobody assisted Subhash in placing the noose around his neck, but he did affirm that his estranged wife and her relatives drove him to suicide. There was massive inducement and a big fat release.

On Monday, Atul Subhash hanged himself to death in his Bengaluru home and the Bengaluru cops lodged a case of abetment to suicide against Subhash's wife Ankita Singhanian and her mom Nisha Singhanian, brother Anurag and Nikita's uncle Sushil; also the judge who cackled when Ankita told Subhash to go kill himself and not bother her with sob stories.

Subhash's mom and dad and bro are beyond inconsolable and the mom fainted while the dad noted, with sad reality, that his son wasn't the sort who would commit suicide, he was too much the independent sort.

So, a lot of provocation and lots more of abetment went into the suicide, which is a crime. Why, even killing oneself is a crime. Both Atul as well as Ankita Singhanian have cases lodged against them after the rather dramatic suicide, funny!

But, death is no laughing matter, what's funny is the snail-like pace of the Bengaluru Police in taking action. If it was a man prodding a woman into committing suicide, the cops would have done a Usain Bolt to take action. No wonder the male of the species stands little chance against the female of the species, in court or outside court.

There is something very 'insect-like', everybody is aware, certain female critters are known to feast on their male mates after a round of procreation. Isn't it a fact, AnkitaSinghanian separated from Atul Subhash after she became the mother of his son?

Didn't she walk out on Subhash, taking the son along with her? Ankita went to her mum's house in Jaunpur in Yogi Adityanath's Uttar Pradesh and Atul Subhash's role was over, except that he felt like he was an ATM for Ankita and Ankita wouldn't let him spend time with his son.

Yep, cruelty has a face and cruelty wears lipstick! Ask the feminists and they will throw a tantrum. Don't for-

get the role of the divorce lawyer with a private detective thrown in for good measure. Atul Subhash walked into the parlour like so many other "suckers" before him and so many others after him.

But Atul refused to be Ankita's ATM and Ankita flooded him with cases of dowry harassment and domestic violence. Even the death of her father from cancer was blamed on Subhash! She let him understand, once and for all, who wore the pants - of course, 'She!'

Atul Subhash was stuck. And there was no son in sight. Only continuous demands for "maintenance money" - from ₹ 40,000 per month, raised to ₹ 80,000 to ₹ 100,000. Ankita Sing-

*But, death is no laughing matter, what's funny is the snail-like pace of the Bengaluru Police in taking action. If it was a man prodding a woman into committing suicide, the cops would have done a Usain Bolt to take action. No wonder the male of the species stands little chance against the female of the species, in court or outside court.*

hanian's maw was big and her wants were many, she also knew how fat his paycheck was and she knew the tricks of the trade.

At one time, Atul Subhash was living perpetually in the courtroom, travelling 40 days in a month of 30 days! From Bengaluru tech city to the Jaunpur family court! Atul Subhash was deadbeat as well as dead-beat.

One of his Bengaluru friends says Atul Subhash made ₹ 14 lakh a month and had been planning to kill himself from July 2024 per the hints in the writings he left behind...Eerie because there is a Stephen King 9/11 story about the "things people left behind" after Mohammad Atta and his pals beat down the twin towers of the World Trade Centre.

Dead people live their spoor! Atul Subhash was no exception. He wanted payback from Ankita and her family for making him feel like a heel. He was not only a victim but

also the butt of gallows humour - black as the nights in the afterlife must be.

Techie Atul Subhash couldn't lift a heel without dockets hanging from his calves and the number of sections jotted against his name, anybody could make a noose of them - Section 498 to, perhaps, Section 306 to, maybe, Section 304...Ask the feminist lawyers or the lady judge who laughed at him and killed him with cruel words.

Will the offending lady judge who laughed at Atul's helplessness be judged? Will Ankita Singhanian be taken to court and tried till she confesses to driving Atul Subhash to committing suicide - as also her mom and her brother? News says Ankita has been sacked from her techie job and she's staring at a paycheck-less future.

'Subhash's death has also left Ankita high and dry. No more alimony; no more money in the bank @ of ₹ 100,000 per month, month after month - the woman did not know how well she was set, thanks to a jovial guy with a fat techie salary.

Ankita Singhanian's hunger for easy money has done her in. Atul Subhash didn't want any more of her. He took decisive action, one she thought he didn't have the guts to take. From 'ATM' to 'Zero Alimony' didn't take too long, did it?

And the Supreme Court has taken notice, or at least that is how it looked like when the top court asked courts across India to base their orders on cases of misuse of dowry laws on eight factors, broadening the debate on the gender-bias that plagues cases filed by wives against their husbands.

The eight points of reference are: Social and economic status of husband and wife; basic needs of wife and children in the future; qualification and employment of both parties; means of income and property; wife's standard of living while living in in-laws' house; has she left her job to take care of the family? Reasonable amount for legal battle for a wife who is not working and, last, what will be the financial status of the husband, his earnings and other responsibilities along with alimony? Has Atul Subhash's death been in vain? Atul's soul might be stranded between here and there in the hereafter, but his soulless tormentors wouldn't be sleeping any easy even if the system works for them. There's a sneaking feeling Atul Subhash took the easy way out. He could have flown off to the Bahamas or booked a seat in a SpaceX flight to the Restaurant at the End of the Universe! Suicide is such a waste of life. (IPA Service)



# Combating Corruption as Career

By: **Ranjan K Baruah**

We know that corruption is a global crisis that affects us all, undermining institutions and impacting individuals, countries and societies. Its acerbic effects drain resources, intensify inequalities, fuel disagreement and weaken democracies. We have seen it very closely in a country like India. We could have been a developed nation in case corruption could be erased from the country. At the same time our world confronts numerous challenges, tragedies, inequalities and injustices, many of which are attached to corrup-

tion. With 1.9 billion young people in the world, fighting corruption is vital for the future of nearly a quarter of the global population. The campaign for International Anti-Corruption Day 2024-2025 focuses on the role young guardians of integrity play as advocates, raising awareness about corruption and its impacts on their communities. Youth should actively participate in discussions, share their experiences and propose innovative solutions to combat corruption.

We are aware that corruption attacks the foundation of democratic institutions by distorting electoral processes, perverting the rule of law and creating bureaucratic quagmires, whose

only reason for existing is the solicitation of bribes. On 31 October 2003, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption and requested that the Secretary-General designate the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the secretariat for the Convention's Conference of States Parties (resolution 58/4). Since then, 190 parties have committed to the Convention's anti-corruption obligations, showing near-universal recognition of the importance of good governance, accountability, and political commitment.

The UN General Assembly

also designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day, to raise awareness of corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it. The Convention entered into force in December 2005.

We know that young people have dreams and aspirations, but corruption erodes the fabric of society, stifles progress and deprives them of educational opportunities, job prospects, engagement in public life, success in sports and access to healthcare and other essential services. Young people must demand accountability and actively participate in anti-corruption efforts. To effectively promote a culture of in-

tegrity across the public and private sectors and build a generation that stands up to corruption, education is key.

The world has hope amongst young people and hence it is important for the young people to actively take part in activities which can minimize corruption. There are many organizations which work against corruption and practice ethical activities. Though there is no specific course related to combating corruption, students from any stream may actively participate in this field. One may study Social Work, Public Policy, Good Governance, etc. One may also take up media studies and get associated with campaigns



against corruption.

Building a just world and a sustainable planet is only possible if corruption doesn't stand in the way and united we can combat corruption and all young people must take it up as a challenge to end up corruption for which they may choose this field as their career choice where they can get

professionally engaged and contribute in a better way. *(The author is a career mentor and skill trainer and currently Adviser of Skill Employment and Entrepreneurship Department of Bodoland Territorial Council, Kokrajhar and can be reached at 8473943734 or bkranjan@gmail.com)*

## DME Assam Recruitment 2024 – 1708 Grade III (Technical) Posts

Last Date: 18/12/2024

Directorate of Medical Education (DME), Assam has released a number of employment notifications for the recruitment 1708 Grade III (Technical) posts in different Medical College and Hospitals as well as Dental College, Nursing College, Paramedical Institutes.

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here starting from 9th December 2024 to 18th December 2024.

Candidates who had already applied for various Grade-III (Technical) posts vide advertisement No.DME/Recruitment/23/2023/20331, Dated: 01/02/2023 and No. DME/Recruitment/23/2023/2295, Dated: 17/08/2024 need not apply again.

**Name of post:** Grade III (Technical)  
**No of posts:** 2685 posts

Educational Qualification: Individual post-wise educational qualification may be checked with the official Advertisement Details.

Pay Scale: Rs. 14,000 - Rs. 70,000, GP: Check Advertisement Details .

**Other Criteria of DME Recruitment**  
Nationality: Candidate must be an Indian citizen.

Age Limit: Candidates age should not be less than 18 years and not more than 40 years as on 1st January 2024.

Age Relaxation: Category-wise upper age limit relaxation is as mentioned below -

# OBC/MOBC: 3 years  
# ST/SC: 5 years  
# PwD: 10 years

Employment Exchange Registration: The candidates must possess valid Employment Exchange Registration Certificate of the State of Assam.  
Application Fee: No application is to be paid the applicants.

Helpline: For any query candidates may contact following number.

Number: 7977259728  
Timing: 10A.M to 6P.M

How to Apply For DME Assam Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy by visiting official DME Assam Recruitment Portal. 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 Registration".  
# In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.  
# Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.  
# At the end, submit the form.  
# Don't forget to take a print out of the application form .

Documents to Upload with DME Application Form

Candidates must upload following documents along with online Application Form of DME Assam Recruitment under Govt. of Assam.

# Passport Size Photograph.  
# Signature of the Applicant.

Candidates must upload their scanned passport size photographs and signature with following specifications.

Photograph:	Dimension
Parameter	50 KB
Maximum File Size	JPG or JPEG
File Type	250 to 320 Pixels
Height	150 to 220 Pixels
Width	

Signature:

Parameter	Dimension
Maximum File Size	30 KB
File Type	JPG or JPEG
Height	100 to 180 Pixels
Width	150 to 220 Pixels

Important Dates of DME Assam Recruitment 2024

# Starting Date of online application submission: 9th December 2024  
# Last Date of online application submission: 18th December 2024

## PNRD Recruitment 2024 – IT Based Professional Vacancy, Online Apply

Last Date: 20/12/2024

Commissioner, Panchayat & Rural Development, Assam has released an employment notification for the recruitment of IT Based Professional Vacancy on Contractual basis under the Office of the Commissioner, Panchayat & Rural Development Department, Assam. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

**Name of post:** IT Based Professional  
**No of posts:** Not mentioned

Educational Qualification: B.Sc. (IT/CS), BCA, B.Tech (CSE/IT), BE (CSE/IT), MCA, MSc (CSE/IT). The qualification must be from recognized university or institution with minimum 60% marks or equivalent grade in the qualifying examination. Distance Education (Degree) approved by DEC/UGC/AICTE is valid

Work Experience: Minimum 3 years of post-qualification working experiences with industry or in government sector in similar job profile.

Help Desk:  
# recruitment.cprd@gmail.com

# 1800-123-3230

Other Criteria of PNRD Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidates maximum age must be 38 Years as on 01.01.2025 .

Citizenship: Candidate must be a citizen of India as defined under Article 5 to 9 of the Constitution of India.

Language Skills: The candidate should be fluent in English and Hindi language apart from Assamese language.

Remuneration (in Rs. per month): Rs.30000/+ Applicable Allowances + PF Benefits

How to Apply for PNRD Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy by visiting official PNRD Recruitment Portal. 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.  
# In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.  
# Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.  
# At the end, submit the form.  
# Don't forget to take a print out of the application form .

Documents to be uploaded

Scanned copies of the following documents need to be uploaded in Online Application Portal.

# Educational Qualification Certificates and Mark Sheets from Class X onwards.  
# Age Proof Certificate (Birth Certificate/Admit Certificate of Class X).  
# Photo Identity Proof.  
# Address Proof.  
# Certificate issued by Competent Authority prescribed by the Government regarding their status as SC/ST/OBC/MOBC/PwD.  
# Experience Certificate on relevant field from Ex-employers.  
# Self-attested passport sized photograph.  
# Scan copy of Signature.

Important Dates of PNRD Vacancy 2024

# Starting date of submission of online application: 7th December 2024  
# Last date of submission of online application: 20th December 2024

## Majuli Judiciary Recruitment 2024 – 8 Peon & Chowkidar Posts

Last Date: 21/12/2024

District and Sessions Judge, Majuli has released an advertisement for the recruitment of 8 Peon and Chowkidar posts in the establishment of District and Sessions Judge, Majuli. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

**1. Peon**  
**No of posts:** 7 posts [UR: 4, OBC/ MOBC: 2, STP: 1]

**2. Chowkidar:**  
**No of posts:** 1 post [UR]

**Scale of Pay:** Rs. 12,000-37,500 + GP Rs. 3900/- (PB-1)

Educational Qualification: Minimum Class VIII pass and those having Class XII Pass or above shall be ineligible to apply for these posts.

**Other Criteria of Majuli Judiciary Recruitment**  
Citizenship: Candidates must be an Indian citizen as defined in the article 5 to 8 of constitution of India.

Employment Exchange Registration: Must have a Valid Employment Exchange Registration Certificate.

Age Limit: The candidate should not be less than eighteen (18) years of age and not more than forty (40) years of age as on 01/01/2025.

Age Relaxation: The category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

# SC/ ST: 5 years  
# OBC: 3 years

How to Apply for Majuli Judiciary Recruitment ?

# Interested and eligible candidates will have to apply in Standard Form of Application (published in the Gazette Part IX of Govt. of Assam) and same must be addressed to "The District & Sessions Judge, Majuli, Garamur, PIN-785104." The last date of receipt of application is 21/12/2024 till 03.00 P.M.

# All applications must be sent by "registered post/speed post" to the aforementioned address and on the envelope [Application for the post Peon/Chowkidar (whichever applied)] must be mentioned.

# The application must be accompanied with the following:-

(i) 2 (two) nos. of recent coloured passport size photographs with full signature on reverse side.  
(ii) Self-attested copies of testimonials in support of his/her Age, Caste And Educational Qualifications, Driving License (if any) etc.  
(iii) The candidates must provide their phone number in their application form, written on the top of the Standard Form in Red Ink.

(iv) The Candidates have to submit a self-declaration certificate along with the application form stating that "he/she has not passed HSSLC or equivalent examination or above."

# Candidates already in Govt. Service must apply through proper channel along with "No Objection Certificate" from the proper authority.

## Anganwadi Recruitment 2024 – 14 Anganwadi Worker & Helper Posts

Last Date: 23/12/2024

Office of the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), ICDS Moirabari, Morigaon has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 14 Anganwadi Worker and Anganwadi Helper (Sahayika) vacancy in various Anganwadi centres. Interested and eligible candidates may apply.

**1. Anganwadi Worker**  
**No of posts:** 1 post

Educational Qualification: Candidates must have passed Higher Secondary (Class 12th). If HS passed candidates not available in a particular area, then HSLC/AHM passed candidates will also be considered as eligible.

Remuneration: Rs 6,500/- per month

**2. Anganwadi Helper**  
**No of posts:** 13 posts

Educational Qualification: Candidates must have passed HSLC/ AHM. If HSLC/AHM passed candidates not available in a particular area, then Class IX passed candidates will also be considered as eligible.

Remuneration: Rs 3,250/- per month

Other Criteria of Anganwadi Recruitment

Age Limit: Candidates age should be between 18 years to 44 years as on 1st January 2024.

Resident-ship: The candidate who apply for the post of Anganwadi Worker/ Anganwadi Helper shall be a permanent resident residing in the concerned Anganwadi Centre survey area where Anganwadi Centre is located.

The residential proof of the candidate for the post of Anganwadi Worker/ Anganwadi Helper must be issued by the Gaon Pradhan/ Ward Member .

How to Apply for Anganwadi Recruitment ?

# The prescribed application form will be available in the office of the Child Development Project Officer, Moirabari, Morigaon.

# The filled up application will be received in the office of the Child Development Project Officer, Moirabari, Morigaon till 23rd December 2024, 3 PM.

Documents to be Submitted With Application Form

Candidates have to submit the self attested copies of the following mentioned documents along with the filled application form as required.

# Recent Passport Size Photograph (2 copies).  
# Age Proof.  
# Educational Qualification Certificates and Marksheets.  
# Address Proof.  
# Caste Certificate (If Applicable).  
# Disability Certificate (If Applicable).  
# Experience Certificate (If Applicable).  
# Residency Certificate.

Important Dates of Anganwadi Worker Recruitment 2024

# Starting date of submission of application: 12th December 2024  
# Last date of submission of application: 23rd December 2024  
# Date of interview: 2nd January 2025, 10 AM onwards

## 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



## Biden watching situation in Bangladesh very closely: White House



WASHINGTON, Dec 13: President Joe Biden is closely monitoring the situation in Bangladesh and the US will hold the country's interim government accountable for ensuring the protection of religious and ethnic minorities, the White House said.

The security situation in Bangladesh has been difficult following the ouster of the former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said.

"And we have been working closely with the interim government to enhance the capability of their law enforcement and security services to deal with the challenge," Kirby said at a news conference on Thursday.

Hasina was ousted as prime minister in the face of a massive anti-government protest in August. There have been a spate of incidents of violence against Hindus and other minorities, as well as attacks on temples in the last few weeks in Bangladesh.

"We've been very clear in our engagement with all Bangladeshi leaders that protection of religious and ethnic minorities is absolutely critical, and the leaders of the interim government have repeatedly committed to providing security to all Bangladeshis, regardless of religion or ethnicity," he said.

"We want to hold them to that," Kirby said in response to a question.

Over the past few weeks, Indian Americans have

held peaceful protests and marches in several cities, including in front of the White House, in Chicago, New York, SFO, Detroit, Houston and Atlanta, urging Biden to help stop alleged brutalities against the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh.

Earlier in the day, Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi urged members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to address the issue of violence against minorities, primarily Hindus, in Bangladesh during the confirmation hearing of Senator Marco Rubio for the position of secretary of state.

President-elect Donald Trump has nominated Senator Rubio for the top diplomatic position. The date of his confirmation hearing has not been announced yet.

"As targeted violence against Hindus and other minorities continues amid the disorder in Bangladesh, I urge the members of the Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations to address this crisis directly during the upcoming hearings to confirm Senator Rubio as the next US secretary of state," Krishnamoorthi said.

Over the weekend, a large number of Indian-Americans held a march from the White House to the US Capitol over alleged attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh.

Raising slogans like "We want Justice" and "Protect Hindus", the demonstrators urged the Biden administration and the incoming Trump administration to ask the new government in Bangladesh to take steps to protect Hindus and also initiate action against those responsible for this. "The Bangladeshi Hindu community and the larger Hindu diaspora from the Indian subcontinent have come in support of the Bangladesh Hindu community because there is continuing violence going on in Bangladesh, specifically in Chittagong and Rangpur area, as well as in some other parts of the country," said Utsav Chakrabarti of HinduAction. (PTI)

## Russia targets Ukrainian infrastructure with a massive attack by cruise missiles and drones

KYIV, Dec 13: Russia launched a massive aerial attack against Ukraine on Friday, firing 93 cruise and ballistic missiles and almost 200 drones, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, describing it as one of the heaviest bombardments of the country's energy sector since Russia's full-scale invasion almost three years ago.

Ukrainian defences shot down 81 missiles, including 11 cruise missiles that were intercepted by F-16 warplanes provided by Western allies earlier this year, Zelenskyy said.

Russia is "terrorising millions of people" with such assaults, he said on his Telegram channel, renewing his plea for international unity against Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"A strong reaction from the world is needed: a massive strike – a massive reaction. This is the only way to stop terror," Zelenskyy said.

But uncertainty surrounds how the war might unfold next year. President-elect Donald Trump, who takes office next month, has vowed to end the war and has thrown into doubt whether vital US military support for Kyiv will continue.

In Moscow, the Defence Ministry said the Russian military used long-range precision missiles and drones on "critically important fuel and energy facilities in Ukraine that ensure the functioning of the military industrial complex." The strike was in re-



tiation for Wednesday's Ukrainian attack using US-supplied the Army Tactical Missile System, or AT-ACMs, on a Russian air base, it said.

Trump said in an interview published in TIME magazine on Thursday that he was against allowing Ukraine to hit targets on Russian soil using US provided weapons.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday that Trump's stance "conforms to our position."

"In this case, we have a shared vision of causes of escalation and that is positive. Obviously, Trump realises what escalates the conflict," Peskov told reporters.

The US Embassy in Kyiv said Friday's attack also targeted transport networks and other key facilities.

Ukraine's biggest private energy company, DTEK, said the attack "seriously damaged" its thermal power plants. Russia has repeatedly at-

tempted to cripple Ukraine's electricity system in an effort to break the will of civilians left in the dark with no running water or heating and to disrupt Ukrainian defence manufacturing.

Ukrainian Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko said energy workers were doing everything necessary to "minimize negative consequences for the energy system," promising to release more details on damages once the security situation allowed it.

Ukraine's air force reported multiple strike drones launched at Ukraine overnight followed by swarms of cruise missiles in the country's air space. It said Russia also used air-launched ballistic Kinzhal missiles against Ukraine's western regions.

A similar massive attack on November 28 involved about 200 missiles and drones and left more than a

million households without power until emergency teams restored supplies.

Ukrainian officials have warned that Russia is stockpiling cruise and ballistic missiles for more attacks.

On November 21, Russia for the first time used an intermediate range hypersonic ballistic missile to strike an industrial plant in the city of Dnipro, in eastern Ukraine. Putin described the attack with the Oreshnik missile as retaliation for Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory with longer-range Western weapons.

He declared that more attacks with the new weapon could follow, and US officials warned Wednesday that the Oreshnik could be used again in coming days. There was no immediate sign one was launched in Friday's attack. Around half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been destroyed during the war, and rolling electricity blackouts are common and widespread.

Kyiv's Western allies have provided Ukraine with air defence systems to help it protect critical infrastructure, but Russia has sought to overwhelm the air defences with combined strikes involving large numbers of missiles and drones called "swarms."

Russia has held the initiative this year as its military has steadily rammed through Ukrainian defences in the east in a series of slow but steady offensives. (AP)

## Suspected Chinese spy with business ties to Prince Andrew barred from UK



LONDON, Dec 13: A suspected Chinese spy with business ties to Prince Andrew has been barred from the UK because of concerns he poses a threat to national security.

A British immigration tribunal upheld the decision on Thursday in a ruling that revealed the Chinese national had developed such a close relationship with Andrew that he was invited to the prince's birthday party. Government officials were concerned the man could have misused his influence because the prince was under "considerable pressure" at the time, according to the ruling.

British authorities believe the Chinese national, whose name wasn't released, was working on behalf of the United Front Work Department, an arm of the Chinese Communist Party that is used to influence foreign entities.

The government determined that the businessman "was in a position to generate relationships between senior Chinese officials and prominent UK figures which could be leveraged for political interference purposes by the Chinese State," according to the tribunal's decision.

Prince Andrew, the younger brother of King Charles III, has been repeatedly criticised for his links to wealthy foreigners, raising concerns that those individuals are trying to buy access to the royal family.

Andrew's finances have been squeezed in recent years after he was forced to step away from royal duties and give up public funding amid concerns about his relationship with Jeffrey Epstein, the American financier and convicted pedophile who committed suicide in prison in 2019.

British intelligence chiefs have become increasingly concerned about China's efforts to influence UK government policy. In 2022, Britain's domestic intelligence service, known as MI5, warned politicians that a British-Chinese lawyer had been seeking to improperly influence members of Parliament for years.

A parliamentary researcher was arrested in 2023 on suspicion of providing sensitive information to China.

The 50-year-old Chinese national covered by this week's ruling was described as a man who worked as a junior civil servant in

China before he came to the UK as a student in 2002. He earned a master's degree in public administration and public policy at the University of York before starting a business that advises UK-based companies on their operations in China.

He was granted the right to live and work in the UK for an indefinite period in 2013. Although he didn't make Britain his permanent home, the man told authorities that he spent one to two weeks a month in the country and considered it his "second home."

He was stopped while entering the UK on November 6, 2021, and ordered to surrender his mobile phone and other digital devices on which authorities found a letter from a senior adviser to Andrew confirming that he was authorised to act on behalf of the prince in relation to potential partners and investors in China.

The letter and other documents highlighted the strength of the relationship between Andrew, his adviser and the Chinese national.

"I also hope that it is clear to you where you sit with my principal and indeed his family," the adviser wrote. "You should never underestimate the strength of that relationship. Outside of his closest internal confidants, you sit at the very top of a tree that many, many people would like to be on."

The letter went on to describe how they had found a way to work around former private secretaries to the prince and other people who weren't completely trusted.

"Under your guidance, we found a way to get the relevant people unnoticed in and out of the house in Windsor," the adviser wrote.

Andrew lives at the Royal Lodge, a historic country estate near Windsor Castle, west of London. (AP)

KYIV, Dec 13: Ukraine's Defence Ministry unveiled a new state agency for its armed forces last year. It was the government's answer to the rampant corruption within the ministry's procurement companies, and meant to be a driver of reform on the elusive path toward NATO membership.

The enterprise, in charge of purchasing nonlethal military goods such as food, clothes and fuel, has already contracted 95% of the products requested for supply, and saved 25% in the process, says Arsen Zhumadilov, the CEO of the State Logistics Operator, known by the local abbreviation DOT. Soon, he says, DOT will begin procuring drones.

It's an example of the type of reform that Ukraine hopes will help clear the path toward NATO, a key deterrent against Russia, officials have argued. Membership in the alliance remains largely a political question, with key states reluctant to grant it, fearing escalation from Moscow.

Western officials are also keenly awaiting the inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump before making declarations. But NATO officials have also demanded widespread anti-graft reforms before Kyiv can join.

Change has been a difficult pill for many within Ukraine's post-Soviet institutions to swallow.

DOT's promising results so far stand in contrast to the deeply-rooted challenges that continue to plague the tenure of Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, including slow progress with restructuring the institution and ongoing allegations of corruption within lethal military procurement.

Western officials are closely monitoring DOT, three Western diplomats told The Associated Press. So far, they have been pleased with the results one year

since it was formed. They spoke on condition of anonymity in order to speak freely about their assessments.

DOT embodies the uneasy co-existence of a digital-savvy youthful ethos and paper-heavy post-Soviet bureaucracy. Its office exudes a fresh startup culture vibe, while catering to one of the most stubbornly rigid ministries in the country.

The contrast underscores the spirit of how Russia's war in Ukraine is being fought, in which innovative drone wars coincide with World War II-style trenches. "We understand that we have been on the radars of NATO, of G7 (Group of Seven) countries, of all NATO member countries in terms of whether we manage or not to put in place a procurement system that is resilient, that is effective, efficient, and that is not prone to corruption," Zhumadilov said.

Nonlethal military purchases became the focus of two corruption scandals under the leadership of Oleksii Reznikov, the previous defence minister. The first involved inflated prices for food supplies and the other was connected to low-quality winter jack-

ets.

Umerov, Reznikov's successor, has described DOT as not just a new agency, but as the beginning of a new public procurement architecture in Ukraine's defence sector. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy specifically tasked Umerov to increase transparency in defence procurement where corruption has always been rife.

Zhumadilov, an influential public figure with Crimean Tatar origins known for spearheading reforms in public procurement, was selected because of his previous track record of success. He previously headed Ukraine's procurement of medical supplies.

Plastered on the wall of the agency is a mood board devised by the company's marketing department.

A photo of a military vehicle is placed next to a snaking jungle dirt road, a drone in flight next to a fluffy puppy in midair, a Rubik's Cube and a designer candle. Staff wear oversized hoodies and T-shirts, a contrast to the military fatigues adorned by ministry officials.

DOT's answer to increasing transparency is DOT-Chain, an IT

system that manages the army's supply demands by digitising the entire process, from the submission of applications to issuing invoices. Developed by a team of DOT IT specialists, it could reduce delivery time fourfold and is the largest digital project in the institution. For now it will cover foodstuff, but Zhumadilov envisions scaling it up.

There were blips on the road. A planned merger with the Defence Procurement Agency, the state company in charge of purchasing lethal military supplies, was aborted after NATO officials recommended against it, casting Umerov's decision-making in negative light.

Acknowledging that corrupt practices in defence purchases has plagued Ukraine for years, Umerov has said the state needed to eliminate the "Soviet, oligarchic" approach to public funds.

But, like most things in the war, that is easier said than done.

Zhumadilov said their company still faces resistance from ministry officials set in their old ways.

"We are trying to be open to our colleagues at Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of Ukraine, but at the same time, and this is also good news, we are an autonomous agency within a larger ecosystem, we can preserve our own culture here."

DOT-Chain, which was designed to lower the burden of army paperwork, for instance, still faces pushback from bureaucrats who prefer signing thousands of papers per week to clicking a smartphone.

"They say that we don't need that. We just want to keep on signing papers," he said. "We are saying, Look, the sheer amount of papers that you are signing on a weekly basis ... it is just unsustainable." (AP)

Ukraine's reformed military procurement agency drives country's NATO ambitions

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Umerov, Reznikov's successor, has described DOT as not just a new agency, but as the beginning of a new public procurement architecture in Ukraine's defence sector. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy specifically tasked Umerov to increase transparency in defence procurement where corruption has always been rife.

Zhumadilov, an influential public figure with Crimean Tatar origins known for spearheading reforms in public procurement, was selected because of his previous track record of success. He previously headed Ukraine's procurement of medical supplies.

Plastered on the wall of the agency is a mood board devised by the company's marketing department.

A photo of a military vehicle is placed next to a snaking jungle dirt road, a drone in flight next to a fluffy puppy in midair, a Rubik's Cube and a designer candle. Staff wear oversized hoodies and T-shirts, a contrast to the military fatigues adorned by ministry officials.

DOT's answer to increasing transparency is DOT-Chain, an IT

system that manages the army's supply demands by digitising the entire process, from the submission of applications to issuing invoices. Developed by a team of DOT IT specialists, it could reduce delivery time fourfold and is the largest digital project in the institution. For now it will cover foodstuff, but Zhumadilov envisions scaling it up.

There were blips on the road. A planned merger with the Defence Procurement Agency, the state company in charge of purchasing lethal military supplies, was aborted after NATO officials recommended against it, casting Umerov's decision-making in negative light.

Acknowledging that corrupt practices in defence purchases has plagued Ukraine for years, Umerov has said the state needed to eliminate the "Soviet, oligarchic" approach to public funds.

But, like most things in the war, that is easier said than done.

Zhumadilov said their company still faces resistance from ministry officials set in their old ways.

"We are trying to be open to our colleagues at Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of Ukraine, but at the same time, and this is also good news, we are an autonomous agency within a larger ecosystem, we can preserve our own culture here."

DOT-Chain, which was designed to lower the burden of army paperwork, for instance, still faces pushback from bureaucrats who prefer signing thousands of papers per week to clicking a smartphone.

"They say that we don't need that. We just want to keep on signing papers," he said. "We are saying, Look, the sheer amount of papers that you are signing on a weekly basis ... it is just unsustainable." (AP)

Ukraine's reformed military procurement agency drives country's NATO ambitions

KYIV, Dec 13: Ukraine's Defence Ministry unveiled a new state agency for its armed forces last year. It was the government's answer to the rampant corruption within the ministry's procurement companies, and meant to be a driver of reform on the elusive path toward NATO membership.

The enterprise, in charge of purchasing nonlethal military goods such as food, clothes and fuel, has already contracted 95% of the products requested for supply, and saved 25% in the process, says Arsen Zhumadilov, the CEO of the State Logistics Operator, known by the local abbreviation DOT. Soon, he says, DOT will begin procuring drones.

It's an example of the type of reform that Ukraine hopes will help clear the path toward NATO, a key deterrent against Russia, officials have argued. Membership in the alliance remains largely a political question, with key states reluctant to grant it, fearing escalation from Moscow.

Western officials are also keenly awaiting the inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump before making declarations. But NATO officials have also demanded widespread anti-graft reforms before Kyiv can join.

Change has been a difficult pill for many within Ukraine's post-Soviet institutions to swallow.

DOT's promising results so far stand in contrast to the deeply-rooted challenges that continue to plague the tenure of Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, including slow progress with restructuring the institution and ongoing allegations of corruption within lethal military procurement.

Western officials are closely monitoring DOT, three Western diplomats told The Associated Press. So far, they have been pleased with the results one year

since it was formed. They spoke on condition of anonymity in order to speak freely about their assessments.

DOT embodies the uneasy co-existence of a digital-savvy youthful ethos and paper-heavy post-Soviet bureaucracy. Its office exudes a fresh startup culture vibe, while catering to one of the most stubbornly rigid ministries in the country.

The contrast underscores the spirit of how Russia's war in Ukraine is being fought, in which innovative drone wars coincide with World War II-style trenches. "We understand that we have been on the radars of NATO, of G7 (Group of Seven) countries, of all NATO member countries in terms of whether we manage or not to put in place a procurement system that is resilient, that is effective, efficient, and that is not prone to corruption," Zhumadilov said.

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ets.

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### ABSU urges Shah to name a road on Bodofa UN Brahma



**HT Correspondent**  
**TEZPUR, Dec 13:** A delegation from All Bodo Student Union (ABSU) has urged the Union home minister Amit Shah to name a prominent road or flyover in New Delhi after the great Bodo visionary Bodofa UN Brahma.

The delegation met the Shah in the nation capital a couple of days back at Parliament house where they also discuss key issues concerning the BTR accord 2020.

During the discussion the ABSU delegation led by president Dipen Boro invited the Union home minister as chief guest to the 57th Annual conference of the organisation to be held at Dotoma, Kokrajhar.

Dipen Boro said in a press release further mentioning the other key points discussed during the interaction with the union home minister that proposal to honour the legacy of Bodofa UN Brahma naming a prominent road of flyover in New Delhi after the great Bodo visionary leader.

"This tribute would not only commemorate his contributions to the Bodo community and the nation but also symbolise national recognition of his visionary leadership," said Boro.

The statement further said that the delegation also urged Shah for expediting the implementation of the BTR accord with special focus on 125th Amendment of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution,

which governs the administration of tribal areas in the Northeast. As per the statement, the team also stressed on Scheduled Tribe (Hills) status for Bodos in Karbi Anglong besides emphasising the importance of laying the foundation for the establishment of a central institute and infrastructure development projects as promised in the Accord.

The delegation also urged the union home minister to do the needful for releasing of Ex-NDFB Cadres and support the martyr families.

"The meeting highlighted the urgency of releasing ex-NDFB cadres currently in prison and withdrawing pending cases against them. Rehabilitation programs for these cadres and the provision of ex-gratia support to the families of martyrs were also discussed as vital measures for peace building and reconciliation as per BTR Accord. The discussions were highly productive, with a strong focus on actionable outcomes. The proposals presented are expected to pave the way for enhanced development, peace, and harmony in the Bodoland Territorial Region," Boro added.

The delegations consisted of BTR chief Pramod Boro, Rajya Sabha MP Rwngrwa Narzary, Lok Sabha MP Jayanta Basumatary and ABSU vice president Kwrwmdao Wary.

# BTC chief distributes educational incentives in Kokrajhar

*'Assam is on the path to becoming one of the most developed states in the nation'*

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Dec 13:** As part of the "12 Days of Development" initiative led by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma across the state, BTC chief Pramod Boro launched the distribution of educational incentives at Green Field in Kokrajhar district on Friday.

Under this initiative, the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) chief distributed 737 scooters under Dr. Banikanta Kakati Merit Award of the Prayag Bharati Scheme; 11,504 bicycles were distributed to Class 9 students under the Chief Minister's Special Scheme, and Anundoram Barooah Cash Awards (ARBAS) were given to 365 students who scored 75% or above in the HSLC Exams.

In his address, BTC chief Pramod Boro said, Assam is on the path to becoming one of the most developed states in the nation through innovative initiatives like these.



He further highlighted the BTR government's vision for a "Smart, Green, and Peaceful BTR, underlining the region's commitment to comprehensive education.

Boro further announced the expansion of the Super 50 programme to Super 100 next year, aiming to benefit more students. "1,200 schools in BTR have

been renovated and repaired under the present government, with 400 more set to be upgraded in the coming year. By the next academic session, no child in BTR would

have to study under a damaged, leaking roof, and mid-day meals would be provided to all students," he added.

He urged the beneficiaries of the bicycles and scooters to use them responsibly, ensuring that these resources contributed to their educational journey.

MLA Lawrence Islary, who also attended the event, lauded the government's initiatives in the education sector but emphasized the need to improve academic results. He called for a collective effort from all stakeholders to enhance educational outcomes and ensure sustained progress.

The event was attended by several dignitaries, including MLA Jiron Basumatary, BTC EMs Wilson Hasda and Gautam Das, BTC MCLAs Madhav Chetry and Montu Boro, deputy chief of the BKWAC, Romeo P. Narzary, former MLA of Tamulpur, Chandhi Basumatary, ADCs, and other officials.

### Bicycles, scooters distributed to meritorious students in Dima Hasao

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Dec 13:** A total of 2101 students were honoured for their academic excellence in the Higher Secondary (HS) and High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examinations through various awards at a grand ceremonial event held at Lal Field in Dima Hasao.

Students received bicycles, scooters and cheques during the event which was held on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC) chief executive member Debolal Gorlosa congratulated the students and urged them to continue their hard work in all aspects of life.

Besides this, a special segment of the event also honoured individuals who had recently cleared the Combined Competitive Examination (CCE) conducted by the Assam Public Service Commission (APSC).

On the other hand, Assam minister Nandita Gorlosa encouraged the students and stressed the importance of perseverance in their studies. She also urged the students to aim for success and make their communities proud through their achievements.

The event saw participation from students across the district along with their teachers and departmental officers.

### Minister Kaushik Rai reviews progress of new ration cards

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Dec 13:** In a significant move to enhance public welfare and streamline ration distribution, state minister Kaushik Rai on Friday reviewed the progress of issuing new ration cards for the Cachar district.

As per an official statement, the meeting was held under the chairmanship of Rai.

Dr Dhruvajyoti Hazarika, additional district commissioner of Cachar and in-charge of Food, Public Distribution, Consumer Affairs & Legal Metrology (F.P.D.C.A.) along with other departmental officials contributed to the deliberations.

During the meeting, Rai emphasised the government's commitment in ensuring that all eligible beneficiaries receive their ration cards promptly.

"Later, the minister reviewed the status of pending applications and discussed measures to expedite the process while addressing any bottlenecks," the statement added.

Rai reiterated the importance of transparency and accountability in the distribution system to benefit the underprivileged sections of society.

The MLAs also shared their insights and concerns regarding challenges faced by their respective constituencies, ensuring that the voices of the people were represented effectively.

The session concluded with actionable directives to streamline the application process, enhance public awareness campaigns, and ensure a seamless rollout of new ration cards across the Cachar district.

Rai lauded the efforts of the district administration and urged all stakeholders to work collectively towards achieving the vision of an equitable public distribution system.

### OBITUARY



President of the premier socio-cultural organisation Rajhans Club for over two decades, and a leading social worker of the town Indrajit Bora (63) died of prolonged liver ailments in Dibrugarh Nursing Home on Thursday. Death of the amiable social leader has been mourned by many organisations here including Rajhans Club, Sivasagar Sports Association, Brihattar Sivasagar Press Club, Sivasagar Press Club, Rotary Club, Sanpreety, Zangam, AASU, and Melachakar Namghar Samaj. His last rites were performed at Thanapatry Crematorium in the presence of a large number of his friends and colleagues. Bora leaves behind his wife and a daughter.



Founder and Head teacher of the Darika Borpatra High School and a senior member of ISKON, Bhuban Chandra Gogoi (66) died of a brief illness on Thursday. Gogoi was actively associated with a host of social organisations including Rangpur Unemployed Youth Association, SivaSingha Samskritik Vikash Kendra, Darikapar Eagle Club, Alok Sandhani Yuva Sangha, Sivasagar Sporting Club, and many others. He won many awards from Sivasagar district Administration, NYK, and many other organisations. He leaves behind his mother and other relations. His death is mourned by the Rangpurhijoti Club, Sivasagar Jila Sahitya Sabha, Cherekapar Sahitya Sabha, and many others.

## Officials from coffee board visit Diphu and Hamren

**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Dec 13:** In a bid to promote coffee plantation in Karbi Anglong, the deputy director (Extension) Coffee Board, Jorhat and deputy director, Regional Coffee Research Station (RCRS) visited Diphu and Hamren.

During the visit, the officials visited several sites to extract details about the land of the new coffee so that they can inspect the land if it is suitable for growing coffee or not.

The officials from Jorhat Coffee Board deputy director (Extension) T Shivaram, Extension inspector AR Gupta, extension officer DK Bora and deputy director of Regional Coffee



Research Station Dr Atiqur Rahman Bora took a journey from Diphu to Hamren on December 9 to meet with new coffee growers and inspect the land.

At Hamren, the team inspected the land of Rosewell Teron in Amlong

Apam, Kramsa village and found it suitable for growing coffee. The team also met two interested coffee growers Jimmy Ronghang and Abraham Teron and informed them about the potential of coffee.

The team also conducted an awareness programme in Jaluk-Langteng village where enthusiast coffee growers took part in the event and showed their interest in coffee plantations.

The official also informed that a total of 31 enthusiast coffee growers have purchased seed for nursery for plantation on 77 hectares of land in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong.

### Winter session of Bodo Territorial Council concludes

*Two significant bills pass in assembly*

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, Dec 13:** After giving nod to two significant bills, the two-day 'Winter Session' of the Bodoland Territorial Council Legislative Assembly concluded on Friday. The session was chaired by the speaker of BTC Legislative Assembly Katiram Boro.

On the concluding day, the two significant bills were passed in the house that paved the way for bringing healthy regulations of the flood plain zoning and land and revenue regulation.

The bills were Bodoland Territorial Council Flood Plain Zoning Bill, 2024 and the BTC Land & Revenue Regulation (Application & Amend-



ment) Bill, 2024.

Additionally, the Pramod Boro-led BTC government secured an amount of Rs 14.5787 under the Supplementary Demands for Grants in the council.

This funding is aimed at increasing the salaries and travel allowances of the BTC speaker, chief executive member (CEM), deputy

CEM, and Member of Council Legislative Assembly (MCLA) members. The demand was presented against the backdrop of the normal budget passed in the August 2024 budget Session.

"The winter session concluded today with the passing of two important bills that will be paving the way for flood control and land regulation in the Bodoland region," Boro said.

He further said that the house saw a constructive discussion and strategic vision creation towards the building up for sustainable development across the region, adding, "The BTR government focus stays firmly on fostering peace and progress for the people of Bodoland region".

### Stolen cattle-laden truck seized at Nagaon

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, Dec 13:** A truck loaded with stolen cattle was seized at Bebejia Jalmoy village in Nagaon district last night here.

As per reports, locals of Bebejia Jalmoy village intercepted the truck bearing number AS 01 SC 5267 on the National Highway (NH) suspecting it to be carrying stolen cattle.

Later, after inspecting the truck over 20 cattle were found inside the vehicle.

The locals immediately informed the Bebejia police outpost and subsequently police rushed to the spot and seized the truck. However, the driver of the truck managed to escape.

### Governor condoles sudden demise of Prof Mihir Kanti Choudhury

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Dec 13:** Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya condoled the demise of former Advisor Education to the Government of Assam and former vice chancellor, Tezpur University, Prof Mihir Kanti Choudhury who breathed his last in a city hospital on Friday.

In a statement, Acharya said, "I am deeply saddened to know the sudden death of Prof. Mihir Kanti Choudhury". As an academic he was par excellence and contributed

immensely to the growth of higher education in Assam. He was also a good human being and apart from taking crucial role in stimulating intellectually imbued minds of the state, he helped his students to become virtuous human beings. His untimely departure is a great loss to the state and country.

The Governor expressed his profound condolences to the bereaved family members and prayed to the Almighty for eternal peace of the departed soul.

## GU launches GUICE to support students for competitive exams

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Dec 13:** Assam's premier institution of higher education -- Gauhati University -- has announced the launch of a GU initiative for Competitive Examinations (GUICE), a path-breaking program aimed at equipping students to excel in various prestigious competitive exams, including Union Civil Services, Assam Civil Services, SSC-CGL, Banking, LIC-AAO, GIC-AM, CAPE, NET, JRF, and GATE, among others.

The duration of the course is one year and the last day for registration is December 20, 2024.

The initiative is in keeping with Gauhati University's commitment to empowering the youth of Assam and the Northeast region with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in highly competitive fields. GUICE will provide a robust platform for academic preparation, mentorship, and skill-building.

"GUICE is a landmark step in fulfilling Gauhati University's mission of not only fostering academic excellence but also ensuring our students are equipped to meet national and global challenges. Competitive examinations are gateways to transformative opportunities, and this initiative reflects our commitment to nurturing a generation of achievers who will contribute to the



state's and nation's development," said Prof Nani Gopal Mahanta, vice chancellor of Gauhati University.

Prof Mahanta further said that there are 60

seats for the GU professional course for UPSC/APSC and 100 seats for GU foundation course for competitive exams.

Last date for registration is December 20, 2024

and there are a limited number of merit-cum-means scholarships and accommodation facility for the students who enrol themselves for GU Professional Course for UPSC/APSC Civil Services Examinations. The fee for the course is ₹ 35,000, payable in two instalments.

As per Prof Mahanta, there is no provision for any scholarship for the students who opt for GU foundation course for competitive examinations but preference will be given to GU students pursuing regular UG, PG and PhD courses.

"There is accommodation for a limited number of candidates. The fee is ₹ 20,000, payable in three instalments," he informed.

Prof Mahanta said that SC, ST and non-creamy layer OBC candidates would be enrolled in both the courses as per the quota norm.

"GUICE offers students a comprehensive curriculum delivered by experienced faculty and subject matter experts. The initiative also includes regular mock tests, workshops, career counseling, and access to an extensive repository of resources. Special focus will be placed on guiding students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunity," the vice chancellor concluded.



# Congress always chose power over Constitution: Rajnath

NEW DELHI, Dec 13: Accusing the Congress of always choosing "satta" (power) over the Constitution, senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh on Friday said the opposition party never tolerated autonomy of institutions and tried to destroy constitutional principles and spirit.

Initiating a two-day debate in the Lok Sabha on "Discussion on the Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India", the defence minister said the Congress has sought to project the Constitution as its own contribution, while deliberately ignoring the contribution of several leaders.

"The talk of protection of the Constitution does not seem appropriate coming from it (Congress). These days, I see that many opposition leaders keep the Constitution in their pockets. Actually, this is what they have learnt from childhood, they have seen their families keep the Constitution in their pockets for generations," he said.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on the other hand, always bows before the Constitution and has never played with the independence and autonomy of institutions, Singh asserted, drawing some jibes from the members of the opposition benches during a speech that was largely heard in attention.

The seasoned parliamentarian said the Congress, during its decades in power, often amended the Constitution with a malicious spirit to change it gradually, while the Narendra Modi government has effected amendments to strengthen its fundamental values and for people's empowerment.

Whenever there was a choice, the Congress chose power over the Constitution, he claimed. It always tried to "hijack and appropriate" the framing of the Constitution, Singh said, highlighting the imposition of Emergency, dismissal of many state governments and superseding of Supreme Court judges for "standing up" to the then Indira Gandhi government to charge the party with violating constitutional principles.

The BJP leader said he is surprised that those who subverted the Constitution are now speaking for its protection. "Expressions for protecting the Constitution from the Congress do not look good," he said in a jibe at the opposition party.

The two-day debate, which is likely to end with Prime Minister's Modi's speech, is being seen as a highlight of the ongoing parliamentary session amid a running battle between the ruling party and the opposition since the Lok Sabha poll campaign, which was marked by the INDIA bloc building its cam-

paigned on the Constitution being allegedly under threat from the BJP. The BJP has accused the opposition of running a "fake" campaign to mislead people.

In his speech, Singh said the BJP has lived the principles of the Constitution -- be it giving constitutional status to the backward commission, providing for women's reservation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies or introducing the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and has also defended those against the assault from the Congress.

The Modi government has ensured that the Constitution is applicable in Jammu and Kashmir by repealing Article 370, he added amid thumping of benches by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) members.

Without naming the Hindu Mahasabha, Singh said "many big leaders" had, in 1944, come out with "The Constitution of Hindustan Free State" to share their ideas about the Constitution India should adopt after its independence. They had called for ensuring citizens' religious freedom and said that the State must be secular, he added. The Congress dubbed those leaders as communal, Singh said, slamming it for overturning a Supreme Court judgment to deny alimony to a divorced Muslim woman for its "appeasement politics".

The Constitution is an expression of the general will of the people, he said. "We must also remember those who were not part of the Constituent Assembly but whose ideas are part of it (Constitution). We must remember Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhagat Singh, Veer Savarkar and several other such icons whose ideas strengthened the Constitution," he added.

"Our Constitution touches upon social, economic, political, cultural, lives and shows the way for nation building. It is the outcome of a series of historical events," he said. Singh's mention of the country's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, a persistent target of the BJP's attack over the years, as one of those who contributed to the making of the Constitution drew rare cheers from the opposition benches.

The BJP leader, though, later also charged Nehru with amending the Constitution to override a Supreme Court judgment for "stifling" freedom of expression.

He spoke of the original copy of the Constitution carrying drawings of gods and tributes to Indian traditions to assert that it also carries India's civilisational and cultural values. (PTI)

# RS proceedings adjourned till Monday amid ruckus over no confidence notice against Dhankhar

## 'Congress has no faith in the Constitution'

NEW DELHI, Dec 13: The opposition move to seek impeachment of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar led to pandemonium in the Rajya Sabha on Friday, with opposition and treasury benches clashing and the Chairman too wading into the issue.

The proceedings of the House, which have been marred because of the issue and the Adani controversy, were adjourned in the first hour itself but not before Dhankhar, saying he was a farmer's son and he will not "show weakness".

"Day in and day out there is only a campaign against the Chairman....it's a campaign not against me, it's a campaign against category to which I belong," he asserted.

"I am personally pained for a reason that the main opposition party has put in as a blitz as a campaign against the Chairman. They are entitled to bring motion against me. This is their constitutional right but they are deviating from the constitutional provisions...." he said.

The Chairman, before adjourning the proceedings at around 11.45 AM till Monday, appealed to Leader of Opposition in the House Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the House J P Nadda to come to his chamber for finding a way out to end the logjam.

"I appeal to you Khargeji, please spare time, accept my



prayer, see me in my chamber today. Same request I am making to the Leader of the House also...I will try to navigate things so that we are able to work as member of the House. I would expect Kharge Ji to respond. Lets us meet in my chamber and find a way out," Dhankhar said.

To this, a visibly angry Kharge retorted: "How can I respect you. You are insulting me".

As he was speaking, the Chair adjourned the proceedings till Monday.

Trouble arose after BJP's Radha Mohan Das Agrawal raised a point of order and narrated the procedure related to the no-confidence motion against Vice President of India, who is an ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

Agarwal spoke at length on the impeachment notice given by the

opposition parties, calling it an insult to the nation and the chair of the Vice President and farmers. He said the notice as the rules specify is to be taken up after 14 days but the Congress leaders have gone to the press with allegations.

The Congress, he alleged, has a history of "insulting Presidents and Vice Presidents".

Jawaharlal Nehru, as the country's first prime minister, used to "continuously insult President Rajendra Prasad", he alleged. He went on to add that Prasad was not given a cremation in the national capital and was even deprived of medical facilities when he was ill.

"Nehru asked (the then President) Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan not to attend Prasad's funeral in Patna. But Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan did not listen to the Prime Minister and he went for the fu-

neral (of India's first President)," he alleged.

He said leader of the opposition Kharge should have waited for 14 days as per rules for the no confidence motion to be taken up and then spoken on the subject but instead he has been making allegations against Dhankhar through press statements and social media.

"Congress has no faith in the Constitution," he said.

"He (Kharge) had made 10 allegations (against Dhankhar)... 10 Janpath ki chatukarita mein 10 aarop (10 allegations in sycophancy of 10 Janpath - the residence of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi)."

He demanded that his breach of privilege motion against the 60 opposition MPs who signed the no confidence motion be taken up and the chair should initiate action against them.

Surendra Singh Nagar (BJP) said the Congress party is "anti-farmer", "anti-OBC" and the country will not forgive it for this act of its.

Neeraj Shekhar (BJP) said the Congress doesn't want any son of farmer, Dalit or poor to progress. "They are making personal remarks (against Dhankhar)," he said.

Kiran Choudhary (BJP) said the act of Congress through the no confidence motion has shown their "anti-farmer" attitude. "They work only to save one family."

Amid the din, opposition Con-

gress MPs tried to make their point.

Dhankhar finally allowed Pramod Tiwari (Cong) to speak.

Tiwari said if the chairman was a son of farmer, the Leader of the Opposition Kharge is a son of farm labourer and a Dalit, who is not being allowed to speak.

Just as he brought a reference to the ruling side trying to save a billionaire, who is facing bribery allegations in the US, Dhankhar interjected to say nothing will go on record.

Dhankhar said, "Kisan ka beta hoon, kamzori nahi dikhaoga (I am son of the farmer, I will not go weak)" "I have tolerated enough," he said, adding the opposition parties have to wait for 14 days before the motion brought by them can be discussed.

"It will come after 14 days," he said. The treasury benches created ruckus when the floor was given to the opposition leaders to make their point.

When Kharge was give the floor, he alleged that the Chairman was purposely encouraging BJP members and giving more time to them.

"Make them sit. We have not come here to listen praises for you," the Congress President said.

Earlier, Dhankhar said he has received four notices under Rule 267 that seek to set aside business of the day to take up the issue being sought to be raised. (PTI)

# Put under house arrest: Hurriyat chief Umar Farooq

SRINAGAR, Dec 13: Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Friday claimed that he was put under house arrest and prevented from offering congregational prayers at the Jama Masjid.

This is the second consecutive Friday that the Mirwaiz was allegedly barred from offering the prayers at the Jama Masjid in the city's Nowhatta locality.

There was no word from police on Farooq's allegation. "Again disallowed from going to Jama Masjid on a Friday for the second consecutive week. As I raise people's issues and concerns from the pulpit, as is my duty, it seems to make the authorities jittery and uncomfortable, so lock him up!" the Hurriyat chairman said in a post on X.

He said "as if by locking me up" the

issues would disappear and the reality altered.

"But an authoritarian mindset can't think beyond... strongly condemn my house arrest and the imprisonment of thousands of Kashmiri prisoners who are victims of this mindset," Farooq added.

Meanwhile, People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader Iltija Mufti said the Mirwaiz's alleged house arrest was "a gross violation of his fundamental rights".

"Arbitrary detention has become the norm in Kashmir. Placing Mirwaiz sahab under house arrest every other week is completely unwarranted and a gross violation of his fundamental right to speak and be heard. Really hope good sense prevails upon the authorities to end this pattern of harassment," she said in a post on X. (PTI)

# Efforts being made to reduce minorities, especially Muslims, to 'second-grade' citizens: Akhilesh

NEW DELHI, Dec 13: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged Friday that efforts are underway to reduce the country's minorities, particularly Muslims, to "second-grade" citizens, and claimed their rights and properties are being systematically eroded.

Speaking in Lok Sabha during a debate on the 'Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India', Yadav charged the government with fostering inequality and failing to uphold the constitutional rights of marginalised communities.

"This Constitution is our armour, our security. It provides us strength whenever needed. The Constitution is the true guardian of the rights of the oppressed, neglected, suppressed, and deprived. For people like us and the weak in the country, especially for PDA (Pichdde, Dalit and Alpankhyak), saving the Constitution is a matter of life and death," he said.

The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister accused the government of neglecting minorities, and said their rights and properties are being systematically eroded. "More than 20 crore people, especially Muslims, are being reduced to second-grade citizens. Atrocities against them are increasing daily. Their properties are being looted, homes demolished, and places of worship seized with administrative help," Yadav alleged.

The SP chief reiterated his call for a caste survey, stating it is vital for bridging social gaps and achieving justice. "Whenever we get the opportunity, we will conduct a caste census. It will not deepen caste divisions but reduce them, ensuring rights and equality for those who have been deprived

for long. Reservation was the most significant tool for social justice, but it has been diluted with outsourcing and contract-based jobs," Yadav added.

Yadav also criticised the government for its handling of border issues with neighbouring countries, claiming that India's territorial integrity is under threat. "Protecting the nation's borders is the primary duty of any government. Yet, we see intrusions...In Ladakh, our troops have withdrawn from our (own) territory, and it won't be long before we are denied access to sacred sites like Kailash Mansarovar," Yadav claimed.

On the issue of economic disparities in the country, Yadav highlighted the plight of the underprivileged.

"Out of 140 crore people, 82 crore depend on government rations for survival. While the country boasts of being among the fastest-growing economies, the reality is starkly different. Two-thirds of the nation's wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few families. If the government has courage, it should reveal the per capita income of those living below the poverty line," he said.

He accused the government of manipulating elections through fear and administrative overreach.

"During the Uttar Pradesh elections (recent bypolls to nine assembly seats), many were denied the right to vote. Women were threatened and police officials openly discouraged them with revolvers. Yet, those brave women defied intimidation and cast their votes. Is this the democracy we live in?" Yadav questioned.

He also warned against the erosion of democratic principles, drawing parallels with authoritarian regimes. (PTI)

# Oppn submits notice in RS for Allahabad HC judge's impeachment over 'controversial remarks': Sources

NEW DELHI, Dec 13: Members of several opposition parties on Friday moved a notice in the Rajya Sabha for the impeachment of Allahabad High Court Judge Shekhar Kumar Yadav over his alleged controversial remarks at a recent VHP event, sources said.

The notice for moving the impeachment motion was signed by 55 opposition MPs, including Kapil Sibal, Vivek Tankha, Digvijaya Singh, John Brittas, Manoj Kumar Jha and Saket Gokhale.

These MPs met the Rajya Sabha secretary general and handed over the notice for impeachment a few minutes before the start of the day's proceedings, the sources said.

Some of the other prominent MPs who have signed the notice are P Chidambaram, Randeep Surjewala, Pramod Tiwari, Jairam Ramesh, Mukul Wasnik, Naseer Hussain, Raghav Chadha, Fauzia Khan, Sanjay Singh, AA Rahim, V Sivadadan and Renuka Chowdhury. The notice for the motion was

moved under the Judges' (Inquiry) Act, 1968, and Article 218 of the Constitution, seeking initiation of proceedings for impeachment of Justice Yadav.

The notice mentioned that the speech/lecture delivered by Justice Yadav during an event organised by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) prima facie showed that he "engaged in hate speech and incitement to communal disharmony in violation of the Constitution of India".

The notice also mentioned that the judge prima facie showed that he targeted minorities and displayed bias and prejudice against them.

It went on to state that Justice Yadav entered into public debate or expressed his views in public on political matters relating to a uniform civil code, in violation of the Restatement of Values of Judicial Life, 1997. The notice mentioned that the public remarks of the judge were inflammatory and prejudiced and directly targeted minority communities.

It also stated that Justice Yadav in his lecture as-

serted that "the country would function according to the wishes of the majority in India".

"Justice Yadav's actions contravene the directive principles enshrined under Article 51A(e) of the Constitution of India, which mandate promoting harmony and renouncing practices derogatory to the dignity of individuals," the MPs said in their notice for impeachment.

"The statements, which have been widely documented and reported, encouraged animosity and division among different religious and communal groups, contravening the secular ethos of the Constitution of India," they added.

"We request the Hon'ble Chairman to admit this motion and forward it to the Hon'ble President of India in accordance with the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, and constitute an inquiry committee to investigate the charges of hate speech, communal disharmony, and violations of judicial ethics," according to the notice. (PTI)

# PM inaugurates multiple projects in Prayagraj, calls Maha Kumbh 'mahayagya of unity'

PRAYAGRAJ (UP), Dec 13: The Maha Kumbh 2025 a "mahayagya of unity" which would take the country's cultural and spiritual identity to new heights, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday, emphasising the event's role in promoting social cohesion as well as economic empowerment of communities.

Addressing a public meeting here after inaugurating developmental projects to improve the city's infrastructure and provide better amenities to pilgrims during the Kumbh Mela, the prime minister said the differences of castes and sects disappear at the event.

The prime minister inaugurated 167 key development projects worth ₹ 5,500 crore. The projects also included Sah'AI'yak Chatbot -- an Artificial Intelligence-based platform to streamline communication for devotees attending the Maha Kumbh.

Modi said the city of Prayagraj, which hosts the Maha Kumbh every 12 years, is not just a geographical location, but a place for spiritual experience where the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers plays a pivotal role in uniting people from all walks of life.

"The Maha Kumbh is a mahayagya of unity," Modi said. "It will take the country's cultural and spiritual identity to new heights." "In the last Kumbh, I had the good fortune of taking a bath at the Sangam and today, once again, I received blessings at the feet of Ganga," Modi said.

The 2025 Maha Kumbh will be held from January 13 (Paush Poonmima) to February 26 (Maha Shivratri) at Prayagraj. It will be the world's largest religious gathering and more than 40 crore people are expected during the 45-day event. (PTI)

**Press Notice**

The Directorate of Fisheries, Assam, Guwahati invites e-tendering from eligible Bidders of appropriate category having currently valid registration from APWD (Bldg./Road)/CPWD or other Govt. Deptt. for the following work under RIDF-XXIX.

Sl.	Work Description	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Bid Processing Fee Incl. of GST (Rs.)	Bid Security	Completion Period
1	17 nos of Fish Farms Projects in 11 districts of Assam under RIDF XXIX - Development of Bahani Adarsha Fish Farm, Karbi Anglong District	45,55,000.00	1,000.00	Rs. 91,100.00 (in case of bidders belong to SC/ ST/ OBC / A/OBC/ UGE Rs.45,550.00)	180 days

Detail information regarding terms & conditions and the bidding document may be downloaded from the website: <https://assamtenders.gov.in> free of cost from 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2024 to 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2025. The last date of submission of this bid is 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 upto 12.30 p.m.

Sd/-  
Director of Fisheries  
Assam, Guwahati

Janasanyog /C/ 5176 / 24/ 14-Dec-24

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**Press Notice**

The Executive Engineer, PWD, Dibrugarh, Chabua-Lahowal, Khowang & Tingkhong Territorial Building Division, Dibrugarh on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bid for the following works from eligible registered APWD (Building) contractor/firm.

The details of the bid and detail notice inviting tender maybe seen at the PWD portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) The bidders must be registered with the E-tendering system (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam (website <http://assamtenders.gov.in>)

Sl No.	Name of Work	Bid Security drawn in favour of	Approx. value of work	Completion Period	Bid Security	Cost of Bid
1	Construction of AT/Type Building at Basic Training Centre (BTC), Chabua, Dibrugarh	E.E. PWD, Dibrugarh, Chabua-Lahowal, Khowang & Tingkhong Territorial Building Division, Dibrugarh	Rs. 19,36,868.00	6 (Six) months	Rs. 38,740.00 for General Category and Rs. 19,370.00 for Reserved Category	Rs. 400.00

Note:  
1. NIT value may be changed during uploading of tender in the website, which may be seen in Detailed NIT of the bid document.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer, PWD,  
Dibrugarh, Chabua-Lahowal, Khowang & Tingkhong  
Territorial Building Division  
Dibrugarh

Janasanyog /C/ 5162 / 24/ 14-Dec-24

**অভিভাবক / পরিবার সন্মত**

এই শিশুটি যোবা ০৮-১১-২০২০ তারিখের পৰা ডিব্ৰুগড়ৰ শিশু গৃহত আশ্ৰয় গ্ৰহণ কৰি আছে। বৰ অনসন্মত কৰাৰ পিছতো এই শিশুটিৰ পিতৃ-মাতৃ তথা পৰিয়ালৰ সন্মত পোৱা নাই। গতিকে কোনো সদাশয় ব্যক্তিয়ে উক্ত শিশুটিৰ পৰিয়ালৰ সন্মত পালে তলৰ স্কিনাৰত যোগাযোগ কৰে যেন।

শিশুৰ বিৱৰণ  
শিশুৰ নাম : চিমন  
পিতৃৰ নাম : অজাত  
মাতৃৰ নাম : অজাত  
ঠিকনা : অজাত  
বয়স : ১৭ বছৰ (অনুমানিক)  
উচ্চতা : ১৫৫ ছে.মি.  
বৰা : মাতৃবন্দীয়া  
মূলি : ক'লা

যোগাযোগৰ স্কিনা :  
জিলা শিশু সুৰক্ষা গোট, ডিব্ৰুগড়  
জীৱন ফুৰন নগৰ,  
ডা ৱীলা পণ্ডে পথ  
যোগাযোগৰ নম্বৰ : ৯৮৫৯৯৮২৭৫  
৬০০২৮৯৯২০

Sd/-  
জিলা শিশু সুৰক্ষা বিষয়া  
ডিব্ৰুগড়

Janasanyog /D/ 10492 / 24/ 14-Dec-24

**ELECTRIFICATION WORK IN DIBRUGARH**

Tender Notice No.: TSK/Elect/170, Dated: 11-12-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work:  
Tender No.: LV-T-14-TSK-TRD-02-R1; Brief Description of Item : Dibrugarh - Railway Electrification work for setting up of Trip Inspection Shed for Maintenance of Electric Loco at Dibrugarh. Tender Value: ₹72,26,876.11/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 1,44,500/-; Date & time of closing of tender at 13:00 hrs. and opening at 15:00 hrs. on 02-01-2025. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available up to 13:00 hrs. on 02-01-2025 in the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

DRM (Elect), Tinsukia  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
Serving Customers With A Smile

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**REPAIRING WORKS AT LUMDING**

E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/163 of 2024; Dated: 11-12-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: SN. 1. Brief Description of Item: Repairs to main road & colony road along with drain from Kalibari to officers colony upto Kendriya Vidyalaya Under SSE/W/N/Lumding. Tender Value: ₹3,90,85,893/-; Earnest Money: ₹3,45,400/-; E-tenders will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 06-01-2025 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 07-01-2025. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 06-01-2025 in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.

DRM/Works, Lumding  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
Serving Customers with a smile

**LOST**

I lost my original documents: Aadhar Card, PAN Card, office ID, Ayushman Card (2 Nos) and ATM cards of AGVB and SBI on 10th December, 2024 (Tuesday) while going around in Dimapur town. If any person (s) finds the same, I humbly request to contact or reach the address mentioned below.

Miss Hunali Rongpipi,  
D/o Lt. Monsing Rongpi  
R/o Council Colony, PO & PS, Diphu, district: Karbi Anglong, Assam  
mobile No. 97072-47696

**AFFIDAVIT**

I, Mr. Biresh Basumatary S/o late Bilu Basumatary, a resident of village Matikhola PO Baithalangso, P.S Howraghat, district Karbi Anglong, Assam and presently residing at Sazole College, Phezhu, Jotsoma, Kohima, Nagaland through this affidavit solemnly affirm that my actual name is Biresh Basumatary S/o Bilu Basumatary as recorded in my birth certificate (registration No. B-2024-18-90347-003081, Aadhar Card No. 8590 0096 3024 and Voter ID No. DTK2067745, PAN Card No. EMEP 4957F, but mistakenly in my official record my name has been recorded as Balie Boro, instead of my actual name Biresh Basumatary. Both Biresh Basumatary, Balie Basumatary @ Balie Boro are one and the same person, but not different individuals i.e. myself. Henceforth I shall be known/called/referred to as "Biresh Basumatary and the same shall be used for all official purposes, future references and correspondences. I signed this affidavit before the competent authority ADC/Executive Magistrate, Diphu on the 3rd of December, 2024.



# Manipur CM urges Centre to review AFSPA imposition



**IMPHAL, Dec 13:** Speaking on the re-imposition of Armed Forces Special Powers' Act (AFSPA) in Manipur's six police station areas, Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh said that the State Government had requested the Central Government to review and withdraw AFSPA from the said police stations. The chief minister sought cooperation and support from the public in the government's effort to restore peace and tranquillity in the State.

Biren Singh was speaking at the Nupee Lal Numit observation recently at the Nupee Lal Memorial complex in Imphal.

A formal function was also held at the GP Women's College, Central Hall, after paying the floral tribute at the Nupee Lal Memorial Complex.

Addressing the gathering, N Biren Singh maintained that Nupee Lal Numit is observed every year to remember the role played by "our brave" women in 1904 and 1939, revolting against the "injustice" of British imperialism. He also said that apart from the contribution of women during the above two instances, we should also remember the bravery and courage shown by Manipuri women in other instances including ousting the Burmese (Awa) during the Seven Year Devastation period (1819-1826).

The chief minister then mentioned that the bravery and courage could also be seen among present day women of the State, as they had been leading from the forefront in every issue pertaining to the safety of the people of the state. He spoke on the contribution of Manipuri women in certain sectors including social, economic, art and culture, hospitality and games and sports among others, apart from their household activities. He added that cultural performances shown by our women in different

national and international events had shown the uniqueness of our culture across the world.

Singh informed that the State Government, acknowledging the hard work and commitment of women, had introduced certain women welfare schemes including Ima Nongthangleima Yaipha Tengbang Scheme, providing financial assistance of ₹ 500 per month to unemployed women who are above the age of 40 years. He further informed that Ima markets had been constructed across every district of the State, considering the role of women in economic activities. Financial assistance had also been given to women sports persons in establishing training institutes, to provide training to young athletes in their respective disciplines, he said.

The chief minister also spoke on the initiatives of the Central Government under Prime Minister Narendra in passing the Women's Reservation Bill 2023 in the Parliament. He further mentioned other initiatives taken up by the State Government for students including Chief Minister's Scholarship for Civil Service Coaching, Chief Minister's Coaching Scheme for Entrance Examination to Professional Courses for NEET and JEE and establishment of DIET in every district among others.

Regarding the current unprecedented crisis in the state, the chief minister informed that State and Central governments have been putting all efforts to bring a permanent solution. However, bringing a solution would take time as the situation had become chronic and fragile, he added. He informed that the State Government in coordination with central forces had been giving every effort to track Laishram Kamalbabu who went missing from Leimakhong Army campus. (NNN)

# Working hard to ensure rights of indigenous: Manipur CM

### 'Go to Hills' campaign to strengthen shared cultural and historical legacy

**IMPHAL, Dec 13:** Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh on Friday said his government is working hard to ensure rights, respect and ownership of land for the indigenous people in the state.

Speaking at the inaugural function of the Manipur Indigenous People Cultural Exchange Festival in Chadong village in Kamjong district, Singh called for "constitutional protection" for the indigenous people.

"Now it is a critical period for indigenous people who have been living since time immemorial. Our land was safeguarded by spear and swords in the history of more than 2000 years and guns arrived only after the British came," he said. Singh said he initiated the "Go to Hills" campaign to strengthen shared cultural and historical legacy.

"Understanding the indigenous communities is the need of the hour...Many people do not want to acknowledge the demographic changes caused by events happening outside the state. We have been struggling to save the indigenous communities which are under threat," Singh claimed.

He also said, "The government is working hard to ensure the rights, respect, ownership of land and authority of the indigenous people. We will succeed in our endeavour."

An indigenous ethnic cultural centre was developed at ₹ 6 crore in Makhel village which is considered as the origin of indigenous



people, he said. "Ever since I became a chief minister, I initiated the 'Go to Hills' campaign as part of understanding our shared cultural and historical legacy. Several historical sites have been developed," Singh said.

The festival organised by the Indigenous Peoples' Forum was supported by the government as part of its effort to foster unity, the

CM said. Singh also urged those who consistently criticise the government to first "study the changes in population and electoral rolls". He appealed to them to "look at satellite images of the number of villages that have grown in the state and the size of forests that have disappeared due to deforestation".

"Please also study why there is a massive

rise in population among one community and not in other communities. If there was anything wrong with what I had said and done, you could punish me. Mere gossip cannot save land and indigenous people" Singh said.

Singh also asked the residents of the state to "support the steps taken up by the government to protect the indigenous people".

"The government will continue its struggle to protect the indigenous population until and unless constitutional protection for these people is achieved," Singh said.

The chief minister said his government is committed to "ensure constitutional protection of indigenous communities" in the state.

He asserted that the war on drugs to protect the youths of the state would continue.

Singh appreciated the efforts of the Assam Rifles and Ukhrul district SP for destroying more than 100 acres of illegal poppy cultivation in Ukhrul and Kangpokpi areas.

The government will definitely extend assistance to any reasonable demand, and all recognised tribes in the state should unite to save land, he said.

Singh also highlighted how the people of Chadong village were shifted due to the construction of a dam and said the project has ushered in new means of livelihood for the villagers through fisheries and tourism.

Singh also extended his wishes for Christmas and called for peace in the state. (PTI)

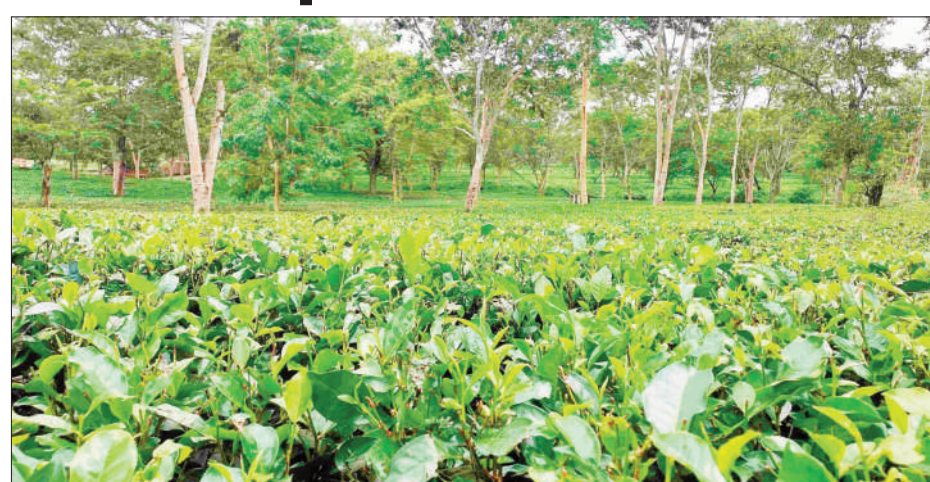
## 7,000 hectares of wasteland under palm oil cultivation

**AGARTALA, Dec 13:** The Tripura government has planned to bring around 7,000 hectares of wasteland under oil palm cultivation by the 2026-27 financial year (FY'27), an official said on Friday.

Initially, the Centre had identified 7,000 hectares for oil palm cultivation in the state but the ICAR-Indian Institute of Oil Palm Research reassessment committee classified 1.46 lakh hectares as a potential area for such farming in 2020 through digital mapping.

"Under the National Mission on Edible Oil-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), the state planned to bring at least 7,000 hectares of wasteland under oil palm cultivation by the 2026-27 financial year. The state has a favourable agro-climate for palm cultivation. Accordingly, we are working rigorously to achieve the target." Horticulture and Soil Conservation Department's Director P B Jamatia told PTI. He said the department has selected two processors as technical associated partners- Godrej Agrovet Pvt Ltd and Patanjali Foods Pvt Ltd -for implementation of the national mission and allotted areas to these companies. (PTI)

## Steps taken to boost tea industry in Tripura: Commerce Minister



**AGARTALA, Dec 13:** Tripura industries and commerce minister Santana Chakma on Friday asserted that the BJP-led government has taken steps to boost the tea industry in the northeastern state.

Addressing the first-ever consultative meeting of stakeholders for establishing a tea e-auction centre in the state, the minister alleged that tea, one of the oldest organised sectors, was largely ignored by the previous Left Front regime.

"Our government has taken initiatives to boost the tea industry in a big way. Now, tea produced in the state has got a brand and logo for proper

marketing. Chief Minister Manik Saha has laid the foundation for an e-auction centre in Agartala. It will be made operational shortly," she said.

Seeking assistance from stakeholders Tea Board India (TBI), Tea Research Institute (TRI), Association of Tea Auctioneers and Tea Development Corporation (TADC) for boosting the tea industry in the state, Chakma said the suggestions made by the experts during the meeting will be taken up at appropriate levels.

Sumanta Poddar, who represented the India Tea Association (ITA), claimed that the tea produced

in the state was safest to drink as it uses a minimal range of pesticides.

"Tripura Tea is the safest because it uses a minimal range of pesticides. Transportation of the finished product to auction centres at Kolkata or Guwahati is a major challenge for tea sellers of the state," he said.

Tanmoy Bandhupadhyay, in-charge of the Tea Research Institute (TRI), Tripura and Cachar centres, laid emphasis on quality plucking of tea leaves which is key to producing quality tea.

"There is a need to focus on quality plucking and manpower shortage in tea gardens. There is also a need to highlight the benefits of drinking tea to attract buyers in a big way," he said.

Tea Board of India (TBI)'s Factory Advisory Officer (FAO), Agartala, C Bharathiraja also laid emphasis on promotion of tea produced in the northeastern state.

"Branding and promotion of tea are required for the betterment of the tea industry. Besides, transportation of tea from factories to auction markets still remains a challenge. These are areas where attention is needed," he said.

Acknowledging the concern over transportation costs, Director of Industries and Commerce, Vishwasree V, assured the attendees that the issues discussed in the consultation meeting will be looked into. The northeastern state, which has 52 tea gardens, produces around 9 million kg of finished tea annually. (PTI)

## Nagaland Govt asked to furnish account on infra dev at Kisama

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIMAPUR, Dec 13:** The Rising People's Party (RPP) has demanded that the Nagaland government provide a full account of how the ₹ 100 crore was spent at Kisama, the venue of the Hornbill Festival, and the revenue generated from the event.

Quoting media reports, the RPP, in a release, on Friday said the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party-BJP coalition government sanctioned ₹ 100 crore for "infrastructure development" at Kisama for the 25th edition of the Hornbill Festival from December 1 to December 10.

Noting that ₹ 100 crore is not a small amount, the party said, in a classic case of money laundering, the coalition government demolished the spanking pavilion/rostrum at Kisama Heritage Village and built a new one at the highly inflated

cost of ₹ 52 crore. It alleged that the Hornbill Festival has mutated into a giant money laundering enterprise over the years.

"To his credit it can be said that CM Neiphiu Rio did single-handedly put Nagaland on the world tourism map, but it has come at a huge cost," the RPP observed.

However, it added, in stark contrast, the Nagaland Foothill Road Coordination Committee had to issue an ultimatum to the state government for release of ₹ 145 crore for the construction of the foothill road. Further, it pointed out, the Dimapur Urban Council Chairmen Federation had recently decried the lack of roads and the crumbling infrastructure in Dimapur.

"This opposition-less government has

absolutely no respect for public sentiments," the RPP stated.

It also said the town hall at Dimapur supermarket is being 'renovated' at the mind-boggling amount of ₹ 18 crore, an amount which could have easily built a new world class facility, while the old flyover in Dimapur was sanctioned the measly amount of ₹ 2 crore for renovation works. Stressing that Dimapur needs several new flyovers and better basic amenities, the RPP wondered that the misplaced priority of this government and its laundering skill is astounding.

Also, quoting sources, the party said both the town hall and the Kisama works were given to the same contractor.

"In short, the entire state has become one giant money laundering ecosystem," the RPP alleged.

## Nagaland receives award for reduced disaster risk

**KOHIMA, Dec 13:** The International Institute of Security and Safety Management (IISSM), a renowned not-for-profit organisation dedicated to advancing education, training, and capacity-building in security, safety, and disaster management, has accorded an Award of Excellence and Innovation to the State of Nagaland for its outstanding achievements in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), an official statement said.

Nagaland has been acknowledged for its remarkable strides in implementing innovative DRR initiatives, including financial resilience mechanisms for disaster response, ground-breaking advancements in hazard preparedness, and collaborative ac-

tions to enhance disaster mitigation strategies, the official statement also said.

The International Institute of Security and Safety Management (IISSM) conferred the Award of Excellence and Innovation in Disaster Risk Reduction to the State of Nagaland during the 34th IISSM Annual Global Conclave 2024 nominated by the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM).

This prestigious recognition was presented at the Taj Vivanta, Dwarka, New Delhi, on December 12 by Sanjay Seth, the minister of state for defence, Government of India.

The chief minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu Rio, was cordially invited as distinguished

guest to receive the award. On behalf of the Government of Nagaland, officials from the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA), home department, Government of Nagaland led by Johnny Ruangmei, joint chief executive officer received the award.

Sanjay Seth, the minister of state for Defence, Government of India, commended the State of Nagaland's accomplishment at the award ceremony, saying it "demonstrates the government's commitment to building a safer and more resilient community by exemplifying a forward-thinking approach to addressing the challenges posed by climate change and disasters," the statement added. (NNN)

Memo No. IV/DPU/DCRB/2024/E/5019

**AUCTION NOTICE**

Intending bidders are invited to participate in public auction of gold seized weighing 8133 grams (purity 99.40% to 99.70%) in connection with Dillai Police Station Case No. 61/2021 in compliance of the SOP issued by CID HQRS, Assam vide Memo No. CID/Cell-VII/Law/F-05/Misc-Gold Disposal/2021/1834 Dtd. 27/05/2022 and as per the decision of the Committee for auction of seized Gold, Karbi Anglong District by submitting their documents affixing court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight and twenty five paise) only (non-refundable)

**Terms & Conditions.**

- Bidders shall have a GST Registration Number along with GST Clearance Certificate with Gold/Gold Jewellery as an item at trading. (to enclosed copy of GST)
- Bidders have to submit their Permanent Account Number (PAN).
- Bidders should have an annual turnover of more than rupees 5 crores.
- Security deposit of ₹ 10,00,000 (ten lakhs) in Demand Draft or call deposit/Banker cheque pledge in favour of SP Karbi Anglong.
- Financial soundness certificate from the bank.
- Copies of IT return of the last three years indicating the annual turnover.
- Minimum bid value will be the base price of the Gold which will be calculated by taking the previous three days average market price of the Gold from the date of auction including GST.
- Successful bidder will have to lift the Gold by depositing the required amount to the treasury within 7 days from the date of auction.
- In the event of failure to lift the Gold by depositing the required amount, the security deposit shall be forfeited.
- The last date of submission of bidding documents is at 11 AM on 18/12/2024. The tender box will be opened at 12 PM in presence of the bidders and the members of the Auction Committee and the auction will be held on the same day at 3 PM after scrutiny of bid documents and selection of appropriate bidders.
- Upon deposit of the required amount through Treasury Challan in Demand Draft, the Gold will be handed over to the successful bidder in presence of the members of the auction committee.
- The bidders may inspect the Gold at the time of the auction.
- Only the eligible bidders fulfilling above conditions will be allowed to participate in the auction

Sd/-  
Superintendent of Police  
Karbi Anglong, Diphu  
Janasanyog /C/5190/24/14-Dec-24

## A-we Festival 2024 begins

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Dec 13:** The A-we Festival 2024 Kickstarted here in Resubelpara, North Garo Hills district at the Mini Stadium Resubelpara on Friday. The festival which aims to showcase the diverse and unique tradition of North Garo Hills district is being held from December 13 to December 14 with various activities lined up for the occasion.

Deputy speaker & Resubelpara MLA Timothy D Shira greeting the occasion as the chief guest lauded the district administration, North Garo Hills for organising the event in a vibrant manner. The festival which was held up for the last 4 years due to various reasons was enabled to resume this year to allow the citizens of the district to have a platform to display their talents, creativity, promoting local businesses and thereby fostering economic growth.

The chief guest Timothy D Shira further promised the gathering of a more grandeur A-we Festival in the upcoming year by donating funds and collaborating with all the MLAs of the district.

## 4 armed men arrested

**CHURACHANDPUR, Dec 13:** Four armed men were arrested in Manipur's Churachandpur district on charges of extortion, police said on Friday. The arrests were made in a joint operation by the district police and the Assam Rifles from near Songpi village on Thursday night, they said. Those arrested were trying to extort money from the locals, they added. The accused were identified as Doujaithang (42) of Tuibong village, Kamminlian (34) of Mata village, Malsom (20) of HQ Veng, and Thangiam Haokip (27) of S Toljang village, police said. (PTI)

**NOTICE**

I, Puspanjali Mahanta, W/O- Naba Krishana Mahanta, R/O- Vill- Bakarigaon, P.O.- Morigaon, P.S.- Morigaon, Dist- Morigaon (Assam), have changed my name from Puspanjali Kalita to Puspanjali Mahanta through an affidavit at Morigaon court on 27.11.2024. Puspanjali Mahanta and Puspanjali Kalita is the same and one person.

No.NZP.676/DDMA/AWC.REP/2024-25/  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Sealed Tenders affixing non-refundable Court Fee Stamps of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight and Paise Twenty-Five) only are invited from APWD class- III & onwards registered contractor/reputed firms for repairing works of damaged infrastructure of AWC against the Storm/Flood 2024 damaged. The terms and condition for the said repairing work can be collected from the office of the Nagaon Zilla Parishad during any office working days on payment of Rs. 500/- (Five Hundred) only (non-refundable) per set of Bid Document. The tender will be received at the Zilla Parishad office, Nagaon on or before 21/12/2024 up to 1.00 PM and will be open at the same date at 3-00 PM at Chief Executive Officer's chamber, Nagaon Zilla Parishad. The tender should be submitted in group wise as per list enclosed in Annexure-I. The tenderer or the authorized agents may be present at the time of opening of the tender.

Sd/-  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Nagaon Zilla Parishad  
Janasanyog /C/5092/24/14-Dec-24

No. GBM/Miyawaki/2023-24/54  
**SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDERS**  
Dt. 12/12/2024

Intending registered organization and financially sound firms/Entrepreneurs having experience for executing the following works under Green Bodoland Mission (GBM) for 2024-25 may submit to the Mission Director of Green Bodoland Mission (GBM), Office of the WPT, BTC, Kokrajhar on or before 3.30 PM on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

Details of works can be obtained from the office of the Mission Director, Office of the WPT, BTC, Kokrajhar during office hours. The notification can be seen in the Notice Board of the Mission Director, Office of the WPT, BTC, Kokrajhar during the office hours on or before 3.00 PM on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

Sl. No	Name of Scheme / work	EMD	Estimated cost (in Lakh)
1	Earth filling and levelling with top soil of fertile field land for Miyawaki site near BTC Secretariat main gate (Approximately 4000 sq m area with 1.5 m height) after compaction	2 % for General & 1 % for reserved Category	7.20

Bids must be accompanied by Processing fees (Non-Refundable) in the form of Demand draft of Rs.500/- (Rupees five hundred) only in the name of Mission Director, Green Bodoland Mission, BTC, Kokrajhar. Bids must be accompanied by Bid Security /EMD (Refundable) of 2 % of the estimated amount in the form of Fixed Deposit / Demand Draft. Tenders with valid SC/ST/OBC categories may submit 1% EMD.

Sd/-Mission Director  
Green Bodoland Mission, BTC, Kokrajhar  
IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/1089



## 'All We Imagine As Light' nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at Critics Choice Awards



**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** Filmmaker Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light" has bagged a nomination in the Best Foreign Language Film category at the 30th annual Critics Choice Awards.

The nominations for the awards ceremony, to be held on January 12, 2025, were announced on Thursday evening by the Critics Choice Association (CCA).

In the best foreign language film category, "All We Imagine As Light" is pitted against France's "Emilia Pérez", Latvia's "Flow", Ireland's "Kneecap", Brazil's "I'm Still Here" and Germany's "The Seed of the Sacred Fig", which is directed by dissident Iranian filmmaker Mohammad Rasoulof.

The nod at the Critics Choice Awards for "All We Imagine As Light" comes days after the film picked up two nominations at the 82nd Golden Globe Awards.

The Malayalam-Hindi film, which marks Kapadia's feature directorial debut, is nominated for Best Motion Picture Non-English Language and the Best Direction - Motion Picture at the upcoming awards.

"To be named as a nominee amongst incredible filmmakers at the Critics Choice Awards is a deep honour," Kapadia said in a statement.

"Along with that, our film returning to several theaters this week across India - in Mumbai, Pune, Goa, Delhi NCR, Kolkata, and Bhubaneswar - is an incredible feeling. We are thrilled about the journey our film is on, and the support and love it's receiving is something we are grateful for," the

filmmaker added.

"All We Imagine As Light", an official India-French co-production, charted history by becoming the first Indian title from India to win the Grand Prix Award at the Cannes Film Festival in May.

It follows two nurses Prabha (Kani Kusruti) and Anu (Divya Prabha) from Kerala navigating life and love in Mumbai along with their friend and cook Parvati (Chhaya Kadam).

Just recently, the movie was named the Best International Film by New York Film Critics Circle and won an award in the same category at the Gotham Awards.

"All We Imagine As Light" claimed the top spot at the Sight and Sound magazine's annual list of 50 best movies of the year.

The film is being distributed in the US by Janus Films and Sideshow. Rana Daggubati's Spirit Media released the film across India in November.

The 30th Critics Choice Awards will be hosted by Chelsea Handler. The awards gala will livestream on Lionsgate Play in India. (PTI)

## Varun Dhawan on Allu Arjun's arrest: Incident is painful but can't blame one person for it

**JAIPUR, Dec 13:** An actor is not in charge of safety protocols and can't be blamed for an unfortunate incident, Bollywood star Varun Dhawan said on Friday, hours after Telugu superstar Allu Arjun was arrested in connection with a woman's death at a promotional event of his latest movie.

Arjun was taken into custody amid tight security from his residence and taken to Chikkadpally police station in a police vehicle.

A 35-year-old woman died and her eight-year-old son has been hospitalised in the incident which took place on December 4 night when a large number of fans thronged the Sandhya theatre in Hyderabad to have a glimpse of the actor.

Dhawan was asked about Arjun's arrest at the promotional event of his upcoming movie "Baby John".

"Safety protocols are not something that an actor can take on himself. We can tell people around us," Dhawan told reporters.

He gave the example of movie theatre chain Cinopolis and

said the company has made good arrangements for the film's promotional event.

"We are grateful to them for that. And the incident that took place is very painful. I feel very sorry and send my condolences. But at the same time, you can't blame one person for this," he added.

The city police have registered a case against Allu Arjun, his security team, and the theatre management under sections 105 and 118(1) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the Chikkadpally police station based on the complaint lodged by the deceased woman's family.

Arjun on December 11 approached the Telangana High Court seeking to quash the FIR registered against him in connection with the death of a woman.

After the formal arrest, Arjun was taken to state-run Gandhi Hospital for medical tests.

A senior police official told mediapersons that he will be produced in a local court. (PTI)

## Yash Raj Films announces Rani Mukerji's 'Mardaani 3', film to release in 2026



**MUMBAI, Dec 13:** Bollywood star Rani Mukerji is officially returning as tough cop Shivani Shivaji Roy in the third chapter of "Mardaani" franchise, Yash Raj Film announced on Friday.

The banner announced "Mardaani 3" on social media, revealing that the threequel will be directed by Abhiraj Minawala, known for assisting on YRF movies like "Band Baaja Baaraat", "Gunday", "Sultan", "Jab Tak Hai Jaan" and "Tiger 3". The film will be produced by YRF boss Aditya Chopra and release in theatres in 2026.

"The wait is over! #RaniMukerji is back as the fierce Shivani Shivaji Roy in #Mardaani3. In cinemas 2026. #AbhirajMinawala #AdityaChopra," YRF posted on X.

In a statement, the actor said the film will commence shooting in April 2025.

"It is always special to wear the police uniform and play a character that has only given me love. I'm proud to essay the character of this feisty cop again in Mardaani 3 as a tribute to all the unsung, brave, self-sacrificing cops who work tirelessly every single day to keep us safe," Mukerji said.

The actor further said the threequel will be "dark, deadly and brutal".

"Mardaani" is an extremely loved franchise and we have a certain responsibility to deliver to the expectation that people have. We will do our best to live up to this. So, I'm intrigued to find out the response of the people towards our film. I hope they shower this film with the same amount of love that they have always given," Mukerji added.

The first "Mardaani" film, which came out in August 2014, was directed by the late Pradeep Sarkar and became a commercial and critical hit.

Its success spawned a 2019 sequel, titled "Mardaani 2", which was directed by debutant director Gopi Puthran, who wrote the first film.

Aayush Gupta of "The Railway Men" fame has written the script of "Mardaani 3". (PTI)

## Raj Kapoor@100: Mirroring India through the ages with his movies of spectacle and ideas

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** "When I die, bring my body to my studio. It is quite possible that I may wake up amid their lights shouting, Action...Action," Raj Kapoor is quoted as saying in a book by his daughter. His words capturing as if in a frame freeze the passion of a filmmaker who left an abiding imprint on Indian cinema.

Raj Kapoor would have been 100 on December 14. He released his first film in 1948, the year after Independence. And as India evolved through the decades, so did his movies, mirroring the dreams and conflicts of society in shades of black and white that gave way to glossy technicolour.

The man, the filmmaker, the far-seeing entrepreneur who started R K Studios with his first film itself and the patriarch of film-dom's "first family", the lines blur and rearrange into the portrait of the larger than life persona still known as the original showman of Indian cinema.

Through the sepia tints of nostalgia

emerges a sharp visionary who knew what would tick.

He was the impassioned lover of "Barsaat", the impoverished wannabe of "Shree 420", the down on his luck Chaplinesque tramp of "Awara", the sensitive joker of "Mera Naam Joker" and the possessive husband of "Sangam". Add to these titles such as "Bobby", "Satyam Shivam Sundaram" and "Ram Teri Ganga Maali" he produced and directed but did not act in, and you have the consummate film man with an unerring eye on the box office.

Raj Kapoor ruled the silver screen along with the two other greats Dev Anand and fellow Peshawari Dilip Kumar. Unlike his colleagues, however, he was not just the actor but also producer and director who made films, spectacles and otherwise, with music that strikes a chord many decades later.

He only directed 10 movies, some such as "Awara" and "Shree 420" in the gallery of unforgettable classics, others like "Bobby"

and "Sangam" blockbusters and then those debatable hits, including "Satyam Shivam Sundaram", "Prem Rog" and "Ram Teri Ganga Maali".

His filmography includes "Andaz", "Jaagte Raho" and "Teesri Kasam" where Raj Kapoor the actor shone bright. He also produced films through his RK Studios, amongst the most powerful in the industry for many decades.

In all this, there was one flop - the introspective, ambitious "Mera Naam Joker", now considered a classic. The failure broke him and he went on to do the teen romance "Bobby".

And all the films had great songs. Remember the global hit "Awara Hoon", "Jeena Yahan Marna Yahan", "Pyaar Hua Iqar Hua" or "Hum Tum Kamre Mein Band Ho". "He was an amazing musician... I suppose it was inborn. He probably got it from my mum who was a singer, not my father... He could play any instrument, whether it

was the accordion, tabla, piano, flute or a 'duff,'" brother Shashi Kapoor recalled in a documentary.

Raj Kapoor was the eldest of the three brothers - also including the unforgettable Shashi Kapoor. Each carved his own separate space in the industry, away from the shadow of their illustrious father Prithviraj Kapoor.

Raj Kapoor was only 17 when he asked his father for permission to abandon his studies for a career in the movies. Prithviraj agreed on the condition that he would work as one of the many assistants employed by him on a monthly stipend of Rs 10.

After a couple of movies as an actor, including the 1947's "Neel Kamal" with Madhubala, Raj Kapoor decided to take the plunge as director and producer with "Aag". He was 24, and one of the world's youngest filmmakers at the time.

"Aag" was also a rumination on inner versus outer beauty, love and loyalty, themes

that deeply resonated with the filmmaker who tackled it again in "Barsaat" (1949) and "Satyam Shivam Sundaram" (1978).

Raj Kapoor turned to Charlie Chaplin's tramp persona in many of his early films starting from 1951's "Awara" and continuing in "Shree 420" and "Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behi Hai", which was directed by his trusted aide Radhu Karmakar.

He was a creature of habit. Through his 37-year career as a filmmaker - beginning with "Aag" in 1948 and ending with "Ram Teri..." in 1985 - he stuck mostly to the same talented team.

It included writer K A Abbas, cinematographer Karmakar, musicians Shankar-Jaikishan, lyricist Shailendra and singer Mukesh, who he called his soul and came to be known as his voice.

According to brother Shashi, their father and his theatrical productions influenced the socialist overtones in his elder brother's earlier films. (PTI)



# RAHANE'S SUBLIME 98 POWERS MUMBAI TO 6-WICKET WIN OVER BARODA MUMBAI REACH SMAT FINAL



**BENGALURU, Dec 13:** Ajinkya Rahane continued his T20 re-invention with a brutal 98 that carried Mumbai to a six-wicket victory over Baroda and into the final of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here on

Friday. Mumbai bowlers chipped away at regular intervals as Baroda were restricted to 158 for seven, and Rahane's blistering knock off 56 balls (11x4, 5x6) took his team to 164 for four in 17.2 overs in

the first semifinal.

Mumbai will face the winner of the second semifinal between Delhi and Madhya Pradesh in the final on Sunday. It was quite remarkable to see Rahane, a batsman of clas-

sic mould, playing like a T20 thoroughbred and the right-hander brought up his fifty in 29 balls with a massive six over mid-wicket off pacer Hardik Pandya. After the early departure of

Prithvi Shaw (8), who scooped Hardik to Atit Sheth in the circle, Rahane and skipper Shreyas Iyer (46, 30b, 4x4, 3x6) added 78 runs for the second wicket in just nine overs.

The partnership knocked the stuffing out of Baroda, whose lone bright moment was when Hardik received loud cheers from a sizable turnout at the Chinnaswamy Stadium as he asked the security guards not to beat up three ground invaders.

Rahane was on 98 when Mumbai needed two more runs to win, and pacer Abhimanyu Rajput bowled a wide, perhaps purposefully, as the scores went level.

The crowd too expressed the displeasure with loud boos and jeers, but in the very next ball Rahane got out while attempting a big heave.

But by then, he had done his job to perfection.

Earlier, Mumbai bowlers were on the money right through the innings while exploiting some early movement on a damp day. Shahswat Rawat (33) and skipper Krunal Pandya (30) could not exploit their starts, getting out to wayward shots.

Shivalik Sharma (34 not out, 24 balls) played a few beefy hits, including a last ball six, to take Baroda past the 150-run mark, but that was not even enough to stretch Mumbai.

**Brief Scores:**  
Baroda: 158 for 7 in 20 overs (Shahswat Rawat 33, Krunal Pandya 30, Shivalik Sharma 34 not out; Suryansh Shedge 2/11) lost to Mumbai: 164/4 in 17.2 overs (Ajinkya Rahane 98, Shreyas Iyer 46) by 6 wickets. (PTI)

## Gukesh's incredible powers of self-awareness led him to World title: Paddy Upton



**BENGALURU, Dec 13:** Paddy Upton, the renowned mental conditioning coach who worked with D Gukesh, said the "incredible self-awareness" of the 18-year-old Indian Grandmaster powered him to a historic World Chess Championship title.

Gukesh became the youngest ever world champion when he defeated China's Ding Liren 7.5-6.5 to annex the crown at Singapore on Thursday.

"I think the most fascinating thing working with Gukesh was his level of self-awareness, just to really recognise where his thoughts are being directed. So, if there was even a moment on the chessboard where he found himself overthinking he had an amazing awareness of it, when his mind drifted off and that's quite unique," Upton told PTI.

"Gukesh has incredible powers of self-awareness and a lot of our work was helping him identify what were the things that would potentially distract his focus. So yeah, I think that's the thing that's really stood out, his ability to recognise his thoughts and manage his mind and his understanding of how to do so.

"And kudos to him, he is a world champion because he was able to manage himself and remain focused and stay in the game even though he's 0-1 down right from the beginning. So that really is a mark of a champion, they cannot be set back by such a big and early setback."

One of the key aspects that Upton drove into Gukesh was that he did not have to overreach to be at his best in each of the 14 games. "One of the things that I really drilled into Gukesh is that one of the biggest mistakes that athletes make when they're ap-

proaching the biggest event of their life is they think they need to play the best they've ever played, and that's a huge mistake.

"So, athletes end up over-eforting in the big moments, and the thing with Gukesh was just to get him to consistently play his natural best chess, and that was going to be good enough," he said.

The biggest challenge Gukesh and Upton faced was to keep the mental sharpness over three weeks of intense and draining chess.

They had a plan for it. "We always knew it was going to be a three-week affair. It was going to be a ding-dong battle. It was going to be long and sustained.

"We had a very clear strategy. About three weeks before the tournament, we stopped doing any new work. I told him, this is now time, we're just going to consolidate everything we've already done.

"Let's just make sure that we really ingrain this in his brain. And he also had a very high-level, two-page document that I sent to him that summarised the mental strategy for the 18 days. He had that both in his head and he had it on paper. But credit to him and his team that they were able to execute it," he explained.

So, what was the nature of his conversations with Gukesh? Was it intense? Casual? Or purely cerebral?

"We had deeply theoretical conversations and went deep into theory and ideas and concepts compared to some athletes who maybe are more emotionally based and maybe less intellectual and the conversation needs to be quite different. (PTI)

## Treesa-Gayatri bow out of BWF World Tour Finals



**HANGZHOU, Dec 13:** Indian women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand missed out on a semifinal spot at the BWF World Tour Finals after losing to Japan's Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida in straight games in their third and final group A match here on Friday.

Treesa and Gayatri, who won their maiden BWF Super 300 title at Syed Modi International in Lucknow recently, lost 17-21 13-21 to their world number 4 opponents in 49 minutes.

It was the fourth defeat for the Indian pair against the Paris Olympics bronze medallists Japanese rivals in five meetings. World number 13 Treesa and Gayatri, the only Indians to have qualified for the prestigious season-ending tournament, needed a win to secure a spot in the knockout stage of the tournament.

On Wednesday, the Indians had narrowly lost to world No.1 pair Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning of China in their opening group match before stunning the Malaysian duo of Pearly Tan and Thinaah Muralitharan in their second match to keep their hopes alive.

But the Japanese pair proved too hot to handle for the Indian duo, who stayed level with Matsuyama and Shida till 5-5.

Thereafter, the Japanese pair zoomed ahead and a six-point burst took them to 18-10. Treesa and Gayatri narrowed down the deficit to 17-19 but Matsuyama and Shida prevailed.

After the change of sides, Treesa and Gayatri had a slender 4-2 lead but Matsuyama and Shida turned the tables quickly and entered the break with a four-point advantage.

The Japanese pair kept a firm grip on the rallies and slowly and steadily kept moving ahead to eventually shut the door on the Indians.

Matsuyama and Shida joined the Chinese pair of Sheng Shu and Ning in the semifinal stage of the tournament. (PTI)

## Europa League: Hojlund scores twice as Man United beat Viktoria Plzen 2-1

**LONDON, Dec 13:** Rasmus Hojlund scored twice after coming off the bench and Manchester United rallied to beat Viktoria Plzen 2-1 in the Europa League.

The Denmark striker netted in the 88th minute after collecting Bruno Fernandes' pass off a free kick to seal the victory and put United into the top eight of the standings.

Hojlund replaced Marcus Rashford in the 56th and scored an equalizer six minutes later after Amad Diallo's shot was deflected by goalkeeper Martin Jedlicka into his path for an easy finish.

The 21-year-old Hojlund also scored twice in the previous round, when United beat Norwegian team Bodø/Glimt 3-2, and has five goals in his six appearances in the second-tier competition.

"It feels good to have scored two goals but I am more happy with the win," Hojlund said. "My instructions? Go out there and score two goals! Just to use my qualities, run the channels and be assertive in front of



goal." United had come off two straight losses in the English Premier League, 2-0 away to Arsenal, and 3-2 at Old Trafford to Nottingham Forest that left the club 13th and eight points adrift of the top four as progress looked slow under new coach Ruben Amorim.

Matej Vydra, who previously

played for Burnley and Watford, opened the scoring three minutes into the second half. United has 12 points from six games after three wins and three draws in Europa League play — good enough for seventh place.

The top eight qualify directly to the Round of 16. The teams

placed No. 9 to No. 24 go into a two-legged playoff.

Tottenham continued to show inconsistent form in a 1-1 draw at Rangers, leaving the north London team in ninth place. The Scottish side is eighth. Substitute Dejan Kulusevski was fed by fellow substitute Dominic Solanke to score 15 minutes before time and salvage a point at Ibrox Stadium.

Spurs were held 2-2 at home by Roma in the previous round and lost 3-2 to Galatasaray before. The draw came after losing 4-3 to Chelsea in the Premier League on Sunday.

Hamza Igamane netted for Rangers at the start of the second half off a cross from James Tavernier in what was a return to Glasgow for Spurs coach Ange Postecoglou, who led Celtic for two seasons.

Fisayo Dele-Bashiru and veteran Pedro Rodriguez scored one each for Lazio in the second half to defeat Ajax 3-1 in Amsterdam and move to the top of the standings with 16 points from six games. (AP)

## Ignore the criticism, it comes with the territory: Anand to Gukesh

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** Legendary chess player Viswanathan Anand on Friday asked D. Gukesh to ignore those questioning the standard of the World Championship title showdown with China's Ding Liren, saying criticism always comes with success.

Indian Grandmaster Gukesh made history on Thursday, becoming the youngest-ever to win the world title defeating Liren in the 14th and final game of the championship in Singapore.

Former world champion Vladimir Kramnik was not impressed with the quality of chess on display during the match, calling it the "end of chess as we know it."

Kramnik expressed his frustration over the game's quality, calling a critical blunder by Ding Liren "childish".

In his reaction, Kramnik wrote on 'X'. "No comment. Sad. End of chess as we know it."

In another tweet, he said, "Never yet has a WC title been decided by such a childish one-move blunder."

Five-time world champion, Norway's Magnus Carlsen too has been critical of the quality on display in earlier rounds, saying, "This does not look like a game between two World Championship contenders. It just looks like maybe the second round or third round of an open tournament."

However, Anand, the five-time world champion and Gukesh's mentor, said he saw "history being made by Gukesh".

"I feel very happy. I was literally watching history being made yesterday," Anand told PTI Videos.

"It (criticism) comes with every match. To be honest, I think it just comes with the territory. You ignore it and that's all. You know Gukesh's achievement, the whole qualification, everything and his concomitant rise. I mean if you look at the Olympiad, he showed that he's actually become a much stronger player.

"He won the Candidates this year, so many good results in Toronto and he's here. So this stuff (criticism) just comes with



it. You cannot expect to become world champion and not face some random criticism," added Anand.

The championship match seemed destined for a draw. However, Liren faltered under pressure and committed a blunder. "Most of us had written the game off (as a draw) by this point. If Ding had brought his bishop back, Gukesh would have had a long task to make any progress. But then, sud-

denly, the game turned, and he won. It was fantastic," he added.

Anand praised the psychological depth of the young champion's approach.

"Gukesh was not playing aggressive or anything. He had an extra pawn and was circling around, trying to find a way through," Anand said.

The tactic of wearing down the opponent, even when it looked as good as a stalemate, proved crucial. (PTI)

## Carlsen lauds Gukesh but rules out world title clash with him

**NEW DELHI, Dec 13:** World number one Magnus Carlsen has lauded D Gukesh for making the most of his chances to be crowned the youngest ever world chess champion but has ruled out the possibility of a title showdown with him as desired by the Indian teen.

The 18-year-old defeated defending champion Ding Liren in the 14th and final round of the match on Thursday to become only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand to claim the coveted trophy.

"It's an incredible achievement (by Gukesh), first he was down in the FIDE circuit, won the tournament in Chennai on demand, then he had an amazing performance in the Candidates tournament," said Carlsen on a popular recap stream, analysing the match.

Carlsen said he was a bit surprised by how the match unfolded with most of the games ending in draw.

"This was something that was bit unexpected, a lot of us thought that Gukesh was a favourite to win the match but this was a game that never really took off, Gukesh was doing a great job of keeping the position alive and suddenly it was all over," Carlsen said.

"It's a really good thing for him, he has the title now for two years, winning this championship is extremely motivating so there is a very good chance that he is going to go for a great run of results now and probably become the number two player now and maybe number one in the not so distant future," he noted.

In the post-event press confer-

ence, Gukesh stated that he would love to fight it out against Carlsen at some point. The Norwegian maverick decided not to defend his title in 2023 after winning the world championship in 2013.

"Winning World Chess Championship does not mean I am the best player, obviously that is Magnus Carlsen. I want to reach the level Magnus has achieved," Gukesh said.

"Obviously playing against Magnus in the world championship would be amazing, it would be the toughest challenge there is in chess. It is up to Magnus, but I would love to test myself against the best player in the world."

But Carlsen ruled that out. "I am not part of this circus anymore," said Carlsen in a general reference to world title clashes.

Carlsen also praised Gukesh's team and said they did a good job. "It is becoming progressively harder (to play mainstream openings) all main lines are analysed so they had to jump a bit," Carlsen said of the opening choices made by Gukesh.

"I have generally kept it fairly risk-free with the white pieces, I have tried not to let things go out of control," he added.

The world's best player for a decade now was critical of Liren's choices in the final game.

"There are a lot of things that Ding could have done differently, Gukesh really made most of his chances," he said.

"It's a massive moment for India, it's a combination of work that is being done there. This is not over. (PTI)



# Onus on Rohit, Kohli as India gear up for potentially make-or-break Test

**BRISBANE, Dec 13:** Rohit Sharma's elegance and Virat Kohli's class will face the ultimate 'Test' when India take on an Australian team eager to set the record straight on a spicy Gabba track in the third game of the Border-Gavaskar series, starting Saturday.

With the series locked at 1-1, Brisbane could well decide the course of the rubber and whether Rohit's men would continue to be the master of their fate in the on-going World Test Championship.

For India, the biggest hope remains in Australia's batting vulnerability which can lead to an implosion if a certain Travis Head doesn't decide to be the marauder.

Steve Smith is currently sailing in the same boat as Kohli if inconsistent batting form is taken into consideration.

In bowling, India has Jasprit Bumrah, who has made every other bowler in the series look pedestrian in his comparison.

He definitely needs more support at the other end but more than that, he needs runs from the likes of Rohit and Kohli as a psychological cushion while breezing in to unleash his thunderbolts.

The decibel levels of "outside



noise" about the duo's waning form have been rising for a while but the two contemporary megastars will be determined to lead the way on a ground where an Indian team showed resilience like never before in 2021.

The numbers have been unflattering for the duo and they would be the first ones to admit that stats always don't lie.

Both Rohit and Kohli would still be a handful if they are asked to manage one of the two factors -- bounce or seam movement. The hosts served them a double whammy -- bounce with liberal sprinkling of grass for some extra

seam movement. They have the skills but the form, at least for the time being, has deserted the duo.

India's biggest issue has been terrible first innings batting during the past one year in both home and away fixtures with six totals of 150 or less during the period.

And Rohit and Kohli's first innings average in the 2024-25 season reads a rather poor 6.88 and 10 respectively.

Kohli has managed to get rid of some pressure with a hundred on the eased-up Perth track. But for Rohit, a captain's knock is needed not just to boost his confidence

but also help him assert as a leader who shows the way.

Rohit is experienced enough to know that he can't always hit his way out of trouble against world-class operators like Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, and Josh Hazlewood, who is once again fit to play with Scott Boland making way for him.

Rohit has been a white ball colossus all his life but if he can lead the way at Gabba, he will forever be considered cricketing royalty. But for that, he first needs to decide his batting position.

He isn't trusting his defence enough and looks like a walking wicket if the ball darts around like it promises to at the Gabba.

Is he good to open or better off at No. 6 where if the top order plays a steady game, he can attack the old Kookaburra that hardly does anything?

Only the skipper can answer that question.

Senior off-spinner R Ashwin and Washington Sundar were steady without being exceptional in the first two Tests but Ravindra Jadeja is a safer option if India realistically want to add batting depth considering his good record

in overseas conditions.

As far as pace bowling is concerned, Akash Deep is blessed with more skills but skipper Rohit loved rookie Harshit Rana's big heat.

In case of Australia, their batting is no less fragile than that of India's.

Head has had a Rishabh Pant-like effect on his days, which often come against India.

But Steve Smith's form is a worry as the Indians have been bowling straight lines to him. Marnus Labuschagne laboured his way to a half-century in Adelaide but he still doesn't look his old prolific self.

Nathan McSweeney has showed grit during the first innings in Adelaide even though there is a long way to go before he becomes a surety in the side.

But one aspect that Australia has done well to figure out is India's reliance on Jasprit Bumrah's first spell with new Kookaburra. The home side knows that if it manages to play that out without too much damage, it can put pressure on other bowlers, who aren't half as good as the Gujarat slinger (PTI)

## Bumrah is a combination of legendary pacers, says Chappell

**SYDNEY, Dec 13:** Jasprit Bumrah embodies the qualities of pace legends such as Dennis Lillee, Andy Roberts and Richard Hadlee but at the same time is forging his own legacy, one that is set to inspire future generations of pacemen, feels former India coach Greg Chappell.

He also said that Bumrah is the only player standing between Australia and the Border Gavaskar Trophy. "What sets Bumrah apart is his combination of skills: (Malcolm) Marshall's adaptability, Lillee's aggression, Richard Hadlee's control, Roberts' strategy, Wasim (Akram) and Waqar's (Younis) reverse swing, (Glenn) McGrath's precision, (Dale) Steyn's explosiveness, and (Kagiso) Rabada's modern versatility."

"As Nasser Hussain aptly observed, 'He's the complete bowler. As he has had back surgery already, it is not certain he will have a long career, but if he does, his name will be mentioned in the same breath as the champions above,'" Chappell wrote in the 'Sydney Morning Herald'.

An all-format bowler, Bumrah has reinforced his status as the best bowler in the world several times including when he led India to a 295-run win in the Perth Test recently.

"While the legends of yesteryear established the foundations, Bum-

rah is carving his own legacy – one that promises to inspire future generations of pacemen." The former Australia captain said Bumrah's lethal yorkers and unsettling bounce evoked memories of Lillee's raw aggression on the field. "Lillee was a warrior, combining raw aggression with psychological prowess. I opposed him many times in domestic cricket and watched him from close quarters against the best batsmen of his era."

"His ability to make it hard for batsmen to score runs with his probing line and length, allied to his guile and determination, made him the champion that he was. Bumrah, though less overtly combative, channels Lillee's ability to unsettle batsmen. His deadly yorkers and disconcerting bounce – especially with his unorthodox release point and trajectory – echo Lillee's capacity to dictate terms."

"Bumrah's quiet intensity and precision make him a nightmare, much like Lillee's unrelenting aggression."

Another great of the game was Roberts, who combined pace with strategic brilliance. Chappell felt Bumrah's 2018 performance at the MCG where he used variations to get the better of the batters was reminiscent of the way Roberts operated. (PTI)

## Dismissals during first innings did affect his flow, admits Gill

**BRISBANE, Dec 13:** Shubman Gill admitted that the fall of wickets at the other end affected his game in the Adelaide Test but expressed confidence that the Indian batting group would deliver a stronger first-innings effort in what is now effectively a three-match series.

Gill didn't play the first Test due to a finger injury but looked good in his brief innings of 31 and 28 during the pink ball Test at Adelaide which India lost by 10 wickets.

"As a batting group, we are looking to post a big total first up. That's been the key discussion and every batter has his own game plan," Gill said in the pre-match press conference after the team scored 150 and 180 in the first innings at Perth and Adelaide respectively.

Gill believes that he wouldn't curb his natural game although he did get edgy seeing wickets tumble at the other end.

"I still have the freedom as a batter. One of the challenges is whether you can play the game you want to play, irrespective of what's happening at the other end and irrespective of scorecard."

"I faltered in the first innings because of what happened at the other end and I take that upon myself." There was a four-over period in which Gill faced just one ball and that affected his concentration.

"And there was a period when I didn't face much -- may be one ball in four overs and then when I faced a delivery I missed a completely fuller ball. These are challenges you face. You might not face a ball for four overs or you might end up facing 18 balls on the trot," Gill explained.

India had had at least six scores of 150 or less in recent times and Gill admitted that the piece of stat isn't lost upon the batting group. He said it is now a three-match series for his side. "Adelaide Test, we didn't do well but the series is still 1-1. We will treat it as a three-match Test series and if we win this one, we will have advantage going into Melbourne and Sydney."

Gill was nostalgic as he walked into the Gabba for the first time since the 2021 Test where he was the top-scorer in the run-chase with a fine 91 that catapulted him into stardom. "Walking into the stadium after 2021 with the team, definitely it felt very nostalgic." (PTI)

## A day in the life of a world champion: Gukesh gets his trophy, revels in stardom

**SINGAPORE, Dec 13:** His eyes were expectedly burning after a sleepless night but the adrenaline kept D Gukesh going as he smiled through a plethora of engagements, including signing hundreds of autographs, before finally getting his hands on the world chess championship trophy a day after becoming its youngest owner.

The 18-year-old Chennai-lad got the better of defending champion Ding Liren of China on Thursday for the historic triumph that made him the 18th overall and only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand to win the crown that came with a whopping prize of USD 1.3 million.

The morning after began with getting a glimpse of the trophy, which he refused to touch as he wanted to wait till the closing ceremony in the evening. He finally held it after it was

presented to him by FIDE (International Chess Federation) President Arkady Dvorkovich.

In his introduction, the FIDE presenters spoke of his "brilliant poise" and "performance for the ages" that he delivered against an older and more experienced rival.

"I mean this moment, it feels like I have lived it a million times. Every morning when I woke up, this moment was the reason I woke up. To hold this trophy and this reality means more than anything else in my life," the graceful teenager said in his acceptance speech after being presented with his gold medal and the trophy that came with a USD 1.3 million reward.

Before that, he sat down to meet and greet a seemingly never-ending stream of fans, both the young and old, even toddlers. (PTI)

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