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

"Congress chief ministers, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra should resign as they were elected through the same electoral process the opposition party is questioning," Bhatia said. "It was ironic that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge questioned EVMs on a day Priyanka Gandhi Vadra took oath as a Lok Sabha MP," he said.

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 elections 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 electoral process (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia speaking at a podium.

Goyal interacts with tea industry stakeholders in Guwahati



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 by the sector.

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 Maharashtra government 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 Fadnis, 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)

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

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 from jail immediately.

RSS general secretary Dattatreya 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 opinion in its support "as soon as possible".

"The attacks, murders, looting, arson as well as inhuman atrocities by Islamic fundamentalists on Hindus, women and all other minorities in Bangladesh are extremely worrying and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh condemns this," he said.

Instead of stopping this, the present Bangladesh government and other agencies are only silent spectators, Hosabale said. "Out of helplessness, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Tripura-Kolkata bus attacked in Bangladesh

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 Road in 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)

'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 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

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma
Chief Minister, Assam

WORLD AIDS DAY
1 December 2024
Theme of the year
'Take the Rights Path: My health, my right!'

CENTRAL EVENT

Chief Guest
Shri Keshab Mahanta
Minister of Transport, IT etc

Venue: **Nehrubali Playground, Nagaon**

📅 1 December 2024 ⌚ 10:30 am

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

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

#IndiaFightsHIVandSTI

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

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 Delhi.

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 Health 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 appreciated the commitment of the BTR



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 initiatives.

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 Ji, in New Delhi and briefed him

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 Health Battalion' for BTR. This will further inspire and support the youth of BTR in joining the Indian Defence Forces and serving the nation", CEM Boro said.

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

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 30: Swasthya Sewa Utsav Phase 3.0 will be held from December 3rd to 5th across all health facilities in Dima Hasao district.

This was announced in a press meet which was chaired by Dr Paban Kr Ganju, joint director of health services and member secretary of the District Health Society.

During the press meet, Dr Paban Kr Ganju announced that the third round of the Swasthya Sewa Utsav aims to assess and address the shortcomings in health institutions, its infrastructure, human resources, and the quality of services.

"Assessment will be conducted by independent assessors," he added.

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).

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-centres.

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



in Kokrajhar from December 3 to 5, focusing on assessing the quality of health institutions, its infrastructure, human resource and quality of services rendered across the district.

Speaking to the media persons at a press conference held at the DC office conference hall, on Saturday, district commissioner Masanda Magdalin Pertin stated that the Swasthya Sewa Utsav phase 3 will be held on December 3 to 5.

She said that the initiative aims to evaluate the infrastructure, human resources, and service quality at healthcare facilities. The assessments will be conducted by independent evaluators to ensure unbiased and accurate reviews.

She informed that the best performing health institutions will be awarded cash prizes as well performing citations from the state

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 services.

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

HT Bureau
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 Borkataky passes away

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 30: Duldul Borkataky, former assistant general secretary of All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and a prominent social worker, passed away at the age of 47.

He passed away on Friday evening at Guwahati Medical College and Hospital (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 organisations. 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: In a swift and coordinated effort, a rescue operation was conducted on Saturday to remove children

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 Alamyam, ACS; Sonali Hojai, labour inspector, protection officer (NIC) Susanta Langthasa, DCPU; district project coordinator Pausuiding Panme, Child Help Line and sub-inspector Monita Pator, Child Welfare Police Officer SJPU, Haflong PS.



Q. CAN YOU BE ARRESTED OVER A VIDEO CALL?

Ans. No

Here's how scammers try to trap you:

- ⚠️ THEY MAY CALL AND CLAIM THAT YOUR NAME IS INVOLVED IN ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS PARCELS CONTAINING BANNED ITEMS.
- ⚠️ IMPERSONATING POLICE OFFICERS, THEY FORCE YOU TO JOIN AND REMAIN ON A VIDEO CALL.
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STOP • THINK • TAKE ACTION

FOR MORE INFORMATION FOLLOW **CYBERDOST**





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 "Aashaycin" 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 cord," Reddy added.

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

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 @vridhcinemas @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)

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 jury panel.

"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 develop 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 speaking.

"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 interview.

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 Ird-gird" 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 added.

The filmmaker thought the production on "Maddhim" would finish early but ended up spending more than two years on the project, encountering many hurdles and prejudices along the way.

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

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

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 Ahuja'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)

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 perform in Bhutan.

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-station.

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 TiXbt.

The first major international concert in Bhutan is promoted by Gelephu Mindfulness City and AEG Presents in arrangement with One Fiinix Live. (PTI)

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 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 @divyenndu on board. #RamCharanRevolts Global Star @AlwaysRamCharan @nimmashivarajkumar @janhvikapoor @buchibabu_sana @iamjaggubhai @arrahman @rathnaveludop @kollaavinash @venkatasatishkilaru @vridhcinemas @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)



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-March.

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 Champions 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 his country.

The impasse has led to a delay in the announcement of the schedule for the tournament.

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 asserted.

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 demands.

"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)

Dibrugarh Railway Workshop Sports Club clinch B Division T20 title

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 30: In a commanding performance, Dibrugarh Railway Workshop Sports Club secured a comprehensive 10-wicket victory against Jeoti Morol Sangha to claim the championship title in the Uttiya Ganguly Memorial B Division T20 Cricket League. 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, who was also adjudged the tournament's Best Bowler with an impressive haul of 13 wickets. C Das 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 Dipranjan Makrany. Dibrugarh Railway Workshop Deputy Chief Engineer Amab Sinha, DDSA Cricket Secretary Abdul Rahman and two family members of trophy donor Sanjib Ganguly and Ulhas Ganguly were also present.

Sindhu cruises past Hooda to reach Syed Modi final 1st Test: Williamson makes another half-century but England dominate on day 3

LUCKNOW, Nov 30: Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu cruised into the women's singles final with a dominating straight-game win 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 Lalinnrat 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 straight-game 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 sixth-seeded pair Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran.

Sindhu's semifinal contest saw her gradually take control as she moved to a 5-3 lead with a precise cross-court drop shot, while Hooda ini-

tially kept pace with well-placed pushes and drops.

However, the 17-year-old's errors, particularly in the length 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. (PTI)

CHRISTCHURCH (NEW 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 applied 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 balls and Carse who made 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 third-highest 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 the board and Rachin 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 innings. (AP)




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