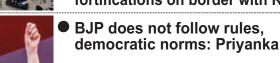
NATION

Israel says it struck Hezbollah weapons smuggling sites in Syria

Poland's PM visits defensive fortifications on border with Russia



Misuse of power, money to control election mechanism seen during Maha polls: Pawar

25 YEARS OF DEDICATED JOURNALISM www.thehillstimes.in PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU Voice of the hills people

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GUWAHATI, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2024

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'Ironic that Kharge questioned EVMs on Priyanka's oath-taking day'

BJP dares Congress leaders to resign on EVM issue

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: The BJP on Saturday hit back at the Congress for questioning the electoral process, including EVM's integrity, saying its Chief Ministers and other elected representatives like Rahul Gandhi should first resign and announce that they will contest only after the ballot papers are brought back.

Such a stand will underscore their trust in the issues being raised by them, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia told reporters, adding that their allegations will otherwise be nothing but empty words.

The Congress should move the courts over the issue too, he said, while stressing that the Supreme Court has quite a few times en-

India's growth over last decade propelled by advancement in science, tech: Singh

GUWAHATI, Nov 30: Union minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday asserted that the country's growth over the last decade was propelled by advancement in science and technology, and innovation.

He said that empowering youth and fostering innovations are key to achieving development goals for the nation. Delivering the presidential address at the inaugural session of the 10th India International Science Festival (IISF) here, the Union minister of State for Science and Technology said, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



Stop atrocities on Hindus,

release ISKCON monk:

RSS to B'desh interim govt

possible".

this," he said.

dorsed the transparency of the electoral process and the integrity of Electoral Voting Machines.

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: The

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

(RSS) on Saturday appealed to the

Bangladesh interim government to

ensure the atrocities on the Hindus

are stopped and ISKCON monk

Chinmoy Krishna Das is released

RSS general secretary Datta-

treya Hosabale in a statement also

appealed to the Indian government

to continue its efforts to stop the

atrocities on the Hindus and other

minorities in Bangladesh and take

necessary steps to build global

from jail immediately.

Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra should resign as they were elected through the "Congress chief ministers, same electoral process the oppo-

opinion in its support "as soon as

arson as well as inhuman atrocities

by Islamic fundamentalists on Hin-

dus, women and all other minori-

ties in Bangladesh are extremely

worrying and the Rashtriya

Swayamsevak Sangh condemns

present Bangladesh government and

other agencies are only silent specta-

tors, Hosabale said. "Out of helpless-

ness, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Instead of stopping this, the

"The attacks, murders, looting,

toral process (CONTD. ON PAGE-2) **Tripura-Kolkata** bus attacked in **Bangladesh**

sition party is questioning," Bha-

Bhatia said that the VVPAT

(voter verifiable paper audit trail)

has a 100 per cent record in matching the votes cast on EVMs.

He then added, "You want elec-

tions on ballot papers. First of all,

Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi

Vadra, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu,

Revanth Reddy and Siddaramaiah

should resign. They should say

they were elected through EVMs,

which is full of scandals and that

they will not take part in the elec-

HT Correspondent
AGARTALA, Nov 30: Tripura

Transport Minister Sushanta Chowdhury has strongly condemned a recent attack on a Shyamoli Paribahan bus travelling from Agartala to Kolkata. The incident occurred on the Bishwa Brahmanbaria, Bangladesh, causing panic among Indian passengers on board.

Providing details of the incident, minister Chowdhury wrote on Facebook, "A Shyamoli Paribahan bus, carrying (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



GUWAHATI, Nov 30: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal on Saturday interacted with representatives of the tea industry, and assured them that the Centre will take necessary steps to resolve the issues faced

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and industry minister Bimal Bora were also present on the occasion along with stakeholders, including buyers, producers and small tea growers from various states. Goyal said he has taken cognisance of the challenges faced by the industry, and he will hold further consultations to resolve the issues. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Maharashtra govt to be sworn in on Dec 5

MUMBAI, Nov 30: The new Mahayuti government in Maharashtra will be sworn in at Azad Maidan here on the evening of December 5 in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's presence, the state BJP announced on Saturday.

While there was no announcement yet on who would be the chief minister, BJP sources said Devendra Fadnavis, who has been chief minister twice and was deputy CM in the last Eknath Shinde-led government, was the frontrunner for the top post.

Shinde, who is holding the charge as caretaker chief minister and who headed to his native village Dare in Satara district a day before amid speculation that he was not happy with the way the new government was shaping up, has taken ill, an aide said. He was running temperature of 105, the aide said. The swearing-in ceremony will take place at 5 pm at the Azad Maidan (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'How can this govt be part of probe into itself': Cong's dig at MEA

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: The Congress on Saturday took a swipe over the Ministry of External Affairs' statement that the Indian government is not part of the US probe into Adani Group in any manner, asking how can this government be part of a probe into itself. In the first official reaction after the industrialist was

charged with alleged fraud by prosecutors in the United States, ministry of external affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India is yet to receive any communication for cooperation in the case. The Indian government is not part of the matter in

any manner at this point in time, he said. Tagging a media report on the remarks, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "The MEA spokesperson says that the

"As we observe World AIDS Day on

December 1st, let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting those affected by HIV/AIDS in Assam. This year's theme, 'Take the Rights Path: My Health, My Right!' reminds us of our collective responsibility to ensure necessary treatment and protection from social discrimination. As citizens, let us promote awareness, safety, and inclusivity, prioritize our health, and take precautions to prevent HIV/AIDS infection. Together, let us create a compassionate,

informed, and supportive society for all."

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma

Chief Minister, Assam

Indian Government is not part of the US probe into



the Adani Group. He has simply stated the obvious. How can this Government be part of a probe into itself?" (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)







Government of Assam Department of Health & Family Welfare

1 December 2024

Theme of the year

'Take the Rights Path: My health, my right!'



Shri Keshab Mahanta Minister of Transport, IT etc

Venue: Nehrubali Playground, Nagaon

1 December 2024 (L) 10:30 am

Organised by -

Assam State AIDS Control Society in collaboration with District Administration, Nagaon

Know your HIV status

Janasanyog /D/9622/24/1-Dec-24

by visiting Integrated Counselling & Testing Centre (ICTC) at your nearest government hospital

Connect with us (f)









#IndiaFightsHIVandSTI







Italian companies have invested USD 6.5 billion in India: Lorenzo Tavazzi

pean House Ambrosetti group's senior partner Lorenzo Tavazzi has said Italian companies have invested USD 6.5 billion in India. which speaks of the importance accorded to the world's fastest growing major economy, and stressed that there are a lot of opportunities for growth.

Tavazzi, who heads TEHA's Scenarios and Intelligence Areas, was speaking in Mumbai on Friday after the inauguration of the Villaggio Italia exposition, being held to coincide with the port of call of Amerigo Vespucci, an Italian Navy ship used for training and supporting national diplomacy.

Speaking at a panel discussion curated by top Italian news agency ANSA in connection with the ship's arrival in Mumbai, Tavazzi said Italy can help India's aspirations on the energy transition and transport fronts with its expertise in sustainable technologies and also high-speed rail.

Alessandro Giuliani of SDA Bocconi Asia Center, a Mumbaibased management education institute, said that given the commonality on the food front, wherein the culinary habits of both the countries focus on usage of spices, Indian students should feel at home if they go to study in Italy.

The education services-focused company has been training Indian students in India for over a decade, and Italian companies are picking them up, he said.

IL&FS gets NCLAT nod to sell subsidiary IPRWL to successful bidder

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: Insolvency appellate tribunal NCLAT has given a go-ahead to debt-ridden IL&FS group for the sale of its subsidiary IL&FS Paradip Refinery Water Ltd (IPRWL) to a successful bidder.

According to reports, this may enable IL&FS to repay a debt of around ₹ 1,000 cr. IPRWL was set up to meet water requirement of the 15 MTPA Paradip Refinery Project developed by IOC in Odisha. IL&FS, which is paring its debt through asset resolution, has not received consent from IOCL for sale of its stake in IPRWL. It had approached the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), which is supervising the process, to direct IOCL to either acquire 100 per cent shareholding in IPRWL at a fair valuation or grant its consent as per the terms of the BOOT agreement and the RFP so as to enable IL&FS to sell it. However, IOCL through its counsel submitted that the BOOT (Build, Own, Operate, and Transfer) agreement with IL&FS was till 2039 and it cannot be disinvested before the said period. Rejecting this, NCLAT said: "IOCL having not given consent for 100 per cent of the acquisition of the shareholding, we are of the view that ILF&S has to be permitted to proceed to give it to the successful bidder as per the process contemplated under the resolution framework." "We thus accept the prayer of the appellant to proceed for giving it to the successful bidder as per the terms of the BOOT agreement and the RFP as per the process contemplated under the resolution framework to its eligible entity," said NCLAT in its order dated November 22. IL&FS group has paid ₹ 38,082 crore to its creditors as of September 30, 2024, according to the latest status report affidavit filed by the debt-ridden firm before NCLAT. (PTI)

MULTI UTILITY VEHICLE

Tender Notice No.: EL/1/DB/W/1 MUV Hiring/2024-25, dtd. 28-11-2024 E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; Tender No. EL/1/DB/W/1/MUV Hiring/2024-25/81 Name of Work : At Dibrugari Workshop - Hiring of one multi utility vehicle (TATA or Similar) of minimu carrying capacity of 1.5 tones with drivers and 02 nos. manpower for a period of two years. Tender Value: ₹.14.91.966.80/-Earnest Money: ₹.29,900/-; Date & time of closing of above tender at 15:00 hrs and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 20-12-2024 For complete information with the tender vailable up to 15:00 hrs. on 20-12-2024 website http://www.ireps.gov.in. Dy. CEE, Dibrugar MORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

MODERNISATION OF SIGNALLING ARRANGE-

MENT IN LUMDING DIVISION E-Tender No. :SNT-36-LMG-2024-25; Dated: 28-11-2024; E-Tender are invite by the undersigned for the following work Name of work: Modernisation of signalling arrangement by provision of Electronic Interlocking at 3 station (Sarupathar, Barpathar & Bhilgaon) i Lumding-Furkating Jn. section o umding Division. Tender Value: 19,00,66,597.49/-; Bid Security ₹11.00.300/-: Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hours and opening a 15:30 hours on 30-12-2024. For details DSTE, Lumo NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY



Educational ties are very important for the bilateral relationship, he said, adding that while India is blessed with strength on the hard skills, it is the soft skills where it needs to imbibe more.

Speaking at the panel discussion, Press Trust of India's chief executive and editor-in-chief Vijay Joshi said that there is a lot in common between India and Italy, and people from both the countries should learn more about each other. Joshi said he is a big fan of Italy and has been to Rome on more occasions than any other European city. I really wish that Indians would learn more about Italy and Italians would learn more about India. There is so much in common between the countries, Joshi said.

Italians also give a lot of importance to family ties, just like we do in India, Joshi said, and spoke of the warmth of the European nation's people.

He said his connect with Italy dates back to childhood, when his father owned the popular Italian brand Lambretta scooter.

I always aspired for a Vespa, he said, recalling another iconic Italian brand. By the time I grew up, my aspirations moved to Alfa Romeo, Joshi said, speaking about the iconic Italian car brand.

Without even coming to know of it, Indians have been influenced by Italian aspects like Julius Caesar, Columbus and Merchant of Venice, he said.

In another panel discussion hosted by ANSA as part of the same event, designer Kulsum Shadab Wahab said she has found compassion and warmth while working in Milan.

She said the port of call of Amerigo Vespucci in Mumbai is not just the arrival of a ship, but

Italian actor Giorgio Andriani, who has done a few Bollywood projects, said the biggest of the similarities in the two countries is

the shared love for food and films. Italian DJ and influencer Olly Esse said she has travelled extensively in India including to northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland, and said that people in India are less judgemental but very curious about Italy and it is this curiosity which takes many to visit the European country.

Others who spoke at the two panel discussions included Kymaya Rohit Kumar, a former Indian student at Italy's Bocconi University, YouTuber Giulia Raffaello and designer Dhruv Kapoor.

The ship and the Villaggio Italia exposition were thrown open to public after the inaugural ceremony at the Indira Dock Friday evening, which was followed by a tribute concert to Giacomo Puccini, an Italian composer known primarily for his operas.

This ship is a bridge between all the different cultures, our cultures, your cultures, all the people that we have been meeting in our journev to establish a bond between the Italian way to do things and is also bringing a message of peace, a message of solidarity, said Luca Andreoli, chief executive of Italy's Ministry of Defence-owned company Difesa Servizi, the organizers

India invites Italy to collaborate on Maritime Heritage Museum



MUMBAI, Nov 30: Union Shipping, Ports and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday asked Italian museums to collaborate with India for the upcoming National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Gujarat's Lothal.

Speaking during a seminar on blue economy and space held on the sidelines of 93-year-old Italian ship Amerigo Vespucci's call on Mumbai port, Sonowal said India is building the largest museum devoted to maritime heritage at Lothal, a site of the Indus Valley civilisation.

The Union Cabinet had recently given the nod for the NMHC, which is estimated to cost over ₹3,500 crore, as per some reports.

Sonowal said as early as 4,000 BC, Indian ships went to neighand crafts. Indian ships had a reputation of being sturdy and were manned by expert seamen, he said.

The Union minister said that Italian travellers including the 13th century Venetian merchant Marco Polo have documented Indian ships to be highly sophisticated. much larger, durable and versatile than other vessels. The dockyard at Lothal is over 5,000 years old and given its importance, India is building the NMHC there, Sonowal said. "I would invite globally renowned Italian museums to collaborate in our endeavour," he said.

The minister called India and Italy as strategic partners, and also affirmed his commitment to take forward the agenda set out by prime ministers of both the countries recently. India and Italy are bouring countries with produce ancient civilisations with a rich such as spices, textiles, and arts cultural heritage, the minister said,

adding that Italian cities were important trading posts on the ancient spice route. The country's scientific and economic heritage spans millennia and as far back as the Rigveda period, that is between 3,300 to 1,900 BC, "Indian civilisation laid the foundation for advancement in diverse scientific domain", he said. Without elaborating, he also told reporters that India and Italy held "informal" talks on Saturday.

He said on the upcoming India-Middle East-Europe-Economic Corridor, Italy has made some wish and added that India will take the necessary steps on this aspect and even called it as the country's responsibility. Both India and Italy are strong maritime nations having advanced space programmes, Sonowal said, stressing that ecology and economic aspirations have to go hand in hand.

"From the enormousness of the ocean to the infinite vastness of space, the potential and benefit of India-Italy partnership is immense,' he said. Italian Navy's Vice Admiral Antonio Natale, who was also present at the occasion, told reporters that the Vespucci, which is used as a training ship, is like a 'floating embassy' because of the way she takes forward the country's diplomacy. "The stop here in Mumbai is to reinforce the friendship and the collaboration with the Indian Navy," he said, adding that the relations between the two countries are good and prepared to be better. (PTI)

Life insurance employees' body demands withdrawal of GST on premiums

KOLKATA, Nov 30: A prominent life insurance employees' federation on Saturday said it will launch a nationwide campaign to press for its demands, including withdrawal of GST on insurance premiums and no

further hike in foreign direct investment in the sector. Addressing a conference of the All India Life Insurance Employees' Federation (AINLIEF), general secretary V Narasimhan said it will be approaching MPs from all political parties to voice support for the de-

mands. The All India Triennial General Conference here is being attended by delegates from across the country. The federation's demands also include withdrawal of the new labour codes and introduction of the old pension scheme for employees recruited in LIC after 2010.

At present, the FDI in the insurance sector is 74 per cent and the Centre is contemplating raising it to 100

Holding firm restructuring won't affect India biz with Bajaj Auto: KTM

bike maker KTM on Saturday said the judicial restructuring of its holding firm Pierer Mobility AG has no impact on business related to products co-developed with Bajaj Auto for Indian domestic market and select export markets.

However, it is impacting business of Pierer Mobility AG/KTM AG that is run out of Austria, including exports from Austria, India and China to its key markets in the US and Europe.

On November 26, given the immediate liquidity constraints, the Executive Board of KTM AG has decided to file an application for the initiation of judicial restructuring proceedings with self-administration over the assets of KTM AG and its subsidiaries KTM Components GmbH and KTM F&E GmbH, the company said in a statement.

All other subsidiaries of KTM AG, in particular all sales companies, are not affected, it added.

"It is to be noted that the aforesaid matter has a bearing on the business of Pierer Mobility AG/KTM AG that is run out of Austria," the company said. These developments are impacting the export volumes from Austria, India and China to its key markets in the US and Europe, it said.

"...the KTM business that is run out of India (domestic, select export markets) for which products are codeveloped by KTM & Bajaj and manufactured and sold by Bajaj Auto continues to operate in the normal course during this period,"

the company added. Bajaj Auto through its whollyowned subsidiary in Netherlands Bajaj Auto International Holdings BV (BAIHBV) holds a 49.9 per cent stake in its associate -- Pierer Bajaj AG (PBAG) in Austria.

The remaining controlling stake in PBAG is held by Pierer Industrie

stake in its subsidiary Pierer Mobility AG (PMAG), the holding company of KTM AG.

Apart from being a part equity owner, Bajaj Auto is also a strategic partner for KTM as it develops and manufactures products (under 400cc) for India and export to overseas markets, the statement said.

The business in India is managed by Bajaj Auto whereas export geographies are managed mostly by KTM AG and partly by Bajaj Auto.

"The KTM and Husqvarna brands are of strategic importance and constitute an important part of Bajaj Auto's premium motorcycles business in India," the company said. Having registered its highest ever volumes sold under these brands in the country in the last financial year, Bajaj Auto remains strongly committed to the sustained growth of this business and is working closely with its channel partners, it added. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

BJP dares Congress leaders

till the ballot papers are introduced." The Congress will soon be confined to the pages of history books, he said. Speaking on the incidents targeting Hindu minorities in Bangladesh, the BJP spokesperson noted the stand of the Indian government and expressed confidence that India's strong voice cannot be ignored.

As the biggest democracy in the world, it is India's duty to raise its voice when minorities are facing harassment anywhere, Bhatia claimed.

He also accused Samajwadi Party (SP) leader and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav of acting as a shield for rioters and alleged that the party's members, including MPs, are involved in instigating violence rather than showing commitment to the restoration of peace. Targeting the SP, he alleged that riots frequently broke out when it ruled the state and that the opposition party had no faith in the police. The BJP's reaction came after Yadav accused the BJP of orchestrating violence in Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh where pro-

testers who were opposing a court-ordered survey of a mosque clashed with police last Sunday. (PTI) Goyal interacts with tea

Sarma said the state government is cognisant of the macro challenges confronting Assam's tea industry and its solutions require a collaborative approach. "I am extremely grateful to Hon'ble Union Minister Shri @Piyush-Goyal ji for patiently hearing the stakeholders of the tea industry and taking a positive approach to resolve their issues. Thank you Piyush Goyal ji for your valuable time," the chief minister wrote on X.

North Eastern Tea Association (NETA) chairman Ajay Dhandharia, in his presentation, highlighted various challenges being faced by the Assam tea industry, which include routing of 100 per cent dust grades through public auctions, maximum residue limit, efficiency of public auctions, early closure of production by December 30, low per capita consumption of tea, stagnancy in export from India and climate change, among others.

Meanwhile, the North East Confederation Small Tea Grower's Association (NECSTGA) called for the disbursement of funds to small tea growers under the development and promotion scheme of the 15th Finance Commission to be made more streamlined. The association also demanded that sufficient funds be made available to the Tocklai Tea Research Institute (TTRI) so that it can conduct awareness and training programmes for small tea growers, NECSTGA president Diganta Phukan said. It also called for declaring tea as the national drink of India and Dibrugarh the 'Tea City' of the country, Phukan added. Goyal was on a day-long tour of the city and

had earlier visited the Kamakhya Temple to offer prayers. (PTI) Maharashtra govt to be sworn

ground in south Mumbai, said state BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule in a post on X. PM Modi will attend the ceremony, he added. Shiv Sena leader Shambhuraj Desai, who hails from Satara district, told reporters that Shinde and other party leaders returned from Delhi early Friday morning after meeting the top BJP leaders, and Shinde has had a cough and cold since then. "Exertion affected him, so we advised him to take rest," said Desai. Sanjay Shirsat, a Shiv Sena leader close to Shinde, said his party must get the home portfolio. Speaking to PTI, Shirsat also claimed that attempts were made to sideline Shinde.

Meanwhile, a BJP leader said a meeting will be held on December 2 to elect the BJP legislature party leader. Fadnavis was likely to get the CM post this time, he added. Shinde, who heads the Shiv Sena and who was chief minister since June 2022, attended a meeting of the ruling alliance leaders with senior BJP leader Amit Shah in Delhi on Thursday night. Before that, he had made it clear that any decision on the chief minister's post by the top BJP leadership would be acceptable to him. Shinde is under pressure from a group of Shiv Sena leaders who think he should not become a deputy CM, having been the chief minister for more than two years. Another group of party leaders insists that he must be part of the new government. The Mahayuti alliance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) retained power with a landslide victory in the assembly elections, the results of which were announced on November 23. While the simple majority figure in the 288-member House is 145, the BJP alone bagged 132 seats, followed by Shiv Sena with 57 and NCP with 41 seats. But the government formation was delayed as the alliance failed to evolve consensus on who would be the chief minister.

Shinde, Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar met BJP president J P Nadda and Union minister Shah late Thursday night to discuss the power-sharing arrangement. Though Shinde appeared to have ceded claim to the top post, indications that there were still some points of disagreements in the alliance emerged when a meeting of the allies here on Friday was put off, and he instead left for his village Dare. The Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party has already stated that Fadnavis was acceptable to it as chief minister.

Elsewhere, Sanjay Raut of the rival Shiv Sena (UBT) told reporters that the "unnatural verdict" delayed the selection of the chief minister, and the differences in the ruling alliance forced Shinde to go to his village.

The Opposition's Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) suffered a rout in the November 20 elections, with the Congress winning 16 seats, Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP) 10 seats and Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) picking up 20 seats. MVA leaders including Sharad Pawar expressed solidarity with social activist Baba Adhav who launched a protest in Pune three days ago against the alleged misuse of Electronic Voting Machines in the recent elections. Power and money were misused to control the election machinery, alleged the senior Pawar. (PTI)

Stop atrocities on Hindus,

a new phase of injustice and atrocities seems to be emerging against the Hindus of Bangladesh to suppress the voice raised by them in a democratic way for self-defence," the RSS general secretary said.

"It is unjust for the Bangladesh government to send ISKCON monk Chinmoy Krishna Das, who is leading the Hindus in such peaceful demonstrations, to jail," he added.

Bangladesh Police earlier on Monday arrested International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) monk Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport area in Dhaka while he was travelling to Chittagong. "The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh appeals to the Bangladesh government to ensure that the atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh stop immediately and release Shri Chinmoy Krishna Das from imprisonment," Hosabale said. "The RSS also appeals to the Indian government to continue its efforts to stop the atrocities on Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh and take necessary steps as soon as possible to build global opinion in its support," he added.

At this crucial time, the RSS general secretary said, India and the global community and institutions should stand with the victims of Bangladesh and express their support, and demand that their respective governments make every possible effort to ensure that atrocities on the Hindus and other minorities are stopped in Bangladesh

immediately. This is necessary for world peace and brotherhood, he added. (PTI) Tripura-Kolkata bus attacked

Indian passengers, was deliberately targeted on Bishwa Road. A truck transporting goods collided with the bus, seemingly to cause an accident. Simultaneously, an auto-rickshaw abruptly came in front of the bus, resulting in another collision. Following this, local residents gathered around the scene and began threatening the passengers. They shouted anti-India slogans, made provocative remarks, and even issued threats to the lives of the passengers. This left the travellers deeply shaken and fearful."

Expressing his concern, Chowdhury strongly criticised the incident and urged the Bangladeshi authorities to act swiftly. "I condemn this attack in the strongest terms and call upon the administration of Bangladesh to take immediate measures to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals travelling in their country," he said. The minister's statement underscores the growing concern for the safety of cross-border travellers and the need for prompt action to prevent such incidents in the future.

'How can this govt be part

The MEA has said the indictment of Indian billionaire Gautam Adani by the US prosecutors is a "legal matter" involving private firms, individuals and the US Department of Justice and that New Delhi was not informed about the case in advance. "We see this as a legal matter involving private firms and individuals and the US Department of Justice. Obviously, there are established procedures and legal avenues in such cases, which we believe would be followed," Jaiswal said. "The government of India was not informed in advance on the issue. We have not had any conversation with the US government on it," he added.

Gautam Adani, founder chairman of the ports-to-energy conglomerate, his nephew Sagar and another key executive have been charged by the US Department of Justice of being part of an alleged scheme to pay USD 265 million bribes to the Indian officials to win contracts for the supply of solar electricity that would yield

USD 2 billion profit over a 20-year period. The Adani Group has denied all allegations as baseless. (PTI) India's growth over last decade

"India's remarkable growth story is deeply rooted in its advancements in science and technology, and innovation." "Over the past decade, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, we have seen a profound transformation across sectors -- from the rise of startups to revolutionary breakthroughs in biotechnology, space technology, and quantum science," he added. The northeastern region, once on the periphery of development, has become a shining example of growth, embodying both economic progress and scientific innovation, he claimed

"As we approach India@2047, empowering youth and fostering innovation is key. Initiatives like the National Research Foundation and the bioeconomy revolution are driving India toward self-reliance and global leadership, with young innovators leading the way," the Union minister added. The four-day festival aims to popularise science and technology across diverse communities and is expected to attract over 8,000 delegates, researchers and leading scientific organisations, along with 10,000 students, fostering collaboration and innovation across disciplines.

At the programme, Singh also launched the India Science, Technology & Innovation (ISTI) portal, a centralised platform which will serve as a comprehensive repository for content related to science, technology and innovation within India's ecosystem. Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, speaking on the occasion, emphasised the importance of integrating technology, resources, and capital in present times to accelerate a nation's growth and prosperity. "Technology is the most transformative force... and by harnessing it, a nation can overcome resource limitation and reduce dependency on capital," he maintained. It will also help in achieving social equity, poverty alleviation, and improving the standard of living, impacting all sectors from agriculture to industry, power, communication and transportation, he added. Highlighting India's rich legacy of contribution to mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and philosophy, he said, "India has been a cradle of the pursuit of science. Assam also has a rich legacy, with its ancient name 'Pragjyotishpur' symbolising its contribution to astronomy and astrology.'

Expressing gratitude to the central government for holding the IISF in Guwahati, the CM said about 30 international scientists are also attending the meet, along with top luminaries of the field of the country. He said 1,500 students from Assam are participating in the IISF and will be staying at the venue, IIT-Guwahati, for three days.

"It will be a one-of-a-kind experience for them. I urge our students to go back and share with their friends whatever they learn here," Sarma added. He said that the IISF is a celebration of collective commitment to excellence, innovation and harnessing of science and technology as a powerful engine of growth and prosperity for the nation. Sarma requested the central government to grant higher education institutions of the Northeast opportunity under the 'One Nation One Subscription' scheme, a newly launched programme which will allow nationwide access to scholarly research articles and journal publications.

The CM said he also had a brief meeting with the director general (DG) of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) N Kalaiselvi, who was present at the IISF and requested her research on how Assam can develop a flood-resistant economy. "Every year, floods destroy our infrastructure. We need to introduce more flood-resistant construction technology. I am sure agencies like CSIR will work towards achieving it," he said. (PTI)



CEM meets Defence Minister in New Delhi

Pramod Boro proposes Special Army Regiment for BTR

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Nov 30: Pramod

Boro, the chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) has proposed Special Army Regiment for BTR.

The said proposal was made after Boro met Union defence minister Rajnath Singh in New

During the meeting held on Friday, Boro highlighted the active and spirited participation of the youth from the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) in the recruitment rallies and other initiatives organised by the Indian Armed Forces.

Further, the BTC chief submitted a memorandum to the defence minister, proposing the creation of a special regiment named the "Territorial Army Home and Hearth Battalion" for BTR.

He stated that this initiative would offer a dedicated platform for the region's youth to join the defence forces and contribute to the nation's security.

"The proposal aims to inspire greater participation while fostering a deep sense of patriotism and national pride among the youth of Bodoland region," Boro said.

The defence minister appreci-



government to encouraging the region's youth and assured due consideration of the proposal

The meeting marks a significant step toward fostering the region's integration with national defence

CEM Boro, was accompanied by Lok Sabha MP, Joyanta Basumatary, BTR executive member, Wilson Hasda and BTC MCLA and Political Secretary to CEM, Madhab Chandra Chetry.

"The creation of special regi-

ment for Bodoland region will inspire the youth of BTR to join National Defence forces and contribute to nation building in days to come ahead," Boro added.

He mentioned that a huge numbers of youths from BTR actively participated in various programs and recruitment rallies conducted by the Indian Armed Forces in Bodoland region.

"It was a pleasure moment to meet Adarniya Shri Rajnath Singh

about the active participation of the youth of BTR in various programs and recruitment rallies conducted by the Indian Armed Forces in BTR. We submitted a memorandum to the Honourable Defence Minister, requesting the formation of a special regiment, the 'Territorial Army Home and Hearth Battalion' for BTR. This will further inspire and support the youth of BTR in joining the Indian Defence Forces and serving the

REGION

Borkataky passes away

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 30: Duldul Borkataky, former assistant general secretary of All Assam Students'

He passed away on Friday evening at Guwahati Medical College and Hospital

isations. He later joined the Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP) and contested the 2021 Assam Legislative Assembly elections from the Biswanath constituency.

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Nov 30: Swastya Sewa Utsav Phase 3.0 will be held from December 3rd to 5th across all health facilities in Dima Hasao This was announced in a press meet which was chaired by Dr Paban Kr Ganju, joint director of health services and member secre-

Kr Ganju announced that the third round of the Swastya Sewa Utsav aims to assess and address the shortcomings in health institutions, in Kokraihar from December 3 to its infrastructure, human resources, 5, focusing on assessing the quality

3 to 5.

Swasthya Sewa Utsav-3 to be held from Dec 3rd to 5th

Speaking to the media persons at

district commissioner

a press conference held at the DC

office conference hall, on Satur-

Masanda Magdalin Pertin stated

that the Swasthya Sewa Utsov

phase 3 will be held on December

She said that the initiative aims

to evaluate the infrastructure,

human resources, and service qual-

ity at healthcare facilities. The as-

sessments will be conducted by

independent evaluators to ensure

She informed that the best per-

forming health institutions will be

awarded cash prizes as well per-

forming citations from the state

Children rescued from the

construction site at Haflong

inbiased and accurate reviews.

and the quality of services. of health institutions, its infrastruc-"Assessment will be conducted ture, human resource and quality by independent assessors," he of services rendered across the dis-

This initiative seeks to achieve a higher level of quality in services of each health facility and address any gaps that are identified, in all district hospitals, sub-divisional civil hospitals, Community Health Centres (CHCs), and Primary Health Centres (PHCs).

tary of the District Health Society.

During the press meet, Dr Paban

In Dima Hasao district, the programme will be conducted in 20 health facilities, including one district hospital, three community health centres, eleven primary health centres, and five sub-cen-

Our Kokrajhar correspondent adds: Along with rest of the state, the third edition of the Swasthya Sewa Utsov is set to be organised government.

She has urged the district health institutions including block, PHC and other health related institutions to render best services for the welfare of the humanity in the district.

Our Morigaon correspondent adds: The 3rd phase of Swasthya Sewa Utsav will take place from December 3 to 5, across 47 hospitals in the district.

The event will be organised under the leadership of CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, aims to evaluate and enhance healthcare

At a press meet held on Saturday, district commissioner Debashis Sarma, along with health officials, announced the completion of preparations for the Utsav. Joint Director of Health Dr Arun Nath stated that trained teams will assess health institutions to ensure quality standards are met.

Track maintenance disrupts train services from December 1-8: NFR

GUWAHATI, Nov 30: As part of track-safety maintenance work between Dihakho and Mupa stations in the Lumding-Badarpur Hill section, several train services will be cancelled, rescheduled, and regulated from December 1 to 8, an official statement said on Saturday.

The cancelled trains are Train no 15888/15887 (Guwahati – Badarpur) on December 4 and 7, Train no 15615/15616 (Guwahati - Silchar) from December 1 to 8, Train no 15617 (Guwahati - Dullabcherra) on December 2, 4 and 7, Train no 15618 (Dullabcherra - Guwahati) on December 3, 5 and 8, Train no 05698 (Guwahati – New Jalpaiguri) on December 3 and 5, Train no 05697 (New Jalpaiguri

Guwahati) on December 4 & 7, Train no 05639 (Silchar - Kolkata) on December 5 and Train no 05640 (Kolkata – Silchar) on December 6

The rescheduled trains are Train no 12504 (Agartala - SMVT Bengaluru) on December 3 and 7, rescheduled to 07:00 hours, Train no 12515 (Coimbatore – Silchar) on December 1 and 8. rescheduled to 03:00 hours of December 2 and 9

And the regulated trains are Train no 12507 (Thiruvananthapuram – Silchar) on December 3, Train no 14038 (New Delhi - Silchar) on December 5 and Train no 14620 (Firozpur Cant. - Agartala) on December 2.

Passengers are advised to check for updates regarding train services.

Former AASU leader Duldul

Union (AASU) and a prominent social worker, passed away at the age of 47.

(GMCH) after a brief illness. Borkataky, hailing from Pabhoi in Biswanath Chariali, was a popular leader in his community and played a significant role in various socio-cultural organ-

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Nov 30: In a swift and coordinated effort, a rescue operation was conducted

engaged in child labour from the construction site at Holy Spirit Hospital.

The operation, prompted by a call to the Child Helpline Unit

(1098), was carried out with the support of the District Labour Department and the district-level Child Labour Task Force," an official statement said.

A total of three children were rescued from the working site and FIR has been lodged against the employer in the matter.

The team was led by the asst commissioner Dritiraj Alamyan, ACS; Sonali Hojai, labour inspector; protection officer (NIC) Susanta Langthasa, DCPU; district project coordinator Pausuiding Panme, Child Help Line and subinspector Momita Pator, Child Welfare Police Officer SJPU,

of Royal Global University



HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Nov 30: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya attended

Global University here on Saturday. Addressing the students at the convocation of Royal Global University, the Governor asked the Royal Global University to develop a model of inclusive education which have the element of compassion for all living beings and take a leading role in educating all students, especially those belonging to

the fourth convocation of Royal

unprivileged section of the society. He also asked the university to develop a curriculum which is helpful in building creativity, entrepreneurship and ethical leadership among the students and become the role models in the society. The Governor also called upon the students to nurture three most important qualities in life which are knowledge, passion and compassion.

'A centre of higher learning should not only be a centre of academic excellence and technical knowledge, but also a place for personality building and promotion of moral values," he said.

A university's objective should encompass giving knowledge of the subject and making a student responsible and sensitive citizen.

"Today is the time of global competition and technological revolution. A new chapter of this technological revolution has started in the form of 'Industry 4.0'. In this fourth industrial revolution, Artificial Intelligence (AI), data science, digital technology and other technologies are being used by the industries," he added.

He, therefore, asked the students to develop their skills in artificial intelligence, data science etc and remain relevant in the evolution of knowledge.

Acharya moreover said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is moving forward very convincingly. In this context, institutions like Royal Global University should also em-

power its students so that they can lead the country in its journey towards Amirt Kaal. The Governor said that students are future of India. Therefore, their education and degrees should not be limited to job purposes only, rather they should create attitude of social responsibility, nation building and service to humanity among the stu-

Speaking on the National Education Policy 2020, the Governor said that NEP 2020, which is the third major reform in India's education structure since independence aims to make India a Global Knowledge Superpower. This vision of this education policy is to create an education system rooted in the Indian ethos that contributes directly to the transformation of India by providing high quality education to all, and helping India becoming a Viswa Guru.

The Governor also said that the National Education Policy 2020 focuses on key reforms in higher education that will enable the next generation to compete in the new digital age and comprehensively outlines the vision of India's new education system, which also inspires the promotion of ancient high

He concluded by urging the graduates to have the courage to think differently, to have the courage to invent, to have the courage to walk on unseen paths, to have the courage to discover the impossible and to overcome problems, become successful and become a potential contributor to Viksit Bharat.

The convocation which witnessed presence of Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, education minister Dr Ranoj Pegu, State's Industry and Commerce Minister Bimal Bora, Chancellor Royal Global University Dr A K Pansari and others saw award of degrees to 1502 students, including 25 PhD, 651 Post Graduate, 771 Under Graduate degrees and 55 Diplomas.

Governor attends fourth convocation Mission Hospital celebrates centenary with inauguration of new building

orating the centenary of Jorhat Christian Medical Cen- Works Department (PWD). tre (JCMC), more commonly known as Mission Hospital, and inaugurated its new

centenary. Speaking at the event on the second day of the hospital's centenary celebrations, Goswami honoured the legacy of doctors who had served at the hospital with dedication, particularly acknowledging the contributions of Dr Kenneth

Dotson and Dr Ajit Goldsmith. The MLA highlighted Mission Hospital's renowned nursing services, which were once considered the best in Jorhat. He recalled a time when, with only two hospitals in the town—the Civil Hospital and Mission Hospital—critical patients were

often rushed to Mission due to its reputation for saving Deepjyoti Das, the hospital's administrator, also addressed the gathering, noting that Goswami had been

HT Correspondent closely associated with the hospital for many years, notably contributing to the improvement of the roads Goswami on Saturday unveiled a monolith commem- within the Mission compound through the Public

While CM Sarma was invited as the chief guest, he

could not attended the centenary due to unavoidable circumstances The event featured a Scripture reading by Neipinrng Kipgen, Mahima Kawa, and a message from Ranjit Doley, Pastor of Rengam Baptist Church. The Eastern Theological College choir sang the theme song, and a brief history of JCMC was presented by Mridul Bhengra and Dr Sajib Baruah.

Dr Dipak Sarma, Senior Consultant in Cardiology at JCMC, shared anecdotes about the hospital's history, and the event concluded with a cultural performance by the hospital staff, celebrating the rich culture of Assam. This centenary celebration marks a significant milestone for the institution, which has been serving the community for over a century, making substantial contributions to healthcare in the region.

Rezum Water Vapor Therapy for prostate enlargement launched

GUWAHATI, Nov 30: A groundbreaking treatment for prostate enlargement, Rezum Water Vapor Therapy, has been officially launched at the Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology (AINU), an official statement said on Saturday. The new therapy offers a minimally invasive alternative to traditional treatments for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), a condition that affects many men, especially older individuals.

Dr C Mallikarjuna, managing director and chief consultant urologist at AINU, explained that current treatments, including medications and surgeries, often come with undesirable side effects like erectile dysfunction and ejaculation problems, which are particularly distressing for younger, sexually active men. "While medications can delay surgery, the results diminish over time, and surgery can cause significant sexual health issues," Dr Mallikarjuna said.

"Rezum Water Vapor Therapy provides a solution by targeting and shrinking excess prostate tissue using steam, which gradually removes the tissue, relieving pressure on the urinary tract.'

The procedure is performed under local anesthesia and typically requires just one session, with results becoming visible in 15 days to a month. In rare cases, a second session may be needed. The therapy is highly effective, with only 10 percent of patients needing traditional surgery 10-15 years after treatment.

The launch event also featured contributions from Dr Syed Md. Ghouse and Dr Vijay Kumar Sarma Madduri, both senior consultants at AINU, who emphasised the treatment's benefits for men with BPH, especially those who have concerns about preserving their sexual health.

Advanced systems ensure clean, eco-friendly and superior quality bedrolls

NFR and Indian Railways set benchmark in passenger linen care

GUWAHATI, Nov 30: NFR and Indian Railways will provide clean, hygienic, well ironed good quality linen/bedrolls to all passengers travelling in air conditioned (AC) sleeper classes by using latest state- of-theart technology for good passenger experience, an official statement said on Saturday.

Linen provided to the passengers during train journey is washed in mechanised laundries/ washing facilities after every single use. Blankets provided to passengers during train journey are normally washed at least once in a month and it gets further reduced to 15 days or further depending upon neces-

An additional bed sheet is also provided in bedroll kit to each AC passenger - one for spreading over the berth and second to use as cover to the blanket. Reservation against cancellation (RAC) passengers is also provided with complete linen set at par with other bone-fide passengers travelling in the coach.

The temperature of the AC coaches is kept around 24 degree centigrade so that it would not require blanket and bed sheet is more

NFR has also taken several steps to provide clean linen/bedrolls to passengers. Several state-of-the-art laundry care centre are



functioning at important locations spreading all over NFR.

Another new laundry care centre has been set up at Guwahati which has a production capacity of 16,000 bedroll packets per day. This will cater the growing linen requirements of Guwahati based trains.

The state-of-the-art laundry at Guwahati is a tunnel-based system which has numerous features, including the capability to handle large volumes of linen while optimising usage of water, power, steam and chemicals along with automatic transfer to subsequent

Indian Railways has taken several initiatives to provide clean and hygiene bedrolls for the comfort and safety of passengers during train journey. Railways initiatives also

include procurement of new linen sets with improved Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) specifications that have tighter tolerances to ensure better quality.

Mechanised laundries have been set up to ensure supply of clean and hygienic linen sets, standard machines and branded chemicals are used for washing of linen items and Whito – meters are used to check the quality of washed linen items.

Moreover, war - rooms have been established at zonal headquarters and divisional levels to monitor and to take prompt action on complaints lodged on Rail Madad portal including complaints on linen and bedroll.

With these practices in place, the railways aim to enhance the comfort and safety of passengers. Indian Railways has also emphasised improvement in logistics for storing, transportation, loading and unloading including Eco - Friendly packaging of

The blankets used in Indian Railways, as per current specifications, are lighter, easy to wash and provide good insulation to passengers for overall comfortable journey experience. It is also to be mentioned that no used and unwashed linen, under any circumstances is provided to the passengers during train journey.



Editor's pick

Trump 2.0: Steep tariffs on cards

By: Kumardeep Banarjee

The fireworks have started, even before people across the globe have ushered in Christmas and New Year's festivities. The ■ Trump presidency 2.0 could be a game changer, potentially recalibrating several global geopolitical and economic partnerships. First, the Biden era days of strategic partnership with nations worldwide would be replaced with a more transactional approach which President Trump in his second stint is likely to institutionalise. Even before taking charge, President-elect Donald Trump has vociferously spelt out his tariff-based external affairs policy.

He had during campaigning talked about imposing nearly 60 per cent tariffs on China imports. Recently he has said that one of the first executive orders, he is likely to sign after assuming office on January 20, would be to impose tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China imports. Of course, the caveat is, unless, they stop sending illegal immigrants and ban drugs across to the US. Donald Trump knows his tariff-based foreign policy approach has bipartisan support among Democrats and Republicans. It feeds well into his Made in America, local job creation narrative which catapulted him back to the White House in a non-consecutive term. India is overseeing this space, as it knows very well that even though the first tariff bullets may not be fired at India, eventually many will. Trump has already spoken about India's high tariffs in his election rallies and notwithstanding the amount of good, the Indian IT services sector has done for the US, he needs to send home hard messages. Knowing each other for a long period and having observed each other's style of governing, can be an initial advantage but not a long-term solution. Key Indian trade interlocutors are in high demand, especially those who have been in government during Trump's first presidency.

At some point in time, the issue of tariffs would come up in the bilateral conversations, where hard-nosed negotiations may be required. India and US under the Biden administration managed to establish a formal institutional framework for settling trade and tariff issues in the form of a Trade Policy Forum (TPF). The TPF platform provides trade representatives from the US and India to meet regularly to discuss and find solutions to mutual areas of concern. To be sure the TPF mechanism existed even under the Trump administration, but with one meeting and a new Indian government under Prime Minister Modi (with less focus on trade and external affairs policy), it served little purpose. Chances are, given Donald Trump's style of functioning, the TPF may be relegated to the background and several transactional bilateral meetings would be formatted to, minimise the friction in the trade relations.

It may be worth noting that India has a trade surplus with the US, a point Trump will keep in mind to extract his side of the deal. Meanwhile, the expected tightening of the trade environment between the US and China would have a significant impact on the global economy. These global headwinds will shape, the narratives for a long time to come. It could have an inflationary impact on global oil prices and growth of the several global economies. India's Reserve Bank has already cautioned that the slowdown in the global economy, protectionism, and tariffs are three key factors that will shape India's economy next year. It would be another tightrope with clever hands of the juggler on rope which can carry India for the next few years. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

World AIDS Day: A path to rights, health, and hope

orld AIDS Day, observed annually on December 1st, stands as a symbol of solidarity in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It is a day to honor the memory of those who have succumbed to AIDS-related illnesses, support those living with HIV, and renew our commitment to eradicating the stigma and challenges associated with the disease. This observance is more than a calendar event; it is a reminder of the ongoing global health crisis that has affected millions since the first cases of HIV/AIDS were reported in the

The History of World AIDS Day

The origins of World AIDS Day trace back to 1988 when it was first established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the United Nations. The initiative came from James W. Bunn and Thomas Netter, two public information officers working for the WHO's Global Programme on AIDS. They proposed the idea of dedicating a specific day to raise awareness and engage communities in the fight against the epidemic. December 1 was chosen for its proximity to the year's end, offering a reflective space for assessing progress and renewing focus on the challenges ahead.

Since then, World AIDS Day has evolved into a platform for advocacy, education, and action. It fosters global partnerships, mobilizes political will, and ensures that the voices of those living with HIV are amplified. Each year, a theme is selected to address specific issues, keeping the spotlight on areas that demand immediate

Why is World AIDS Day Important?

World AIDS Day is critical for several reasons. It brings attention to a disease that has killed over 40 million people globally and continues to affect approximately 38 million living with HIV today. Despite advancements in treatment and prevention, the fight is far from over. Many individuals remain unaware of their HIV status, face barriers to accessing healthcare, or are marginalized due to stigma and discrimination.

The day also emphasizes the importance of prevention and education. Awareness campaigns on December 1st provide vital information about safe practices, testing, and treatment options. In regions where misconceptions about HIV/AIDS persist, such campaigns can be life-saving.

Additionally, World AIDS Day galvanizes resources and political will. Governments, organizations, and communities use this day to pledge support, renew funding commitments, and announce policy changes to combat the epidemic.

The Story Behind the Red Ribbon

The red ribbon has become a universal emblem of awareness and support for people living with HIV/AIDS. Its story began in 1991 when a group of New Yorkbased artists formed the Visual AIDS Artists Caucus. They wanted to create a visible symbol that conveyed compassion and solidarity with those affected by the epidemic. Inspired by the yellow ribbons tied for soldiers during the Gulf War, the group chose a red ribbon to symbolize love, passion, and the blood that unites

all humanity. The simplicity of the ribbon allowed anyone to participate in spreading awareness, making it an enduring symbol of hope and advocacy. Today, wearing the red ribbon is an act of remembrance and a statement of commitment to ending the epidemic.

What Can We Do on World AIDS Day?

World AIDS Day is an opportunity for individuals, communities, and organizations to take action. This could involve organizing or

participating in awareness camsupporting local HIV/AIDS organizations, or simply starting conversations about the disease to combat stigma.

For individuals, it could mean getting tested for HIV, learning about prevention methods, or donating to causes

support those living with the virus. For organizations and governments, it

is a day to announce new initiatives, policies, or funding aimed at tackling the epidemic. Schools, workplaces, and community centers can also play a role by hosting educational events and work-

The Work Continues Beyond December 1

While World AIDS Day is a powerful focal point, the fight against HIV/AIDS requires sustained effort throughout the year. After December 1, it is crucial to maintain the momentum by advocating for comprehensive sexual education, access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), and research funding. Addressing societal stigma and discrimination must remain a priority, as these are significant barriers to achieving universal healthcare access for HIV-positive individuals

Communities can continue their support by volunteering with organizations that assist HIV/AIDS patients or participating in year-

Lessons of Bhopal gas tragedy should have been a

events. Policy-makers must ensure that commitments made on World AIDS Day are translated into tangible actions.

2024 World AIDS Day Theme: "Take the Rights Path: My Health, My Right!' The theme for 2024, "Take the

Rights Path: My Health, DEGREE OF THOUGHT Right!", underscores the impor-**Dipak Kurmi** tance of human rights in achiev-

ing health equity for those living with or at risk of HIV. It highlights the intersection of health and rights, emphasizing that access to healthcare is a fundamental human right. This theme calls for dismantling barriers that prevent individuals from accessing life-saving treatment and services, including poverty, gender inequality, and discrimination.

Empowering individuals to claim their rights ensures that the global response to HIV/AIDS is inclusive and effective. This year's theme serves as a rallying cry for governments, healthcare providers, and civil society to prioritize health equity in their agen-

HIV/AIDS in India and the Northeast

India has one of the highest numbers of people living with HIV globally, with approximately 2.3 million cases reported in 2023. While significant progress has been made in reducing new infections and providing ART, dipakkurmiglpltd@gmail.com)

challenges persist. The Northeast region of India, including states like Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland, has emerged as a highsocio-economic and cultural factors contributing to the growing epidemic. The region faces unique challenges, such as drug use and inadequate healthcare infrastructure, which exacerbate the spread of HIV. For instance, intravenous drug use is a significant driver of infections in states like Manipur. Additionally, stigma and limited awareness often deter individuals from seeking testing and treat-

Efforts to address these issues include targeted interventions by the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) and local NGOs, which focus on harm reduction, awareness campaigns, and community-based support programs. However, more investment in healthcare infrastructure, education, and social services is essential to curb the epidemic's growth in the region.

World AIDS Day is more than a commemoration; it is a call to action. By understanding its history, importance, and the symbolism of the red ribbon, we are reminded of our collective responsibility to combat this global epidemic. The theme for 2024, "Take the Rights Path: My Health, My Right!", encapsulates the urgency of ensuring equitable healthcare access for all.

In India and particularly in the Northeast, the rising prevalence of HIV/AIDS demands sustained attention and resources. By prioritizing awareness, prevention, and treatment, we can ensure that those living with HIV lead dignified, healthy lives. Beyond December 1, our commitment must endure, translating words into actions that bring us closer to a world free from the shadow of HIV/AIDS. (The writer can be reached

India's long-range cruise missile takes flight a game-changer in defense

By: Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

n November 12, 2024, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) achieved a significant milestone by successfully conducting the first flight test of India's Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM). Launched from a mobile articulated launcher at the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur, Odisha, this test marked a monumental step in India's indigenous defense development program. The missile's performance met all primary objectives, underscoring its potential as a gamechanger in modern warfare.

Development and Collaborative Efforts The Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile is the result of years of rigorous research and development led by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) in Bengaluru. It is a culmination of collaborative efforts by various DRDO laboratories and Indian industries, making it a testament to India's self-reliance in defense technology. Key industrial partners such as Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), Hyderabad, and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bengaluru, played a pivotal role as developmentcum-production partners, ensuring the missile's seamless integration and deploy-

The project was approved under the Defence Acquisition Council's (DAC) Mission Mode framework, which emphasizes critical projects with strategic importance. With a planned range of over 1,000 km, the LR-LACM is designed to meet the evolving needs of India's armed forces, offering unparalleled precision in long-range strikes.

Design and Capabilities The LRLACM's design incorporates cutting-edge technology, state-of-the-art avionics, and advanced software. Its versatility is evident in its ability to be launched from both mobile ground platforms and frontline naval ships using the Universal Vertical Launch Module (UVLM). This capability enhances its operational flexibility, allowing it to adapt to diverse combat scenarios.

One of the standout features of the missile is its ability to perform complex maneuvers while flying at varying speeds and altitudes. This, coupled with its subsonic speed and terrain-following capabilities, makes it exceptionally difficult to detect and intercept, providing a strategic advantage in penetrating enemy defenses. During the first test flight, the missile demonstrated precise waypoint navigation, complex maneuvers, and accurate trajectory tracking, proving its reliability and accuracy.

To ensure stealth and efficiency, the missile employs terrain-adjacent flight paths, enabling it to evade enemy radar systems. Its advanced radio-frequency seeker, which will be integrated in future trials, will enhance its terminal homing capabilities, making it a formidable weapon for precision strikes.

Strategic Importance

Long-range land-attack cruise missiles are a crucial component of modern military arsenals, enabling stand-off strikes on strategic

targets from safe distances. This capability ensures the safety of launch platforms and operating personnel while delivering devastating effects on high-value targets.

The LRLACM's design draws inspiration from globally renowned cruise missiles like the US. Tomahawk and Russia's Kalibr, both known for their precision in long-range strikes. However, İndia's LRLACM stands out due to its indigenous development, with almost all components, except for a few sensors and accelerometers, being locally sourced. This self-reliance reduces dependency on foreign technology and underscores the strength of India's defense manufacturing

Testing and Future Plans

During the inaugural test flight, the LR-LACM was closely monitored using an array of advanced sensors, including radars, electro-optical tracking systems, and telemetry equipment along its flight path. The missile's seamless execution of mission objectives was a testament to the robustness of its design and development.

Future plans include around 20 additional test flights to further refine the missile's performance and reliability. These tests will focus on enhancing its range, accuracy, and terminal homing capabilities. Once the trials are completed, the Indian Navy is expected to procure approximately 200 units of the missile, valued at around ₹5,000 crore. This procurement will significantly boost the Navy's strike capabilities, particularly in scenarios requiring sea-skimming attacks.

Contributions to National Defense

The successful development and testing of the LRLACM mark a significant advancement in India's defense capabilities. It highlights the nation's progress in achieving self-reliance in critical technologies and its ability to compete with global defense leaders. By investing in indigenous missile systems like the LRLACM, India not only strengthens its military arsenal but also reduces its dependency on foreign imports, fostering economic growth and technological innovation. This achievement also sends a strong message about India's commitment to modernizing its armed forces and safeguarding its strategic interests. As the LRLACM moves closer to operational deployment, it will become a cornerstone of India's defense strategy, offering unmatched precision, flexibility, and reliability in combat scenarios.

Conclusion The Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile is more than just a weapon; it is a symbol of India's technological prowess and determination to secure its borders. With its advanced capabilities and indigenous roots, the LRLACM is poised to become a gamechanger in modern warfare, enhancing India's ability to deter and defeat potential threats. As India continues to invest in cutting-edge defense technologies, the successful flight test of the LRLACM stands as a shining example of what can be achieved through innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to excellence. (The author is a poet, freelance journalist, and columnist)

part of our constitutional ethos By: Navsharan Singh

n this Constitution Day Novemper 26 how do we reflect on the world's worst industrial disaster in Union Carbide, Bhopal as we approach the 40th anniversary of this carnage on December 2 and 3? It is a tragedy every Indian is familiar with, but over the years, it has been reduced to a footnote in public memory, ruefully remembered by most people just once a year when the anniversary approaches.

In the meantime, untold suffering, trauma and harm people were subjected to continue to haunt them and future generations bear the harsh impact in the form of disabilities, mutagenic disorders, reproductive wrongs, cancer and mental health issues even four decades after the tragedy.

Successive governments have not created any substantial policy changes to address, prevent or prepare for such disasters in the future, and there is still no law on corporate accountability in case of such accidents. With the new buzz around 'ease of doing business' accountability has been eroded further.

The same industries continue to be encouraged and there is no promise of non-repetition. In these four decades, we have witnessed malicious attempts by Union Carbide and the State to deny culpability by deliberately misconstruing the harm, passing the buck and squabbling over the number of dead and the affected.

What are the lessons for the movements for justice that the 1984 disaster offers and how do we read Bhopal 40 years later?

US multinational Union Carbide and its Indian subsidiary, Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) started setting up the Bhopal factory in the late sixties and by the 1970s, began dealing in a chemical pesticide, Sevin.

The 1960s was a time when India's so-called Green Revolution was ushered in Puniab, Harvana and Western Uttar Pradesh. Pesticides were the key ingredients, along with chemical fertilisers, for the new high-yielding variety seeds that were pushed through institutional support in these states.

Green Revolution, the package of high-yielding seeds of rice and wheat, networks of irrigation and heavy groundwater usage, dependence on chemical pesticides and fertilisers, and broad institutional support had raised new hopes for food self-sufficiency, and hunger and malnutrition mitigation in

Today, there are a million reasons to question the so-called Green Revolution's promise (which it failed to deliver). It was environmentally unsustainable, the indiscriminate use of groundwater it encouraged took a toll on human health through heavy metal poisoning and the monocropping accelerated a heavy onslaught of pests causing major crop loss, bankruptcies and sui-

But back in the 1960s, the hegemony of science and the technology package offered under the Green Revolution was unquestioned. Even the sceptics maintained that ecologically destructive methods may be detestable but are necessary to increase farm production.

Ignoring the evidence that indigenous methods are capable of similar or higher yields, agriculture under the Green Revolution technology package was made heavily dependent on chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

When it entered the fray, Union Carbide was voraciously targeting precisely the market that the dependence on that technology package had opened. The Indian pesticide market was estimated to be one of the largest in the world -nearly 40 percent of the area under cultivation had already been brought under high-yielding varieties. The demand for pesticides was only going to grow.

The manufacturing process of Sevin required some lethal chemicals such as methyl isocyanate (MIC), a volatile chemical that the carbide factory initially imported. To enhance profits by eliminating international shipping costs and taking advantage of lower labour costs in India, the company proposed to manufacture and store MIC at the plant.

The government also pushed local manufacturing to reduce imports and protect foreign exchange. So even when the climatic conditions for its storage were not favourable, the production process was initiated.

It is well documented that from the beginning there were shortcuts in safety procedures. Union Carbide built the factory in a densely populated urban area and the storage of large quantities of methyl isocyanate overlooked the risk factors. The workers' union - Union Carbide Karamchari Sangh - formed in the early 1980s, consistently warned the local population and the workers of the occupational hazards.

But all forewarnings were ignored and the State demonstrated complete indifference. The inspection of the factory was consistently inadequate; just a few weeks before the gas leak, the Union Carbide factory was granted an environmental clearance certificate by the state pollution control board. On the night of December 2–3, 1984.

a large amount of MIC escaped from a storage tank and the poisonous gases quickly spread, affecting around 36 of the 56 Bhopal municipal wards. It is estimated that the disaster claimed the lives of over 2,000 the same night and 20,000 died over the following years. Severe injuries were caused to approximately 550,000 others - this was over 60 per cent of the city's population.

Four days after the disaster, Warren Anderson, the then chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of Union Carbide Corporation, appeared in Bhopal and was arrested immediately. But he was let off within hours of his arrest, allegedly on the orders of some senior political leader in Delhi.

He managed to escape, allegedly under the safe passage of a few officials and politicians. As the criminal cases proceeded against Union Carbide, Anderson's extradition was sought but it was rejected by Washington in 1992. Another 2011 Indian government request for extradition remained pending. Anderson died in September 2014, a few months before the 30th anniversary of the disaster, without facing a trial.

In March 1985, the government of India passed the Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims) Act, which granted it the exclusive authority to represent the victims of the disaster in civil litigation against Union Carbide.

In 1989, the government of India reached a settlement with Union Carbide - one made without the consultation or consent of the survivors themselves - whereby the US multinational agreed to pay US \$470 million to the government of India.

Holding no accountability to the victims, the compensation was paid to the government but not to the victims directly. In exchange for the payment, Union Carbide was absolved of all civil liabilities, including all claims by Indian citizens, corporations, partnerships or other entities arising connected with the Bhopal gas leak disaster against the multinational and its subsidiaries and affiliates. All criminal proceedings were also extinguished.

The families of the victims of the carnage received compensation of Rs1 lakh for every death and Rs25,000 for lifelong injuries. The Indian government shamefully signed on to this settlement and also agreed to defend the corporation in the event of any future lawsuits. The Bhopal victims' compensation case was sealed with this settlement.

Over the years, several individual survivors tried to file lawsuits against Union Carbide (which became part of Dow Chemical in 2001) in the United States. However, these lawsuits were dismissed, with the recommendation to pursue claims through the Indian legal system instead. In most cases, they were dismissed because the court found that these claims were barred by the 1989 Union Carbide settlement in India.

Forty years later, the victims and survivors of Bhopal remain without justice and continue to wage a struggle without much support. The victims endured the harmful impact of the poisonous gas, and the impacts are being passed down

To date, the State and the corporation

have not been held to account. Union Carbide, Warren Anderson and Dow Chemical never stood trial. The state government created a Department of Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation in 1985. It outlined a medical rehabilitation programme spanning several years, widows were given a pension of Rs200 per month, and in 1992 a housing colony called the Gas Vidhwa (Gas widows) Colony with 2,486 units was built to provide housing for the widows of 1984. This is as far as the compensation goes.

The vast area around the Union Carbide factory lay ravaged by the remnants of the killer factory. Union Carbide shut down the site and left it to rust. It has never been cleaned up. But the people have not given up their fight, they are archiving cruelties, they are keeping records and moving to local courts to fight for their rights, and fix liabilities against grave criminal negligence heaped on them.

They built local and national support groups and found international allies in their fight. Bhopal Gas Peedith Mahila Udyog Sangathan (BGPMUS), the Bhopal Gas Peedith Sangharsh Sahayog Samiti (BGPSSS) and several others remain steadfast in their resolve and continue to voice protest at various forums to not let the pain be suppressed.

Their undying campaigns remain a thorn in the side of the Indian State and the responsible corporations. Union Carbide and Dow Chemicals. It remains an inspiration for people all over the

It is our good fortune that nothing on the scale of Bhopal has happened again but Malbros and many other similar plants show a continuity, and the spectre

of 1984 Bhopal continues to loom large. History tells us that nations rethink and course correct after disasters but there has not been any such conversation in India. As 'production over safety and profit over everything' continues to be the bedrock of corporate decisionmaking and the State continues to sit in defence of capital, offering Indian soil for exploitation by corporations using global labour arbitrage, the spectre of death and disease is always looming overhead.

The more we lower our labour standards, the more vulnerable we make our people, and the higher the attraction for global capital to come to India.

Union Carbide is an untold tragedy, but many more are waiting in this race to the bottom if they are not resisted. The 40th anniversary is perhaps already too late to start a conversation about a different future that ensures justice for the people harmed by the development process. But start we must because the collective struggles show governments and corporations are invincible until they are not! (IPA Service)

THE FUSION OF ARTISTRY AND HISTORY

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

ocated in the historic Sivasagar district, Rang Ghar stands as an architectural marvel that intricately weaves together the threads of artistry and history. Erected during the reign of the Ahom dynasty, this monumental structure is not merely a building; it serves as a living testament to the cultural richness and historical significance of a civilization that flourished for nearly 600 years. Rang Ghar is often referred to as the "House of Entertainment" and embodies a blend of functional design and exquisite artistry, making it a unique symbol of Assamese heritage.

The origins of Rang Ghar can be traced back to the 18th century when the Ahom king Swargadeo Pramatta Singha commissioned its construction. This period was marked by significant socio-political developments, and the structure was intended to serve as a venue for various royal festivities, including traditional games, cultural performances, and gatherings that celebrated the community's unity. The architectural brilliance of Rang Ghar reflects the Ahom's profound understanding of their environment, combined with a deep appreciation for artistic ex-

The design of Rang Ghar is

shape, which is reminiscent of a traditional Assamese boat turned upside down. This innovative design not only serves an aesthetic purpose but also reflects the region's close relationship with water and nature. The two-storied structure is embellished with terracotta tiles and features a unique roof that slopes gracefully, allowing rainwater to flow off easily, which is essential given Assam's heavy monsoon climate. The spacious interior, originally intended for gatherings, is adorned with intricately carved wooden pillars that showcase the exceptional craftsmanship of the artisans of that era. Each pillar tells a story, etched with intricate motifs that depict scenes from Assamese folklore and mythology, celebrating the cultural ethos of the time.

The exterior of Rang Ghar is no less impressive. The façade, with its smooth curves and ornate carvings, creates a captivating visual that draws visitors from afar. The entrance is flanked by two majestic staircases that ascend to the upper level, where spectators could enjoy performances and festivities. The open-air design allows for a communal experience, fostering a sense of togetherness that was central to the Ahom way of life. This architectural feature underscores the importance of community engagement and celebration

within Assamese culture.

terior of Rang Ghar reveals a captivating blend of artistry and functionality. The large open space was designed to accommodate a diverse array of cultural activities, from traditional music and dance performances to the famed sports competitions that were held during royal festivities. The ambiance, steeped in history, invites visitors to imagine the vibrant celebrations that once echoed within these walls, where the rhythms of traditional drums and the melodic tunes of folk songs created a tapestry of sound and joy. In addition to its architectural beauty, Rang Ghar serves as a repository of cultural mem-

ory.

The structure is intricately linked to the identity of the Ahom people and stands as a symbol of their resilience, unity, and pride. The events that transpired here reflect the socio-cultural dynamics of the time, illustrating how the Ahoms integrated various elements of their heritage into a cohesive narrative. The rituals and celebrations hosted at Rang Ghar were not mere entertainments; they were expressions of identity and cultural continuity, fostering a strong sense of belonging among the people.

The artistic expressions within Rang Ghar are not limited to architecture alone; they extend to the various crafts that flourished under the patronage of the Ahom dynasty. The period witnessed the emergence of skilled artisans who excelled in a wide array of crafts, including weaving, pottery, and metalwork. The renowned Muga silk, with its golden sheen, became emblematic of Assamese identity, while the intricate designs of terracotta pottery reflected the community's artistic prowess. These crafts were deeply intertwined with the cultural fabric of Assam and were often showcased during the festivities held at Rang Ghar.

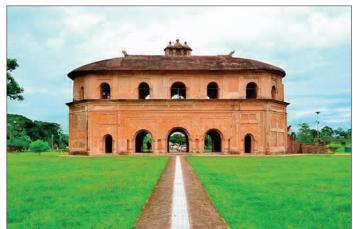
The heritage of Rang Ghar extends beyond its physical structure; it embodies the ethos of the Ahom dynasty—a culture that celebrated creativity, craftsmanship, and community. The artisans who contributed to the creation of this magnificent edifice were not mere builders; they were storytellers, weaving narratives of their culture into every design and motif. Their artistry transcended mere functionality, transforming Rang Ghar into a canvas that captured the essence of Assamese identity.

In contemporary times, Rang Ghar continues to hold significance as a cultural landmark and a focal point for heritage tourism in Assam. The recognition of its historical value has prompted efforts for preservation and revitalization, ensuring that future generations can experience its grandeur. The Geographical Indication (GI) tag awarded to Rang Ghar further underscores its au-

fying that it is not just an architectural structure but a representation of the unique cultural heritage of Assam.

The GI tag plays a crucial role in safeguarding the legacy of Rang Ghar, as it highlights the significance of traditional craftsmanship and encourages the preservation of cultural practices. This recognition not only fosters a sense of pride among the local community but also attracts attention from researchers, historians, and tourists alike, eager to explore the rich tapestry of Assam's cultural heritage. As a result, Rang Ghar has emerged as a hub for cultural activities, including festivals, art exhibitions, and workshops that celebrate Assamese traditions The resurgence of interest in

Rang Ghar also emphasizes the importance of cultural education and awareness. Educational initiatives that highlight the historical and artistic significance of this monument play a vital role in fostering a sense of identity among young Assamese. By engaging with their heritage, students and community members can develop a deeper appreciation for the artistry and craftsmanship that defined the Ahom dynasty. Such initiatives not only enhance cultural pride but also promote the preservation of traditional skills and techniques that may otherwise fade into obscurity. Moreover, Rang Ghar serves as a platform for the revival of



traditional arts and crafts, providing artisans with opportunities to showcase their work and connect with a wider audience. The integration of contemporary art forms with traditional craftsmanship creates a dynamic dialogue between past and present, ensuring that the artistic legacy of the Ahom dynasty continues to thrive. This synthesis of old and new fosters innovation while honoring the rich history of Assamese culture.

As Assam navigates the comolexities of modernity, Rang Ghar stands as a reminder of the importance of preserving cultural heritage. It challenges us to reflect on our roots and the stories that shape our identities. The monument invites visitors to engage with the narratives embedded within its walls, to immerse themselves in the vibrant tapestry of Assamese history, and to celebrate the artistry that has flourished in this region for centuries. Thus, Rang Ghar is more than

just an architectural structure; it is a living testament to the fusion of artistry and history that defines Assamese culture. The intricate craftsmanship, vibrant performances, and communal celebrations that once thrived within its walls echo the spirit of the Ahom dynasty, a civilization that valued creativity, resilience, and unity. As we honor the legacy of Rang Ghar, we recognize the importance of preserving our cultural heritage for future generations, ensuring that the stories of our past continue to resonate in the present and inspire a vibrant future. The enduring legacy of Rang Ghar serves as a beacon of hope, illuminating the path toward a deeper understanding and appreciation of the rich tapestry of human creativity and expression that defines our shared history. (The Writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-Magazine ŠAMPROTIK who can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com)

Language shaping identity in Things Fall Apart

By: Kangkan Borah

hinua Achebe is recognized as one of Africa's major literary and cultural critics and passionately engaged intellectuals, and his novels have depicted the juxtaposition between pre-colonial and post-colonial condition, and also exhibit the cultural identity of Igbo community in both complementary and contesting ways. With beautiful musings on life and loss, and through a kind of innovative language, he is brimming with poetic yet practical sagacity on human life, and this makes his works specific which, without any pre-

sumptions, presents the colonial history to the readers with possible alternative African discourses in future. His novel Things Fall Apart (1958) can be taken as the best representative of such a penchant in Achebe.

From the twentieth century onwards, especially from the middle of the century, there is an emergence of a new kind of literature from the various places of the world like Asia, Africa, South America, and Caribbean Island etc. that were the erstwhile colonies of the British Empire.

Though geographically and culturally, all these places are very much different from each other, but the main

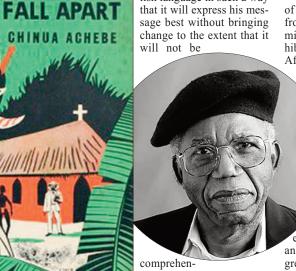
characteristic which the writings of these places share in common is their concerned subject matter which is the experience of marginalization, exploitation and resistance. "Instead of simply being the writing which 'came after' empire, postcolonial literature is that which critically scrutinizes the colonial relationship."

The novel Things Fall Apart recounts the life of

the wrestler and village hero Okonkwo, and depicts the arrival of white missionaries to the Igbo village and their impact on African's life and society. Told from the point of view of the colonized people, the novel can be considered as an early narrative about the European colonization of Africa which also captures its unique cultural her-

As a writer, Achebe always tries to show the fusion of two cultures in his society and hence he "... needs more than a single linguistic standard by which to define the ethnic predicament of his characters." Achebe himself once says that the African

writers should use the English language in such a way that it will express his meswill not be



sible as a medium for international communication and he seems to practice this idea in Things Fall Apart.

In the novel, it can be seen that Achebe not only tries to portray his cultural identity in the story, rather he makes the language he is using as a part of his cultural identity and the novel's popularity throughout the world can be seen as a success of this linguistic identity.

Some of the experiments that Achebe shows in this novel are the introduction of untranslated na-

tive terms, grammatical deviation from the standard British English rules, direct translation of his native proverbs, and most significantly, the changes in the level of semantics and to some ex-

The use of native words and expressions in the novel such as gome, agbala, foo foo, obi ndichie of umofia meaning the elders of the village etc. give not only an authentic tone to the novel, but also embellishes it with Igbo linguistic element. Throughout the novel, Achebe almost uses many proverbs that are direct translation from his native language which, for a native English speaker have

Achebe in a way challenged the grammaticality of the language itself. The translation that comes from the colonial educational system, in a way, misplaced. Achebe ensures that his resonance exhibit the African culture, he shows how poor the African English language.

Hence, we can say that the novel provide a space which delves out prevalent features of Achebe's anti-colonial discourse. He competently uses the English language to describe ideas, circumstances and issues which are peculiar to the Igbo society and which portray the socio-cultural setting. Moreover, in his writings, his endeavor for contributing towards Nigeria's nation building process and cultural reformation is very much apparent.

Thus, the novels success can be considered as an outcome of Achebe's sure-footed expository prose style and deliberately using of an innovative language which grasps colonial greed or exploitation and cultural identity of a particular Nigerian community.

Achebe's taste or artistic beauty in a way evolved in a framework which has been shaped by the changing discourse on the issue of representation and national identity in colonial and post-colonial Africa. What Achebe does in his classic novel as a conscious strategy of linguistic mediation is that he does not only use the standard languages followed by the colonizers but also he moulds it into a new expressive style in order to exhibit the cultural identity of Igbo community. (The author can be reached at kangkan9@gmail.com or

James Joyce's Ulysses: A literary masterpiece

By: Satyabrat Borah

ames Joyce's "Ulysses", first published in 1922, is widely regarded as one of the most Important and challenging works in modernist literature. Its revolutionary narrative techniques, rich layers of allusion, and profound exploration of human consciousness make it a landmark in both the evolution of the novel and the history of Western thought. Joyce's genius lies not just in his mastery of language, but in his ability to transcend traditional storytelling, offering readers an intimate look at the complexities of everyday life while drawing on the mythical structure of Homer's "Odyssey"

This article explores "Ulysses" as a masterpiece, examining its themes, structure, narrative techniques, and cultural significance.

Ulysses parallels Homer's Odyssey, with the events of the novel mirroring the adventures of Odysseus, or Ulysses, in ancient Greece. However, where Homer's epic chronicles the hero's long journey home after the Trojan War. 'Ulysses" is confined to a single day—June 16, 1904—in the life of Leopold Bloom, an ordinary advertising canvasser in Dublin. The entire novel spans 18 episodes, corresponding to the episodes of "The Odyssey", yet instead of grand battles and mythical creatures, Joyce focuses on the mundane: a man walking through the city, interacting with people, and grappling with his thoughts and memories.

Leopold Bloom's journey through Dublin reflects his quest for identity, belonging, and understanding in a fragmented world. Other central characters include Stephen Dedalus, a young, disillusioned artist (from Joyce's earlier novel "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man", and Molly Bloom, Leopold's wife, whose monologue at the end of the novel is one of the most celebrated passages in English literature.

The use of the epic structure for such a seemingly trivial day in the life of an ordinary man exemplifies Joyce's innovative approach to storytelling. By placing a modern, middle-class man at the center of an epic narrative, Joyce elevates the ordinary and blurs the lines between myth and reality.

Perhaps the most defining feature of "Ulysses" is Joyce's pioneering use of the stream-of-consciousness technique, a narrative style that attempts to capture the flow of thoughts, sensations, and memories as they naturally occur in the human mind. This technique allows Joyce to delve into the inner workings of his characters' minds, creating a complex and often disorienting narrative that reflects the chaotic nature of consciousness.

The stream-of-consciousness passages in "Ulysses" break free from traditional plot structures and linguistic conventions, often disregarding punctuation, grammar, and syntax in favor of the raw, unfiltered thoughts of the characters. This experimental approach demands active engagement from readers, who are invited to piece together the narrative through fragmented thoughts, associations, and memories.

One of the most famous examples of this technique occurs in the final chapter, which consists of Molly Bloom's soliloguy. Her uninterrupted flow of thoughts, devoid of punctuation, captures the rhythm of the mind and provides a deeply intimate portrait of her character. This passage is often hailed as one of the most remarkable achievements in modernist literature.

At the heart of "Ulysses" is Joyce's exploration of the relationship between the personal and the universal. By framing the everyday actions of his characters within the epic structure of "The Odyssey", Joyce suggests that the human experience, no matter how mundane, is imbued with deeper meaning and significance.

Leopold Bloom's journey through Dublin can be seen as a metaphor for the human quest for meaning in a chaotic world. Themes of alienation, exile, identity, and the search for belonging pervade the novel, reflecting both Bloom's personal struggles and the broader cultural dislocation experienced by Ireland under British rule.

The city of Dublin itself becomes a character in the novel, with Joyce meticulously mapping

out the streets, buildings, and landmarks. Every detail of the city is rendered with painstaking precision, reflecting Joyce's desire to create a "microcosm" of the modern world within the boundaries of a single city. Through this technique, Joyce captures the rhythms and textures of urban life, elevating Dublin to a mythical status.

In addition to the mythological structure, Joyce layers "Ulysses" with a vast array of literary, philosophical, and historical allusions. From Shakespeare to Irish politics, from Catholicism to popular culture, the novel draws on a wide range of sources, creating a rich intertextual tapestry that rewards careful and repeated readings. Joyce's use of symbolism is also notable, with recurring motifs such as water, light, and food serving as metaphors for deeper psychological and spiritual states.

"Ulysses" is a quintessential modernist text, embodying the key themes and techniques of the modernist movement. Modernism, which emerged in the early 20th century in response to the disillusionment brought about by industrialization, war, and the collapse of traditional social structures, sought to break away from established literary conventions and explore new ways of representing reality.

Joyce's narrative style in Ulysses reflects the fragmented, disjointed nature of modern life. The novel eschews linear progression, instead offering multiple perspectives and voices that overlap, interrupt, and contradict each other. This fragmentation mirrors the breakdown of coherent, stable narratives in the modern world and captures the complexity and confusion of human experience.

The novel also grapples with questions of identity and selfhood in a world that seems increasingly alienating. Leopold Bloom, as a Jewish man in predominantly Catholic Dublin, represents the outsider, the individual who is constantly negotiating his place within society. His alienation, both cultural and personal, becomes a metaphor for the broader sense of displacement and fragmentation experienced by modern individuals.

From its inception, "Ulysses" was surrounded by controversy. Its frank depictions of bodily functions, sexuality, and explicit language led to its banning in several countries, including the United States, where it was subject to an obscenity trial. However, the trial ultimately resulted in a landmark victory for free expression in literature, and "Ulysses" was declared not obscene in

Despite its early notoriety, "Ulysses" quickly gained recognition as a masterpiece of modern literature. T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Virginia Woolf were among the prominent writers who praised Joyce's innovative style and profound vision. Over the decades, "Ulysses" has continued to inspire scholars, writers, and readers, becoming a central text in the study of modernism and 20th-century literature.

The novel's influence extends far beyond the literary world. "Ulysses" has been adapted into plays, films, and art and Joyce's impact can be een in the work of writers like Samuel Beckett, William Faulkner, and Gabriel García Márquez, who embraced his experimental approach to narrative and language.

Today, "Ulysses" is celebrated each year on

Bloomsday (June 16), with readings, performances, and festivals held in Dublin and around the world to honor Joyce's masterpiece.

James Joyce's "Ulysses" remains a monumental achievement in literature, not just for its narrative innovations but for its profound exploration of human consciousness, identity, and the modern condition. By blending the ordinary with the mythic, the personal with the universal, Joyce created a work that continues to resonate with

readers nearly a century after its publication. Its complexity may be daunting, but for those willing to engage with its layers of meaning and symbolism, "Ulysses" offers an unparalleled reading experience, one that mirrors the richness and intricacy of life itself. As a testament to the power of language and storytelling, "Ulysses" stands as one of the greatest novels ever written. a true masterpiece that will continue to inspire and challenge generations of readers.

A Flaring Flame

By: Shahnaz Islam

It aches Like an inseparable Beneath my skin and Crawls into my bones Living shards of insanity Poking out like tears In infinity Which unpaid for years A Flaring Flame The untold curse of shame in remorse, A broken angel corpse.



Scroll, Breathe, Repeat

By Karan Chetri

They say the glaciers are melting, somewhere, Between ads for electric cars and a makeup tutorial. Clickbait smiles promise six steps to happiness, But my Wi-Fi stutters, buffering joy - please wait. Is this how we live now? A loop of distractions, A thousand notifications, but no messages to keep.

The ocean rises in pixels, The fires burn in real time, But my thumb keeps scrolling. Why does every tragedy come with a hashtag? Tweets flutter like dying birds, Algorithms chart our grief with perfect precision.

In the middle of the night, the screen glows blue, Soft like the lie of a better tomorrow. Did I miss the sunrise, or did I just dream it? My window blurs with smoke and promises, We post our prayers, but they slip through the cloud, Lost in the static of trending now, trending never.

Can you hear the hum? The buzz of wires beneath the earth, The hum of data feeding the dark, Where our faces dissolve into binary, Where our names are owned by someone else's server. We are ghosts in our own feeds, Streaming our loneliness, live.

> But the planet turns, oblivious to servers and likes, The polar bear hunts shadows on shrinking ice. Someone's protesting outside, A sign that reads "Save Us", But no one can agree on what that means. We inhale smoke and irony, exhale pixels and hope.

There was no immediate comment from Syrian authorities or activists monitoring the conflict in that country

Israel says it struck Hezbollah weapons smuggling sites in Syria

TEL AVIV, Nov 30: Israeli aircraft struck Hezbollah weapons smuggling sites along Syria's border with Lebanon, the Israeli military said Saturday, testing a fragile, days-old ceasefire that halted months of fighting between the sides but has seen continued sporadic fire.

The military said it struck sites that had been used to smuggle weapons from Syria to Lebanon after the ceasefire took effect, which the military said was a violation of its terms.

There was no immediate comment from Syrian authorities or activists monitoring the conflict in that country. Hezbollah also did not immediately comment.

The Israeli strike, the latest of several since the ceasefire began on Wednesday, came as unrest spread to other areas of the Middle East, with Syrian insurgents breaching the country's largest city, Aleppo, in a shock offensive that added fresh uncertainty to a region reeling from multiple wars.

The truce between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah, brokered by the United States and France, calls for an initial two-month ceasefire in which the militants are to withdraw



Israeli forces are to return to their side of the border.

The repeated bursts of violence - with no reports of serious casualties — reflected the uneasy nature of the ceasefire that otherwise appeared to hold. While Israel has accused Hezbollah of violating the ceasefire, Lebanon has also accused Israel of the same in the days since it took effect.

Many Lebanese, some of the 1.2 million displaced in the conflict, were streaming south to their homes, despite warnings by the Israeli and Lebanese militaries to stay away from certain areas.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported that an Is-

northern communities, have been apprehensive about returning home. Hezbollah began attacking Israel on October 8, 2023, in solidarity with the Palestinian militant group

Hamas and its assault on southern Israel the day before. Israel and Hezbollah kept up a low-level conflict of cross-border

goal of the war with Hezbollah but

Israelis, concerned Hezbollah was

not deterred and could still attack

fire for nearly a year, until Israel escalated its fight with a sophisticated attack that detonated hundreds of pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah fighters. It followed that up with an in-

tense aerial bombardment campaign against Hezbollah assets, killing many of its top leaders including longtime chief Hassan Nasrallah, and it launched a ground invasion in early October. More than 3,760 people have

been killed by Israeli fire in Lebanon during the conflict, many of them civilians, according to Lebanese health officials. The fighting killed more than 70 people in Israel — over half of them civilians - as well as dozens of Israeli soldiers fighting in southern Lebanon.

Poland's PM visits defensive fortifications on border with Russia

DABROWKA (POLAND), Nov 30: Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk traveled Saturday to his country's border with the Russian region of Kaliningrad to inspect progress in the construction of military fortifications along the eastern frontier, calling it "an in-

vestment in peace." Tusk's visit comes a month before Poland is to take over the rotating presidency of the 27-member European Union, Polish officials say their priority is to urge Europeans to beef up defences at a time of Russian aggression and with change coming soon in Washington.

Some European leaders are concerned that the incoming administration of Donald Trump might be less committed to Europe's defence. Poland's government and army began building the system dubbed East Shield this year. It will eventually include approximately 800 kilometres along the Polish borders with Russia and Belarus, at a time when Western officials accuse Russia of waging hybrid attacks against the West that include sabotage, the weaponisation of migration, disinformation and other hostile measures.

"The better the Polish border is guarded, the more difficult it is to access for those with bad intentions," Tusk said at a news conference near the village of Dabrowka as he stood in front of concrete anti-tank barriers. Poland has been at the mercy of aggressive neighbours over the past centuries and has become a leading European voice for security at a time when France and Germany are weakened by internal political prob-

lems. Poland aims to spend 4.7 per cent of its gross domestic product on defence next year, making it one of NATO's leaders defence spending.

Tusk's government estimates that the strategic military project will cost at least 10 billion Zlotys (USD 2.5 billion). Poland's borders with

pean Union and NATO. Tusk said he expected the East Shield to eventually be expanded to protect the small Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Russia, Belarus — as well as

Ukraine — are the easternmost ex-

ternal borders of both the Euro-

"Everything we are doing here - and we will also be doing this on the border with Belarus and Ukraine — is to deter and discour-

age a potential aggressor, which is why it is truly an investment in peace," Tusk said. "We will spend billions of Zlotys on this, but right now the whole of Europe is observing these investments and our actions with great satisfaction and will support them if necessary."

He said he wants Poles "to feel safer along the entire length of the eastern border." Tusk also said the

> fortifications would include Poland's bor-Ukraine, a

close ally, but did not elabo-Along the

frontier, anti-

known as "hedgehogs" will be integrated with natural barriers like ditches. Tusk said parts of the project are not visible to the naked eye, but it is nonetheless the largest project of its nature in Europe since the end of World War II. The plans also include the construction of appropriate threat reconnaissance and detection systems, forward bases, logistics hubs, warehouses and the deployment of anti-drone systems, the state news agency PAP reported.

Taiwan's prez departs

for Pacific visit with

The planned stopovers in Hawaii and the ter-

Lai Ching-te will go on a weeklong trip to

visit the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Palau -

three diplomatic allies of the self-governed is-

peace, and prosperity to continue to expand our

cooperation with our allies, to deepen our part-

nership and let the world see Taiwan not just as

a model of democracy, but a vital power in pro-

moting the world's peace and stability, and pros-

perous development," he said at the Taoyuan

Though Taiwan retains strong contacts with

dozens of other nations, it has only 12 formal

diplomatic allies. The self-ruled democracy has

International Airport, ahead of his departure.

"I want to use the values of democracy,

9 arrested in connection More than 100 arrested as Georgian police clash with protesters over suspension of EU talks with lawyer's murder 'during B'desh violence

DHAKA, Nov 30: Nine people have been arrested in connection with the killing of a lawyer during violence in Bangladesh's southeastern port city of Chattogram over the arrest of a Hindu community leader, police said on Saturday.

They were arrested after 46 people were booked for their alleged involvement in the murder of Saiful Islam, who was in his early 30s, during Tuesday's clashes after Chinmoy Krishna Das was denied bail by a Chattogram court.

Das, the spokesperson for Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote, was arrested from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport here on Monday in a sedition case. "Saiful Islam's father filed the case last night naming 46 people," said Abdul Karim, the officer in charge of the port city's Kotwali police station.

Karim said most of the accused are resident's of city's Sebok Colony, a hub of sanitation workers belonging to the Hindu community.

He said the accused were identified through CCTV footage of the court premises, the scene of the violence on November 26. Police said one man identified as Chandan Das is the primary accused as he was seen attacking the lawyer with a

The incident sparked nationwide outrage with lawyers and political groups taking to the streets demanding stern punitive actions against Islam's killers while some groups wanted ISKCON Bangladesh to be banned. (PTI)

TBILISI (GEORGIA), force against members of the **Nov 30:** More than 100 demonstrators were arrested

overnight in Georgia as protesters clashed with police following the government's decision to suspend negotiations to join the European Union, the country's Interior Ministry said Saturday. It was the second straight

night of protests after Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze of the country's ruling Georgian Dream party announced the decision the previous day. Demonstrators faced off against police late Friday in a number of major Georgian cities, including the capital, Tbilisi, and the Black Sea port of Batumi.

The Associated Press saw protesters in Tbilisi being chased and beaten by police as demonstrators rallied in front of the country's parliament building.

Riot police used water cannons to push protesters away from the building and later moved to force them farther back along Rustaveli Avenue, the city's main boulevard.

media and used loudspeakers to shout profanities and insults at the crowds.

southern village of Majdal Zoun.

The agency said there had been ca-

sualties but gave no further details.

Majdal Zoun, near the Mediter-

ranean Sea, is close to where Israeli

The military said earlier Saturday

that its forces, who remain in south-

ern Lebanon until they withdraw

gradually over the 60-day period,

had been operating to distance "sus-

pects" in the region, without elabo-

rating, and said troops had located

and seized weapons found hidden in

Israel says it reserves the right

under the ceasefire to strike against

any perceived violations. Israel has

made returning the tens of thou-

sands of displaced Israelis home the

a mosque.

troops still have a presence.

Georgian Dream's disputed victory in the country's October 26 parliamentary election, which was widely seen as a referendum on Georgia's aspirations to join the European Union, has sparked massive demonstrations and led to an opposition boycott of the par-

The opposition has said that the vote was rigged with the help of Russia, Georgia's former imperial master, with Moscow hoping to keep Tbilisi in its orbit. Georgian President Salome

Zourabichvili joined protesters on Thursday after accusing the government of declaring war on its own people. In an address to the nation Friday, she urged police not to use force against pro-

"This is evident in every way - no one is willing to accept a Russified Georgia, a Georgia deprived of its constitution, or a Georgia in the Police also used heavy hands of an illegitimate gov-



ernment and parliament," Zourabichvili said.

"That is why so many of you are out here today: I see you. I see you on Rustaveli Avenue and in cities across Georgia: Batumi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Akhmeta, Lagodekhi, Telavi. It is unprecedented for citizens of Georgia to rise up simultaneously and spontaneously in

this way. The government's announcement that it was suspending negotiations to join the EU came hours after the European Parliament adopted a resolution that condemned last month's vote as neither free nor fair. It said the election represented another manifestation of Georgia's continued democratic backsliding "for which the ruling Georgian Dream party is fully responsible.'

European election observers said October's vote took place in a divisive atmosphere marked by instances of bribery, double voting and physical violence. The EU granted Georgia

candidate status in December 2023 on condition that it meet the bloc's recommendations. but put its accession on hold and cut financial support earlier this year after the passage of a "foreign influence" law widely seen as a blow to democratic freedoms. EU lawmakers urged a

rerun of the parliamentary vote within a year under thorough international supervision and by an independent election administration. They also called on the EU to impose sanctions and limit formal contacts with the

The Georgian prime minister fired back, denouncing what he described as a "cascade of insults" from the EU politicians and declaring that "the ill-wishers of our country have turned the European Parliament into a blunt weapon of blackmail against Georgia, which is a great disgrace for the European Union.'

Kobakhidze also said Georgia would reject any budgetary grants from the EU until the end of 2028. Critics have accused Georgian Dream established by Bidzina Ivanishvili, a shadowy billionaire who made his fortune in Russia — of becoming increasingly authoritarian and tilted toward Moscow. The party recently pushed through laws similar to those used by the Kremlin to crack down on freedom of speech and LGBTQ+ rights. (AP)

two-day stop in US; China isn't happy Georgian government. TAOYUAN (TAIWAN), Nov 30: Taiwan's president departed on Saturday for his trip to the South Pacific that will include a two-day

transit in the US, his first since assuming office, though few details about his itinerary were made public. ritory of Guam have already drawn fierce criticism from Bejing, which claims Taiwan as its own territory and objects to official exchanges between it and the US, the island's biggest backer and military provider.

> recently been facing increasing pressure from China. It is unclear whether Lai will meet with any members of the incoming US administra.

tion during his transit.

land in the Pacific.

President-elect Donald Trump said in an interview with Bloomberg in July that Taiwan should pay for its defence. The island has purchased billions of dollars of defence weaponry from the US. He also evaded answering whether he would defend the island from Chinese military action.

While the US is obligated to help the island defend itself under the Taiwan Relations Act, it has maintained a position of strategic ambiguity over whether it would ever get involved if Tai-

wan were to be invaded by China. A second Trump administration is expected to test US-China relations even more than the Republican's first term, when the US imposed tariffs on more than USD 360 billion in Chinese products. Taiwan is one of the main sources of

tension in the bilateral relationship. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Friday if the U.S. wanted to maintain peace in the Taiwan Strait, it is important for it to handle the Taiwan issue "with utmost caution, clearly opposing Taiwan independence

and supporting China's peaceful reunification." She also said China firmly opposes any form of official interaction between the U.S. and Taiwan, including visits by Taiwan's leaders to the U.S. for any reason.

When former Taiwanese President Tsai Ingwen went to the U.S. last year as part of a transit to Latin America, it drew vocal opposition from China. Tsai met with the former House Speaker

Syrian troops in Aleppo backed by warplanes battle shock offensive by rebels

BEIRUT, Nov 30: Syrian government troops battled insurgents inside the country's largest city Aleppo for the first time since 2016, while warplanes targeted rebel supply lines on the city's edge, state media reported on Saturday. Insurgents broke through govern-

ment defense lines in Aleppo on Friday and entered the city's western neighbourhood with little resistance. The insurgents launched their shock offensive in Aleppo and Idlib country-

side on Wednesday and wrestled control of dozens of villages and towns along the way, including a strategic town south of Aleppo. The pro-government Al-Watan news-

paper reported airstrikes on the edge of Aleppo city, targeting rebel supply lines. It posted a video of a missile landing on a gathering of fighters and vehicles, in a street lined with trees and buildings.

Twenty fighters were killed in the airstrikes that targeted rebel reinforcements, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the country's unresolved civil war. Aleppo residents reported clashes and gunfire,

and some were fleeing the fighting. Schools and government offices were closed Saturday as most people stayed indoors, according to Sham FM radio, a pro-government station. Bakeries were open. In social media post, the insurgents were pictured outside of Aleppo citadel, the medieval palace in the old city centre, and one of the largest in the world. In cellphone videos, the insurgents recorded themselves having conversations with residents they visited at home, seeking to

reassure them they will cause no harm. State media reported that a number of "terrorists", including sleeper cells, have infiltrated parts of the city. Government troops chased them and arrested a number who posed for pictures near city landmarks, state media said. On a state TV morning show Saturday, commentators said army reinforcements and Russia's assistance will repel the "terrorist groups", blaming Turkiye for supporting the insurgents' push into Aleppo and Idlib provinces.

Russia's state news agency Tass quoted Oleg Ignasyuk, a Russian Defence Ministry official coordinating in Syria, as saying that Russian warplanes targeted and killed 200 militants who launched the offensive in the northwest on Friday. It provided no further details.

Aleppo has not been attacked by opposition forces since they were ousted from eastern neighbourhoods in 2016 following a gruelling military campaign in which Syrian government forces were backed by Russia, Iran and its al-The attack on Aleppo fol-

lowed weeks of simmering low-level violence. including government attacks on opposition-held

areas. Turkiye, which has backed Syrian opposition groups, failed in its diplomatic efforts to prevent the Syrian government

which were seen as a violation of a 2019 agreement sponsored by Russia, Turkiye and Iran to freeze the line of the conflict.

The offensive came as Iran-linked groups, primarily Lebanon's Hezbollah, which has backed Syrian government forces since 2015, have been preoccupied with their own battles at home. A ceasefire in Hezbollah's two-month war with Israel took effect Wednesday, the day the Syrian opposition factions announced their offensive. Israel has also escalated its attacks against Hezbollah and Iran-linked targets in Syria during

the last 70 days. Turkiye's state-run Anadolu news agency said the insurgents have seized control of large parts of Aleppo and Idlib countryside. (AP)

North Korea's Kim vows steadfast support for Russia's war in Ukraine

SEOUL, Nov 30: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed his country will "invariably support" Russia's war in Ukraine as he met Russia's defense chief, the North's state media reported on Satur-

A Russia military delegation led by Defense Minister Andrei Belousov arrived in North Korea on Friday, amid growing international concern about the two countries' expanding cooperation after North Korea sent thousands of troops to Russia last month.

The official Korean Central News Agency said that Kim and Belousov reached "a satisfactory consensus" on boosting strategic partnership and defending each country's sovereignty, security interests and international justice in the face of the rapidly-changing international security environments in a Friday meeting. Kim said that North Korea

"will invariably support the policy of the Russian Federation to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity from the imperialists' moves for hegemony," KCNA said.

North Korea has supported Russia's invasion of Ukraine, calling it a defensive response to what both Moscow and Pyongyang call NATO's "reckless" eastward advance and U.S.-led moves to stamp out Russia's position as a powerful state.

Kim slammed a U.S. decision earlier in November to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with U.S.-supplied longer-range missiles as a direct intervention in the conflict. He called recent Russian strikes on Ukraine "a timely and effective measure demonstrate Russia's resolve, KCNA said.

According to U.S., Ukrainian and South Korean assessments, North Korea has sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia and some of them have already begun engaging in combat on the frontlines. U.S.,

South Korean and others say North Korea has also shipped artillery systems, missiles and other conventional weapons to replenish Russia's exhausted weapons inventory. Both North Korea and Russia haven't formally confirmed the North Korean troops' movements, and have steadfastly denied reports of weapons shipments.

South Korea, the U.S. and their partners are concerned that Russia could give North Korea advanced weapons technology in return, including help to build more powerful nuclear missiles.

Last week, South Korean national security adviser Shin Wonsik told a local SBS TV program that that Seoul assessed that Russia has pro-

says is protected by Belgrade.

Serbia's Foreign Minister

Marko Diuric condemned Friday's

explosion but also criticized

Kurti's "ethnonationalist regime'

rushing "to point fingers at Bel-

"We believe that such prema-

"These baseless allegations un-

grade without evidence.'

He said Russia also appeared to have given economic assistance to North Korea and various military

systems to North Korea.

technologies, including those needed for the North's efforts to build a reliable space-based surveillance system. Belousov also met North Korean Defense Minister No Kwang Chol on Friday. During a dinner banquet later the same day, Belousov said the the two countries' strategic

actions of imperialists, KCNA In June, Kim and Putin signed a treaty requiring both countries to provide immediate military assistance if either

partnership was crucial to de-

fend their sovereignty from

aggression and the arbitrary

is attacked. It's considered the two countries' biggest defense deal since the end of the Cold War.

Kevin McCarthy at the time. (AP) **Explosion damages water, power supply** in Kosovo

PRISTINA (KOSOVO), Nov 30: A powerful explosion damaged a water canal and temporarily cut water and power supply to Kosovo's cities, the prime minister said on Saturday, blaming groups supported by Serbia.

Prime Minister Albin Kurti said the explosion on Friday in Vrage, 60 kilometres north of capital Pristina, disrupted water supply to some cities and main power

It followed two other explosions in previous days on buildings of a police station and local authorities in the same area in the north of the country, mostly populated by the ethnic Serb minority. Kurti blamed "official Belgrade

and its criminal structures led by

Milan Radoicic, supported by

Serb institutions and Serbia's Pres-

ident Aleksandar Vucic.'

Radoicic, a politician and wealthy businessman with ties to Serbia's ruling populist party and Vucic, was among 45 people charged in Kosovo in connection with a gunfight last year in which a Kosovar police officer was killed following an incursion by heavily armed Serb gunmen.

ture accusations are a deliberate Only three Serbs have been ardiversion," said Djuric. rested and the others are at large, including Radoicic, who Pristina dermine efforts for constructive

The European Union and the United States strongly denounced the explosion and demanded that the perpetrators are brought to jus-

situation.'

"These violent actions have no place in a democratic society, and those responsible for these criminal attacks against the legitimate authorities of the Republic of Kosovo should be held accountable," the US Embassy in Pristina

late tensions in an already delicate

Kosovo-Serbia relations remain tense despite efforts by the international community to normalise

Kosovo was a Serbian province until NATO's 78-day bombing campaign in 1999 ended a war between Serbian government forces and ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo, which left about 13,000 dead, mainly ethnic Albanians, and pushed Serbian forces out. Kosovo proclaimed independence in 2008 which is not recognized by Belgrade.

Brussels and Washington are urging both sides to implement agreements that Vucic and Kurti reached in February and March

They include a commitment by Kosovo to establish an Association of the Serb-Majority Municipalities. Serbia is also expected to deliver on the de-facto recognition of Kosovo, which Belgrade still

considers its province. The NATO-led international peacekeepers known as KFOR have increased their presence in Kosovo after last year's tensions.



Arambai Tenggol chief, Kuki militants under NIA radar

Coordinated attack on Indian Reserve Battalion post, looting of arms and ammunition

GUWAHATI, Nov 30: Meitei radical organisation Arambai Tenggol's supremo Korou Nganba Khuman and Kuki militants are under the radar of the National Investigation Agency, which has been tasked with probing four cases of attacks on security forces and an IED explosion in strife-torn Ma-

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2024

The cases include looting of arms and ammunition from the 1st Manipur Rifles complex in Imphal, attack on Indian Reserve Battalion post in Moreh and IED explosion in Bishnupur.

The Counter Terrorism and Counter Radicalisation Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs has recently ordered the NIA to undertake further investigation of the four cases.

The cases have recently been transferred by the Supreme court from the NIA Court in Imphal to NIA Special Court in Guwahati.

A copy of the transfer petition filed by the NIA before the Supreme Court said, "The first case involving Khuman is related to an incident that occurred on November 1 last year when a large number of Arambai Tenggol members led by him and armed with sophisticated weapons, wearing camouflaged uniforms, and black colour shirts coming in many light vehicles gathered at Palace Compound in Imphal East district on a call given in Facebook page Korou Nganba Khuman in Manipuri lan-



guage which literally translates to please come all brave brothers let us teach them all a final lesson

"When they were stopped by (personnel of) the Imphal East police station at the palace gate, the group fired at police, overpowered the local police and proceeded through Sanjenthong Bridge towards Imphal West side in many light vehicles," it said.

'The central government has received information from the Government of Manipur regarding registration of an FIR at Porompat in Imphal East district dated 1/11/2023 under Sections 147, 148, 149, 186, 188, 307, 379 A, 395, 504, 505, 506, 34 of IPC, Sec 18 of UA(P) Act, Sec 6 (1) (a) of Official Secrets Act, Sec 25 (1-B) of Arms Act," an FIR filed by NIA Imphal

"The central government is of the opinion that a scheduled offence under the NIA Act 2008 has been committed and having regarded the gravity of the offence and ramifications on national security, it is required to be investigated by the NIA in accordance with the NIA Act," it added.

The second case involving Khuman is of another incident that happened on the same day at 6 pm.

The petition stated that a large number of AT members led by its chief rushed in from the northwestern gate and attacked the 1st Manipur Riffles Battalion in Imphal.

'They ransacked government office belongings including vehicles and looted the arms and ammunition from the 1st MR Battalion. After the arrival of reinforcement of the security forces including civil police, Assam Rifles and CRPF, the assailants escaped with arms and ammunition looted from security personnel," it said.

One Mutum Rajesh Singh (25) of Lilong Chajing Mamang Leikai and Langthabal Kunja of Kyamgei Shantipur were arrested on November 30, 2023 in connection with the

Another case that brought Kuki

militants under the radar of the NIA involved an armed attack on an IRB post in Moreh in Tengnoupal dis-

trict in January this year.

"On January 17, 2024, some heavily armed suspected Kuki militants attacked the IRB post at Ima Kondong Lairembi in Moreh using bombs and firearms thereby injuring one IRB personnel. IRB also retaliated and thus encounter ensued between unknown suspected Kuki militants who are waging war against the national security forces and IRB personnel," the petition stated.

It said the fierce exchange of fire spread to many other parts of Moreh town and one rifleman Somorjit Meetei attained martyrdom and two other IRB personnel were injured. No accused were arrested in the case

The fourth case was related to an IED bomb blast at Phougakchao Ikhai in Bishnupur district on June 21 last year by suspected militants in which three persons were injured and houses and government properties were damaged

One Seiminlun Gangte of Churachandpur, and two others, identified as Md Noor Hussain and Md Islauddin, have been arrested in connection with the case

More than 250 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year. (PTI)

We joined India with defined boundaries unlike Mizoram: Biren

IMPHAL, Nov 30: A day after the Manipur government urged Mizoram CM Lalduhoma to demonstrate "better statesmanship" by being a "good neighbour" rather than fueling hatred through "unwarranted comments", Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Saturday said Manipur is not like Mizoram, "which was once just a district in Assam".

Speaking at a function for construction of infrastructure to relocate the Assam Rifles from the premises of the historic Langthabal Old Palace, Singh said, "Manipur is not like Mizoram. We have a written history of 2,000 years. Manipur merged with the Union of India as a single entity in 1949. Our boundaries were not newly created but we joined with the Union with intact

The Manipur CM's reaction came in the backdrop of a recent interview given by Lalduhoma to a national daily in which he said Singh was a liability for the state, its people and the BJP, and even President's Rule is preferable compared to his administration.

"Assam Rifles is here to serve the nation. They are not our enemies. We all are Indian citizens. The gap can be bridged through interactions between commanders. CSOs, and intellectuals. Our common enemy is located in foreign territories, not within. The paramilitary force can deal with insurgents or unlawful activities as they see fit, but not everyone is an insurgent," the CM said. "People ask, 'What is the Chief Minister doing?' Can the CM go and engage in firing? The CM makes policy plans—how to identify illegal immigrants, how to cancel the Free Movement Regime, and how to implement the NRC. We will never rest until we have clearly safeguarded the entire land of Manipur and its indigenous people," Singh asserted.

The CM asserted that the conflict since May 3 last year is not due to corruption by the government but because of measures taken to protect the original inhabitants of the land and address the distorted histories of the state. "Naturally, those who once thrived on the drug trade will be upset with the government and against me," he added.

Singh also thanked Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Assam Rifles authorities for agreeing to relocate

their camp from Langthabal Old Palace. He said, "The Langthabal Palace is a historic place.



The Assam Rifles has been stationed in the state for more than 100 years for security reasons. They cannot shift immediately. Major General Ravroop and the DG understand this well. They took the demands of the people for the relocation of the force from the old palace very seriously, as it is a historical site and very close to the university campus.

Later, talking to reporters, Singh said, "I would like to thank Union Home Minister Amit Shah, IGAR, and Assam Rifles authorities. They agreed to vacate the Langthabal Old Palace, which is the second palace of the state, and relocate to another area. The people had been demanding the relocation of the Assam Rifles from the old palace, but it did not materialise due to a communication gap between the Assam Rifles and the state government. I am very grateful to the Assam Rifles for agreeing to shift. This is an achievement for the

Asked about statements made by the Mizoram CM in relation to Manipur, Singh responded, "I think the state government, through the DIPR, has already clarified this matter. As a mature CM of any state, one should not incite hate or interfere in the internal affairs of another state. It is very unfortunate."

In the statement, the Manipur government had also said, "Mizoram CM reveals his democratic credentials by espousing imposition of President's Rule in Manipur while opposing boundary fencing of the Indo-Myanmar international border. He also calls for reunification of the Zo people. He also talks about possibility of armed militias in Manipur pointing their guns at Delhi and need for disarming, and sincere negotiations with hill leaders." Regarding the missing person case, Singh said, "We condemn such incidents. We have instructed the authorities to locate the person, and state forces are actively searching for his whereabouts." (PTI)

'Be good neighbour, don't stoke fire of hatred, division'

IMPHAL, Nov 30: The Manipur government hit out at Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma, asking him to show "better statesmanship" by being a "good neighbour" rather than stoking the fire of "hatred and division" through "unwarranted comments". In a statement on Friday night, the Manipur government said that India must be wary of the "greater agenda of carving a Kuki-Chin Christian nation" out of contiguous areas of Myanmar, India and Bangladesh, played out over decades of meticulous planning.

It said it will not allow fragmentation of Northeast India at the behest of foreign vested interests, or "secessionist interests as openly espoused by the Mizoram CM". "Mizoram CM reveals his democratic

credentials by espousing imposition of

President's Rule in Manipur while opposing boundary fencing of the India-Myanmar international border. He also calls for reunification of the Zo people. He also talks about possibility of armed militias in Manipur pointing their guns at Delhi and need for disarming, and sincere negotiations with hill leaders," it said.

The Manipur government's statement came in the backdrop of a recent interview given by Lalduhoma to the Hindustan Times in which he said that N Biren Singh was a liability for the state, its people and the BJP, and even President's Rule is preferable compared to his administration.

"He further questions the use of border fencing saying smuggling of guns, weapons and drugs could not be stopped along India-Bangladesh border despite ex-

istence of border fence," the statement said. "The Mizoram government has been steadfast in opposing the efforts of the Centre to fence its open borders with neighbouring Myanmar for the purpose of curbing illegal immigration, trafficking of arms and drugs, internal security and defence," it added.

The Manipur government said the ongoing crisis in the state is a creation of illegal immigrants from Myanmar whose economy, driven by the cultivation of illicit poppy, had taken a severe hit under CM Singh's 'war on drugs'

"It is not on account of any anti-tribal policy of the state government, as has been falsely portrayed by the Mizoram CM through fabricated narratives and history,'

Four militants arrested in Manipur

IMPHAL, Nov 30: Four militants belonging to two banned outfits have been arrested in Manipur for possession of firearms and involvement in extortion, a police statement said on Saturday.

Three militants belonging to the Kangleipak Communist Party (Peoples' War Group) outfit were arrested on Thursday for possessing firearms and extorting people, it said.

They have been identified as Chongtham Shyamchandra Singh (23), hailing from Imphal West district, and Maibam Suraj Khan (32) and Boghimayum Sahid Khan (30), who hail from Imphal East district.

Three 5.56 mm INSAS live cartridges, an empty case of .32 ammunition and three mobile phones were seized from their possession.

In another incident, a militant belonging to the banned United National Liberation Front (Ningon Macha group) was arrested on Thursday for illegal possession of firearms.

The arrested militant was identified as Sangomshumpham Warish (25), who hails from Lilong Haorou in Thoubal district. A .32 pistol and ammunition were seized from his possession, it added. (PTI)

Tipra Motha chief opposes Tripura minister's claim over Pushpabant Palace

AGARTALA, Nov 30: Tipra Motha Party (TMP) supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya on Saturday opposed Tripura tourism minister Sushanta Chowdhury's claim regarding the state government's "sole authority" over the iconic Pushpabant Palace, commonly known as Kunjaban Palace.

"Perhaps this will refresh the memory of many regarding Kunjaban! The state was given the palace for a specific purpose by Rajmata Kanchanprabha Devi.

They should have consulted and considered the sentiments before turning it into a commercial venture, which was originally given for a public purpose," Debbarma wrote on Facebook, sharing a copy of the agreement signed in September 1949.

The royal scion's post came a

day after Chowdhury claimed that Kunjaban Palace is a government property as per the merger agree-

"I don't want to hurt anyone's sentiments. The palace, which was the property of the royal family, became an asset of the government after the signing of the merger agreement. There is no mention in the agreement that the government cannot implement any project at the palace," Chowdhury told reporters on Friday.

He added, "This is government property, and the government can make decisions regarding it. No final decision has been made yet (on converting the palace into a five-star hotel). There are properties of the kings that are being used as marriage halls for business pur-

Singapore-based entrepreneur aids violence-hit Manipuri women

IMPHAL, Nov 30: A Singapore-based Manipuri entrepreneur is helping displaced people living in relief camps crochet stuffed dolls for the global market, aiming to provide the women of the violence-hit northeastern state with a sustainable livelihood and promote self-reliance.

Speaking to PTI over the phone, Monish Karam, who runs a tech firm in Singapore, said, "After conflict suddenly broke out in May last year, we saw thousands of people left homeless and cramped in relief camps with no source of income. This hit us hard, and we wanted to do something sustainable for the affected people. After a lot of brainstorming sessions, we decided that the initiation of a skill-oriented programme would be best for the displaced persons to help



them earn a sustainable livelihood in the long run."

"I saw a palm-sized crocheted doll of my daughter and took inspiration from it to enable affected women make similar dolls, as Manipuri women are traditionally good in handicrafts and producing handloom items," Karam, who is a computer science graduate from the National University of Singapore, said. "However, we wanted to

focus on doll characters that

are generic, relatable, and have a global appeal so that the dolls could be sold outside Manipur, and the money generated could be used to finance the displaced women and their families," he added.

Karam further said that his team had seen displaced women involved in making candles, incense, and washing powders, only to struggle with selling the finished products.

He said they decided to make the doll-making project much simpler. "Many have seen inmates of relief camps making candles and incense, coming out to the streets to sell their products. In order to make the whole process simpler for the affected women, we decided to take care of the complexities involved in the process of selling the dolls, such as sales support, branding, marketing, collaboration, and simply let the women focus on making the dolls," Karam said.

"These dolls are not mere dolls. We believe they are the symbol of hope and vessels of storytelling," he said.

The whole project, titled 'Project Stitching Hope' is carried out under 1 Million Heroes (IMH), a subgroup of the tech firm owned by Karam. (PTI)

Date 29/11/2024

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL **DEPARTMENT OF S.E. WORKS** KAAC::SECRETARIAT DIPHU-782460

No. KAAC/S.E.W/1031(Pt-I)/2024-25/283

Dtd. - 26/11/2024.

PRESS NOTICE (E-PROCUMENT NOTICE)

Superintending Engineer, Works Department, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu invite bids from the contractors registered under Works Department in appropriate category for the following

SI. No.	Name of Work	Approx value of work (Including) GST (in Rs)	Bid Security, (in Rs)	Cost of Bid Document (in Rs)	Period of Completion
1	Up-gradation of stadium lighting system at KASA stadium, Karbi Anglong.	Rs. 2,30,11,770.00	1 % (ST/SC/OBC) 2% (General)	Rs. 4,602.00	90 days
2	Luminaries and supply installation testing & commissioning materials at Donkamukam Football Ground.	Rs. 1,77,10,402.00	1 % (ST/SC/OBC) 2% (General)	Rs. 3,542.00	60 days

The bid document and other details can be downloaded from the e — procurement portal of Govt. of Assam www.assamtenders.gov.in and Organization Chain "Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council/PWD". from 3 P.M. of 26-11-2024 to 4 P.M. of 16-12-2024.

The bidders must be registered with E- Tendering system (ETS) of the Govt. Of Assam website http://assamtenders.gov.in and organisation chain "Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council/ PWD)."

The undersigned reserves the right to accept / reject any of all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

> Superintending Engineer (Works), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,

Memo No. KAAC/S.E.W/1031(Pt-I)/2024-25/a (4)

Sd/-DIPHU Dtd. - 26/11/2024.

No.BDB/Tender/46/2023-24/3422

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tender affixing a non-refundable Court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees eight & twenty five paisa) only with a validity period of 180 days which will subsequently to be converted and drawn up in the printed of F-2 form are invited from the registered contractors of Class-I (A, B & C), Class-II & Class-III category of Assam PWD (Roads & Building) and BTC according to their eligibility for submitting tenders for the works under Sports & Youth Welfare Dept. (SOPD), BTR during the financial year 2024-25 as stated below. The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2.00PM on 23/12/24 and will be opened on the next date (as on 24/12/24) & place at 2.30 PM.

SI. No.	Name of activity	Estd. Value (in Lakhs)	Tender Value (in Lakhs)	EMD/Bid Security (in Rs.)	Cost of Tender paper (in Rs.)	Pre-bid date and Time	Last date & time of bid submission	Date & Time of bid opening	Time of completion of Work
1	Land Dev. with Const. of goal post at Phanus Memorial M.E. School playground under Nagachuba in Udalguri.	7.00L	7.00L	(for 7000 S/T,S/C) 14,000/- (for OBC/ General)	210	2/12/24	23/12/24	24/12/24	6 month
2	Field Dev. at No.3 South Amguri playground under Nagachuba vcdc in UdalguriDist	6.00L	6.00L	(for 6000 S/T,S/C) 12,000/- (for OBC/ General)	180	2/12/24	23/12/24	24/12/24	6 month
3	Land Dev. at Nagachuba LP school playground under Nagachuba VCDC in UdalguriDist.	5.00L	5.00L	(for 5000 S/T,S/C) 10,000/- (for OBC/General)	150	2/12/24	23/12/24	24/12/24	6 month
4	Const. of Toilet near Bengali Yuba Centre under Dimakuchi VCDC in Udalguri dist.		4.00L	(for 4000 S/T,S/C) 8,000/- (for OBC/ General)	120	2/12/24	23/12/24	24/12/24	6 month
5	Land Dev. with Const. of goal post at Batabari Bonzar Club playground under Paschimpatala VCDC in Udalguri dist.	6.00L	6.00L	(for 6000 S/T,S/C) 12,000/- (for OBC/ General)	180	2/12/24	23/12/24	24/12/24	6 month

Detail N.I.T. may be seen in all working days during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Tender papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agents from 2/12/24 to 24/12/24 up to 1.30 PM. In the office of the undersigned on payment in the form of demand draft/bankers cheque from any Nationalized Bank, duly pledged in favour of the Principal Secretary, BTC Kokrajhar payable at Kokrajhar.

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/982

Block Development Officer, Bhergaon Dev. Block, Bhergaon

KOZHIKODE (KERALA), Nov 30: Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on a two-day visit to Kerala after her maiden electoral win from the Wayanad hill constituency, on Saturday said the BJP did not play by any rules or follow democratic norms in its political attacks.

Comparing the BJP's behaviour with the landslides that hit Wayanad in July, Priyanka contended that just like the natural disaster, the saffron party's conduct knows no rules, offers no explanations and follows no democratic norms that are normally adhered to in political

"The political challenges we face (from the BJP) today are like landslides. There are no rules. There are no explanations.

"The behaviour of the ruling party (at the Centre), the BJP, knows no democratic norms, not even those we normally adhere to in a political fight," she said while speaking at a joint public meeting, with her brother and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, at Mukkam here.

She further said that institutions were being destroyed, leading to the wavering of the people's basic faith in the electoral process and "the institutions that held our country together".

Later, at a reception given to her in Karulai in Nilambur assembly constituency in Malappuram district,



Priyanka reiterated -- "we are fighting against the BJP that has no rules, no respect for democracy and the Constitution". "They have a negative and

destructive agenda," she added. She claimed that the Parliament had not functioned for a week as the BJP was afraid to discuss certain issues on which the Congress-led opposition wanted to hold discussions in the Lok

"We have a big battle before us in the Parliament and across India. We are fighting to safeguard our Constitution,"

She also said that there was a need for a "fair, balanced and strong judiciary

that is not pressurised"

Priyanka also assured the people of Wayanad LS constituency that she was in Parliament for them and it is their voice that she will raise there.

"It is your voice that I will raise. It is your problems that I will try to resolve and it is your beliefs, values and aspirations that I will stand for each and every day from now till the end," she said.

She further said that she will work for a better future for the people of Wayanad and added that it will be her "mission" to resolve the various issues, like human-animal conflict, night travel ban, strengthening health and education services and improving tourism, faced

by them. Priyanka said she was "doubly grateful" to the people of Wayanad for showing her the same love and affection that they showed to her brother and for choosing her to represent them in Par-

"Thank you very much. I will not disappoint you. I will work very hard for you. You will be happy when you see your MP," she said.

Earlier at the public meeting, she said she would leave no stone unturned to ensure a stronger and better future for the people of Wayanad.

In the morning, after arriving at Karipur airport here, Priyanka said, "I am happy to be back here and I am ready to start working and do whatever I can to help the people of Wayanad have a better future.

The Wayanad constituency comprises seven assembly segments of Mananthavady (ST), Sulthan Bathery (ST), and Kalpetta in Wayanad district; Thiruvambady in Kozhikode district; and Eranad, Nilambur, and Wandoor in Malappuram district.

Priyanka had scored her maiden electoral victory by winning the Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll with a huge margin of 4,10,931 votes, which is bigger than the lead her brother Rahul secured when he won from the constituency during the Lok Sabha general elections held early this year. (PTI)

control election mechanism seen during Maha polls: Pawar

Misuse of power, money to



PUNE, Nov 30: NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday claimed the misuse of power and money to control the entire election mechanism, which was never before seen in any state assembly or national polls, was witnessed in Maharashtra

Pawar made the statement when he visited senior activist Dr Baba Adhav, who is protesting against the alleged "misuse of EVMs" in the recent state polls in Maharashtra. Adhav, who is in his 90s, began his three-day protest at Phule Wada, the residence of social reformer Jyotiba Phule, in the city on Thursday.

The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies, the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP), have been alleging manipulation of EVMs in the recently held Maharashtra Assembly elections, which saw a landslide victory by the Mahayuti.

The Mahayuti, comprising the Shiv Sena, BJP and NCP, won 230 out of 288 assembly seats in the November 20 polls, while the MVA managed just 46 seats.

Talking to reporters, Pawar said while there is some truth to claims by some leaders about votes being added to EVMs, he did not have proof to corroborate them.

He said, "There is a murmur among the people that the recent polls in Maharashtra saw 'misuse of power' and 'floods of money', which was never seen in the past. Such things are heard of in local-level polls, but taking over the entire election mechanism with the help of money and misuse of power was not seen before. However, we witnessed it in Maharashtra, and people are

He added that people were recalling late socialist ideologue Jaiprakash Narayan and

felt somebody should take a step forward. "I heard Baba Adhav has taken a lead into this issue and is agitating at Phule Wada. His protest gives hope to the people, but it is not enough. A mass revolt is necessary, as the danger of the parliamentary democracy getting destroyed looms, Pawar said

The former Union minister said those who have reins of the country in their hands are least bothered about this.

"Despite widespread discussion over it (alleged misuse of EVMs) in the country, whenever the opposition tries to raise the issue in the Parliament, they are not allowed to speak. Opposition leaders have been seeking an opportunity to speak on these issues for six days, but their demands have not been accepted even once. It shows they want to attack parliamentary democracy," he claimed.

The NCP (SP) chief said some people had given him presentations about how votes can be added in EVMs, but he had no proof to corroborate these claims.

"We did not act on this as we did not believe them. We never thought that the Election Commission would go to such an extent. We have not expressed distrust towards the institution, but after the Maharashtra polls, it looks like there was truth to the claims," he said.

Asked about 22 defeated candidates demanding a recount, Pawar expressed doubts if something concrete would come out of this exercise.

The senior leader termed allegations of Congress leaders such as Balasaheb Thorat that 7 per cent of votes were cast in the last two hours of the election as shocking.

"It is not only Thorat but a lot of people have come up with similar information, and it needs to be taken into account. The Congress held a meeting on the issue, and there was a discussion that the INDIA bloc should take up this issue together. I am sure that by Monday, some decision will be made," he said. He said while he previously did not believe in claims that 15 per cent votes were already set in EVMs, in the last five days, he felt there might be some truth

Bihar govt committed to welfare of farmers: Nitish Kumar

PATNA, Nov 30: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday said his government is committed to the welfare of farmers and is implementing various schemes covering the entire spectrum of agriculture for the benefit of cultivators in the

Kumar said his government after coming to power in 2005 took several initiatives for welfare of farm-

"After coming to power in November 2005, we took several initiatives and launched schemes for the development of agriculture sector and for the benefit of farmers. Our government is committed to the welfare of farmers.... the state government is implementing various schemes covering the entire spectrum of agriculture for the benefit of farmers in the state", Kumar told journalists after inaugurating four-day agri exhibition - 'Agro Bihar 2024' at Gandhi Maidan here.

He further said, "We launched an agriculture road map in the state in 2008 which increased the production and productivity of crops, fruits and vegetables in the state. We also took several steps to improve women's participation in the agriculture sector in the state...and the result is very positive".

Farmers are getting modern equipment related to farming, procuring high-quality seeds and availing benefits of several other schemes launched by the government, the CM said. Organising such an exhibition is also an initiative by the government where farmers can get updated information about the use of latest technology in the agri-

culture sector, he added. The CM, accompanied by state Agriculture minister Mangal Pandey and senior officials, also visited different stalls at the exhibi-

"More than 125 stalls related to agri-sector have been set up at the exhibition. Apart from Bihar, manufacturers of equipment used in the agriculture sector, from other states like Delhi, Haryana, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal are also participating in this exhibition. Scientists, agricultural experts and entrepreneurs associated with the agricultural sector from Bihar as well as other states are also participating in the exhibition", a statement issued by the Chief Minister's

office said. Arrangements have also been made for 4,500 farmers from all districts of the state to visit the fair every day at government expense, said the statement.

"Farmers will also be trained at 'Kisan Pathshala' at the exhibition where they will get information about the latest agricultural machinery, crop residue management equipment and other materials", it

PM Modi 'biased' towards Adani, discriminating against Wayanad landslide victims: Rahul

KOZHIKODE (KERALA), Nov 30: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Saturday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi by accusing him of being "biased" towards industrialist Gautam Adani and of discriminating against Wayanad landslides victims by not providing them the due sup-

Rahul hit out at Modi at a joint public meeting at Mukkam here with his sister and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi who is visiting the Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency for the first time after her huge maiden electoral victory from there. The LoP in the Lok Sabha alleged that Modi was treating Adani differently from the people of India, despite his indictment in the US, even though the Constitution says everyone should be treated equally.

"PM Modi says it does not matter if Adani has been indicted in the US and called a criminal there, in India we will not indict him,' Rahul claimed.

He further accused Modi of discriminating against the people of Wayanad, alleging that he was not willing to provide them the support which they were due.

"This is the atmosphere in which we are op-

view meet to deliberate on

factors that led to the party's

poll debacle in the state got

underway here on Saturday.

A series of meetings are

scheduled to be held over two

days in presence of party na-

tional general secretary (or-

ganisation) B L Santosh, state

in-charge Laxmikant Bajpai

and state BJP chief Babulal

The saffron party had con-

tested 68 seats in the recent

assembly polls in Jharkhand,

but managed to secure only 21

"We accept the people's

mandate... The candidates

shared their poll experience.

Every aspect is being re-

viewed. The BJP will again

reach out to people as an or-

Marandi, among others.

Jharkhand: BJP's two-day meeting

'BJP workers are dedicated

I think somewhere we could

not give them their due re-

spect, especially the old work-

ers... This may be one of the

reasons behind the result, but

this is my personal opinion,"

Former MLA and the

party's Godda candidate Amit

Mandal said they would find

out the reasons behind the

party's disappointing perform-

"We did not expect the re-

sults, especially in the Santhal

Parganas. We will rectify our

faults and emerge stronger,"

The JMM-led alliance last

week stormed to power in

Jharkhand for the second time

in a row, securing 56 seats in

the 81-member assembly,

while the BJP-led NDA man-

JMM leader Hemant Soren

took oath as the 14th Chief

ance in the review meeting.

and very sensitive.

Yaday said

he said.

aged 24 seats.

ward us that gives us confidence and protects us," he said.

Rahul, after paying tribute to the victims of the landslides, said his party and the UDF are standing with the people who lost family members, property and suffered in the tragedy.

"Unfortunately, we are not in government and therefore, we cannot do what a government can do. So, I told my sister and (AICC general secretary) K C Venugopal that every member of the Congress and the UDF should put pressure on the government of Kerala to help the victims of the landslides," he said. He said his sister's win from the Wayanad

LS seat indicates that the people have placed their faith and trust in them to represent the hill constituency in the Parliament. He also expressed confidence that "we (Congress-led opposition) will defeat the ide-

ology of the BJP" which behaves arrogantly and allegedly spreads hate and divisiveness. "The fight is to protect the Constitution which says everyone should be treated equally," Rahul said. During his speech he also advised his sister that in whatever decision she takes, "the guide should be the people of Wayanad" as true knowledge always re-

Jharkhand: BJP's two-day meeting to review poll debacle gets underway Adhav; defends EVMs PUNE, Nov 30: Maharashtra deputy CULE Nov 30: Maharashtra deputy

here to call off his protest against alleged misuse of EVMs in the recent state polls,

saying that the verdict should be accepted. The ruling Mahayuti had fared badly in the Lok Sabha elections but did not question the Electronic Voting Machines, the Nationalist Congress Party chief said, sitting next to 95-year-old Adhav.

"In the Lok Sabha polls, Maha Vikas Aghadi won 31 seats (out of 48 in Maharashtra) while we got 17 seats. We accepted the people's mandate. We did not make any allegations about EVMs. In Baramati, my candidate (wife Sunetra Pawar) lost by more than 1.4 lakh votes, while in the assembly election, I won by one lakh votes," said Pawar.

As to state Congress chief Nana Patole's claim that voting percentage suddenly spiked just before the polling concluded, Pawar said it was up to voters to decide when to step out for voting.

He, however, agreed that a discussion needs to take place.

"I agree that there has to be a discussion over the issue, and if no solution is found, one can go to the courts....Even the Supreme Court recently rejected a plea stating that the petitioners blame EVMs when they face defeat but when they win, they do not level any allegations," Pawar

declined by minus 1.3% each

Citing the Periodic Labour

Force Survey Series, Ramesh said

the average real earnings over

time have stagnated between 2017

and 2022 across all employment

types' salaried workers, casual

workers and self- employed work-

ers. Citing the Center for Labour

Research and Action, Ramesh said

the real wages of brick kiln work-

Brick kilns involve intensive

labour and are a low-paying work

of last resort for India's poorest,

When real wages stagnate or

fall as they have in the last few

years, consumption will also be

ers have stagnated or declined be-

tween 2014 and 2022.

year," he said.

to prevent carnage: Karan Singh RANCHI, Nov 30: The leader Neera Yadav said the Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday re- NEW DELHI, Nov 30: Veteran like Pakistan, where Islamic funda-Jharkhand BJP's two-day re- poll results were unexpected. quested veteran activist Dr Baba Adhav Congress leader Karan Singh on mentalism suffused the nation, Saturday condemned the recent attacks on Hindu temples and com-

Yunus must take immediate steps

munity leaders in Bangladesh and urged the country's interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus to take immediate steps to prevent the "carnage" as well as reassure the Hindu community of their security.

His remarks came a day after three Hindu temples were allegedly vandalised by a sloganshouting mob in Bangladesh's Chattogram, which has witnessed protests and violence since a former ISKCON member was booked for sedition.

Relations between India and Bangladesh have come under strain after the interim government headed by Yunus assumed power following the resignation of prime minister Sheikh Hasina in August amid a student-led protest.

India has been expressing concern over the attacks on minorities, especially Hindus, in that country.

Singh said in a statement, "Having been in the Union Cabinet and personally witnessed the whole saga of Bangladesh liberation in the 1970s, it was assumed that, unBangladesh was to be a democratic and non-denominational nation where all religious communities would receive equal protection from the state.'

But recent events in which Hindu temples, organisations, community leaders and private residences have been ruthlessly attacked, causing severe loss of life and property, are indeed shocking, he said.

The same has happened with Christian churches and the Ahmadiyya community. These events are highly condemnable, the former Union minister said.

"I urge the Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, who heads the new (interim) government of Bangladesh, to take immediate steps to prevent this carnage and to reassure the large and widespread Hindu community that their lives, property and religious places shall be fully secure," Singh said.

The recent events have created widespread concern in the billionstrong Hindu community around the world and are gravely impacting the image of Bangladesh, he

Mamata Banerjee govt playing politics over supply of potato to Odisha: Minister BHUBANESWAR, Nov 30: time, we are not going to request

Odisha Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra on Saturday alleged that the Mamata Banerjee government is playing politics over the supply of potatoes and that the state government would not request West Bengal to restore supply of the tuber. Due to restrictions imposed by the West Bengal government, potatoes-laden trucks have not been allowed to cross the border since Wednesday night. Many of these vehicles have also returned to their origin points, officials here said.

Speaking to media persons about the potato crisis, Patra said, "The West Bengal government is playing politics, for which, they restricted supply of potato to Odisha while sometimes they allow it. But, this

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: The Con-

gress on Saturday attacked the

government over India's eco-

nomic growth slowing to near

two-year low, saying the country's

medium and long-term economic

potential is "eroding rapidly" and

asked how long will the grim re-

ality of stagnant wages for crores

of workers continue to be ignored.

charge communications Jairam

Ramesh said the GDP growth fig-

ures released last evening for

July-September 2024 are much

worse than anticipated, with India

recording a measly 5.4% growth

and consumption similarly grow-

ing by an unimpressive 6%.

Congress general secretary in-

them to supply potato to Odisha."

is no point in talking to her."

It is not proper to restrict the supply of vegetables or goods to any state because all states are under one country and everyone should live together, he said.

minister said. (PTI)

However, if West Bengal sends potatoes on its own. Odisha will accept it, he said. Patra said, "We are not going to have any talks with Mamata Banerjee government for potatoes. She has already stated in the media that her government will not send potatoes to Odisha so there

"West Bengal is also depending on other states for fish and other items. If desired, Odisha can also stop the goods vehicles at its border. But, we are not going to do so," the

The poll percentage, however, has been encouraging for us. I congratulate the ruling coalition, which contested

with a better strategy," BJP leader Amar Kumar Bauri Koderma legislator and BJP

Minister of Jharkhand in a grand ceremony here on Thursday. (PTI) Economic potential eroding rapidly while PM Modi generates hype: Cong

multiple sources of data have now confirmed this wage stagnation," he asserted.

Citing Labour Bureau's Wage Rate Index, he said real wages for the labourers stagnated between 2014-2023 and in fact declined between 2019-2024

Ramesh further cited the Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural

stagnant, he pointed out. "The recent rush of statements by senior leaders from India Inc about slowing consumption are

he said.

only the symptom of this deeper malaise.

This slowdown will have severe consequences for us: without adequate growth in consumption to assure them of a market for their products, India's private sector will be unwilling to invest in new production," Ramesh argued.

"Not surprisingly, the quarterly GDP growth numbers reveal that private investment - which has to drive accelerated economic growth - continues to be extremely sluggish. Our medium and long-term economic potential

is eroding rapidly," he said. The Congress leader pointed out that the fundamental cause for this is stagnant wages for crores of

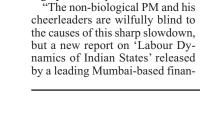
workers. How long will this grim reality continue to be ignored, Ramesh

asked "The people of India continue to live in hope while the Prime Minister generates hype," he said. India's economic growth slowed to near two-year low of 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of this fiscal due to poor performance of manufacturing and mining sectors, but the country continued to remain the fastest-growing large economy, data showed on Friday.

The gross domestic product (GDP) had expanded by 8.1 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2023-24 fiscal, he said.

The previous low level of GDP growth at 4.3 per cent was recorded in the third quarter (October-December 2022) of finan-

cial year 2022-23. However, India remained the fastest-growing major economy as China's GDP growth in the July-September quarter this year was at 4.6 per cent. (PTI)



cial information services company, India Ratings and Research, on the 26th of November 2024 reveals its real cause: stagnant wages," Ramesh said in a state-The Congress leader pointed

to show that overall real wage growth at the national level has been flat at 0.01% over the last five years. In fact, the workers in Haryana, Assam and Uttar Pradesh have

out that the report uses Periodic

Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data

seen their real wages decline in the same period, he said. This is hardly the exception, nearly every piece of evidence

points to this same damning con-

clusion that the average Indian

can buy less today than they could

10 years ago, Ramesh said. 'This is the ultimate root cause for India's growth slowdown, and

Statistics and said that under former prime minister Manmohan Singh, real wages for agricultural labourers grew at 6.8% each year.

"Under Narendra Modi, real wages for agricultural labourers

Sambhal violence: Ban on outsiders' entry extended to December 10, SP lawmakers barred from visit

Nov 30: Several Samajwadi Party lawmakers, including its Sambhal MP, were stopped from entering the violence-hit district, as the administration on Saturday extended the ban on the entry of outsiders and public representatives into Sambhal till December 10 to maintain "peace and order".

The earlier prohibition on outsiders' entry was to expire on Saturday. Later, the Samajwadi Party announced that it would provide

₹5 lakh each to the family of the four people who died in the violence over a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque.

It also demanded that the state government give ₹ 25 lakh each to the families.

"The Samajwadi Party will provide financial assistance of ₹ 5 lakh each to the families of those who lost their lives in the violence in Sambhal due to the failure of the BJP government and administration. The Uttar Pradesh government should give compensation of ₹ 25 lakh each to the families of

the deceased," it said on X. On Saturday, with the ban extended, the Samajwadi Party's Muzaffarnagar MP Harendra Malik was stopped from entering Sambhal from Ghaziabad.

"Are opposition leaders and MPs so irresponsible that they can't be allowed to move within the state?" Malik asked.

The party had announced a 15member delegation would visit the district to gather information about the violence that broke out over the Shahi Jama Masjid's survey. Curbs under Section 163 (power



to issue order in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger) of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, set to expire on Sunday, were extended till December 31.

In a statement issued in Sambhal, District Magistrate Rajendra Pensiya said, "To maintain peace and order, the imposition of Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita in the district has been extended to December 31."

"No outsider, any social organisation or public representative can enter into the borders of the district without seeking permission of the competent authority till December 10," he added.

Tension had been brewing in Sambhal since November 19 when the mosque was surveyed following claims that a Harihar temple previously stood at the site.

Violence erupted during a second survey on November 24 as protesters gathered near the mosque and clashed with security personnel. Four people died and

issue in the Lok Sabha."

NATION

In Moradabad, Samajwadi Party MP Ruchi Veera's residence was surrounded by cops to prevent her from travelling to Sambhal.

Leader of Opposition in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly Mata Prasad Pandey, who was to lead the delegation, told reporters outside his Lucknow residence that Home Secretary Sanjay Prasad requested him to not visit Sambhal.

"The Sambhal district magistrate also called and told me that the ban on the entry of outsiders had been extended," he said.

"The government perhaps wanted to prevent me in order to hide its wrongdoings as our visit would have exposed its mistakes,"

Heavy security has been deployed outside Pandey's residence since Friday.

"Stopping us here in Lucknow at our residence is completely unjustified under the orders issued. If we had reached Sambhal or were stopped at the border, that would have made sense," Pandey said.

"The collector said we shouldn't enter Sambhal and now they say we can't even leave Lucknow. The fact that the police stopped us like this proves that Uttar Pradesh is under police rule, not the rule of law," he charged.

He added that the situation in Sambhal required an impartial investigation.

Asked if the party would send a delegation secretly, Pandey said, "If we intended to go secretly, we would have reached Sambhal by

NDA cadets must carry forward bonds they made to plan and execute ops: IAF chief

Amar Preet Singh on Saturday said National Defence Academy (NDA) cadets must carry forward the vast experience of their training to service academies and bonds they made at the institute in planning and execution of operations.

The Air Chief Marshal was the reviewing officer of the 147th course of the NDA and addressed the Passing Out Parade at the triservice training institute in Khadakwasla.

Speaking on the occasion, he said, "The vast experience of training at the NDA needs to be carried forward to the respective service academies, and the bond created here must be carried towards planning and execution of our operations. I am confident that you will all don the mantle of jointness as proudly as you will don your serv-

He said as young officers, the role of NDA cadets in any future conflict would be pivotal in ensuring that the enemy designs are defeated and that the territorial integrity of a great nation is not compromised.

"High-quality training imparted at the NDA and other academies of the three services will guide you and equip you with the strength and confidence to boldly face these challenges," he said.

He said the NDA is rightly called the cradle of leadership and is undoubtedly one of the finest academies in the world.

"In terms of infrastructure size and quality of training, this academy is unmatched, and you all had the rare distinction of being trained here and being associated with it for the rest of your life," the Air Chief Marshal said.



"Having chosen to voluntarily ioin the Armed Forces, you made the brave decision to take the route less travelled," he said, addressing

He said as future military leaders, the cadets will be leading a highly motivated and courageous set of soldiers, sailors and air warriors, and trust will be placed in their leadership given the perils of

'Therefore, it is your sacred duty to lead from the front only through your immaculate personal conduct, professional competence and unquestionable integrity to win the trust and respect. The NDA is not only a cradle of leadership but also a cradle of jointmanship," he said.

He asked the cadets never to hesitate to make decisions, be fearless and always trust in their abilities

and gut feelings. "Never forget the courage, honour, and sacrifices made by your predecessor. Let their valour be your motivating factor throughout your career. Always remain physically, strong, mentally awake, and morally straight. Be honest in your dealings and have clean thinking so that you always choose the harder

right than the easier wrong," he advised.

As many as 1,265 cadets participated in the parade, of which 357 cadets, including 215 from the Army, 301 from the Air Force and 38 from the Navy, were from the passing out course.

The passing-out cadets included 19 from friendly foreign countries (Bhutan, Tajikistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia and Maldives). The cadets will join their respective pre-commissioning training academies.

A contingent of 47 Female Cadets', presently in their third, fourth and fifth terms of training, also participated in the parade.

Cadet Ankit won the President's gold medal for earning first place in the Overall Order of Merit, Cadet Yuvraj Singh Chauhan was awarded the silver medal for standing second, and Cadet Jodha Thongiaomayum received the bronze medal for standing third.

The Golf Squadron bagged the prestigious 'Chiefs of Staff Banner' for being the Champion Squadron, which was presented during the parade. (PTI)

Goa-IDC launches online platform OPEN

PANAJI, Nov 30: Goa Industrial Development Corporation on Saturday launched India's first Digital Public Good for Industry Governance framework, Open Platform for Enterprise Network (OPEN), to transform industry governance by simplifying, digitising and standardising government-to-business trans-

The formal launch of this platform marks a significant milestone in Goa's journey toward enhancing the ease of doing business and fostering a vibrant industrial ecosystem, Goa Industrial Development Corporation (Goa-IDC) Chairman Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco said while addressing a press conference in As part of the highly-anticipated launch of its new

Open Platform for Enterprise Network (OPEN) portal, Goa-IDC also announced the availability of 20 Industrial plots at Verna Industrial Estate and nine commercial plots for auction, offering unparalleled opportunities for the establishment of industrial and commercial enterprises.

Lourenco said the new portal, designed to enhance ransparency and efficiency, will streamline the process for interested investors, making it easier than ever to access and bid for these prime properties.

Developed by Goa-IDC, the OPEN platform leverages DIGIT - a United Nations-certified Digital Public Good (DPG) - to deliver a streamlined, technologydriven solution that adheres to global standards for privacy, interoperability, and scalability.

Lourenco said the development of OPEN was driven by insights gathered during the 2023 IDC-Connect programmes organised by Goa-IDC at the 24 industrial estates, where businesses emphasised the need for digital solutions to improve the efficiency and transparency of industry-related processes.

Responding to the feedback, Goa-IDC embarked on a mission to create a transformative governance tool designed to reduce the time, paperwork and steps in-

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: The enforcement of a rule by Air

India that restricts carrying

large musical instruments as

cabin luggage has Indian

artistes concerned who flagged

the larger issue of baggage

mishandling that allegedly ails

Davs after Zubin Balaporia.

keyboardist of Indus Creed

band, took to Facebook

against Air India's "extremely

discriminating policy". Other

musicians have also shared

their concerns about the way

musical instruments are han-

dled by airlines, resulting in

damaged or lost luggage at

carry a guitar on board. Now

they have stopped this and are

asking musicians to pay for an

extra seat for the guitar. This is

ridiculous. Vistara used to

allow guitars on board and In-

diGo still does. Come on Air

India - TATA Group. Why

have such a mercenary atti-

tude. Surely you help in pro-

moting the arts. Have a heart

and regain your soul," Balapo-

ria wrote on the social media

Meanwhile, a statement by

platform.

"Earlier we were allowed to

all airlines across the board.

are our own people and we wanted Potato price shoots up in Jharkhand as West Bengal 'restricts' supply

several others were injured in the

clashes. The police have denied al-

legations that it fired at the protest-

ers. The Supreme Court has since

ordered the Sambhal court to halt

proceedings in the case and its sur-

Malik, who was stopped from

entering Sambhal, further said,

"Our delegation included MPs Zia-

ur-Rehman Barq (Sambhal) and

Igra Hasan (Kairana). The govern-

ment is acting in an autocratic

abad border as the police stepped

up vigil to ensure that no one could

apply a healing touch to those af-

fected by the violence but the gov-

ernment is controlling everything,"

Malik said before he and his con-

stopped in Hapur, told reporters,

"All those affected by the violence

Hasan, whose convoy was

voy were removed from the spot.

move towards Sambhal.

Traffic was choked at the Ghazi-

"I want to go to Sambhal to

RANCHI/ DHANBAD, Nov 30: The price of potato has shot up by Rs 5 a kg in Jharkhand's retail market in the past two days after neighbouring West Bengal reportedly restricted the supply of the tuber, an official said on Saturday.

In a bid to maintain the stock and keep the price of potato under control, the West Bengal government has allegedly put a restriction on interstate supply of the tuber, according to a potato traders' association in West Bengal. West Bengal meets 60 per cent of Jharkhand's potato demand round the year, while the rest of the demand is met by Uttar Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and local production.

"Around 50-55 trucks, each conining 20-22 tonnne of potato, arrive in Jharkhand from West Bengal. We were informed that the trucks were stopped at Bengal check posts from Thursday, which fuelled the prices of potato in wholesale as well as retail markets from Friday in the state," Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC), Jamshedpur, secretary Abhishek Anand told

He said that the production of locally grown potatoes was delayed by a month this year, which has also impacted the prices. "The supply from other states is going on as usual," he said. Jharkhand BJP presurged the newly elected Hemant Soren-led government to hold a talk with the West Bengal government to deal with the situation, as people of the state are already suffering with the rising prices of potato.

Former president and advisor of West Bengal Progressive Potato Traders Association (WBPPTA), Bibhas Kumar Dev, told PTI over phone, "The West Bengal police have increased vigilance on bordering areas in a bid to curb export of potatoes to other states. Hundreds of potato-laden trucks were sent back during these checks since Wednesday evening. The move is causing a huge loss to the traders.

He said that they would hold a meeting on Saturday to find out a solution to the problem. According to WBPPTA, the production of potatoes in West Bengal was around 1.2 crore tonne in 2023 against the annual average production of around 1 crore tonne a year.

In Ranchi's retail market, the Bengal variety of potato, which was sold at ₹ 32-35 a kg on Friday, is being sold at ₹35-40 per kg depending on the quality on Saturday.

The same potato is being sold for around ₹ 35 a kg in retail market of Dhanbad city. The potato traders in Dhanbad said that after the restriction in West Bengal, they are fulfilling the demand from

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL **DEPARTMENT OF S.E. WORKS** KAAC::SECRETARIAT D I P H U-782460

No. KAAC/S,E.-W- HRN/54(Pt) /2024-25/

Dtd. / /2024.

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs. 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of works department and will be received by the undersigned up to 4 P.M. on 21 / 12 / 2024 and will be opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderer or their authorized agent if any.

If the day of the opening of tender happens to be a holiday/non-working days, the tender will be opened in the next day. The undersigned has the right to accept, reject any tender without any reason thereof and will not be bound to accept, the lowest tender quoted

SI. No	Name of Works	Tender Amount	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion	
1	Construction of Buddhist Temple at Kolonga Nepali Gaon Under Bithung Renathama Constituency.	Rs. 95,06,000.00	ST/SC/OBC = 1% General = 2%	120 days	

Detail N I T documents and name of works amounts may be obtained from Office of the S.E.(Works), KAAC, Diphu during working hours on payment of Rs, 1900/-

Terms & Conditions

- 1. The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/ works for all division under CPWD for the year 2021.
- 2. Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bank draft & should be attached with the tender without which no tender will
- 3. The Contractor shall Repair/Re-Construction if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuse to repair/Re- construction the woks.
- 4. The work must be carried on as directed by the E.E (W), KAAC/KAAC Authority.
- 5. The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender. a. Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
 - Sale Tax Clearance Certificate/GST.
 - c. Council Registration.

 - d. Call Deposit. e. Council receipt
 - Caste Certificate.
 - Aadhaar Card
 - h. Pan Card
 - Account number
 - k. Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund
 - k. The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-

Superintending Engineer (Works) Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council DIPHU

Dtd. 30/11/2024.

Memo. No. KAAC/S,E.-W- HRN/ 54(Pt) /2024-25/284 (A)

throw it. So the musicians want to keep it with them. In-

instruments in one piece. They don't care if it's an instrument and should be loaded in a certain way," the 57-yearold added. The issue of mishandling was reported by a

a video that showed Air India staffers throwing luggage into a carriage van. "Air India, Ratan Tata, is this the way you handle fragile

items," he wrote. In another incident dated December 2022, singer Benny Daval took to the social media

"All Indian airlines breaking struments," he wrote.

the same space as big cabin luggage. Musicians are asked to check-in their luggage in hard cases, even then there is a risk of lost or damaged baggage. It happens all the time,'

more frequent with Air India, Shori added, other airlines are equally at fault.

"It depends on the staff's added. (PTI)

Air India to PTI clarified that the airline has not changed its



Not everyone can afford extra seat: Artistes

voice concern over Air India baggage rule

including musical instruments inside the cabin conforming to the stipulated dimensions.

It added that small musical instruments, "which adhere to the specified dimensions, and which are not likely to inconvenience other passengers or create any safety hazard during turbulence, are allowed to be carried onboard free of

"Any musical instrument, which exceeds the specified dimensions, is allowed to be carried in the cabin but only by booking an additional adjacent seat. Large, bulky or odd-sized musical instruments are to be carried as checked-in baggage only," it said.

The situation is not new, according to percussionist V Selvaganesh, who said that such rules "are not good for musicians". "Imagine there are smaller bands, they can't afford buying an extra seat. I think Air India used to give one seat free for Pandit Ravi Shankar so why did they change that," Selvaganesh told

The Grammy winner added that a bigger concern is the way checked-in luggage is treated that they "cross their fingers" during journeys. 'They don't care even if you put fragile stickers. They just

struments are expensive to buy," he said. "We always cross our fingers and hope that we find our

musician Ishwar Dwivedi on

platform to flag a number of airlines for mishandling bagand mishandling musicians in-

Delhi-based bass guitarist Sonic Shori said that his band, The CopyCats, always "asks event managers to not book Air India". "Volume-wise a guitar takes

Shori said Even though the situation is

mood, they will randomly tell us we can't take the instruments onboard,"



Xavier Samuel, Sonal Sehgal to star in 'The Great **Departure**'

Shot entirely in India, the film is currently in the post-production stage, reported entertainment news outlet Deadline.

'Growing up in a patriarchal society and yet with a set of parents who encouraged my fiercely independent streak, I often found myself in a dichotomy of how I was brought up and what society expected of me and hence took to cinema as a form of expression," Sehgal said in a statement.

Samuel said he was "very moved" by the script of the film.

LOS ANGELES, Nov 30: "The Twilight Saga" fame Xavier Samuel and "Aashavein" actor Sonal Sehgal will headline the upcoming film "The Great Departure". Originally titled "Travellers", the

script of the film has been penned by Sehgal and explores patriarchy in the society through the prism of a man and woman who meet in Varanasi and have very different experiences while on the same

road trip as they fall in love.

Produced by Arvind Reddy's KVR Productions, "The Great Departure" is directed by Pierre Filmon, known for directing "Long Time No See" and "Le Silence, D'abord".



Growing up in a patriarchal society and yet with a set of parents who encouraged my fiercely independent streak, I often found myself in a dichotomy of how I was brought up and what society expected of me and hence took to cinema as a form of expression - Sonal Sehgal

"The theme of patriarchy, the road trip genre, and the script that struck a

Filmon shared his experience of shooting the film and called the entire unit a "dream team". (PTI)

cord," Reddy added.

180 FILMS FROM 29 COUNTRIES TO BE SCREENED AT 30TH KOLKATA INTERNATIONAL FILM FEST

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: Actor Divyenndu of "Mirzapur" fame will share screen space with "RRR" star Ram Charan in filmmaker Buchi Babu Sana's

upcoming Telugu film, the makers said on Saturday.

The film, which marks Ram Charan's 16th project, also stars Janhvi Kapoor. Production house Vriddhi Cinemas shared Divyenndu's casting announcement in an Instagram post. "Our favourite 'Munna Bhayya' will light up the big screens in a spectacular role tailor made for him," the banner said in the post, referring to the actor's fan-favourite character Munna from Prime Video series "Mirzapur". "Team #RC16 welcomes the incredibly talented and the compelling performer @diestival, which will be held from December 4-11. "Around 180 films will be screened, including shorts and documentaries from India and other countries," West Bengal minister and KIFF organising committee member Aroop Biswas told reporters here on Friday.

There will be 42 feature films in four competition sections. It will include international competition (innovation in moving images) where the coveted Royal Bengal Tiger Trophy will be given in the Best

Film and Best Director categories. A total of 14 films will vie for top honours under the international competition section.

The competition in Indian languages section will have 12 films vying for the Hiralal Sen Memorial Trophy and Award. There will also be nine films in the Asian Select (NETPAC) Award category and seven in Bengali panorama section, Ghosh said. There will also be a centenary tribute section for Tapan Sinha, Marlon Brando, Marcello Mastroianni, Mohammad Rafi, Talat Mahmood and Madan

Mohan, among others. A special tribute section will be for Manoj Mitra, Kumar Sahani and Utpalendu Chakraborty who died this year Tapan Sinha's Bengali comedy film 'Galpo Holeo Satti' (1966) will be the inaugural film at Dhono Dhanyo Auditorium on December 4

The annual Satyajit Ray Memorial Lecture will be delivered by popular Bollywood director R Balki on November 6 while actress Vidya Balan will have an interaction with the audience on December 6. One of the subjects for panel discussion is 'Intolerance, Global Justice and the Media', scheduled on December 7. The venues will be Nandan I, II, III apart from Sisir Mancha, Rabindra Sadan, Nazrul Tirtha and Radha Studio

Three cineplexes — Navina, New Empire and Ajanta Cinema — will also screen movies vyenndu on board. #RamCharanRevolts Global Star @AlwaysRamCharan @nimmashivarajkumar @janhvikapoor @buchibabu sana @iamjaggubhai @arrahman @rathnaveludop @kollaavinash @venkatasatishkilaru @vriddhicinemas @SukumarWritings @MythriOfficial," the caption further read.

Also produced by Sukumar Writings and Mythri Movie Makers, the upcoming film also stars Shiva Rajkumar. AR Rahman will score music for the project. Divyenndu will next be seen in action thriller film "Agni", set to premiere on Prime Video on December 6. (PTI)

Ed Sheeran set to be first international artist to perform in Bhutan



NEW DELHI, Nov 30: British musician Ed Sheeran is set to make history in January by becoming "the first international artist" to per-

The "Shape of You" singer, who announced a series of 'Mathematics Tour' shows on Friday, will be performing on January 24 at the Changlimithang Stadium in the Himalayan kingdom's capital, Thimphu. It will be followed by an expansive tour in India and the Middle East, running till May 2025.

"Having launched his record-breaking Mathematics Tour in Dublin in 2022, Sheeran, 33, has captivated audiences worldwide with over 134 electrifying performances to date. This upcoming run, alongside the European leg, marks the concluding chapter of his celebrated Mathematics era," said the organisers.

Each performance promises an intimate experience with the British artist in his purest form armed with only his guitar and Loop-

The tour will draw from all of his albums since 2011, starting with "Plus", "Multiply" (2014), "Divide" (2017), "Equals" (2021) and "Subtract" (2023). The tour also includes a song from 2019's "No. 6 Collaborations Project" ("Blow").

The tickets, starting at USD 10, are available for purchase on

The first major international concert in Bhutan is promoted by Gelephu Mindfulness City and AEG Presents in arrangement with

Divyenndu joins Ram Charan-Buchi Babu Sana's film

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: Actor Divyenndu of "Mirzapur" fame will share screen space with "RRR" star Ram Charan in filmmaker Buchi Babu Sana's upcoming Telugu film, the makers said on Saturday. The film, which marks Ram Charan's 16th project, also stars Janhvi

Production house Vriddhi Cinemas shared Divyenndu's casting announcement in an Instagram post. "Our favourite 'Munna Bhayya' will light up the big screens in a spectacular role tailor made for him," the banner said in the post, referring to the actor's fan-favourite character Munna from Prime Video series "Mirzapur"

"Team #RC16 welcomes the incredibly talented and the compelling performer @divyenndu on board. #RamCharanRevolts Global Star @AlwaysRamCharan @nimmashivarajkumar @janhvikapoor @buchibabu sana @iamjaggubhai @arrahman @rathnaveludop @kollaavinash @venkatasatishkilaru @vriddhicinemas @Sukumar-Writings @MythriOfficial," the caption further read.

Also produced by Sukumar Writings and Mythri Movie Makers, the upcoming film also stars Shiva Rajkumar. AR Rahman will score music for the project. Divyenndu will next be seen in action thriller film "Agni", set to premiere on Prime Video on December 6. (PTI)

Zoya Akhtar joins fellow jury members Luca Guadagnino, Andrew Garfield at Marrakech Film Festival

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: Filmmaker Zoya Akhtar, who serves part of the jury of the 21st Marrakech Film Festival, walked the red carpet alongside panel head, director Luca Guadagnino and Hollywood stars Andrew Garfield and Jacob Elordi. In a video shared by the official X page of the festival, Akhtar was spotted posing for the shutterbugs at Friday's opening ceremony of the gala in Marrakech, Morocco.

Iranian filmmaker Ali Abbasi, Hollywood actor Patricia Arquette, Argentine director Santiago Mitre, Belgian-French actor Virginie Efira and Moroccan actor Nadia Kounda were also part of the

The jury of the 21st edition competition, presided by Luca Guadagnino, and joined by Ali Abbasi, Zoya Akhtar, Patricia Arquette, Virginie Efira, Jacob Elordi, Andrew Garfield, Nadia Kounda, and Santiago Mitre. - Opening Ceremony of the #Marrakechfestival," read the caption of the post shared by Marrakech Film Festival. According to the festival's website, its main aim is to promote and de-

velop the art of cinema and the film industry in Morocco. Marrakech Film Festival opened with "The Order", directed by Justin Kurzel, who returned to the gala after winning the Jury Award in 2011 for "Snowtown". The gala will come to a close on December 7. Akhtar's last directed film is "The Archies", which was released on Netflix last year. (PTI)

Vimal Chandra Pandey on Bhojpuri's first sci-fi film 'Maddhim': Wanted to tell a cinematic story in my mother tongue

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: "Bhojpuri and science fiction? Who is going to watch it?" Those were the questions that writer-filmmaker Vimal Chandra Pandey encountered when he decided to adapt Bob Shaw's famous 1966 short story "Light of Other Days" for his Bhojpuri film "Maddhim".

Pandey, who made his film debut with 2017's critically-acclaimed film "The Holy Fish" and is awaiting the release of his second movie "Dhatura", says it all began with a desire to tell an interesting story in the language that he grew up

"Bhojpuri is my mother tongue and I always wanted to do something in it. The desire to do something in it kept growing. My model to tell this story was the independent cinema in the south where filmmakers are telling culturally specific stories with limited resources and they are resonating world over. I thought, 'Why not do something similar in Bhojpuri?" Pandey told PTI in an inter-

According to the film's official plotline, "Maddhim" follows inspector Pratyush and constable Chaube who are investigating the death of a famous pulp fiction writer called Raman Rastogi. "Circle officer and SP are convinced that it is a case of adultery and murder by his wife but inspector Pratyush is continuously looking for appropriate answers. Finally, he comes to know about Raman Rastogi's past. An unbelievable but mind-blowing scientific invention helps Pratyush catch the killer red handed," it read. Pandey, an established Hindi writer with novels such as "Bhale

Dino Ki Baat Thi", "Lahartara" and "Dasasmedh" and story collections "Dar", "Mastulon Ke Irdgird" and "Maaran Mantra", said while he was keen to tell a story in Bhojpuri, the idea to make it in the sci-fi genre came from his co-writer Vaibhav Mani Tripathi.

Tripathi, a sci-fi enthusiast, initially approached Pandey to translate one of his stories for a Bhojpuri storytelling audio app. He was also keen for Pandey, who already has

an Audible audio series to his credit, to do something similar for his audio app.

"He also wanted me to write an audio series. But I was more keen to make a movie in the language. He came up with the idea to make it a sci-fi project and we read a lot of literature before settling on Bob Shaw's story, which was written in the 1960s.

We took the concept of slow glass from the story and wove a murder mystery around it," Pandey

The filmmaker thought the production on "Maddhim" would finish early but ended up spending more than two years on the project, encountering

Bhojpuri cinema, which was once known for hits such as "Ganga Maiya Tohe Piyari Chadhaibo", "Nadiya Ke Paar" and "Ganga Kinare

many hurdles and prejudices along the way.

Mora Gaon Ho" and attracted the top writers, directors and even actors and musicians, has come to be associated with obscenity even though there are efforts to change the perception from within the

According to Pandey, it is also widely believed that independent filmmakers tend to stick to a format where there has to be a downtrodden hero or heroine at the centre of the story

"I faced challenges in casting. We thought we will not cast Bhojpuri actors but Hindi artists from the Bhojpuri region. But some of the big artists were like 'Science fiction and Bhojpuri? Who is going to watch it?'. The assumption is that a Bhojpuri film has to be set in a village and tell a story about their condition. Why can't it be a murder mystery and science fiction?

My story belongs to this genre," the filmmaker said, adding that he is not averse to heartland stories. "I have the rights to one of writer Yogendra Ahuia's stories. I initially wanted to make it in Hindi but while I was finishing 'Maddhim', I realised that the story would lend itself beautifully to Bhojpuri. It can be a reference point for Bhojpuri cinema. The story's title is 'Kushti' and it revolves around caste issues. My screenplay is ready. It can be a wonderful movie in Bhojpuri." (PTI)





Table-toppers Bengaluru FC seek to breach Odisha FC's 'fortress' in ISL match



BHUBANESWAR, Nov 30: Buoyed by their impressive allround form, table-toppers Bengaluru FC will hope to breach Odisha FC's 'fortress' when the two sides square off in an Indian Super League (ISL) match at the Kalinga Stadium here on Sunday.

Bengaluru FC have been rolling seamlessly ever since their campaign got going. The

ing like a well-drilled unit and hence they are gradually taking the home-away factor out of consideration this year, succeeding across venues.

The Blues have won two of their four away matches this season, and it's only the second time in their history they have achieved this tally in the first four away games.

The Bengaluru side sit at the

couple of draws. The Blues defeated Mohammedan SC 2-1 in their last away outing.

Odisha FC have also momentum swaying in their favour as they are coming into Sunday's match on the back of an impressive 6-0 win over Hyderabad FC, having climbed to sixth in the ISL table with three wins and draws each.

Odisha FC have gradually begun finding their feet after an

indifferent start to the season and they can hope for home advantage on Sunday.

SPORTS

The Juggernauts are unbeaten in their last two encounters with Bengaluru FC in the ISL -- one win and one draw. They also have won each of their two previous ISL games against Bengaluru FC at the Kalinga Stadium.

Bengaluru FC have netted

frontline has been boosted by the presence of former India captain Sunil Chhetri, who came off the bench to bag a brace against Mohammedan SC in the last game.

Odisha FC head coach Sergio Lobera stressed on the need of getting on to a positive rhythm and securing wins that can help them seal their fate towards the end of the campaign.

"The first step is the next game. For sure, we know we have six points in play in the coming couple of matches. Getting points is important to get in a good position, which will help us in the final leg of the competition," Lobera said.

Bengaluru FC head coach Gerard Zaragoza understands that good summer acquisitions and a formidable pre-season have been central to their success so far this year.

'We made some really good signings. We worked hard to find the best players for our style. We did a good pre-season. I don't know if we are contenders or not. The only thing we want is to play games and win them now," Zaragoza

Odisha FC and Bengaluru FC have faced off 10 times in the ISL. The Blues hold the upper hand with five wins, while the Juggernauts have claimed three victories, and two matches have

> Lucknow in 2016. The goal will always be to bag Olympic gold and a World Cup medal. The way we performed in Paris shows that we

"Our immediate target is next FIH Pro League matches and then win the Asia Cup and qualify directly for the World Cup. A World Cup medal hasn't come for a long time and I want to fulfil that in my career," said Harmanpreet, one the best defenders and drag-flickers of the world right now. "...Hope we can relive those golden days during our career.

achieve that," he added. From a personal point of view, Harmanpreet wants to better his drag-flick skills and remain fit to

WC medal hasn't come for long time, I want to achieve it in my career: Harmanpreet



NEW DELHI, Nov 30: India men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh has two Olympic bronze medals in his cabinet, but rues missing out on World Cup glory, an anomaly that he wants to set right in the next edition of the mega event in 2026.

India have till date won three World Cup medals -- bronze in 1971 (Barcelona), silver in 1973 (Amstelveen, Netherlands) and gold in 1975 (Kuala Lumpur) under Ajitpal Singh's leadership.

Harmanpreet, who won backto-back Olympic bronze in Tokyo and Paris, the second one under his leadership, however, had won the Junior World Cup in

can compete with top teams and win," Harmanpreet told PTI.

We will not surrender till we

prolong his career.

"Drag-flick is getting tough day-by-day and the goal is to work on how to improve myself, bring in more variations and re-

Harmanpreet credits current Indian women's hockey team coach Harendra Singh for shaping his career and believes the women's side drag-flicker and star forward Deepika is in good

"Deepika is doing great. She produced a great performance in the Asian Champions Trophy in Raigir, Bihar. She is a good dragflicker and a forward who can score. She is in safe hands under Harry (Harendra) sir," he said.

"I will never forget those days and the help Harry sir provided

By his own admission, hockey was a coincidence in his life as Harmanpreet never aspired to play the sport.

"Hockey has chosen me as in my family there was no player, neither I had interest in hockey. I had interest in many sports like volleyball, football, athletics, basketball," he said.

"A coach in my school said try hockey and from the day I started hockey, I became a fan of it. I started the sport at 7-8 years."

Harmanpreet was the toast of the revamped Hockey India League auction recently, bagging Rs 78 lakh bid from Soorma

Rajasthan United beat Namdhari 3-1 with stunning comeback win



SRI BHAINI SAHIB (PUN-JAB), Nov 30: Rajasthan United FC staged a stunning second-half comeback to beat hosts Namdhari FC 3-1 in the I-League here on

Namdhari took a fortunate lead in the 18th minute when Rajasthan defender Wayne Vaz, under pressure from Akashdeep Singh, scored an own goal.

The hosts dominated early, with Akashdeep coming close to dou-

bling the lead in the 34th minute, only for Rajasthan goalkeeper James Kithan to deny him with a

Rajasthan grew into the game and equalised in the 51st minute after William Neihsial was fouled in the box and Alain Oyarzun converted the resultant penalty with

Namdhari nearly regained the lead in the 70th minute, but Cledson Dasilva's header drifted nar-

Three minutes later, Seiminmang Manchong dribbled past multiple defenders and fired in a low shot that eluded goalkeeper Jaspreet Singh, putting Rajasthan

Namdhari's hopes faded after a red card in the 80th minute, and Wayne Vaz redeemed himself in the 85th minute, tapping in from close range to seal Rajasthan's

Ronaldo don't always deliver, Sculptors offer advice

compared the new Harry Kane bronze statue to a bulging-jawed comic strip character.

In Miami, observers say the Dwyane Wade sculpture looks more like actor Laurence Fishburne than the former basketball star. Of course, the infamous Cristiano Ronaldo bust in 2017 gave the chiseled soccer star a chubby face and goofy smile.

A statue of Mohamed Salah in 2018 depicted the Liverpool star with a disproportionately large head. In 2011, a terracotta warrior statue of Andy Murray at a Shanghai tennis tournament drew chuckles, including from the star himself: "I thought I was better looking than that.

It wasn't always this way. In classical times, sculptors "had absolutely no interest in depicting people accurately," explained Lucy Branch, a London-based sculptural conservator.

"What they ended up doing quite often, they recycled sculptures so when another athlete became more prominent, they just changed the name on the plaque," said Branch, host of the "Sculpture Vulture" podcast

"There's this idea now, in this era, that commemorative sculpture should be like portraiture — it should look exactly like the person they are commemorating. But actually that's a really new idea in sculpture."

To avoid pitfalls, here are some tips from sculptors:

Do your researchLondon-based sculptor Hywel Pratley studied countless images of Queen Elizabeth II to create a memorial statue in the East Midlands town of Oakham. "A good portrait sculpture is evidence of 1,000 decisions after 10,000 observations," Pratley said. In addition, Yorkshire county sculptor Steve Winterburn recommends getting close with a subfind characteristics.

"You don't want it looking like a Madame Tussauds," said Winterburn, who created a statue of five Rugby League greats at Wembley Stadium. "It still needs a bit of art in it, a bit of soul. That's what makes art really sing.

Smile at your perilThe Ronaldo bust depicted the Portugal star smiling crookedly. Likewise, the Salah sculpture features the Egyptian smiling while celebrating a goal. In Miami, Wade's mouth is open in the statue representing the moment the player famously jumped onto a courtside table and yelled "This is my house."

It's probably best avoided. "It's really difficult to do teeth looking good in sculpture," Pratley

Get the profile rightStart "by understanding the profile" before moving on to determine widths from the front view, Pratley said.

"Get the profile right and you will have won half the battle, because then you can have something at least that you can trust," he said. "When you're lost, you can say, well I knew where I was then,' and you will get lost as a sculptor in the forms.

"There's so many to understand. It's not two dimensions, it's three. There's an exponential opportunity for everything to go wrong. If you've got the profile, then you can go forward with more confi-

The eyes have it?Winterburn tries to make the eyes "come alive" in his work.

"The eye is the soul of the person that carries it," he said. "If you look at a lot of public work, I'm not being funny, they're dead. There's nothing in them, they're just featureless, soulless. With a painting, if in doubt, fade it out. With sculpture, there is nowhere

Statues of stars like Kane and Let's drop Labuschagne for Adelaide Test against India: Johnson



ADELAIDE, Nov 30: Former pacer Mitchell Johnson reckons that Australia should drop out-of-form Marnus Labuschagne from the playing eleven for the day-night Adelaide Test against India, starting December 6.

Labuschagne got out for two (52 balls) in the first innings and 5-ball three in the second essay during the

"Marnus Labuschagne — after a lengthy poor run with the bat — should be replaced for the second Test in Adelaide. And that's not for the sake of having someone pay the price for the thrashing in Perth," Johnson wrote in 'Nightly.'

Johnson said it will help Labuschagne to go back to domestic

"It (dropping) would give him a chance to play some Sheffield Shield and club cricket away from the pressure of playing for your country. I feel he would benefit from that more than going out there trying to survive against Jasprit Bumrah and co.," he

Johnson said dropping Labuschagne, who has collected 4119 runs at an average of 48 from 51 Tests, should not be viewed as the end of the road for the top-order batter.

"In his past 10 Test innings, he's passed 10 just once. He's trying to fight through it in the middle but it's not curworking. Dropping Labuschagne, 30, would not mean he doesn't still have a long future in the Test team or that he's the wrong player

"For the time being in this form

slump though, we need him to be better - which means making big runs, not bowling bouncers and risking the potential of injury when that's the job of the bowlers in the team," he added.

Johnson was referring to Labuschagne getting used as a back-up seamer after injury concerns to allrounder Mitchell Marsh at Perth.

Johnson, who took 313 wickets with his left-arm pace and made 2065 runs from 73 Tests, said veteran batter Steve Smith too looked jaded.

"Steve Smith's form is a serious concern. He looks like he has lost his sharpness we are used to, missing balls on his pads that in the past were easy runs," he added. (PTI)

Ashwin has been phenomenal but team wants to prepare Washington for future: Harbhajan

MUMBAI, Nov 30: No one can take away the "phenomenal achievements" of Ravichandran Ashwin but the Indian team management is preparing Washington Sundar for near future when the former calls time, feels another spin maestro Harbhajan Singh. Ashwin, who with 536 wickets is second to Anil Kumble's 619 Test scalps for India but the next 84 victims could take time with young Washington suddenly becoming India's first-choice offbreak bowler in the Gautm Gambhir era.

"I think that's what their (team management and selectors') long term plan is. Ravichandran Ashwin has done a phenomenal job playing for India in taking all those wickets in his career," Harbhajan told PTI in an exclusive interview when asked if he sees Ashwin's younger Tamil Nadu statemate taking over the mantle of lead

Ashwin's age is certainly a factor that is being kept in considera-

"But now that he is at that stage, at the age of 38, so that's why they have kept Washington Sundar with them (for) whenever R Ashwin will retire. The team thinks that they have to prepare Washington, so I think they are working on the same path," the former off-spinner with 400 plus Test and 700 plus international wickets across formats

Harbhajan spoke during the launch of a book titled "The Extraordinary Life of Kiran Dembla", authored by filmmaker Dr Deepak Singh.

Harbhajan, who didn't play the WACA Test in 2008, said the win in the series opener at the Optus Stadium "doubled the joy".

"It was (the) most important win for India because Perth has always been a very happy hunting ground for Australia," he said. "To beat them in their backyard is always very difficult, but this is a ground where the happiness of winning doubles because here they (Australia) consider themselves (to be) very strong at this venue." "So,



well done to team India, they played phenomenal cricket and I hope this will continue and India (would) go on to win this series 4-," he added.

Harbhajan said winning the first Test notwithstanding, another Test in the series will set India on the path to the World Test Championship final but added that merely getting there would not be enough. "If they win another game, I think India will definitely go into the WTC (final) but it's not important to reach there, it's important to win we will reach there," he said.

Harbhajan heaped praise on India's stand-in captain for the Perth Test, Jasprit Bumrah, saying he commands a lot of respect in the dressing room for the man that he is. "Bumrah is an amazing player, and of course, he has got a great mindset. I have been a huge supporter of Bumrah from Day One and he has got that very calm "He knows his game and he is

one of those guys who is a very likeable person in the dressing room. He commands a lot of respect in the dressing room so when such a person leads you from the front, the team obviously follows,' he added.

The former India player said while Bumrah was at the forefront, he singled out KL Rahul for his formidable batting at Perth in the first Test along with Yashasvi Jaiswal for India's triumph. "To give credit, Jassi did a great job but along with that, Jaiswal (too)," he

"KL Rahul... we talk so much about him, that KL is not making runs, this is not happening for him or that is not happening but in the end, you see, if you give a (long) run to a player — he is a quality player, KL Rahul — and I am so happy for him." Harbhajan hoped India will continue their momentum from Perth as they prepare for the next assignment in a day-night Test at Adelaide. (PTI)

Dibrugarh

Railway Workshop

Sports Club clinch B

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, Nov 30: In a com-

manding performance, Dibrugarh

Railway Workshop Sports Club se-

cured a comprehensive 10-wicket

victory against Jeoti Morol Sangha

to claim the championship title in

the Uttiya Ganguly Memorial B Di-

vision T20 Cricket League.

Division T20 title

Pakistan blinks, PCB source says will accept hybrid model if same policy followed for ICC events in India

KARACHI, Nov 30: Backing down from its boycott threat, the Pakistan Cricket Board has told the ICC that it is willing to accept the 'Hybrid' model for hosting next year's Champions Trophy provided the world body allows the same arrangement for events to be held in India till 2031.

A top PCB source told PTI that the Board is also demanding a greater share in the annual revenue cycle for agreeing to the model under which India would be playing its share of matches, including the clash against Pakistan in Dubai, owing to security concerns. The Champions Trophy is to be held in February-

The proposal is a climbdown for the PCB, which had earlier threatened to boycott the tournament if its hosting rights were not granted in full and India's demand for a neutral venue was accepted.

"The current situation is that PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has said that it will only accept hosting the Champions Trophy on a hybrid model if the board agrees that in future all ICC events will be on same system with Pakistan not going to India to play matches," a PCB source told PTI.

Till 2031, India are due to host three ICC men's events -- the 2026 T20 World Cup jointly with Sri Lanka, the 2029 Champions Trophy and the 2031 ODI World Cup jointly with Bangladesh.

Given that Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are co-hosts for two major events, Pakistan would not be compelled to travel to India if they insist against it. The point of contention could be just the 2029 Champions



Trophy, which will be held entirely in India.

Another flash-point could be next year's women's ODI World Cup in October, also to be held in India. The state of flux surrounding next year's Champi-

ons Trophy is now expected to be resolved in the next couple of days after the ICC executive board considers Pakistan's latest demands.

The ICC Board met briefly to find a solution on Friday but no agreement could be reached. The world body eventually told PCB to either accept the hybrid model or be prepared to be excluded from the tournament after Naqvi reiterated the unyielding position of

The impasse has led to a delay in the announcement

The PCB source claimed that Naqvi is sticking to his stance despite pressure and has even sought financial perks for the PCB to accept the hybrid model. "Pakistan also wants the ICC board to increase its

financial cycle share of revenues from 5.75 percent and Naqvi is insistent on this but he has not sought any additional hosting fees," the source added.

"People are saying that Naqvi has sought time to get back after talking to his government but we don't know if he went there with the backing of the government and had already sought their approval to make his stand in the ICC board's virtual meeting," he as-

Naqvi, who is also the interior minister in his country, also faces the prospect of a public backlash if PCB is seen to be backing down without any tangible gains. Earlier, Naqvi also met Emirates Cricket Board head Mubashir Usmani in Dubai, conveying that Pakistan was ready to host the Champions Trophy and all the preparations were on schedule.

The PCB source though rejected speculation that the Board would get a bonus of USD 20 million besides the hosting fees of USD six million for the Champions Trophy for conceding to India's de-

"Pakistan has taken only one stance and that is in future, it will also not play in India in any ICC events and the Hybrid model should be applied for all future ICC events that Pakistan and India will play their games at neutral venues," he said. (PTI)

lead in the 45th over, 20

minutes before stumps.

But Phillips fell for 19

shortly before the close of

play when New Zealand

was 153-6, its lead only

two runs and with only the

Earlier, Brook was

helped again Saturday by

New Zealand's poor

catching. He was dropped

for the fifth time in his in-

nings, by Glenn Phillips at

gully from the bowling of

Will O'Rourke, when he

Brook was dropped four

times on the second day:

on 18 by Phillips in the

gully, on 41 by Tom

Latham at first slip, on 70

by Devon Conway in the

deep and on 112 by wick-

etkeeper Tom Blundell off

He was finally out,

caught by Blundell from

the bowling of Matt

Henry, in the sixth over of

the second new ball when

England was 381-6.

bowlers to come.

was 132.

Matt Henry.

The final, played at Jalan Outdoor Stadium in Dibrugarh on Sunday, saw a one-sided contest as Jeoti Morol Sangha crumbled for just 81 runs. The Railway Workshop Sports Club's opening batters made light work of the target, cruising to victory without losing a wicket. JN Saikia of Dibrugarh Railway

Workshop Sports Club emerged as the architect of Jeoti Morol's downfall, claiming four crucial wickets. He was named the Man of the Match. Saikia, was also adjudged the tournament's Best Bowler with an impressive haul of 13 wickets. C Das of of Dibrugarh Railway Workshop Sports Club was named the Best Batter of the tournament. Jeoti Morol Sangha's Sabir Khan was named the Man of the Series.

The trophy presentation was officiated by DDSA Vice Presidents Manash Jyoti Dutta and Dipuranjan Makrary. Dibrugarh Railway Workshop Deputy Chief Engineer Arnab Sinha, DDSA Cricket Secretary Abdul Rahman and two family members of trophy doner Sanjib Ganguly and Ulhas Ganguly were also present.

India vs PM XI 1st day's play abandoned due to rain; Rohit, Gill miss Pink ball game time

CANBERRA, Nov 30: Unrelenting rain forced the abandonment of the first-day's play of the two-day practice match between India and Prime Minister's XI here on Saturday, robbing Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill of some muchneeded Pink ball game time ahead of the day-night second Test against Australia at Adelaide.

The teams have agreed to play a 50-over-a-side match on Sunday at the Manuka Oval, weather permit-

However, the day might have come as a dampener for captain Rohit, who had skipped the first Test at Perth to welcome a baby boy into his family, ahead of the Pink Ball Test, starting from De-

Though he has had couple of extensive net sessions with Pink ball, facing some quality bowlers in a real-match situation holds a different value, considering India's last day-night Test was against Sri Lanka in March 2022 in Ben-

Gill had to sit out of the first Test because of a finger injury and the top-order batter is expected to walk back into the eleven. (PTI)

Sindhu cruises past Hooda to reach **Syed Modi final**



LUCKNOW, Nov 30: Two- while Hooda initially kept pace time Olympic medallist PV with well-placed pushes and Sindhu cruised into the drops. women's singles final with a However, the 17-year-old's dominating straight-game win errors, particularly in the length over fellow Indian Unnati Hooda at the Syed Modi International Super 300 badminton tournament here on Saturday.

Top seed Sindhu outclassed the 17-year-old Hooda 21-12 21-9 in just 36 minutes in the semifinal.

Hooda struggled to challenge Sindhu, committing a series of unforced errors that allowed her illustrious opponent to maintain control throughout the match.

"I am happy with today's performance. From the beginning, I maintained the lead. I was just trying out a few strokes and overall, I was confident with the way I was playing," Sindhu said after the match.

"I think Unnati played her best, but I didn't give her a chance to overtake me. I was leading from the beginning to the end. She is an upcoming player, and I wish her all the very best.

"I need to go back and prepare for tomorrow because it's not going to be easy. From the beginning, I need to give my best," Sindhu added.

A former world champion, Sindhu, currently ranked 18th, will face either Thailand's Lalinrat Chaiwan or China's Wu Luo Yu in the final as she chases her third Syed Modi International title.

Earlier, India's mixed doubles pair of Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila advanced to the final with a convincing straightgame victory over China's Zhi Hong Zhou and Jia Yi Yang.

The fifth-seeded Indians secured a 21-16, 21-15 win in the 42-minute semifinal. They will meet the winner of the other semifinal between Chinese duo of Pin Yi Liao and Ke Xin Huang and Thailand's sixthseeded pair Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Supissara

Sindhu's semifinal contest saw her gradually take control as she moved to a 5-3 lead with a precise cross-court drop shot,

of her lifts, allowed Sindhu to lead 11-8 at the break.

Hooda's determination to stay in rallies often resulted in smashes and drops going wide.

Sindhu extended her lead to 15-8 without relying on her trademark baseline smashes. Unforced errors continued to plague Hooda, enabling Sindhu to close out the first game comfortably.

After the change of sides, Sindhu continued to dominate the proceedings, surging to 8-3 lead before extending it to 11-4 at the interval.

She continued her aggressive play with a smash, an overhead cross-court drop, and a body smash, taking the score to 18-7

Hooda saved one of Sindhu's 12 match points but ultimately faltered with another error, handing Sindhu the match.

Reflecting further on her game, Sindhu said: "I am definitely happy with the way I am going. Definitely, there is a scope for a lot of improvement... it's not just that if we finish training or if we are at the top, we don't have to train. Every day is a new process, and I am doing that."

Addressing her recent struggles, including her Paris Olympics campaign, Sindhu said, "I know Paris was not a good one for me. I have tried my best, but it doesn't matter. I need to get back stronger. So, I am working on myself."

Sindhu, who has been working with coaches Anup Sridhar and Korea's Lee Hyun-il, also spoke about adapting her fitness regimen.

"Every athlete has a different style of fitness. You keep growing, and at the same time, your movements need to be perfect. Maybe back in my twenties, the training program might have been different. Now, it's completely different. It depends on age, how I am playing, and my movements. Accordingly, we keep changing it." (PTI)

Williamson makes another half-century but England dominate on day 3 nally erased the England

Christchurch Zealand), Nov 30: Kane Williamson completed his second half-century of the match and passed 9,000 Test runs on Saturday as he led New Zealand's faltering resistance to England's control on the third day of the first Test.

Williamson followed his first innings 93 with 61 and was one of five batsmen to fall before New Zealand erased England's 151-run first innings lead.

At stumps, New Zealand was 155-6, four runs ahead and with only bowlers yet to bat. Daryl Mitchell was 31 not out and Nathan Smith was on one. Brydon Carse had 3-22 and seven wickets for the match. England

Bazball principles to take charge of the match almost from the resumption Saturday, dashing past New Zealand's first innings of 348 and building a commanding first innings lead at almost six runs per over.

Harry Brook resumed at 132 and went on to 171 in a 159-run partnership with Ben Stokes who was 37 not out overnight and finished with 80.

Dashing late contributions from Gus Atkinson who made 48 from 26

eleven.

CANBERRA, Nov 30: There will be few tweaks in

Australia's bowling plans against Yashasvi Jaiswal

and KL Rahul for the day-night Test in Adelaide after

their defeat in Perth, revealed Scott Boland, who is set

to replace injured Josh Hazlewood in the playing

Hazlewood has been ruled out with a side strain and

35-year-old Boland, who has played 10 Tests since his

Test debut in 2021, is top contender to bowl those hard

lengths against an Indian batting line-up oozing with

confidence after their second innings effort in the



33 from 24 with three monstrous sixes piled more pain on New Zealand late in its innings as it made 499 all out.

In total, England added 180 runs in 33 overs Saturday at a tempo set by Brook who posted his seventh century and thirdhighest score in tests and Stokes who reached his 35th half century from 105 balls, then added his next 30 runs from 41 deliveries.

New Zealand then lost both openers, Tom Latham (1) and Devon Conway (8), with only 23 runs on

Ravindra (24) with 46 runs still needed to erase England's lead. Ravindra continues to show enormous promise but was out to rash shots in both in-

Williamson provided an example of application to tury from 74 balls when Zealand top order, continuing in his usual unflappable manner even after he was struck on the helmet by Stokes when on 26.

In contrast, Ravindra was lured into an unnecessary shot at a short ball by Carse, knowing that the

sprung when he was caught in the deep by Jacob Bethell. Williamson

9,000 test runs in his 103rd test at an average of 54 when he reached 26. He went on to a half cen-New Zealand was 117-3. He was out with the total at 133-4, trapped lbw by Chris Woakes, and

wicketkeeper Tom Blundell was caught behind next ball as New Zealand slumped to 133-5, still 18 runs behind England.

Brooks had come to the crease when England was 45-3 before lunch on day He turned around Eng-

land's innings in a 151-run partnership with Ollie Pope (77) and led his team into a dominant position with Stokes. (AP)

Post Perth, Aussie bowlers likely to tweak Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood ruled out of 2nd Pink Ball Test against India

ADELAIDE, Nov 30: Pacer Josh Hazlewood was on Saturday ruled out of the second Test against India — a day-night match — starting here "We've spoken as a team about our plans for all the different Indian batters. I won't tell you those, but on December 6 with a "low grade left side" injury, Cricket Australia anwe've got pretty set plans. They might have a little bit

Australia are trailing 0-1 in the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy after a 295-run shellacking in the first Test at Perth.

"Josh Hazlewood has been ruled out of the match with a low grade left side injury. Hazlewood will remain with the group in Adelaide to prepare for the remainder of the series," the CA said in a media release.

Uncapped pacers Sean Abbott and Brendan Doggett have been added to the Australian squad for the Adelaide Test. (PTI)

Unfair to judge Gambhir so early in his coaching role: Ajay Jadeja

of a tweak after the guys have seen them again from

Perth," Boland told reporters after the first day's play

Jaiswal (161) and Rahul (77) added 201 runs in a

record opening stand on Australian soil followed by

between India and Australian Prime Minister's XI was

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: Former India middle-order batter Ajay Jadeja on Saturday defended head coach Gautam Gambhir from the criticism he has received following the 0-3 drubbing against New Zealand, saying it's "unfair" given the short time he has been in the new role.

Gambhir, the hero of the 2011 World Cup title triumph, took over the reins of the India team in July after Rahul Dravid's tenure

Following a bright start against Sri Lanka in the T20I series, India lost the ODI series to the home side. The Test team then thrashed Bangladesh 2-0 before a nightmare outing against New Zealand put Gambhir under massive scrutiny. "I think you are being unfair to

him... If you will start judging peo-

ple on the basis of their coaching

role or whatever way it is being

looked at, it is too short a time to for people to be judged," Jadeja told PTI Videos in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of FICCI Turf event here on Saturday.

their bowling plans, admits Boland

washed out

"If you are not convinced that he is good, then one performance here or there will be able to convince anyone. I don't think it is the time to judge him, it is the time we should enjoy him," added Jadeja, known for his exploits in the 50over game where he scored over 5000 runs in 196 ODIs.

India's massive 295-run win against Australia in the first Border-Gavaskar Test at Perth following the no-show against the Kiwis has come as a huge morale-booster for the side and Jadeja felt Gambhir should not be judged within six months of his appointment. "So, there are phases and it will

into that direction and start judging to do." him (Gambhir) in six months. "You knew what you were asking for and what you were getting. He is a very clear-cut person and he has made it clear throughout his

life. So, what your are seeing now

is what everyone expected of him

Jadeja said that regular Test skipper Rohit Sharma's return for the second Test at Adelaide from December 6 after missing the opening game will boost India's confidence

"Him (Rohit Sharma) coming

back to the team will surely boost India's confidence, for sure. He is a leader, when the chips were down, team was going down, he stood up there as the leader and now when the team is going up, he will be again there as the leader."

Asked whether KL Rahul and Rohit should swap batting slots in the second Test after the former had a formidable outing in the Perth game, Jadeja said, "I have no details of what the team is thinking right now, no views on who should bat at what number. Rohit Sharma has always been an asset to the side wherever he bats.'

Opening the innings with Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rahul scored 77 in the second innings at Perth, helping India to set a massive 534-run target. Some experts have opined that Rahul should open in the Adelaide Test as well, while Rohit should in at onedown. (PTI)

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come, sometimes you win and

sometimes you lose. So, I won't go