

6 WORLD Chief of International Criminal Court lashes out at US, Russia over threats, accusations Bangladesh court acquits Zia's son and 48 others 8 NATION Cong workers scuffle with police in Lucknow 'Inconsistencies in postal ballots and EVM results in Maharashtra'

Constitution debate to be held in LS, RS Govt, Oppn break week-long impasse in Parl

NEW DELHI, Dec 2: The government and opposition parties reached an agreement on Monday to break the week-long impasse in Parliament with the dates announced for a discussion on the Constitution, to mark its 75th year of adoption, in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The Lower House will take up the discussion on the Constitution on December 13 and 14, and the Upper House on December 16 and 17, Parliamentary affairs minister Kiren Rijiju said following a meeting Speaker Om Birla held with floor leaders of different parties. Opposition parties had demanded discussions in both Houses of Parliament to mark the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly. Rijiju told reporters that all parties have agreed to allow Parliament to function from Tuesday, and both Houses will take up their listed agenda items. He expressed confidence that Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha will function smoothly from Tuesday. Following back-channel talks, the breakthrough was achieved at the meeting chaired by Birla and attended by Gaurav Gogoi of the Congress, DMK's T R Baalu and TMC's Kalyan Banerjee among others besides Rijiju and his deputy in the ministry Arjun Ram Meghwal. Several opposition leaders, who attended the meeting, also echoed Rijiju's views about Parliament functioning smoothly from Tuesday.



Asked about other issues being raised by the opposition such as the Sambhal violence and the unrest in Manipur, Rijiju said Birla has made it clear that any matter can be raised in line with the rules while requesting parties to allow Parliament to function smoothly. Sources said the Samajwadi Party may be allowed to raise the Sambhal issue and the TMC the events in Bangladesh following the deposition of the Sheikh Hasina government. The Congress has been persistent in raising the issue of indictment by US prosecutors of Adani Group chairperson Gautam Adani and other company officials on bribery and fraud charges. This coupled with vociferous opposition protests over matters such as the Sambhal violence and Manipur unrest have resulted in constant adjournments of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha since the Winter Session began on November 25. However, some other opposition parties, especially the TMC, have not attached the same priority to the Adani row and want Parliament to discuss a host of different issues, including unemployment, price rise, and the Centre's alleged discrimination against opposition-ruled states in fund allocation. The TMC has skipped opposition meetings on formulating the INDIA bloc's joint strategy during the session. A TMC source said his party cannot be there just to stamp its approval on the Congress' agenda. The Congress and many of its allies have also been vocal in targeting the ruling BJP for its alleged attack on the Constitution under the government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The BJP on the other hand has projected the main opposition party as the principal violator of constitutional norms and spirit when it was (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Himanta apprises Modi about devp initiatives of Assam govt PM to attend Assam investor summit

NEW DELHI, Dec 2: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the Assam Investor and Infrastructure Summit in Guwahati in February next year, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said here on Monday. The chief minister also extended an invitation to the Prime Minister to attend a mega performance of the Jhumur dance of Assam's Adivasi community. "Today in New Delhi, I had the privilege to receive Adarniya Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji's guidance on various developmental issues. On behalf of the people of Assam, I also had the pleasure to invite him to bless the Assam Investor & Infrastructure Summit and Mega Jhumur Performance in February 2025 which he has kindly accepted to grace," Sarma said in a post on X. The summit in Guwahati will be held on February 24 and 25, 2025. The Jhumur performance will also be held during this time. In his 25-minute meeting with the prime minister, Sarma apprised him about a slew of development initiatives undertaken in Assam and also sought his guidance on various developmental issues, according to a state government release. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



Cost of health, life insurance to come down if GST Council decides: FM India must become data self-reliant: IN-SPACE chief

NEW DELHI, Dec 2: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said the cost of insurance to the policyholder is expected to come down if the GST Council recommends a reduction in the GST rate on health and life insurance policies. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, she said the GST Council in its September 9 meeting had recommended to constitute a Group of Ministers (GoM) to holistically look into the issues pertaining to GST on life insurance and health insurance. "...The matter of review of GST rates on life and health insurance is pending before the GoM. If a recommendation for a reduction in GST rate is made by the GST Council, the cost of insurance to the policyholder is expected to come down on account of reduction in GST," she said. Sitharaman said this while replying to the question on whether GST reduction on health insurance will be a step towards making healthcare more equitable. To a query on how the government will ensure that insurance companies pass on the benefits of any GST reduction to consumers, rather than retaining them through increased premiums, Sitharaman said competitive pricing would bring down the cost of insurance. "As the GST rates are applicable over and above the insurance premium, if the GST rate is reduced, it is expected to benefit the policyholder directly especially in a competitive market with many insurers as the cost of insurance will reduce to that extent," she said. Currently, an 18 per cent GST is levied on premiums paid for life and health insurance policies. The GST Council, chaired by Sitharaman and comprising her state counterparts, is slated to meet on December 21 where the GoM report on reduction of GST on life and health insurance is expected to be discussed. In the 2023-24 fiscal, the Centre and state governments collected ₹ 16,398 crore GST from healthcare and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

HYDERABAD/NEW DELHI, Dec 2: Space sector regulator IN-SPACE's chairman Pawan Goenka on Monday said India faces significant gaps in meeting all its space data needs and remains heavily reliant on foreign providers. Addressing the GeoSmart India 2024 conference in Hyderabad, he also said without the geospatial industry growing, India cannot achieve its vision of being a Viksit Bharat by 2047. "Are all our data needs met today? My answer is definitely not... Affordability, low-resolution data, high-resolution data -- not enough," Goenka said. He said despite abundant data from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), it falls short of providing "anytime, anywhere, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



'Make in India' has become 'Make-believe in India': Cong

NEW DELHI, Dec 2: The Congress on Monday said that the fall in the GDP numbers for the last quarter highlights the "unimpressive" manufacturing growth and the failure of 'Make in India' which, it claimed, has become 'Make-believe in India'. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh, in a statement, said the GDP growth figures released three days back for the quarter July-Sept 2024 revealed a "dramatic fall". Equally noteworthy and concerning is that manufacturing growth slowed to a shocking 2.2 per cent, he said, lamenting that export growth has also decelerated to 2.8 per cent. "The data belies the dismal reality of the Prime Minister's decade-old promise to make India a new global hub for manufacturing exports." "The unfortunate reality is that ten years after the Government's flagship Make in India scheme was launched, India's manufacturing is stagnating, and our exports are faltering," Ramesh claimed in his statement, a day after party leader Rahul Gandhi raised similar concerns. The BJP has alleged that the Congress' attempt to "paint a picture of economic doom with selective data and half-truths" is misleading. BJP leader Amit Malviya said that "crying foul over a 5.4 per cent GDP

growth rate is laughable when it is one of the highest globally". "Your persistent doom-mongering is not just baseless but reflects an inability to acknowledge progress," Malviya said while refuting Gandhi's criticism. Ramesh claimed that the share of manufacturing in India's Gross Value Added has fallen from 18.1 per cent in 2011-12 to 14.3 per cent in 2022-23, and the number of manufacturing workers has fallen from 51.3 million in 2017 to 35.65 million in 2022-23. He said India's share in global merchandise exports has also largely stagnated, and exports are falling as a share of India's GDP. "In fact, growth in India's share of global exports grew much faster in the 2005-15 period, largely corresponding to Dr Manmohan Singh's tenure as Prime Minister," he claimed. In the all-important employment-intensive sectors like garments, exports have fallen from USD 15 billion in 2013-14 to USD 14.5 billion in 2023-2024 and India has been left way behind by countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam, he claimed. "These depressing results are ultimately a result of the Modi Government's failure to boost private investment in manufacturing. The hype over (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'No voter should be excluded': SC seeks EC stand over enhanced voter limit



NEW DELHI, Dec 2: The Supreme Court on Monday sought the Election Commission's response on a PIL challenging its decision to increase the maximum number of voters from 1,200 to 1,500 at every polling station, saying no elector should be excluded. While asking the poll panel to clarify its stand, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar said, "We are concerned. No voter should be excluded." The bench therefore directed senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing the poll panel, to file a short affidavit explaining the rationale behind the decision to increase the number of voters per polling station. "Senior advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for the Election Commission, says on instruction that they will explain the position by way of a short affidavit. Let the affidavit be filed within a period of three weeks," said the bench. Singh said the bench knew about the consistent allegations on EVMs, adding, "They will keep on coming. The polling has been happening like this since 2019 and political parties are being consulted before this in every constituency." The senior lawyer said polling stations could have

multiple polling booths and political parties were consulted in each constituency when the total number of voters was raised per EVM. Singh further said voters were always permitted to cast their votes, even beyond the prescribed time. The bench, which will hear the matter on January 27, 2025, asked the EC to provide a copy of its affidavit to the petitioner before the next date of hearing. The PIL, filed by Indu Prakash Singh, challenged two communications issued by the EC in August, increasing the number of voters per polling station in each constituency across India. The plea said the decision to increase the number of voters per polling booth was arbitrary and not based on any data. On October 24, the top court refused to issue any notice to the poll panel but allowed the petitioner to serve the copy to the standing counsel of the poll panel so that its stand on the issue is known. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the petitioner, contended that increasing the number of voters from 1,200 to 1,500 would lead to the exclusion of underprivileged groups from the electoral process as an individual would take longer to cast their franchise. He submitted longer queues and waiting times at the polling stations would dissuade voters from going to cast their votes. The bench, however, said the poll panel wanted more participation and with the use of EVMs, it took a shorter time compared to ballot papers as the poll panel intended to considerably reduce the time taken to cast votes by increasing the number of EVMs at booths. The petitioner, however, said the poll panel's decision would impact voters during the assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand (since concluded) and Bihar and Delhi to be held in 2025. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Kejriwal alleges 'Jungle Raj' in Delhi, slams BJP and Shah

NEW DELHI, Dec 2: AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Monday alleged that there was a "Jungle Raj" in Delhi and people in the city had never witnessed such times of rise in crime. Kejriwal met a family in Naraina whose two members were killed in a span of six months by the criminals. He said that a youth was recently stabbed to death despite complaining to the police fearing for his life from some local criminals. Six months ago, his younger brother was murdered, he told reporters. "Delhi people never witnessed such times of chaos and Jungle Raj all around. Anybody can murder anybody. When it was known that those who killed one member of the family, could kill someone else, why was no action taken to stop them?" he asked. Kejriwal urged the BJP and the Union home minister Amit Shah to provide safety to Delhi people who were feeling unsafe. Ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls, the Aam Aadmi Party has (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

AAP more interested in liquor sales than health of citizens: Mandaviya

NEW DELHI, Dec 2: Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday slammed the AAP dispensation for not implementing the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme and said it is more interested in liquor sales than the health of Delhi's citizens. The Delhi assembly polls are slated for early next year. The minister's remarks also assume significance as they come a week after the Delhi High Court sought the AAP government's stand on a plea by Delhi's BJP MPs seeking implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY). Addressing a press conference here, Mandaviya said it was unfortunate that states like Delhi and West Bengal are not implementing the scheme even after repeated requests by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and letters from the Centre. "There could be political differences but public welfare works must be prioritised in India's federal democratic set-up for the welfare of all," he said. "The government of India has written to the Delhi government urging it to implement the scheme but the Delhi government is more interested (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Young innovators are nearing commercial success by building rockets and satellites' ISRO chief Somanath urges youths to pursue careers in S&T

GUWAHATI, Dec 2: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chairman S Somanath on Monday exhorted youths to engage themselves with scientific and technological advancements being made by the country so that India can emerge as a global leader in the years ahead. He urged them to pursue careers in science and technology and contribute to the growth in these fields. Somanath was speaking at a 'Student Science Interactive Program - Face to Face with New Frontiers in S&T', as part of the four-day India International Science Festival (IISF) at HIT-Guwahati, which will conclude on Tuesday. The ISRO chairman interacted with school students, inspiring them to explore careers in science and technology and pursue innovation in the field of space research, a release



said. "As students, you are the torchbearers of the future in science and technology. It is essential for you to grasp the remarkable innovations and advancements taking place in these fields today," he said. "By recognising their potential and the opportunities they present, you can draw inspiration to pursue similar paths and contribute to building a brighter tomorrow," Somanath added. He maintained that engagement of the youth in the country's current

scientific and technological endeavours is pivotal in realising the vision of making India a global leader. The release said industry-academia collaboration, knowledge-sharing technical sessions and initiatives to inspire students and teachers in creative, knowledge-based learning have been organised as part of the IISF. The event also brought policymakers and scientific leaders together under one roof to discuss sustainable practices across science, agriculture, manufacturing and healthcare, it added. A key highlight of IISF 2024 was the lab-to-life initiative, where the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) signed three technology transfer Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to promote sustainability and technological advancements. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Bond of friendship between Nagas and Assamese people rooted in proximities: Guv



DIMAPUR, Dec 2: Nagaland Governor La Ganesan said the bond of friendship between the Nagas and the Assamese people is rooted in cultural, historical, and geographical proximities. Ganesan said this during the commemoration of the Assam State Foundation Day at Raj Bhavan in Kohima on Monday. He said Assam with its remarkable history and cultural depth has always held a special place in the hearts of the Nagas, adding both communities have interacted over centuries, fostering mutual respect and understanding. "These interactions have laid the foundation for the bond of friendship and brotherhood that persists to this day," Ganesan noted.

He also stressed that despite occasional differences, like any neighbouring states, the focus should remain on harmonious relations and shared prosperity. He said the gathering on the occasion signifies the strong connection between Assam and Nagaland and highlights the Assamese community's invaluable contribution to our shared heritage. "Let this occasion remind us to continue advocating for stronger ties and a mutual appreciation that transcends geographical boundaries." "Let us celebrate not only Assam's accomplishments but also the enduring bond between the people of Assam and Nagaland, and may this spirit of camaraderie and cooperation light our path toward a brighter future," he added. Ganesan said Assam, with its beautiful landscapes, diverse culture, and rich resources, serve as a crucial economic powerhouse for India. "Its abundant tea gardens have not only placed India on the global map as a leading tea producer but have also become a symbol of our agricultural success. The oil and gas reserves in Assam further underscore its value in our country's development, providing energy and economic strength," he said. Beyond economics, Ganesan said, Assam's contribution to India's cultural richness is incomparable and that its classical Sattriya dance, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Conflict cannot survive without your participation. -Wayne Dyer

Truce in Lebanon: Welcome move

The ceasefire in Lebanon apart from giving respite to the beleaguered Lebanese, will also be a litmus test for Hezbollah on whether it can continue to flourish as a political and militant outfit in Lebanon or not.

For more than a year, the conflict was mostly limited to clashes in the border areas between Lebanon and Israel. However, the picture changed in September, when Israel exploded thousands of pagers used by Hezbollah members before launching a widespread bombing campaign across the country followed by a ground invasion.

Unlike in 2006, when Hezbollah was able to ignore a similar deal that ended a war that year, the group will now have to show that it is actively complying with the terms of the ceasefire.

IDPD 2024 and its relevance

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), celebrated annually on December 3, serves as a critical moment for the global community to pause and reflect on the status, rights, and contributions of individuals with disabilities.

IDPD 2024 is the recognition that sustainability is not just about environmental protection but is deeply intertwined with social, economic, and political equity.

For much of history, people with disabilities have been viewed through a deficit lens, often seen as individuals in need of help or charity.

The concept of disability leadership within the context of sustainability is a relatively new but increasingly important paradigm.

that solutions benefit everyone, not just the able-bodied majority. By positioning people with disabilities at the forefront of sustainability initiatives, IDPD 2024 calls for a more inclusive approach to tackling the world's most pressing challenges.

Disability leadership is particularly vital when addressing environmental sustainability. For decades, the environmental movement has focused on issues such as climate change, deforestation, and renewable energy.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The role of disability leadership is also critical in the economic sphere, where persons with disabilities have long been excluded from the workforce.

The benefits of disability inclusion in the workplace extend beyond the individual level. Research has shown that diverse teams—including those with disabled individuals—tend to be more innovative, creative, and effective.

The leadership of persons with disabilities is also critical in the realm of social sustainability.

World Day of the Handicapped: Breaking barriers

By: Satyabrata Borah

World Day of the Handicapped, now officially known as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, is observed every year on December 3.

People with disabilities often encounter barriers in many aspects of life. These barriers can be physical, social, or institutional, preventing them from fully participating in society.

Disabilities can take many forms, including physical, intellectual, sensory, and mental health challenges.

ence. Social inclusion and participation are vital for the dignity and happiness of persons with disabilities.

Technology plays a significant role in empowering persons with disabilities. Assistive devices, software, and innovative solutions have transformed the lives of many.

Advocacy and policymaking are essential for advancing the rights of persons with disabilities.



forms for their voices and talents.

Families and caregivers play a vital role in supporting persons with disabilities.

Building an inclusive society requires collective effort. Everyone has a role to play in creating a world where persons with disabilities can live with dignity and independence.

The World Day of the Handicapped is also a reminder of the importance of collaboration on a global scale.

Healthcare is another area where persons with disabilities often face challenges.

Karunadhara's role in achieving inclusive SDGs for persons with disabilities

By: Dipak Kurmi

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), celebrated annually on December 3rd, marks a significant opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities (PWDs) and to promote their rights.

In this context, Karunadhara, an Assamese trust founded in 2011, stands as a shining example of the vital role played by non-governmental organizations in fulfilling this mission.

The Genesis of Karunadhara: A Vision of Compassion

Karunadhara was conceived by the late Shri Homen Borgohain, a distinguished Assamese author and journalist, whose work throughout his career exposed the stark realities faced by individuals with disabilities and critical illnesses in Assam.

The trust operates on a clear set of objectives, all of which are centered around alleviating the suffering of disabled and critically ill individuals in Assam.

Impact on the Ground: Karunadhara's Achievements

The financial assistance provided by Karunadhara has been transformative for many individuals. For example, several persons with disabilities, who would have otherwise led a life of misery, have been able to access treatment or live independently thanks to the trust's intervention.

2. Aid for Critically Ill Persons: The organization also focuses on helping individuals who require specialized medical treatment, often beyond the means of their families.

3. Awareness and Advocacy: Through the publication of literature and organizing seminars across Assam, Karunadhara educates the public about the needs and rights of people with disabilities.

4. Promoting Welfare and Social Inclusion: Beyond just providing financial aid, Karunadhara is committed to raising the social status of disabled individuals by encouraging their participation in society.

A Focus on Sustainability and Empowerment

Karunadhara's work is not just about providing immediate relief—it's also about empowering individuals to become self-reliant.

The organization's work is also aligned with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), as it actively collaborates with individuals, community organizations, and even corporate bodies to raise funds and support its initiatives.

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Assam Rifles, Mizoram Police seize banned 'meth' tablets

AIZAWL, Dec 2: Assam Rifles, along with Mizoram Police, on Monday seized banned methamphetamine tablets worth ₹ 68 crore near the India-Myanmar border in Champhai district, an officer said.

Acting on a tip-off, the Assam Rifles and the police jointly launched an operation in Zokhawthar village and recovered 22.6 kg of the banned tablets, he said.

Methamphetamine is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system.

During the operation, the joint team observed the movement of a suspect crossing the Tiau River with a brown sack.

On being challenged, the individual ran away towards Myanmar leaving the consignment there, the officer said.

The seized contraband worth ₹ 68 crore has been handed over to the state police in Zokhawthar for further investigation and legal proceedings, the Assam Rifles officer said. (PTI)

'In India, our Muslim brothers and sisters live without facing such hostility' Protests erupt in Tripura over persecution of minorities in Bangladesh

HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, Dec 2: Widespread protests erupted in Agartala on Monday as demonstrators staged a sit-in outside the office of the Bangladesh assistant high commissioner, denouncing the escalating violence against Hindu minorities in Bangladesh and calling for the immediate release of ISKCON member Chinmoy Das Prabhu.

The demonstration, spearheaded by the 'Hindu Sangharsh Samity,' a right-wing organisation, saw participation from diverse sections of society.

"The illegal arrest of Chinmoy Das Prabhu by the Bangladesh interim government is both inhumane and unacceptable. Reports suggest that he has been deprived of basic needs like food. We demand his immediate release and stand firmly against these repeated attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh,"



a protestor declared. She highlighted the contrasting scenario in India, where minorities, including Muslims, coexist peacefully.

"In India, our Muslim brothers and sisters live without facing such hostility. Why, then, are Hindus being targeted in Bangladesh? We will persist in our protest until the Yunus-led government ensures the release of the ISKCON leader," she added.

BJP vice president Subal Bhowmik, who joined the protest, expressed grave concerns over the deteriorating situation for Hindu minorities in Bangladesh.

"The frequency and intensity of these attacks have surged, especially after the change in government. This protest is a united stand by various organizations to condemn these acts," Bhowmik said.

He also mentioned the Indian government's intervention, holding Bangladesh Prime Minister Md. Yunus accountable for inciting violence against the Hindu community.

"Md. Yunus bears the responsibility for these atrocities and for fueling anti-Hindu sentiments. Strong measures must be taken," he asserted.

Tripura, which shares an 856-km border with Bangladesh, has witnessed growing unrest over the persecution of Hindus in the neighboring nation, with protesters burning effigies of Md. Yunus as tensions escalate.

Over 19,000 acres of illegal poppy cultivation destroyed in Manipur since 2017: Report

IMPHAL, Dec 2: The Manipur government has destroyed a total of 19,135.6 acres of illegal poppy cultivation in at least 12 districts since 2017, according to an official report.

In Kangpokpi district, the highest of 4,454.4 acres were destroyed during the period, followed by 3,348 acres in Ukhrul and 2,713.8 acres in Churachandpur, the study - Mapping and Estimation of Opium Poppy Cultivation Area using Remote Sensing and GIS Technology - revealed.

The exercise was conducted by the Manipur Remote Sensing Applications Centre under the Planning Department, based on data provided by the 'Narcotics and Affairs of Border' wing of the state police.

The other districts where illegal poppy cultivation was destroyed include 2,575 acres in Tengenoual, 1,982.5 acres in Chandel and 1,682 acres in Senapati, the report said.

It showed that the area under poppy cultivation in nine districts in 2021-22 was 28,598.91 acres, which declined to 11,288.1 acres in 2023-24.

Between 2023 and 2024, poppy cultivation decreased by 32.13 per cent compared to 2022-23, according to the study.

In a post on X, chief minister N Biren Singh had last month said the state government is committed in its resolve to eradicate illegal poppy cultivation in the northeastern state. (PTI)

Pema Khandu extends Assam Day greetings, hails state's progress

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Dec 2: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Monday extended his greetings and best wishes to the people of Assam on the occasion of Assam Day.

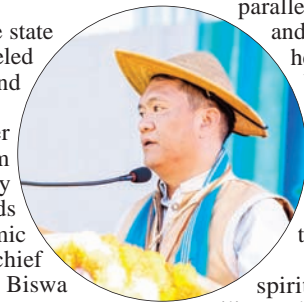
He described the state as one of unparalleled natural beauty and warm hospitality.

Khandu further asserted that Assam is progressing by leaps and bounds under the dynamic leadership of its chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma.

"Finest greetings and best wishes on #AssamDay to all! Today, we celebrate the rich heritage, vibrant culture, and remarkable history of Assam, which is progressing by leaps and bounds under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri @himantabiswaji. From the majestic Brahmaputra River to the serene tea gardens, Assam is a land of unparalleled natural beauty and warm hospitality," he wrote on the micro-blogging site X.

The Arunachal chief minister also called on people to honor the spirit of unity and resilience that defines Assam.

"Let's honor the spirit of unity and resilience that defines this beautiful state. Once again, wishing the people of Assam and everyone who cherishes its legacy a joyful and proud Assam Day!" he added.



Celebrate wisdom of indigenous people: Peru envoy

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Dec 2: Ambassador of Peru to India Javier Manuel Paulinich Velarde on Monday called upon the people of Peru and the Nagas to continue to celebrate the wisdom of the indigenous people and look forward to partnership and collaboration in the areas of common interests.

Addressing a roundtable with partner countries and partner states of Hornbill Festival 2024 at the bamboo hall at Kisama, Velarde emphasised the importance of the people-to-people connection between the Republic of Peru and the Nagas due to its shared similarities in culture and traditions.

Chairing the programme, Investment and Development Authority of Nagaland (IDAN) chairman and adviser to Nagaland chief minister, Abu Metha said the roundtable is a platform to forge partnerships, ties, and networking with each other.

He called upon the visiting dignitaries to look beyond the traditional and cultural aspects and delve into the economic prospects and opportunities that Nagaland



has to offer. He acknowledged the Sikkim government for being very supportive towards the Hornbill festival and for participating with a large delegation.

An Invest India representative lauded the Nagaland government for promoting the Hornbill Festival as a festival of business conference, partnership and collaboration rather than mere festivity.

Secretary, DIPR Sikkim, Annapurna Alley shared the similarities, advantages and disadvantages that the two states confront due to the pattern of their terrain and the scope of the tourism sector.

During the meeting, two MoUs were signed between the Nagaland higher education department and Salesforce.com India Pvt. Ltd and between the IDAN and Omsheel Foods.

Cultural extravaganza marks Day 2 of Hornbill Festival

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Dec 2: Cultural extravaganza by the different tribes of Nagaland marked the second of the ongoing Hornbill Festival at Naga Heritage Village, Kisama, on Monday.

The event held on the theme "cultural connect" was hosted by the deputy chief minister TR Zeliang.

During the morning session of the cultural extravaganza, a key highlight of the Hornbill Festival, various troupes from different tribes showcased various traditional dances and songs that celebrate the rich heritage of Nagaland.

Each tribe will also present one commemorative performance on different days throughout the festival, highlighting the uniqueness of their traditions. A winner will be announced at the festival's conclusion.

The highlights of tribal cultural performances included the Angami, Chang, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Phom, Zeliang and Tikhri cultural troupes.

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL KAAC SECRETARIAT:: DIPHU

Invitation

The authority of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu, requests your kind presence at the Homage ceremony of **Kajir Ronghangpi** a Legendary of Karbi Heroine on 5th December, 2024, the meeting to be presided by Shri Surjya Rongphar, Hon'ble E.M. i/c Art & Culture, KAAC at Kohora, Karbi Anglong as per programme overleaf.

Sd/-
Principal Secretary
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,
DIPHU

PROGRAMME

5th December, 2024

- 08:30 AM** :: Spot Drawing Competition.
- 10:00 AM** :: Garlanding of Statue of Kajir Ronghangpi at Kajir Ronghangpi Memorial Park, Kohora.
- 10:30 AM** :: Homage by Karbi Bhaktitom Trust, KARSA, Diphu.
- 11:00 AM** :: Public Meeting.
- Chief Guest** :: Dr. Tuliram Ronghang, Hon'ble Chief Executive Member, KAAC, Diphu.
- Special Guest** :: 1. Dr. Numol Momin Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly, Dispur.
- 2. Shri Darsing Ronghang, Hon'ble MLA, Assam Legislative Assembly
- 3. Shri Bidyasing Englang, Hon'ble MLA, Assam Legislative Assembly
- 4. Shri Rupsing Teron, Hon'ble MLA, Assam Legislative Assembly

Guests of Honour::
1. All Hon'ble EMs, KAAC
2. All Hon'ble MACs, KAAC

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (HILLS) PANCHAYAT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG

No. PDDHE.02/Filling up of Posts/2023-24/ 646 Dated: Diphu the 2nd Dec' 2024

ADVERTISEMENT

It is for General information to all applicants who had applied for the post of Junior Assistant (LDA), Gram Sevak and Gram Sevika under The Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Karbi Anglong & West Karbi Anglong Districts. Vide Advisement No.:- **PDDHE.02/Filling up of Posts/2023-24/610 Dated: Diphu the 3rd Oct' 2024**, are requested to collect their Admit Card in the Office of The Deputy Director (Hills) P&RD, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, on working days and working hours w.e.f : **3rd December 2024**. The applicants are requested to bring **2 (Two) Nos.** of recent Passport Size Photograph. The schedule of Written test is mentioned below: -

Sl No.	Name of the Posts	Date of Written Examination	Reporting Time	Examination Center
1	Gram Sevika	15 th December 2024 (Sunday)	09:30 AM (Morning Shift)	Don Bosco Higher Secondary School, Rongkhelan, Diphu, Karbi Anglong.
2	Gram Sevak	15 th December 2024 (Sunday)	01:30 PM (Afternoon Shift)	- DO-
3	Junior Assistant (L.D.A.)	22 nd December 2024 (Sunday)	09:30 AM (Morning Shift)	Don Bosco Higher Secondary School, Rongkhelan, Diphu, Karbi Anglong.

General Instructions

1. It may be noted that some of the applications may have been rejected due to submission of incomplete/ incorrect documents.
2. No TA/DA will be provided for this purpose.
3. The undersigned reserves all the rights to enhance or reduce the posts and also cancel/postpone the interview at any time without assigning any reason thereof and intimation to the candidate.

Sd/-
Deputy Director (Hills)
Panchayat and Rural Development,
Diphu, Karbi Anglong

Memo: PDDHE.02/Filling up of Posts/2023-24/ 646 Dated: Diphu the 2nd Dec' 2024

ALFONSO CUARON SAYS HE ALMOST DIRECTED A JAMES BOND FILM



LOS ANGELES, Dec 2: Oscar winner Alfonso Cuarón says he was once offered to direct a James Bond film, but he decided to turn it down as he was "troubled about the idea of doing it".

While Cuarón didn't reveal which Bond film he was supposed to direct, he said he eventually passed over the project after a dinner with fellow filmmaker Joel Coen.

"Ages ago I was offered a 'Bond' film. And I said, 'Yeah, cool. Maybe Bond, I am going to do one.' And then when the process started and I was going to shoot all the dialogue and stuff, there was a (separate) team doing all the action scenes.

It kind of felt very weird. I was troubled about the idea of doing it," the Mexican filmmaker said during a session at the ongoing Marrakech Film Festival.

Cuarón, known for hits such as "Y Tu Mama Tambien", "Gravity", "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban", and "Roma", recalled taking Coen's advice on the Bond film.

"I had dinner with Joel Coen, and I said, 'Joel, what do you think of Bond?' And he said, 'Oh cool, I enjoy Bond.' I said, 'Would you do a Bond film?' According to the director, Coen replied: "It probably falls into the category of a film I want to watch but not do." Cuarón then said he learned the lesson that there are "some films I prefer to watch and not do".

The filmmaker also spoke about directing "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" (2004), when he had not even read the books penned by JK Rowling on which the popular fantasy film franchise was based.

"I had written 'Children of Men' (2006) that nobody wanted to do. I was unemployed. I was going to have a child. This film was offered to me, and I didn't want to do it because I didn't know anything about 'Harry Potter.'" After he read the books, he said to himself: "There is something good here! I will give it a try." And "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban", the third film in the eight-part franchise, went on to become "the best" filmmaking experience.

"I learned like crazy. It was a crash course in visual effects. It was a really pleasant experience," he added.

Cuarón's latest work is the Apple TV+ thriller series "Disclaimer", starring Leila George, Cate Blanchett and Louis Partridge. (PTI)

'Singham Again', 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3' major blockbusters in Australia: producer Anupam Sharma

NEW DELHI, Dec 2: With Indians being just two-three per cent of Australia's population, it's a matter of pride that Bollywood films like "Singham Again" and "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3" are turning out to be blockbusters in the country, says Sydney-based filmmaker Anupam Sharma.

Punjabi movies are also gaining market share in Australia, he pointed out. "We recently had 'Singham Again', 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3', all the major blockbusters. But one thing is very exciting, it's the Punjabi films.

"They're touching million-dollar box office, which is unheard of. We're (Indians) just two-three per cent of the population (of Australia). And they're punching above their weight," Sharma told PTI in an interview.

He was speaking on the sidelines of the recently concluded Film Bazaar, held alongside the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa.

According to trade website Box Office Mojo, "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3" and "Singham Again" earned AUD 899,742 and AUD 819,651 in Australia upon release last month.

The filmmaker said Punjabi producers have approached him to co-produce films in the language with Australian banners.

Punjabi film "Honsla Rakh", starring Diljit Dosanjh, earned AUD 639,107 upon release back in 2021 at Australian box office. Amrinder Gill's "Chal Mera Putt 2" collected AUD 643,309 in 2020, as per Box Office Mojo.

"If this is the box office they are getting, combined with the grants we are getting from Screen Australia (government agency), they're just loving it.

"Everyone is surprised because Australia has a very small film industry. Population of Australia is a bit around Mumbai's population.

So for them to be sustaining on Indian films is something very proud for us," he added.

Australia was the focus country at IFFI Film Bazaar this year.

Sharma, who helped in the production of "Dil Chahta Hai", "Heyy Baby", and "Salaam Namaste" in Australia, said the local government saw how these Indian movies were promoting the country and that's how talks to bring the talent from both the regions together started progressing.

"All this combined with a co-production treaty being active has created the most fertile grounds to share stories between two cultures..."

"At the same time, as a filmmaker, I'm excited because outside India, particularly with diasporic Indians and people of diverse backgrounds, it is a big movement to tell our stories ourselves. We have had

enough people from the West coming and telling us our stories."

Sharma also thanked Screen Australia, a federal government agency charged with supporting Australian screen development, production and promotion, and other Australian film resources.

He also spoke about his 2015 feature directorial debut "unIndian", which starred Indian actor Tannishtha Chatterjee and Australia cricket great Brett Lee in his first film role. The Sydney-set film revolves around Will (Lee), who teaches Australian English to immigrants, falls in love with Meera (Chatterjee), an Australian woman of Indian origin and a single mother.

Lee may be a former Australian speedster to many cricket fans but Sharma said he always knew him as a "performer" after doing a TV commercial and a series with him. "The moment he said yes, we had the film funded in four days, all by Indian fans, high net

worth individual fans of his from Australia... Then, the search began for a re-

ally good actress to compliment him, someone who was a star as well as an actor. But not a diva. And we couldn't have got someone better than Tannishtha Chatterjee for that," he recalled.

He is next set to produce "Bidjara Kumari", billed as the first film to explore Australian Aboriginal and Indian cultures. Also on board are Richard Jemison and Jodi Bell, who are Aboriginal First Nation producers.

The story follows a First Nation girl Tasha from Australia who comes to India in search of her father.

"For me to come on board with two amazing humans on a very creative story and a shared story between two of the oldest cultures of the world is exciting." (PTI)



Vikrant Massey announces break from films, says 'time to recalibrate'



NEW DELHI, Dec 2: In a rare instance of an actor announcing that he's taking a break from films, "12th Fail" star Vikrant Massey on Monday announced that it was time for him to "recalibrate" and go back home. The announcement comes weeks after the release of his latest movie "The Sabarmati Report" on the aftermath of the Godhra train burning of 2002. He said during promotions of the film, which released on November 15, that he had received death threats on social media but is not worried as it is "purely based on facts".

Massey, who recently garnered success and acclaim with 2023's "12th Fail" and the recent Netflix movie "Sector 26", thanked fans for their "phenomenal" support in the last few years. "But as I move forward, I realise it's time to recalibrate and go back home. As a Husband, Father & a Son. And also as an Actor (sic)" the 37-year-old wrote on Instagram. Massey welcomed his first child, son Vardaan, with actor-wife Sheetal Thakur in February. The actor, also known for TV series "Balika Vadhu", films "Lootera", "A Death in the Gunj", and "Cargo" as well as web series "Mirzapur", said he has one more release lined up for 2025.

"So coming 2025, we would meet each other for one last time. Until time seems right. Last 2 movies and many a years of memories. Thank you again. For everything and everything in between. Forever indebted! (sic)" he wrote. It's an unusual though not unprecedented move.

In 2019, Zaira Wasim, the breakout star of sports drama "Dangal", announced her "disassociation" from acting, saying she was not happy with the line of work as it interfered with her faith and religion. Veteran actor Vinod Khanna also shocked his fans when, at the height of his career, he left Bollywood to follow his spiritual guru, Osho Rajneesh, to Oregon in the United States in 1982. (PTI)

LUCKNOW STORYTELLER CAPTIVATES AUDIENCES IN RUSSIA WITH DASTAN ON RAJ KAPOOR, SHAILENDRA

LUCKNOW, Dec 2: Lucknow-based storyteller Himanshu Bajpai enthralled audiences in Russia over the weekend with his dastan centered on the friendship between legendary filmmaker Raj Kapoor and lyricist Shailendra.

"Dastan Raj Kapoor-Shailendra Ki" (The Story of Raj Kapoor-Shailendra), a dastangoi performance which Bajpai presented at the Indian Embassy in Moscow on Saturday, commemorated the birth centenary of the 'Showman of Hindi Cinema'.

December 14, 2024 marks the 100th birth anniversary of Raj Kapoor. Bajpai's performance, translated from Urdu into Russian by Pragati Tipnis, resonated with both Indian and Russian audiences.

Deputy Chief of Mission Nikhilesh Giri praised Bajpai's sto-

rytelling for transporting the audience to the bygone era.

"It's a mesmerising art form, and Bajpai is instrumental in bringing it to new heights. We hope to invite him back to Russia next year," Giri said at the event.

According to Tipnis, this was the first time that people in Russia experienced the "magnificent Indian tradition" of dastangoi.

Dastangoi is a centuries-old traditional art of storytelling in Urdu. Derived from the Persian words 'dastan' (story) and 'goi' (to tell), it involves narrating long, intricate tales with dramatic flair.

"The dastan performances have brought the two nations closer," she added. Bajpai performed the same 'dastan' on Sunday at the world-famous Writers' Village in Peredelkino, a hub for global liter-

ary figures established during the Soviet era under the aegis of authors like Maxim Gorky.

"This was the first Indian cultural programme hosted at the prestigious venue," Bajpai told PTI from Moscow over phone.

Raj Kapoor, the filmmaker and actor of iconic Hindi films "Awara", "Barsaat", "Shree 420", "Mera Naam Joker", and "Sangam", found large audiences in the erstwhile Soviet Union with his movies and music enjoying popularity in the country. His long-time friend Shailendra penned lyrics for many of his films.

During his performance, Bajpai said the dastan begins with a story in post-independence India when Shailendra recited his powerful poem "Jalta Hai Punjab" at a poetry recital which was attended by Raj

Kapoor.

"Impressed by Shailendra's work, Raj Kapoor requested him to write for his films, but Shailendra declined, stating he did not write for money," added Bajpai.

However, in 1949, when Shailendra needed financial assistance, Raj Kapoor lent him Rs 500, a handsome amount at the time, marking the beginning of a lifelong friendship. "The story delves into the creation of iconic songs like 'Awara Hoon', which Shailendra wrote without hearing the film's plot, and which was initially rejected by Raj Kapoor before becoming a milestone in Indian cinema," he said.

Bajpai recounted another anecdote which explored the origins of the song "Ramaiya Vastavaiya" from the iconic 1955 film "Shree 420". (PTI)





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