

# GP Singh released from state, to become CRPF DG Take part on ONOE debate, PM tells youths Harmeet Singh to hold addl charge of I



GUWAHATI, Jan 27: After a two-year stint as the DGP of Assam, Gyanendra Pratap Singh was on Monday released from state services to join the Central Reserve Police Force as Director General

The 1991-batch Assam-Meghalaya cadre IPS officer has been the Director General of Assam Police since February 1, 2023. "The officer is hereby released from the date of handing over of charges," the home and po-

litical commissioner & secretary, Biswajit Pegu, said in a notification.

The outgoing DGP will be the DG of CRPF till his retirement in November 2027 or until further orders, whichever is earlier, he added. The order, however, did not specify when Singh will hand over the charge to Special DGP Harmeet Singh, who has been given the additional charge to look after the DGP's work.

Singh had returned from central deputation to Assam as the additional DGP (Law and Order) in December 2019 during the peak of anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests in the state. He was serving as the NIA's IGP in New

Delhi before being sent back to the state to quell violent agitation against the citizenship law. He was also a part of the Special Protection Group (SPG) earlier.

The Assam government order further said that Special DGP Harmeet Singh has been allowed to look after the current duties of the DGP in addition to his existing responsibilities temporarily till the appointment of a regular incumbent.

Currently, Singh is serving as the Special DGP of Headquarters (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the ongoing debate on the "One Nation, One Election" (ONOE) proposal is critical for India's democratic process and urged youngsters to actively engage in and promote the discussions. Addressing a National Cadet Corps (NCC) rally here, Modi urged youngsters, including NCC cadets and NSS volunteers, to actively engage in and promote the debate, which he said is directly linked to their future.

The Prime Minister observed that polls have often led to an overwhelming cycle of continuous electioneering in India.

"After independence, elections at the state and central levels were held together for a long time. But over time, this pattern broke down, causing significant challenges for the country," he said.

Modi highlighted that the current situation, where elections take place frequently, disrupts governance and development. "Today, there is an important



debate about 'One Nation, One Election'. Holding the Lok Sabha and state elections simultaneously could alleviate disruptions and enable a more focused governance approach," he said.

The Prime Minister urged youngsters to take part in the discussion, stressing its relevance for

the country's future. "I appeal to the NCC cadets, volunteers and all youngsters across the country -- wherever you directly linked to your future," he ister (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

said while emphasising that participating in the debate is essential for shaping India's future political landscape. Comparing India's election frequency with that of other countries, Modi pointed out that even in the United States, the electoral cycle is structured to ensure a clear separation of governance periods. "In countries like the US, elections are held every four years and the dates for forming a new government are are, take this debate forward. It is fixed," he noted. The Prime Min-

Commitment should be to mutual understanding, not suspicion: Chinese FM

BEIJING, Jan 27: India and China should meet each other halfway and commit themselves to mutual understanding rather than mutual suspicion, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Monday as he met Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri

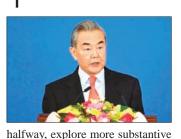
Misri is here on a two-day visit for talks with Chinese officials to improve India-China relations, in the second such high-profile visit from India to China in less than oneand-a-half months.

In his meeting with Misri, Wang said that since the meeting between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Russia last year, the two sides have earnestly implemented the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, carried out active interactions at all levels and accelerated the process of improving China-India relations, said a press release issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry here.

"The two sides should seize the

BTR govt celebrates Bodo Peace Accord day

CM Sarma to grace the celebration today



measures, and commit to mutual understanding, mutual support, and mutual achievement, rather than mutual suspicion, mutual alienation, and mutual consumption," Wang said. The improvement and development of China-India relations is in the fundamental interests of the two countries and their people, and is conducive to safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of the global South countries, he said.

Good relations between India and China are also conducive to making contributions to the peace, stability, development, and prosperity of the two ancient civilizations in Asia and the world, Wang said. Besides being

MGNREGA wages: Cong NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Accusing Prime Minister Modi's uncaring atthe Modi government of perpetuattitude and shortsightedness was his

Budget must increase

ing a policy of indifference to the plight of MGNREGA workers, the Congress on Monday demanded that the Union budget must increase MGNREGA wages and the Aadhar Based Payment Bridge Systems not be made mandatory.

The opposition party demanded that MGNREGA wages be increased with the goal of hitting ₹ 400 per day as a national minimum wage

In a statement, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said MGNREGA wages cannot be set by the arbitrary whims of the government.

He said a Standing Committee must be established to evaluate the need for changes in the wage rate.

The Aadhar Based Payment Bridge Systems (ABPS) must not be made mandatory, Ramesh said. He also put forward the demand

that the number of workdays under MGNREGA must be increased

from 100 to 150 days.

mockery of MGNREGA on the floor of Parliament in 2015," Ramesh said.

In the years since, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, MGNREGA has conclusively demonstrated its utility as one of the few social security interventions that the government can execute, he said.

From a pre-pandemic total of 6.16 crore households requesting work under the scheme in 2019-20, the numbers jumped by 33 per cent to 8.55 crore in 2020-2021, he said. For these crores of families, MGNREGA was the only lifeline amidst the chaos of the government's unplanned lockdowns, Ramesh said.

"Amidst an ongoing economic slowdown, there continue to be 9.31 crore active workers that are employed under the programme as of January 2025. Close to 75 per cent of these workers are women. Despite this reality, the government

Waqf panel accepts ruling alliance's amendments in 14 clauses

Rejects opposition-sponsored changes

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: The parliamentary committee scrutinising the Waqf bill is set to propose that the existing "Waqf by user" properties will remain so if not in dispute or is a government facility, as the panel on Monday adopted all amendments proposed by BJP members and negated those by opposition MPs.

Opposition MPs proposed amendments in all 44 clauses of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, seeking to restore the provisions of the existing law, and claimed that the law proposed by the committee in its report would maintain the Bill's "draconian" character and the bid to inter-

fere in religious affairs of Muslims, sources said. The meeting of the joint parlia-

mentary committee headed by BJP MP Jagdambika Pal on Monday was again marked by noisy protests

**BJP-RSS** people 'traitors', never

contributed to freedom struggle: Kharge



cused him of "subverting" demosion set to begin on January 31, the cratic process. The panel is set to ruling BJP-led National Democratic Alliance can get the Bill passed in adopt its report on Wednesday with MPs of opposition parties such as the first half of the session as it enthe Congress, TMC, DMK, and the joys a majority in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, they AIMIM expected to give their disadded. DMK MP A Raja alleged sent, the sources said.

### AASU special general meeting gets underway HT Correspondent SIVASAGAR, Jan 27: All Assam

Students Union's (AASU) two-day special general meeting got underway in the Swargadeu Saulung Siu-ka-Fa Samannay Kshetra near the historic Talatal ghar premises on Monday

The Talala ghar premises and the entire Jaysagar area wore a festive air with over 5000 student representatives from different districts assembled here in the morning.

Hoisting the AASU flag, AASU president Utpal Sarmah said that the people of Sivasagar always stood behind the people of Assam at the time of crisis. The first annual general meeting was held in 1979 that initiated the Assam Movement.

Criticising the present government, he said that the ruling power wants all (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

MHOW, Jan 27: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday urged party workers to unite in saving the Constitution, saying the Dalits, backwards, tribals and poor will suffer otherwise.

Addressing the "Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan" rally here, he also branded the BJP-RSS people as "traitors", and said the Congress will never tolerate the exploitation of the poor in the name of religion.

Taking a swipe at BJP leaders taking a holy dip at the Maha Kumbh, Kharge said taking a dip in the holy Ganga will not help remove poverty.

He, however, stressed that he does not wish to hurt anyone's 'aastha' (faith).

"BJP leaders are competing with

each other to take the dip in the Ganga river for the sake of cameras." he said. The Congress chief also at-

tacked the RSS and the BJP, saying while they make statements like 'don't look for Shivling under every mosque', they continue to "instigate" people to do so.

He said the people of the RSS, who abuse the Congress today, did nothing for the country's freedom

struggle and independence as they were with the British.

"The RSS-BJP are 'deshdrohi (traitors). If you want to free yourself from poverty and unemployment, then protect the Constitution and remain united," Kharge said. He said home minister Amit

Shah's remarks on Ambedkar in the Rajya Sabha, while replying to a debate on the Constitution last year, showed his "real feelings" for Ambedkar.

Taking a swipe at PM Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah, he charged, "they have committed so many sins that they cannot go to heaven in 100 lives".

The Congress had planned this rally at Ambedkar's birthplace to highlight the BJP's alleged insult to Ambedkar's work. (PTI)

HT Correspondent KOKRAJHAR, Jan 27: Marking the 5th anniversary of the historic BTR Peace Accord, the Bodoland Territorial Region government began the celebration on Monday commemorating the accord day.

The celebration will span two days with a series of events lined

The first day of the event was carried out in all districts and 40 constituencies of the BTR region. It kicked off with a grand bike rally in Kokrajhar, which saw enthusiastic participation from netizens as BTR Chief Executive Member (CEM) Pramod Boro and district commissioner of Kokrajhar, Masanda Magdalin Pertin flagged off the rally.

Speaking to The Hills Times and integrity in our region, and the

cord, Boro, one of the key signatories of the BTR accord, expressed satisfaction with its success. He emphasised that the accord has brought peace, stability, and development to the region, marking a significant milestone in the history of BTR. The two-day program aims to celebrate the achievements of the peace accord while reflecting on the journey of growth and harmony in the region. "To celebrate the successful

completion of the five glorious years of the historic BTR Peace Accord 2020, I was delighted to flag off a Bike Rally in Kokrajhar this morning. The BTR Peace Accord ushered in an unprecedented era of sustainable peace, harmony,

about the progress of the peace ac- bike rally carried forward our message of peace & progress in celebration of this historic moment," CEM said.

> On January 28, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma will attend various programmes scheduled to be held at Green Field, Bodofa Nwgwr in Kokrajhar. Sarma will inaugurate the newly constructed hostels for BTC EMs (Executive Members) and MCLAs (Members of the Council Legislative Assembly) at Harinaguri along the Baukhungri Hills, lay the foundation stone of Kokrajhar University campus, and perform the Gwthar Bathou San celebration at the Bathou Traditional & Cultural Centre at Bagansali in Kokrajhar town. He will also address a public gathering (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

# Search committee set up to shortlist names for next CEC: Sources

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: The government has set up a search committee under Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to shortlist names for the appointment of the next chief election commissioner, sources said on Monday, citing an order.

The finance and the department of personnel and training secretaries are the other two members of the panel.

So far, the senior-most election commissioner (EC) was elevated as Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) following the retirement of the incumbent

However, after a new law on appointments of the CEC and ECs came into force last year, a search committee shorlists names of five secretary-level officers for consideration of the committee for the appointment as the CEC and ECs. CEC Rajiv Kumar demits office on February 18 upon attaining 65 years of age.

While provisions of the "Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023", are being applied for the first time to appoint a CEC, it was used to appoint ECs Gyannesh Kumar and SS Sandhu to fill vacancies created by the retire-



ment of Anup Chandra Pandey and the resignation of Arun Goel last year.

According to the law, the CEC and ECs will be appointed by the President on the recommendation of a selection committee headed by the Prime Minister and comprising the Lok Sabha opposition leader and a Union Cabinet minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister. After Rajiv Kumar, Gyanesh Kumar is the senior-most election commissioner. His tenure is till January 26, 2029.

Sources said the search committee was constituted on January 17 by an order issued by the Union law ministry and it could meet during the Budget Session of Parliament that begins on January 31. (PTI)

# *IIT-G develops intricate nanomaterial for* mercury detection in living cells, environment

Mercury exposure poses severe health risks for humans

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati have developed an innovative and cost-effective method to detect the presence of harmful metals in living cells and the environment.

According to officials, the innovation could revolutionise disease diagnostics and environmental monitoring by improving the detection and management of metal toxicity in biological systems. The findings of the research have

been published in leading journals --"Journal of Materials Chemistry C" and "Materials Today Chemistry".

"Central to our research are perovskite nanocrystals, cutting-edge materials known for their exceptional properties, making them ideal for detecting metal ions. These nanocrystals, about one-lakh times smaller than a human hair, interact with light in signif-



icant ways, enabling them to serve as fluorescent probes inside living cells." "However, their quick degradation in water has previously limited their applications," said Saikat Bhaumik, As-

Physics, IIT-Guwahati.

encapsulated the perovskite nanocrystals in silica and polymer coatings, significantly enhancing their stability and luminescent intensity in water.

"This modification ensures that the nanocrystals maintain their functionality over extended periods, making them highly effective for practical use. The enhanced nanocrystals emit a bright green light under specific wavelengths, enabling precise detection of mercury ions, which are hazardous even in minute concentrations," Bhaumik said.

He explained that mercury exposure, whether through contaminated food, water, inhalation or skin contact, poses severe health risks, including the nervous-system damage, organ dysfunction and cognitive impairments.

"The team's nanocrystals demonstrated remarkable sensitivity, detecting mercury levels as low as a few nanomolar concentrations. Moreover, when tested on live (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Professor, department

sistant

To address this, the researchers have

### BUSINESS

# Sensex tumbles 824 pts to end at over 7-month low as Trump's tariff rhetoric upsets investors

**MUMBAI, Jan 27:** Benchmark BSE Sensex tanked 824 points to settle at more than seven-month low on Monday following heavy selling in IT and oil & gas shares amid weak global trends and increased uncertainty over US trade policy.

The 30-share BSE barometer plunged by 824.29 points or 1.08 per cent to close at 75,366.17 with 23 of its constituents ending lower and seven with gains. During the day, the barometer plummeted 922.87 points or 1.2 per cent to a low of 75,267.59.

The broader 50-share Nifty dropped by 263.05 points or 1.14 per cent to close at 22,829.15, tanking below the 23,000-level for the first time since June 6, 2024. In the intraday session, the NSE Nifty declined 305.3 points or 1.32 per cent to 22,786.90.

IT, telecom, utilities, power, consumer durables, oil and gas and healthcare sector shares were major losers as investor sentiment was hit by uncertainty over US trade policy.

US President Donald Trump announced 25 per cent tariffs on Colombia after the latter blocked planes carrying deported migrants. The US reversed the decision after Colombia, a close US ally, agreed to take back deported migrants.

"Broad-based selling across sectors plummeted the Indian market amidst tepid earnings and weak sentiments across the globe," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

"The weak sentiments were further exacerbated as the US trade

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confrontation continued, like with Colombia this time. Heightened volatility is here to stay this week ahead the upcoming events risk like the FOMC meeting, expiry week, and Union budget," Nair added.

ties Ltd, said. Among Sensex shares, HCL tech fell the most by 4.49 per cent folmetals, oil & gas and realty dragged lowed by Zomato, Tech Mahindra, Sensex below the 76k mark, PowerGrid and Tata Motors. whereas investors continued to exit mid and small-cap stocks on wor-

Shares of Infosys, Tata Steel, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and Bharti Airtel also declined, dragging the index to more than seven-month lows.

ICICI Bank, however, bucked the trend and rose 1.39 per cent following upbeat third-quarter results. Hindustan Unilever, M&M, SBI and L&T were among the other gainers

"A combination of factors like weak US and European market cues, monthly F&O expiry later this week, persistent FII fund outflows, cent) also declined. In the broader market, LT Foods

cent each) and Utilities (2.41 per

shares fell more than 4 per cent to settle at Rs 379.85 apiece on BSE after the company posted disappointing Q3 earnings, marked by a decline in net profit and weak operational performance.

IDFC First Bank shares plunged 8.85 per cent to close at ₹ 56.76 per piece. During the day, the stock tanked 9.33 per cent to hit a 52week low of ₹ 56.46 per share.

CDSL shares slumped more than 10 per cent to finish at Rs 1,342.90 apiece on the NSE after the company reported its lower-than-expected Q3 earnings performance. Overall market breadth was neg-

ative as 3,522 stocks declined while 593 advanced and 119 remained unchanged on the BSE. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies slumped by ₹ 9,28,229.09 crore to ₹ 4,10,23,624.90 or (USD 4.75 trillion)

In Asian markets, Shanghai and Tokyo closed lower due to weak manufacturing data. European markets also traded lower in early sessions with Germany's DAX dropping 1.1 per cent, the CAC 40 in Paris falling 0.8 per cent and Britain's FTSE 100 by 0.3 per cent. US stocks in futures trade also declined. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,758.49 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude edged up 0.22 per cent to USD 78.67 a barrel. (PTI)

# **IIT-G** develops intricate

Contd. from Page 1...

mammalian cells, the nanocrystals were found to be non-toxic, preserving cell function while effectively mon-itoring mercury ions." "The potential applications of this research extend beyond mercury detection. These nanocrystals could play a pivotal role in identifying other toxic metals in biological systems and could also be adapted for drug delivery, enabling real-time monitoring of treatment efficacy," Bhaumik said. (PTI)

# BTR govt celebrates Bodo

during the event. In the afternoon, an award distribution ceremony was held at the Bodofa Cultural Complex, where individuals excelling in various fields were honoured by the BTR government for their contributions to society.

Meanwhile, the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) celebrated the BTR Peace Accord Day centrally at Kashikotra HS School playground in Chirang district.

Notably, president of ABSU, Dipen Boro chaired the event.

The BTR Peace Accord, regarded as the third Bodo accord, was signed on January 27, 2020, between the Bodo movement groups (ABSU, ex-NDFB, and UBPO), and the Centre and Assam government.

# AASU special general meeting

the people to be under one culture, one language, and one religion denying the multiplicity of Indian culture. Sarma lambasted the state government for alleged failures in Education, the Jal Jiwan Mission, and all other issues raised often by the non-BJP political parties.

Dr Samujjal Bhattacharjya, chief adviser, AASU paid tributes to the Swahids of the Assam Movement and appreciated the organisational skill of the Sivasagar District Students Union. He said that AASU would like to draw a roadmap in the delegates' meeting for good and quality education, where students of all categories will benefit.

"A doubt has crept into our mind whether the Assam we love would remain intact in future due to divisive forces." he further highlighted. Bhattacharya stressed on an intellectual, cultural, and educational movement in Assam through Asom Unnati Sabha and other organisations which will lead to more production and more income for every household.

The cultural programmes were inaugurated by Samujjal Bhattacharjya. He also criticised the government for creating a huge beneficiary group at the expense of a productive workforce.

Sarju Hanche in his speech said that the political parties come to the people only at the time of election. The morning session was attended by AASU general Secretary (i/c) Sarju Hanche, president of the reception committee Dr Sabyasachi Mahanta, executive president Sarat Hazarika, general secretary, Samiran Phukan, Manob Hazarika, Brojen Bora, Punaram Mili, Buddhin Mishra, Lakhikanta Mahanta, Santu Borthakur, Dilip Das, Deba Hazarika, Manoj Bhagawati, Dr Utpal Dutta, and a host of distinguished citizens

### Budget must increase

to perpetuate a policy of indifference to their plight," he alleged. As a share of GDP, allocations to MGNREGA have been reduced to 0.26 per cent in 2024-25, Ramesh said pointing out that the World Bank recommends that at least 1.7 per cent of the GDP should be allocated to this programme.

Of the budgetary allocations made to MGNREGA, estimates suggest that about 20 per cent of the budget is paid towards clearing dues from previous years, he said.

"The minimum average notified wage rate was increased by 7 per cent in FY25- at a time when Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is estimated to be 5 per cent. The real wage increase is therefore a miserly 2 per cent," he pointed out

"Between 2019-20 and 2023-24, close to 4 crore job cards were deleted. Meanwhile, only 1.2 crore job cards have been added in the last two years," Ramesh said.

Estimates from one state suggest that 15 per cent of the deletions were wrongful and on January 1, 2024, the central government made it mandatory that all payments for MGNREGA must be through the Aadhar-Based Payment System (ABPS), the Congress general secretary said.

However, 27 per cent of workers are ineligible for payment under the ABPS and their demand for work is not registered, he said, adding that many also lose their wages despite doing work.

"The National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) is also required for workers to register attendance. However, glitches in the app, limited access to smartphones, and irregular connectivity have resulted in widespread prevalence of unregistered attendance, unrecorded work, and delayed wage payments," Ramesh argued.

During the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, MGNREGS workers from across the country raised these issues at the Jan Sunwai held at Ranka, Garhwa District, Jharkhand on February 14, 2024, he recalled.

Eight months later, these issues continue to persist - "a government-created human, economic, and institutional tragedy", he said

Putting forwards the demands of the Congress, Ramesh noted several of them have already found place in the Demand for Grants Report (2024-2025) put forth by the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Rural Development and Panchavati Rai.

"MGNREGA was envisioned as a demand-driven scheme, with workdays depending on the individuals applying for work rather than government budgets."

"Especially given the worsening economic downturn, the budget must make adequate financial provision to realise this vision," Ramesh asserted.

Amidst a decade-long crisis of stagnant wages, an increase in MGNREGA wages as envisioned in the Congress Nyay Patra for the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections -- assumes renewed importance, he said.

The forthcoming Union Budget must increase MGNREGA wages, with the goal of hitting ₹ 400 per day as a national minimum wage, Ramesh said.

The Congress leader also demanded that wages must be paid within the statutory period of 15 days and any delay in payment must be compensated.

In FY 2013-14, the minimum average notified wage rate for Mahatma Gandhi NREGA was ₹ 155, while in FY 2024-25, the minimum average notified wage rate is ₹ 279. (PTI)

Waqf panel accepts ruling

### Govt invites application for SEBI chief post NEW DELHI, Jan 27: The govern-

ment on Monday invited applications for the post of Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

The current SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch's three-year term ends on February 28. Buch assumed charge at the helm of SEBI on March 2, 2022.

In a public advertisement, the department of economic affairs under the finance ministry invited applications from candidates by February 17.

"The appointment shall be made for a maximum period of 5 years from the date of assumption of charge or till attaining the age of 65 years of the appointee, whichever is earlier," the ministry said.

The chairperson will receive a pay equivalent to a secretary to the Government of India which is Rs 5,62,500 per month (without house and car), the advertisement said.

The ministry also said that keeping in view the role and importance of

prices slipped ₹ 100 to ₹ 83,000 per 10 grams, bringing an end to its eight-day rally in the national capital on Monday, amid a weak global trend, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Besides, the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) first meeting of 2025, and the European Central Bank (ECB) will decide on interest rates on Wednesday and Thursday, which could influence the bullion prices. On Friday, gold of 99.9 per cent purity climbed ₹ 200 to hit a lifetime high of ₹ 83,100 per 10 grams in the national capi-

On Monday, the precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity decreased ₹ 100 to ₹ 82,600 per 10 grams from Friday's closing rate of ₹ 82,700 per 10 grams. Meanwhile, silver plunged ₹ 2,000 to ₹ 92,000 per kg delivery slumped ₹ 509 or 0.56 per due to reduced offtake by induscent to ₹ 91,090 per kg in futures

gold contracts for February delivery fell ₹ 4 to ₹ 80,022 per 10 grams. On Friday, the yellow metal hit a lifetime high of ₹

80,312 per 10 grams. "Gold experienced volatile trading as the first session of the week saw profit booking. In the domestic market, MCX gold traded within a range, with buyers capitalising on the weak opening ahead of the US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst -Commodity and Currency, LKP

Securities, said. The upcoming Fed policy announcement remains a key focus for market participants, and gold is likely to remain range-bound, trading between ₹ 79,000 and ₹ 80,600 in the short term, Trivedi added. Silver contracts for March

2,802.20 per ounce in the international markets.

'Gold prices corrected on Monday as speculators liquidated their long bets and grabbed profits following a recent rise. So far this

month, gold has climbed by more than 5 per cent," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Commodities Analyst at HDFC Securities, said. Comex silver futures fell 0.79 per cent in the Asian market hours

> to USD 30.94 per ounce. "Commodities are under pressure on disappointing Chinese PMIs that showed that manufacturing PMI (January) fell into contraction zone, which raises concerns about the state of the Chinese economy," Praveen Singh - Associate VP, Fundamental Currencies and Commodities, Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said.

Risk sentiments have been hit further on concerns about US tech-

cent), Teck (3.04 per cent), Metal (2.86 per cent), Healthcare (2.73 per cent), Industrials (2.63 per cent), Oil & Gas and Commdities (2.42 per Gold snaps 8-day rally; falls marginally to

₹ 83,000 per 10 gm ahead of US Fed policy NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Gold



and muted third quarter corporate

earnings so far have continued to

push investors in reducing their eq-

uity exposure," Prashanth Tapse,

Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equi-

Strong selling in IT, telecom,

ries that slowdown in earnings will

fail to match the higher valuations

clined 3.51 per cent and Midcap

The BSE SmallCap gauge de-

Among the sectoral indices,

telecommunication plummeted the

most by 3.83 per cent and Focuses

IT by 3.34 per cent. IT (3.31 per

assigned to them, Tapse added.

index slumped 2.68 per cent.

SEBI as a regulator, the candidate should have "high integrity, eminence and reputation preferably above 50 years with more than 25 years of professional experience".

The candidate is also required to have a "shown capacity in dealing with problems relating to securities markets, or has special knowledge or experience of law, finance, economics, accountancy' which in the opinion of the central government shall be useful to the board".

"The chairman should be a person who does not and will not have any such financial or other interests as are likely to affect prejudicially his function as the chairman," the advertisement added.

The government will appoint the SEBI chairperson on the recommendation of the Financial Sector Regulatory Appointments Search Committee (FS-RASC). The committee is also free to recommend any other person also who has not applied for the post on the basis of merit, it added. (PTI)

trial units and coin makers. It had settled at ₹ 94,000 per kg on Fridav

trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). Globally, Comex gold futures decreased USD 4.40 that is more cost-effective, Singh In futures trade on the MCX, per ounce or 0.16 per cent to USD

nology stock valuations emanating from Chinese AI startup DeepSeek added. (PTI)

# ITER chosen no 1 engineering institute in East India

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Jan 27: Institute of Technical Education and Research (ITER), faculty of engineering and technology of Siksha 'O' Anusandhan Deemed to be University (SOA) here has been chosen as the No. 1 engineering institute in eastern India at the Times Business Awards-Jharkhand for 2025 event held at Ranchi. The awards, flagship program of the Times of India, were given in recognition of exceptional achievements in 36 categories including education at a function graced by Bollywood actor Sonu Sood on January 17. ITER was introduced at the function as an institute under SOA which is known as a university which has adopted a zero tolerance policy towards incidents of ragging in the campus. Any proven incidence of ragging is met with stringent action including expulsion.

Prof. Prasanta Kumar Patra, Dean (Sponsored Research and Industrial Consultancy), SOA, received



#### the award in the function

Mr. Utkarsh Kumar, senior IAS officer, Mr. Balbir Dutt, senior journalist, Mr. Kaushal Kishore Jaiswal, eminent environmentalist, Ms. Nandini Gupta, Executive Director and Mr. Hemant Mehta, General Manager at Radisson Blu, attended the program as guests.

# 5 lakh sales for Royal Enfield Hunter 350



<u>HT Bureau</u>

GUWAHATI, Jan 27: Royal Enfield, the global leader in the midsize motorcycle segment (250cc-750cc) announced that Hunter 350 has crossed the milestone of 500,000 sales, an official statement said.

Introduced in August 2022, the Hunter has been one of the fastest growing motorcycle models, boasting of half a million happy owners across the globe.

"With its cool styling, dynamic performance and modern-retro charm, the Hunter 350 is the

preferred choice for young riders today," the statement said.

It further said that, whether navigating tight spots within the urban maze, or just hanging out at the coolest neighbourhoods in the city, or zipping through open roads, young riders are choosing the Hunter 350 for its swift agility and confident manoeuvrability.

The Hunter 350's widespread popularity is a testament to its versatile appeal across diverse markets, both in India and globally.

It has emerged as a preferred choice for riders

seeking a compact, nimble, and character-packed motorcycle that effortlessly combines everyday practicality with the thrill of pure motorcycling.

Yadvinder Singh Guleria, Chief Commercial Officer, Royal Enfield on the occasion said, "The Hunter 350 has truly redefined what it means to ride in urban and dynamic environments. Reaching the 500,000 sales milestone in a short time is a reflection of the immense love and trust of our customers for the Hunter 350."

He further said that the ever-growing vibrant community of passionate riders of Hunter 350 have made it a disruptor in the mid-size motorcycle segment.

Thanking the consumers he said, "We thank all our customers who continue to motivate us in creating motorcycles that inspire exploration, self-expression, and the joy of riding. Royal Enfield will be celebrating this milestone conducting rides along with the Hunter 350 customers across geographies reinforcing our commitment to ride more and ride pure!."

The Hunter 350's popularity is a testament to Royal Enfield's mission of delivering motorcycles that are innovative, stylish, and powerful. In India, the Hunter 350 has made rapid inroads into the Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets as well, apart from the metros. In addition to India, Hunter is now available across all markets of APAC, Europe, North America, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand, the statement concluded

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committee's proceedings were reduced to a "mockery" and that the "report is already ready by this time." "The DMK, myself, will move the Supreme Court to strike down the new law after it receives Parliament's nod," he said. Pal, however, rebutted the charges, and said the panel considered all the amendments in a democratic way. The view of the majority prevailed, he said, adding that the accepted amendments would make the proposed law better and more effective.

He noted that the government was bound to accept the changes made by the committee.

Among the other amendments supported by the BJP and its allies and adopted by the committee with 16 votes in favour and 10 against is the decision to do away with vesting any inquiry into disputes over a government property with the district collector concerned, the sources said.

The accepted amendment proposed by BJP MP Brij Lal said that the "state government may by notification designate an officer above the rank of collector" to carry out an inquiry, as per law. Several Muslim bodies had objected to the authority given to the collector, noting that he was also the head of revenue records, and any inquiry by him might not be impartial as he would go by his own office's claim.

While the Bill removes the concept of "Waqf by user", where properties could be deemed as Waqf-based solely on their long use for religious purposes, one amendment moved by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey and accepted by the panel made some allowances for such existing facilities. "Waqf by user" will remain as Waqf properties, except when these are in dispute or are government facilities, it said. However, the amendment also makes it clear that such existing properties must be registered before the new law comes into force, the sources said.

While the Bill states that only a person practising Islam for at least five years may declare a Waqf, which refers to properties dedicated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes under Islamic law, an amendment passed by the panel adds that such a person should be showing or demonstrating that he or she is practising the religion for five years, according to the sources.

With the Bill making it mandatory for every Waqf registered under the existing law to declare the property's details on its website within a period of six months from the proposed Act coming into force, another cleared amendment will now give the "Mutawalli (caretaker)" the authority to extend the period, subject to satisfying the Waqf tribunal in the state. An amendment proposed by BJP MP Sanjay Jaiswal and accepted by the committee seeks the inclusion of one person having knowledge of Muslim law and jurisprudence as a member of such tribunals, the sources said.

Hitting out at Pal, TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee claimed, "Everything was pre-decided. We were not allowed to say anything. No rules and procedures were followed. We wanted to discuss the amendments clause by clause but were not allowed. The chairperson moved the amendments and then declared them without listening to our points. This is a bad day for democracy." In total, hundreds of amendments were proposed by the committee members. The amendments were consolidated and linked to the clauses they referred to before the panel took them up. (PTI)

## Commitment should be to mutual

minister, Wang is a member of the powerful political bureau of the ruling Communist Party and China's Special Representative for the India-China border mechanism.

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval is the Special Representative from the Indian side.

Misri's visit to China followed last month's talks between Wang and Doval under the Special Representatives mechanism.

After his arrival here on Sunday, Misri met Liu Jianchao, head of the influential International Department of the ruling Communist Party which sets the tone for China's foreign policy.

The two sides exchanged views on jointly implementing the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, strengthening exchanges and dialogues, and promoting the improvement and healthy and stable development of China-India relations, as well as international and regional issues of common concern, official media reported. The visit of Misri, India's former Ambassador to China, is taking place ahead of the celebrations of China's Spring Festival and the Chinese New Year, beginning on January 29, during which the country will officially shut down for a week. (PTI)

## Take part on ONOE debate

said more youngsters should join politics with innovative ideas. "I had said from the Red Fort that one lakh youngsters should join politics," he said. Modi also said that the future of the world cannot be imagined without India's youngsters. "That is why I call you a force for global good," he added.

Modi said in 2014, the number of NCC cadets in the country was around 14 lakh. "Today, it is around 20 lakh and more than eight lakh of them are girl cadets," he added. (*PTI*)

Harmeet Singh to hold

and Border, Director General of Civil Defence, Commandant General of Home Guards, and Director of Fire and Emergency Services. (PTI)

#### TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025

### REGION

#### 3 THE HILLS TIMES

# 76th Republic Day celebrated across state; Ministers, CEMs highlight govt's achievements

HT Bureau DIPHU/ GUWAHATI, Jan 27: The 76th Republic Day has been celebrated across state on Sunday across state with full fervor and enthusiasm.

KAAC CEM Tuliram Ronghang was present as the chief guest at the celebrations of Republic Day at Diphu Govt Boys HS School playground on Sunday, commemorating the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950, marking India's transition to a sovereign republic.

At the parade ground Ronghang was given the guard of honour from the Assam police and also inspected the parade performed by Assam police personnel, Home Guards, NCC cadres of different schools and college including school students from various schools of Diphu town

The CEM unfurled the national flag upholding the values of democracy. The CEM addressing the crowd with the republic day speech reiterated about the demand of Autonomous State under Article 244 (A) of the constitution that should be achieved not through violence, but peaceful means. By taking the example of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence, the CEM said the Autonomous State should also be achieved through non-violence. He also mentioned that during the course of the movement either through peaceful means or arms struggle several lives have been lost. The desired goal though not achieved but has witnessed the signing of MoU and MoS bring more powers to the KAAC, he stated. The CEM also called for a unity and commonness to work together in achieving the desired goal.

Assuring the people with more development the CEM said, "In this year people will witness new changes taking place in terms of development. Road development, hospital, school building, potable drinking water facility and education sector both in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong will be seen. New Jawaharlal Navodya Vidyalaya (JNV) school including Agriculture College, Veterinary college, degree college, B.Ed. College, Govt. Law College, Engineering College will come up soon. If peaceful atmosphere prevail development will follow, he said

The CEM also made mentioned about the district boundary and PGR/VGR issues and said that white paper has been published so that people knew about KAAC's initiative. Every issue can be resolved through peaceful discussion. The CEM also stated that the KAAC has been conducting pubic interaction programmes by going to the people directly in order to know about their problems and needs, and to build up trust with them.

The 76th republic day celebration has been peaceful and this peaceful atmosphere should continue in the days to come, the CEM noted.

As part of the celebration cultural tableau demonstration by various government departments were carried out. Cultural demonstration depicting the culture of different tribes and communities were also performed.

Our Tezpur Correspondent adds: In Tezpur, guardian minister for Sonitpur, zarika unfurled the national tri

have built this great nation. Singh further added that although the nation has emerged as a global economic power, many challenges like poverty, inequality, and climate change remain at large for the nation. He urged the academic community to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to combat these challenges.

A host of cultural programs along with a special voga performance was also organized, where school children and students of the university participated. A friendly cricket match between faculty members and staff was also organized on the occasion.

Our Silchar Correspondent adds: Under the dynamic leadership of Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the state is experiencing a transformative era of growth and development, making remarkable strides in infrastructure, healthcare, education, and governance, food, public distribution & consumer affairs minister Kaushik Rai said this while addressing the gathering at the 76th Republic Day celebrations held at the Police Parade Ground in Silchar.

Rai emphasized on the achievements of the state government in collaboration with the Central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"It is with immense pride and gratitude that I stand before you today to highlight some transformative projects which will enhance a new era of growth and progress in our region. The construction of a 100-bedded hospital is a significant milestone in improving healthcare access for our people, ensuring quality medical services for all. Additionally, the establishment of a law college and the construction of the CO- District Commissioner's Office reflect our commitment to advancing education and administration in the area. The completion of the Nandachand Bridge and the Shilghat Bridge under the Lakhipur constituency are transformative projects that will enhance connectivity and drive economic progress. Moreover, we witnessed a historic moment on the 1st December when our Hon'ble Chief Minister inaugurated the new judicial court building at Lakhipur, further strengthening the pillars of justice in our community," Rai stated.

Rai highlighted the creation of the Barak Valley Development Department, a testament to the government's commitment to inclusive growth. He announced the revolutionary Barapani-Panchgram Expressway project, which is set to reduce travel time between Guwahati and Silchar to just five hours. This ambitious initiative will bolster regional connectivity and open new horizons for trade and socio-economic integration.

Other pivotal projects, including the East-West Corridor and four-lane highways linking Silchar to Jiribam, Vairengte, and Churaibari, were also emphasized. These developments will enhance mobility, improve accessibility, and foster growth across the region.

The minister detailed several flagship healthcare initiatives, including a ₹ 165 crore, 500-bed hospital at Silchar Medical College, now 66%



Mahato, and local MLAs, the minister paid homage to India's martyrs. Later, he unfurled the national tricolor at the Police Parade Ground, commemorating the sacrifices of those who laid the foundation for Indian democracy.

Concluding his address, Rai attributed Assam's meteoric development to the visionary policies of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and the unwavering support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"These achievements are not just milestones; they are a testament to our collective vision and determination to transform Assam into a beacon of growth, innovation, and inclusivity," he said. With a roadmap for sustainable progress, Assam is set to scale new heights, fulfilling the aspirations of its people and paving the way for a brighter future

Our Margherita Correspondent adds: Margherita co-district commissioner Parikshit Thoudam in his address to the gathering spoke of the significance of Republic Day and the importance of upholding the values of the Constitution of India, highlighting the progress of Margherita Co-District and the vital role of citizens in its upliftment.

A series of cultural programme, including singing of patriotic songs and performance of traditional dances by local school and college students, cultural troupes enthralled the gathering.

The Republic Day parade led by Parade Commander Dy SP Pallab Baruah was the highlight of the event.

NCC cadets and local security forces marched proudly presenting a display of discipline, harmony and National pride where various departments participated by displaying tableaus and showcasing schemes run by departments.

A prize distribution ceremony was held where best Parade Commander was awarded to Dy SP Pallab Baruah, best platoon Commander to Ujjal Debnath of Ledo College NCC, first prize in Parade to Margherita college NCC, Second prize in Parade to Ledo college NCC, Third prize in Parade Margherita Public Higher Secondary School, while first prize in

the food packets among the patients at Hojai FRU, Haam Hospital and Global Hospital. On the other hand, all schools, colleges, social organisations and individuals within the district celebrated the 76th Republic Day with zeal and fervour.

Our Jorhat Correspondent adds: Assam minister for cultural affairs, industries, commerce, and public enterprises, Bimal Borah, who was the chief guest at the 76th Republic Day celebrations organised at the Jorhat District Sports Association Field here on Sunday unfurled the Tricolour

Bora, who was presented with a guard of honour by Assam police personnel, in his address, paid glowing tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and other freedom fighters, and many of whom sacrificed their lives in the freedom movement. He also paid tribute to the Dr BR Ambedkar. chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution and other members of the Drafting Committee.

The Minister spoke on the journey of progress and prosperity underway in the State initiated by CM Himanta Biswa Sarma-led Government. Borah mentioned about various welfare and developmental activities undertaken by the Government under various schemes and projects across the State.

He also took salute from a march past carried out by contingent of Assam Police, CRPF, CISF, Home Guards, Civil Defence and NCC, Scouts and Guides. A cultural programme too was organised on the occasion. Jorhat MLA Hitendra Nath Goswami, senior officials of district administration, police and Government departments, families of freedom fighters, and general people attended the function in which cultural troupes also performed.

Our Kokrajhar Correspondent adds: The districts of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) joined the celebration of 76th Republic Day on Sunday at their respective district headquarters with befitting programme scheduled on the occasion which saw large number of participation of people from different areas.

In Kokraihar, the chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Pramod Boro unfurled the National Flag at Kokrajhar Govt HS and MP School parade ground in Kokrajhar. CEM Boro received guard of honour from police personnel, students, contingents from different school and colleges. A multi cultural procession representing different communities was demonstrated to mark the celebration.

"On the auspicious morning of the 76th Republic Day of Bharat, I offered my humble homage & floral tributes to Rashtrapita Mahatma Gandhi Ji, and paid my respectful tributes to our revered martyrs at the Swahid Bedi. Their ideals and sacrifices continue to be our guiding beacons as we strive to build the India of their dreams", CEM Boro said.

"As we proudly celebrate the Republic Day of India today, I extend my heartiest greetings to all my fellow citizens. On this day, we reaffirm our firm commitment to the ideals & values that our founding fathers enshrined in our Constitution and protected by the sacrifices of our brave hearts. We pledge to build a peaceful & progressive BTR, and a strong, united, and inclusive Bharat", Boro added.

In Chirang, Assam cabinet minister, Urkhao Gwra Brahma unfurled the Indian national flag at Kajalgaon parade ground

Brahma received guard of honour march past presented by police, student contingents on the occasion which was organised by the Chirang district administration.

In Udalguri, the deputy chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Gabinda Chandra Basumatary unfurled the national flag on the occa-

Our Dima Hasao Correspondent adds: The 76th Republic Day of India was celebrated with great enthusiasm and grandeur across Dima Hasao. The central event was held at the NL Daulagupu Sports Complex in Haflong, where Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, Debolal Gorlosa, unfurled the national tricolor. The theme for this year's celebration, Swarnim Bharat - Virasat aur Vikas (Golden India - Heritage and Development), reflected the district's aspirations for unity and progress.

The event witnessed participation from people from all walks of life. The chief guest, CEM Debolal Gorlosa, was accompanied by district commissioner Simanta Kr Das, ACS, and superintendent of police Mayank Kumar, IPS. Following the floral tribute to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, Gorlosa inspected the ceremonial march-past.

In his address to the gathering, CEM Gorlosa extended warm Republic Day greetings and congratulated 84-year-old Dimasa legend Joynacharan Bathari, who was recently honored with the prestigious Padma Shri award for his contributions to the preservation of Dimasa folk music and traditional instruments. Gorlosa acknowledged Bathari's work as a source of immense pride for the district and the nation

Highlighting recent achievements, Gorlosa referred to the inauguration of the Dimasa Museum at Maibang, calling it a testament to his government's commitment to preserving the district's cultural heritage. He also emphasized the positive impact of government schemes like Nijut Moina and Orunodoi, which have improved education access and enhanced women's livelihoods.

Addressing criticisms, Gorlosa reaf-

lighted initiatives to boost tourism, industries, and employment opportunities in the district, assuring that his government is dedicated to creating livelihoods for its people. He concluded his speech by wishing everyone a joyful Busu Dima, the post-harvest festival of the Dimasa community.

Similar celebrations were held across the district, including the Dishru Field in Maibang, where Samanta Rabi Bara, ACS, unfurled the national flag. The spirit of Republic Day resonated in all five blocks, offices, and institutions throughout Dima Hasao.

The Northeast Frontier Railway celebrated the 76th Republic Day in a befitting manner. The central program was held at the NFRSA complex at Maligaon, where Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, general manager of NF Railway unfurled the National Flag in presence of a gathering of railway officials and their family members. He also inspected march-past by contingents of RPF, NFRSA, Civil Defence, and Bharat Scouts & Guides. The Republic Day was also celebrated in all the five Divisions of NF Railway viz Tinsukia, Lumding, Rangiya, Alipurduar and Katihar, where the Divisional Railway Managers unfurled the National Flag in presence of Divisional railway officials. The General Manager while addressing the gathering congratulated all officers and staff who discharged their duties in the best possible way despite many adverse situations towards achieving the goals for overall development of railway. He also briefed about the performance of N F Railway achieved in the last few months. NF Railway/Construction Organisation also celebrated the 76th Republic Day.

Arun Kr Chaudhary, General Manager/NFR (Construction) unfurled the National Flag at the program that was organised at the GM/NFR (Construction) office.

NFR also celebrated the 75-year anniversary of the Assam Rail Link. On January 26, 1950, the first passenger train was run through this historic route. After the partition of the country, the rail route of the Northeast region was cut off from the main part of the country. In such a situation, a new rail route "The Assam Rail Link" was constructed from Kishanganj to Fakiragram, which was completed in record time and this rail link has proved to be a boon for the Northeast Frontier Railway.

The General Manager mentioned that Northeast Frontier Railway has also signed a MoU with IIT Guwahati for collaboration in developing innovative AI based solutions to enhance safety, efficiency and sustainability in rail infrastructure. Northeast Frontier Railway is focusing in a big way on staff training using state of the art technologies. VR and AR based training is being provided at MZTI, Alipurduar. The Specialized S&T training centre at Pandu has recently been upgraded with digital classroom and full scale models. GYAANVAPI App for counselling of CLI and running staff has also been launched.

In his speech he also mentioned about the Doubling project which has been completed in the entire route from New Bongaigaon to Agthori via Rangiya and New Bongaigaon - Azara via Goalpara. Paving the way for Railways in Mizoram, the newly laid BG line between Bhairabi and Hortoki has also been commissioned. 244.86 route kms of Railway Electrification have been completed upto December, bringing the total electrified length to 2828 RKM. He also informed that total 8 nos of mechanized laundries are now functional in Northeast Frontier Railway, including the state of the art 16 tonne capacity BOOT laundry at New Guwahati. For improvement of safety & operational efficiency, the General Manager further mentioned that in last nine months, 6 new train pairs were introduced, 110 special trains operated, and 284 coaches added to 85 rakes. Automatic Fire Detection & Alarm System has been commissioned at 29 stations and fire prevention system has been provided in 1191 LHB AC coaches, 135 power cars & 75 pantry cars. The General Manager further added that 141 km block section under NFR has been covered under Intrusion Detection System.

colour.

After receiving guard of honour showcased by NCC troops from Darrang College, Tezpur, College, St. Convent School, and ITBP, Home Guard, SSB, Assam Rifle, Hazarika addressed a mammoth gathering and highlighted several developmental activities executed in the Sonitpur.

He also highlighted some other progressions witnessed in the region including the health sector, Bogibeel Bridge, Chowkighat Bridge, ongoing tourism project at Marabharali River etc. In the programme, several personalities from various fields were felicitated. Cultural programmes showcasing ethnic fabric of the region, Rajasthani folk dance, Assam Rifles' Pipe band etc. mesmerized all.

Meanwhile, Tezpur University here celebrated the day with spirit of patriotism and national pride. The celebrations commenced with the unfurling of the national flag by Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, vice chancellor, Tezpur University, followed by the rendition of the National Anthem. The tireless efforts of scientists, students, farmers, the courage of our soldiers, and the compassion of the citizens

bed Superspeciality Hospital funded by JICA for ₹ 160 crore, featuring advanced neurology and cardiology departments; a ₹ 23 crore Critical Care Block at Silchar Civil Hospital under PM CARES; and a 100-bed Lakhipur District Hospital funded by the World Bank.

In the sphere of education, the establishment of GC College University and the construction of Model Degree Colleges in Dholai and Lakhipur were lauded as game-changers for academic excellence in the region. Urban modernization projects under the AMRUT scheme were highlighted for their role in improving living standards and fostering sustainable urban growth.

Rai also spotlighted the ongoing construction of a mini secretariat near ITI Srikona, expected to be completed by the end of 2025. This landmark project aims to streamline administrative efficiency and improve service delivery for the region.

The celebrations began with Rai laying a wreath at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Silchar's Gandhi Bagh. Accompanied by Cachar district commissioner Mridul Yadav, superintendent of police Numal tableau display Margherita Municipal Board, Second prize to NEC CIL Margherita and Third prize to office of BEEO. Margherita education Block.Fruits were distributed among the patients of Margherita FRU civil hospital and Central Hospital, Margherita by the officials of Margherita co-district administration

Our Hojai Correspondent adds: The 76th Republic Day was celebrated with lot of enthusiasm in Hojai on Sunday. District commissioner Bidyut Bikash Bhagwati unfurled the national flag and received salute from police, NCC cadets, students of school and colleges.

The event was organised at Kachari Maidan. Various awareness tableaus on different schemes and themes were showcased followed by cultural performance and other programs. On this occasion, superintendent of police Saurabh Gupta, official from all the departments and many distinguished guests were present.

The Hojai Unit of Marwari Yuva Manch also celebrated the day with enthusiasm.

After that a team of MYM distributed

Boro earlier paid homage to national martyrs at Swahid Bedi and Mahandas Karamchand Gandhi at MG Park in Kokraihar.

Boro has his warm greetings to all citizens of the state on the occasion of Republic Day, he said that the BTR government was committed to work for all round development of the society, and accordingly launched various missions and visions for bringing healthy welfare and development of the society across the Bodoland region.

He stated that the government of Bodoland Territorial Region has been committed to work for all round development of the society, and accordingly rendered services towards the welfare and upliftment of the citizens.

firmed his dedication to the development of Dima Hasao. "My sole motive is to make Dima Hasao one of the top districts in Assam. The trust and love of the people keep me motivated to overcome every challenge," he said. He underscored the importance of youth as the nation's pillars, emphasizing health, education, and sports.

In education, Gorlosa noted the progress in filling vacant teaching posts, ensuring better functionality of institutions, and pledged to recruit more teachers in crucial subjects like Science and Mathematics. Recruitment, he stated, is carried out based on need and merit, without bias towards caste, creed, religion, or political affiliations.

On infrastructure, the CEM announced ongoing road construction projects worth approximately Rs 600 crores, emphasising their significance for connectivity and development. He also mentioned the restoration of the railway field in Haflong, creating more space for sports and activities. Gorlosa revealed plans to inaugurate a traditional Customary Law Court on April 29, marking the Council Foundation Day, to promote traditional values and practices. The CEM high-

### **Road safety** awareness prog held HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Jan 27: Ledo College on monday hosted "Road Safety Awareness programme" at its auditorium which was organised by Ledo College Student Union in collaboration with Ledo college teachers unit and transport department of Tinsukia District administration.

Kanoi Mahanta, district transport officer. Tinsukia. addressed the students and emphasised the importance of road safety awareness among the youth and he shared his thoughts on how the current generation can stay alert and aware to prevent road accidents.

Professor Latumoni Gogoi highlighted the importance of road safety awareness where he advised the students to be cautious while driving and to follow traffic rules.

The programme aimed to create awareness among the students and the general public about the importance of road safety and the need to take preventive measures to avoid accidents.

# *Tea Tourism at Lepetkata aims to bring opportunities for local entrepreneurship and employment*

#### <u>HT Bureau</u>

GUWAHATI, Jan 27: Luxmi Tea Company has long been a pioneer in prioritizing the welfare of its workers as a family and ensuring holistic development. The project offered a mix of lifestyle options with key focus on education, community engagement and employment generation.

The Institutional Zone included schools, colleges and skill centres, while the Public-Semi Public & Social Infrastructure features art galleries, hospitals, tea convention centre and art theatres. The Hospitality & Tourism offers luxury hotels, resorts, and wellness centers for relaxation. The Eco Tourism promotes sustainable travel with agricultural and aquaculture activities in vernacular accommodations.

"Tea tourism offers a range of employment opportunities for the

stated an official of Luxmi Tea. children and youths of tea estates, providing jobs as hospitality staff, He also mentioned that the deguides, drivers, and homestay velopment will not reduce the hosts. Additionally, the project production capacity of the Lepcan create jobs in the medical secetkata Tea Estate. Instead, it will tor, such as nurses, pharmacists, enhance it, ensuring that the and other aligned professions, workers' livelihood remains intact benefiting the youths from both and continues to prosper. The the tea estate and surrounding project is designed to foster susareas. Many young, educated intainable growth, providing longdividuals will also find employterm benefits to the estate and the ment as teaching and local population. Luxmi prioritise non-teaching staff in the newly employee well-being, care and developed schools and colleges. commitment to worker welfare. Moreover, as the tourism and hoscommunity development and suspitality industries grow, local tainable development. youth will be trained in hospital-Johan Tanti, worker at Lepetkata Tea Estate said that he was filled with optimism for the fu-

ity, guiding, languages, and customer service, improving their skill sets and opening up new avture. Having faced limitations in enues for employment. This skill his own life due to a lack of education and skills, Johan was now development will enable them to hopeful for the opportunities his access a broad range of career opchildren would have. portunities, creating a brighter fu-

ture for the entire community,"

Amit Karmakar, Boyle Divi-

sion Sardar said, "I am very enthusiastic about this initiative. With its focus on education and skill development, this will open doors for the younger generation to achieve their ambitions and contribute to the growing workforce of the future.

Lepetkata, Lakshmi Nayek's dream for her children to thrive in a better world was set to become a reality, she would like her children to be engaged in the hotel in the hospitality sector with proper skill training and had a good living and earning better than her.

The tea tourism at Lepetkata will change the economic scenario of not just the estate but also the surrounding areas, there will be increase in livelihood and employment for the youths. The local shops will grow and 80% of the local youths will get employment, a PR stated.

# **Assam Women's University** achieves NAAC accreditation

#### <u>HT Bureau</u>

GUWAHATI, Jan 27: Assam Women's University, the premier institution dedicated to women's empowerment in the region, has reached a significant milestone by securing accreditation from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).

The university has been awarded a CGPA of 2.22 and a "B" Grade in its first cycle of accreditation. Sharing her feelings, Prof Ajanta Borgohain Rajkonwar, the vice-chancellor of AWU mentioned that this achievement reflected the collective effort and dedication of the AWU family.

"We are committed to ensure our standards of excellence and innovation in the field of education." Raikonwar said.

"The NAAC accreditation is a testament to our pursuit of institutional excellence. Achieving a 'B' grade with a CGPA of 2.22 underscores the hard work and vision of our team. I

thank everyone who contributed to this success, and together we will strive to take AWU to greater heights," Prashanta Puzari, the Director of IOAC of the university mentioned

This accreditation marks the beginning of a transformative journey for AWU. It underscores the university's role in empowering women through quality education and its commitment to becoming a center of excellence in the region.



## 4

### THE HILLS TIMES VOL.XXVI, ISSUE 017, DIPHU, TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025

#### QUOTE OF THE DAY

To be interested solely in technique would be a very superficial thing to me - Andrew Wyeth

# Time to review ties with US

The inaugural speech of Donald Trump and the flurry of executive orders issued by him on the first day as president, show that Trump does what he said he will do. In claiming to make America great again, Trump has threatened to take over the Panama Canal, the control of which had been handed to Panama by a treaty in 1977. He has renamed the `Gulf of Mexico' as the `Gulf of America' and promised more imperial steps to expand American territory as no US President has done in recent history. Trump has ordered an emergency in the southern borders with Mexico and deployed the army to check immigrants crossing the border. Other anti-immigrant measures, including annulling the right of citizenship of persons by birth in the country, are bound to heighten xenophobia and whet the appetite of the far-right. A striking feature of the second Trump Presidency that was seen graphically in the swearing-in ceremony is the fawning support of the tech-billionaires and the super-rich for Trump. The key role played by Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, and other billionaires in the administration makes the regime look like a plutocracy. There are well-founded fears that social security benefits and welfare measures will be the victims of the drive to downsize the federal government and social expenditure. Conversely, this is an administration, which will give big business and corporate interests a free run.

At the level of international relations, though the Trump Presidency will prove disruptive on multilateralism, trade tariffs and climate change measures, basically there will be a continuity in pursuing America's imperialist interests. After all, the Biden administration became notorious for its redux neoconservative foreign policy. The Biden years saw the United States stoking and financing Israel's genocidal war on Gaza and ensuring that Russia-Ukraine conflict becomes a fullfledged war with unstinted military and financial support to Ukraine. Biden also continued on the path of increasing confrontation with China and building alliances in the Asia-Pacific region. Given the composition of the Trump administration, one can expect a more aggressive approach in the Latin America with Cuba and Venezuela being in the sights for increased interventions

The Modi government is anxiously watching what steps Trump will take regarding tariffs on Indian goods exports to the US and a restrictive visa policy. If Trump carries out his threat to deport undocumented migrants, we have to expect around 20,000 Indians who have already been identified or processed as entering the United States illegally, being sent back to India. More importantly, the Modi government is desperate to prove to Trump that it is a good and reliable ally. The External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, has had two stints in Washington in the last few weeks. On his second trip to attend the inauguration, he along with three other foreign ministers of the Quad countries, including the new US Secretary of State, had a meeting. But the photo up with Trump was bagged by Mukesh and Nita Ambani, who attended the pre-inaugural din-ner. The plutocrats get precedence over ministers in Washington now.

 $\frown$  eldom did we hear voices of congeniality and cohesion from the warring political parties of India about its civilizational uniqueness. Electoral politics had conveniently concealed its civilizational ambiance to a dangerous extent and parties that ruled India for decades soon after its Independence executed their power to press it harder than how the colonial interventions did it. Mostly, the ideological differences between the ruling parties and those who stayed in the opposition have been about their intense commitment registering their disregard for India's civilizational glory. Their quarrel was about who represented the most servile approach to a privileged religious section, especially the Muslims. Both sides had the same goal. Maintain the sentiments of the collective vote bank of the minorities to the brim and reap immense electoral benefits. They remained persistently tenacious and ambitious throughout India's political chronology while they enthusiastically registered their refusal about its cultural eminence. The best thing for them to do was to erase maximum documentary evidence of India's civilizational history and create a parallel narrative that would receive accolades from academia across the globe. And they succeeded in nullifying everything that India's future generations would have celebrated. Its spiritual ethos, cultural inclusivity, diverse and all encompassing moral values, everything got systematically removed or misinterpreted. Their parallel narratives were to systematically replace an ancient India of cultural distinction and spiritual treasure with one that they projected to have always conceded and surrendered to external aggression and invasion. Therefore, the consistent conflict was between the real history and their version of the history.

Should we shrink back from calling India a civilizational state? While its status of being a constitutional state is not challenged, its political geography is understood to have been governed by its constitution. But the parties opposing



uous civilizations that preserved Narendra Modi at the centre, espeits traditions and traditional values cially the Congress, have been with its history being traced back compulsively registering their disregard for India's ancient philoto the days of the Vedic era. Its sophical heritage. To them, India essence lies in its ability to emis a piece of land sharing a politibrace the multiplicity of linguistic cal geography among its states and cultural supplies brilliantly cewith every state equally sharing its menting its edifice of pluralism. own unique cultural identity and This has been identified as its strength and there have also been thus making it a Union of States. differing views about it. Pluralism India's cultural landscape has been known for its civilizational ethos has not been its and spiritual diversity and globally accidental founthis remains an attraction even dation. today. Pulling millions of pilgrims evolved into a from all over the world to the huge land mass Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj, India of spirituality flourishing through showcased its spiritual distinction its principle of inclusiveness. Mulonce again. The controversial detiple bate on India being a civilizational stemmed from its basic philosostate or constitutional state began phy of Sanatana Dharma. Sanatana Dharma proclaimed the after the emergence of a new political ideology that had immense power of pluralism, literally a respect for the nation as a civilizatransformative one, which taught tional unity in 2014. This surge of the world "Ekam Sat Vipra a nationalistic thought that has Bahudha Vadanti" (Truth is one; willingly amplified India's civithe wise call it by different lizational status for a decade under names). Therefore, beyond its in-Narendra Modi brought serious ternally scattered political borders, ramifications to the existential tacideally, India remained a single tics of parties, while their electoral cultural unity and a great space of

spiritual identity. This inclusive bases crumbled and collapsed. approach was instrumental while India is one of the oldest contin-

world.

#### we extended a holistic reception to Abrahamic religions that landed here on the pretext of trade and exploration. Its influence as a progressive philosophy stretched across borders and successfully connected the world through trade, culture and spirituality. Remnants of India's spiritual awakening could be seen across continents in the form of temples and monuments and huge stone carvings. So, except for political ambitions, the parties, the naysayers, have no reason to deny India's civilizational base.

From the days of Bhagavad Gita to the days of the seers of modern period, India was deeply rooted on the principle of Dharma. It remained an ideal landscape of collective existence based on ethical living and societal harmony. The Gita extensively discusses Dharma in its multiple angles. Governance by rulers had unbending principles of Dharma being executed for the welfare of the societies. Therefore, it is not an airdropped fantasy while the present government takes aspirational steps to regain India's glory as a Vishwa Guru. This has been the truth for centuries. Adi Shankaracharya was a great proponent of Advaita Vedanta. He did it to strengthen the essential humanness across societies. India remained a land of spiritual seekers and leaders. Shankaracharva's initiative to spiritu-

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: M.R.Lalu

India

religions successively

ally unify the

monastic centers

through

another

land

was

major milestone of India's cultural

revival. Its identity as a spiritual

landscape gained great relevance

in the 21st century. Its ancient

wellness practices such as Yoga.

Ayurveda, Meditation and its vari-

ety of rituals invited the world to

its complex geographical terrains.

Huge assemblage of seekers from

unknown lands seek spiritual asy-

lum here. The Modi Government's

cultural diplomacy was another

milestone. Bringing the global

community closer to India's spiri-

tual ambiance through Yoga, Med-

itation and Ayurveda was its focus

meanings of religious festivities was the other. The Maha Kumbh under the administrative acumen of Yogi Adityanath in Uttar Pradesh could translate this spiritual confluence into a golden opportunity of diplomatic outreach.

Uninterrupted controversies have been gaining attention since the Modi regime's inauguration. His government, with a decade of administrative shrewdness, had been sharply evocative on the need for India's cultural revival. As we culminate a year of festivities on the Ram Temple consecration, there have also been versions of intellectual animosity raining on its grand completion. Appeasement politics and vote-bank tactics threateningly pulled multiple parties from attending the consecration. We could barely hear any celebrated intellectual speak for the correction of the historical wrongs committed on the Hindu civilizational symbols. As outcries for the revival of our Dharmic ancestry began, there has also been persistent demand for maintaining the status quo. An unquenchable thirst to demand justice for our ancestors by reviving our cultural symbols and centers is our responsibility. For, civilization is a continuity of ideas, ideologies, rituals, visions and spiritual exuberance; attempts to erase its imprints from the face of the world are reprehensible. While nefariously diluting the spiritual imprints of India, throughout its history, appeasement politics treated Hindu unity as an absolute impossibility. They had conflicting theories to delay the resurrection of temples like Somnath, a denial that was well planned. As 76th Republic Day celebrations once again reinforce the power of our constitution, a sea of human gathering is reviving India's civilizational ancestry at the Maha Kumbh while the Ram Temple sanctification completes its first year. This confluence of events is a reality, where a constitutional state is enlivening its civilizational ambiance. (The author and freelance journalist and can be reached

and to get them realize the deeper *mrlalu30@gmail.com*)

# Trump's plan to get Russia-Ukraine war ended

#### **By: Asad Mirza**

uring his election campaign just like getting the Gaza fore his inauguration, which he did,

lin. "Right now, the price is high enough that that war will continue," he said.

Oil and gas revenues have been Ceasefire implemented be-s inauguration, which he did, Russia's most important source of from Trump that the conflict in cash, accounting for a third to a half Ukraine could be ended by lowering

ment further on a meeting between the leaders, saying it was "hard to read coffee grounds" to predict the future. Peskov also rejected a claim

#### **By: Dipak Kurmi**

ver the past century, the United States has emerged as a global States has emerged as a global powerhouse, with its leaders often making pivotal decisions that not only



Decisions that shaped the world: A century

of landmark U.S. Presidential choices

agreements. While NAFTA spurred economic growth and globalization, it also highlighted the complexities of balancing domestic industries with international competition.

The 21st century brought new chal-

Trump had also promised to get the Russia-Ukraine war ended within 100-days of him taking over the US Presidency.

Curiously, within days of Trump becoming the 47th US President, Russian President Vladimir Putin has said he is ready to discuss the war in Ukraine with Donald Trump and suggested it would be a good idea for them to meet. In his first comments since Trump issued threats to inflict economic damage on Russia if it failed to end the war in Ukraine, Putin struck a favourable tone towards the US president.

Putin and the newly inaugurated American president have both said they are ready to meet for talks on Ukraine. Trump has threatened Russia with tougher economic sanctions if Moscow does not agree to end the conflict.

Putin has told a Russian state TV journalist that "We believe the current president's statements about his readiness to work together. We are always open to this and ready for negotiations. It would be better for us to meet, based on the realities of today, to talk calmly.

Putin went on to describe his relationship with Trump as "businesslike, pragmatic and trustworthy". He added that negotiating with Ukraine was complicated by the fact that its president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, had signed a decree preventing him from conducting talks with Putin.

In what seems to be an effort to further cosy-up to Trump, Putin echoed the US president's claim that he would have prevented the war starting in Ukraine in 2022, and parroted Trump's discredited assertion that the 2020 US elections were "stolen" from him.

Economic sanctions against Rus-

Trump's attempts to persuade Putin to negotiate have been reinforced by threats to escalate pressure on Russia's already strained economy, including introducing sanctions and tariffs, if Moscow fails to "make a deal" to end the war.

Speaking virtually at the World Economic Forum in Davos on Thursday (23 January) evening, Trump called on OPEC+ to push down global oil prices as a way to hit a vital stream of revenue for the Krem-

of federal budget proceeds over the past decade.

While Trump has not given a detailed blueprint for ending the war, his running mate, JD Vance, has suggested Trump could push a "heavily fortified" demilitarised zone at the countries' borders, freezing the war along the current frontlines.

Trump's return to the White House has reignited discussions about the possibility of western peacekeeping forces being stationed in Ukraine to help maintain a ceasefire, But the Russian foreign ministry has called the idea "unacceptable", while also dismissing calls to freeze the war along the frontlines.

Still, the situation remains in flux, and this week Trump made statements that appeared aimed at sooth-

*It seems as if finally, the* three years old Russia-Ukraine might end after the

US President Donald Trump's pompous intervention. The Russian President Vladimir Putin has assumed a noticeably favourable tone, downplaying Trump's economic threats, while Trump blames Ukrainian President Zelensky squarely as the one who started the war

ing Moscow. In an interview with Fox News on Thursday (22 January), he described President Zelensky as "no angel" and suggested the Ukrainian leader shared some of the blame for the war's outbreak. "He shouldn't have allowed this war to happen." In his nightly video address late on Friday (24 January), Zelensky said that Putin was seeking to "manipulate" Trump. "He is trying to manipulate the US president's desire to achieve peace. I am confident that no Russian manipulations will succeed any longer." he said.

Kremlin's response

In its response Kremlin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists, "Putin is ready. We are waiting for signals" from the United States.

Peskov said that he could not com-

the price Russia receives for its oil, saying, "This conflict does not de-

pend on oil prices.3 Peskov said the conflict was instead based on "threats to Russia's national security" and "threats to Russians" living in Ukraine and "the lack of desire and complete refusal of Americans and Europeans to listen to Russia's concerns.'

**OPEC's** role

Trump, who promised during his campaign to swiftly end the conflict, is now focusing on leveraging OPEC+, the coalition of oil-producing nations, by urging them to cut oil prices to pressure Russia. He believes that reducing oil prices could force Russian President Vladimir Putin to reconsider the war.

However, industry experts believe that pressuring OPEC+ could be difficult. The group has already postponed increasing oil production due to weaker demand and competition from non-member countries. Trump's broader strategy

Trump has framed his approach to the Ukraine conflict in economic terms, arguing that leveraging economic pressure on Russia could force Putin to negotiate. Previously president Biden had also adopted a strategy on the same lines but that too was rejected by Saudi Arabia, and Trump faces a similar challenge in navigating the interests of the two largest oil producers within OPEC+. Trump's bold strategy highlights

his focus on using economic leverage, particularly targeting oil, as a tool to resolve global conflicts - a stark contrast to military interventions and military help to allies, except Israel.

In reality though, Trump is trying to hit two birds with one stone, if he is able to get the oil prices down, then apart from forcing Russia to come to the negotiating table, the move would serve the US domestically, too. Lower oil prices would lead to lower inflation and lower any annovance against other policies of Trump, if the American public is able to get consumer goods and personal finance at lower costs. (The author is a New Delhi-based senior commentator on national, international. defence and strategic affairs, environmental issues, an interfaith practitioner, and a media consultant.)

steered the nation's course but also profoundly impacted the global political, economic, and social order. From the end of World War I to modern-day challenges such as climate change, U.S. presidents have consistently demonstrated the ability to influence world affairs. These decisions have redefined international diplomacy, global governance, and economic structures. Here, we delve into some of the most significant decisions made by U.S. presidents that have transformed the

The creation of the League of Nations in 1919 marked one of the earliest attempts to establish a global framework for peace. President Woodrow Wilson envisioned an international body where nations could resolve conflicts through dialogue and collective security. Though the United States never joined the League due to Congressional opposition, Wilson's ideals set a foundation for what would later become the United Nations. This vision of multilateral diplomacy ushered in a new era of international cooperation, leaving an enduring legacy in world politics.

Fast forward to the Great Depression, the global economic crisis that tested the resilience of nations. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal in 1933 redefined the role of government in economic recovery. By implementing comprehensive reforms such as Social Security and financial regulations like the FDIC. Roosevelt not only revitalized the U.S. economy but also set a precedent for welfare states worldwide. His vision inspired governments across the globe to adopt interventionist policies, proving that proactive governance could stabilize economies and restore public trust during times of upheaval.

The devastation of World War II brought about another critical moment under President Harry S. Truman. In 1948, Truman championed the Marshall Plan, a massive economic assistance program aimed at rebuilding war-torn Europe. By stabilizing Western European economies and curbing Soviet influence, Truman ensured a U.S.-led postwar order. This decision not only laid the groundwork for modern European institutions, such as the European Union, but also established the United States as a dominant force in global reconstruction and governance.

During the Cold War, U.S. foreign policv shifted toward containment, a strategy highlighted by President Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1957 Middle East intervention. The Eisenhower Doctrine, aimed at countering Soviet influence in the region, solidified America's long-term presence in the Middle East. This policy shaped decades of U.S. involvement in the region, influencing geopolitics, energy markets, and the balance of power. It also set a precedent for U.S. interventions that would have lasting implications for regional stability.

Domestically, President Lyndon B. Johnson's 1964 decision to push for the Civil Rights Act marked a turning point in the fight for equality. By dismantling legal segregation and prohibiting discrimination based on race, religion, or gender, Johnson redefined American society and influenced human rights movements worldwide. The Act became a symbol of justice and equality, inspiring global efforts to combat systemic discrimination and oppression.

Meanwhile, President Richard Nixon's 1972 decision to open diplomatic relations with China fundamentally altered the global power structure. By engaging with Chairman Mao Zedong, Nixon ended decades of isolation and paved the way for China's integration into the global economy. This diplomatic breakthrough reshaped the Cold War dynamic, leveraging China as a counterbalance to Soviet power and setting the stage for its rise as an economic superpower.

The Cold War reached its culmination during Ronald Reagan's presidency. Through a combination of military buildup and strategic negotiations with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Reagan played a crucial role in ending the decades-long ideological conflict. His decision to sign the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 1987 symbolized a turning point in U.S.-Soviet relations, heralding the collapse of the Soviet Union and establishing the U.S. as the world's dominant superpower. This unipolar world order fundamentally altered global geopolitics, with the United States steering the course of international relations in the post-Cold War era.

In the economic realm, President Bill Clinton's 1994 support for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) transformed global trade. By creating a trilateral trade bloc with Canada and Mexico, Clinton promoted economic integration and set a model for future trade

lenges, epitomized by the events of September 11, 2001. President George W. Bush's response-a global War on Terror-marked a profound shift in U.S. foreign policy. Military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq redefined global security priorities, but they also sparked controversy and reshaped the Middle East. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security and changes in counterterrorism strategies underscored the far-reaching consequences of this deci-

Amid rising concerns about climate change, President Barack Obama's leadership in negotiating the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement highlighted America's role in addressing global environmental issues. By rallying nearly every nation to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Obama established a framework for multilateral action on climate change, reinforcing the U.S. as a leader in environmental governance.

However, this commitment to multilateralism faced challenges during President Donald Trump's administration. Trump's 'America First" approach prioritized national interests, disrupting global trade with protectionist policies and challenging international institutions like NATO and the United Nations. His administration's actions, such as imposing tariffs and withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, sparked debates about the U.S.'s role in a rapidly globalizing world.

Finally, one of the most controversial decisions in history was President Harry S. Truman's authorization of the atomic bomb in 1945. By deploying nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Truman sought to bring an end to World War II. While this decision accelerated Japan's surrender, it also inaugurated the nuclear age, with lasting implications for global security and ethics in warfare.

These landmark decisions reflect the complex interplay of domestic priorities, international challenges, and leadership vision. Each decision not only shaped the course of U.S. history but also left an indelible mark on the world. From advancing human rights and fostering global cooperation to navigating economic crises and redefining geopolitics, U.S. presidents have consistently demonstrated their ability to influence the trajectory of human history. Their decisions remind us of the profound responsibility borne by those who lead, as their choices often resonate far beyond their time and borders. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmiglpltd@gmail.com)

# MISCELLANEOUS

# Assam CM's historic tour of Advantage Assam 2.0 in South Korea and Japan

#### **By: Diganta Barooah**

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025** 

onourable Chief Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma embarked on a 5 day tour of South Korea and Japan from 19th January, 2025 onwards for promoting Advantage Assam 2.0 initiative. He travelled to Seoul and Tokyo, capitals of South Korea and Japan respectively, and met entrepreneurs, businessmen and industrialists to promote 'Advantage Assam 2.0 - Investment & Infrastructure Summit 2025', the mega summit which is going to be held on 25th and 26th February, 2025 at the Veterinary Field, Khanapara, Guwahati. Recent strategic investments, such as the approximately USD 3.3 billion Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) project by TATA in Jagiroad, highlights Assam's ability to attract big-ticket investments and its commitment to creating a conducive business environment. Honourable CM had fruitful discussions with industrial leaders and organizations. Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma talked to more than 140 entrepreneurs at Advantage Assam roadshow organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce in South Korea. CM Sarma met Kyungsung Kang and his team in a fruitful discussion with the honorable President of Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) in Seoul, South Korea.

In the conversation with the delegation of Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) Dr. Sarma focused on planning to build a complete semiconductor ecosystem in Assam as a supplement of Assam's rich tourism potential and construction of world's largest OSAT group in Jagiroad. The CM also had a great meeting with the delegation of the Korean International Trade Association (KITA). KITA is South Korea's largest business organisation representing over 73.000 companies.

He then had a productive meeting at Seoul with Dr Joon Choi, Vice President of SK Hynix, one of the world's largest semiconductor vendors. Following a meet up with the Honorable Minister of SME and Startup of the Republic of Korea, Oh Yongju.

On 21st January, 2025 honourable CM had an enjoyable experience meeting Lee Yong Zoo, Chief Executive Officer of Seoul Viosis, an innovative organization who is doing significant work in semiconductor and LED technology. Dr. Sarma through Advantage Assam 2.0 invited them to participate and join the semiconductor ecosystem starting in Assam.

Honourable CM met Yong Ha Ru, Vice President of GS Group, one of the largest renewable and clean energy institutions in South Korea as a tour schedule on 21st January, 2025. During



the meeting, he interacted and detailed them about Assam's goal of generating 3000 MW of clean energy by 2030. Dr. Sarma said that he is extremely eager to partner with such initiatives.

On the last day of the South Korea trip (21st January, 2025) the CM of Assam visited Seoul's Pangyo Techno Valley also known as the Silicon Valley in South Korea.

The Advantage Assam 2.0 roadshow had an excellent start in Japan on 22nd January where Dr. Sarma exchanged views with more than 160 Japanese businessmen regarding the subject of ease of doing business and on the state of the economy of Assam.

He met Koga Yuichiro San, State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Government of Japan and conveyed Assam's readiness to establish a business park dedicated to Japanese firms

During his meeting, the honourable CM had also requested the Government of Japan to consider setting up testing centres for Technical Intern Training and Specified Skill Workers programs, so that our youth have better ccess to short term work opportunities in Japan.

Dr. Sarma also had an engaging discussion with Kazuya Nakajo, Executive Vice President of Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO). JETRO is playing an important role in promoting trade between Japan and global companies and the CM sought their expertise in enhancing collaboration between Japan and Assam in trade, commerce and industry to enable mutual growth.

Meanwhile, the CM and his team met Hirohide Hirai, the Vice President of Hitachi and talked about Assam's ambitious target in renewable energy and how we can partner with Hitachi to attract investments and skilled manpower. He also invited them to explore opportunities at #AdvantageAssam2. can play in facilitating work opportu-

Honourable CM was delighted to meet Charles Kawashima, the Vice President of Renesas Electronics, Japan's leading semiconductor manufacturer. The Tata Semiconductor facility at Jagiroad will produce 48 million chips per day, making Assam a global hub for chip supply. Dr. Sarma asked Renesas to become a partner in our ambitious growth story. The longest river bridge of India which is coming up at Phulbari in Assam connecting Assam and Meghalaya is being constructed with the help of technology & assistance of Japan's JICA Company. Dr. Sarma mentioned these at a meeting with the businessesmen, industrialists and investors of Japan at Tokyo.

He also showed gratitude to Eiji Hosoi, President & CEO of Toyo Engineering Corporation for hosting him at the company's Tokyo headquarters.

According to Dr. Sarma, Toyo's vast experience in energy and Assam's innate advantages in the sector can lead to better solutions for sustainable growth. Honourable CM asked them to explore opportunities in renewable energy at the upcoming #Advantage-Assam2 summit.

Dr. Sarma had a good discussion with Kazuo Ofuchi San, the Managing Executive Officer of Konoike Group.He invited them to join the team Assam at #AdvantageAssam2 and explore opportunities in Assam's rapidly growing health sector. Dr. Sarma told them that the Government's focus is on expanding public health care which involves constructing new 23 medical colleges and hospitals, a comprehensive health insurance plan and trained medical and nursing workforce.

Dr Sarma and his team spoke on the strong cultural and economic ties between India and Japan through the lens of Assam's perspective. He also discussed about the vital role that Assam

nities in Japan for the skilled workforce of Assam.

After completing his engagements for the day in Tokyo on 22nd January, 2025, Dr. Sarma joined a Video Conference with Adirek Sripratak, Chairman of Charoen Pokphand Group, Thailand's leading agri company. The company's leadership is keen to set up a piggery and poultry unit in Assam as they visited Guwahati too.

Dr. Sarma told them that pork is a cultural cuisine of Assam and its promotion and expansion in global markets will be a significant boost to the youths of Assam who are engaged in this industry

Honourable CM underlined Government of Assam's intention to establish an industrial park dedicated to Japanese companies. Dr. Sarma felt honoured to meet H.E. Furukawa Yasushi, Japan's State Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism on 23rd January, 2025. He along with his team spoke at length on promoting tourism between Japan and the State of Assam and its potential to bring prosperity and to strengthen ties between the two countries

From Charaideo Moidams to Kaziranga to the Bagans and Golf courses of Assam, the CM highlighted Assam's untapped tourism potential and the diverse itineraries that Government of Assan can offer to Japanese visitors. The Assam CM was engaged in a very productive discussion with Lekh Raj Juneja, CEO, Kameda Seika and invited him to explore opportunities in Assam's rapidly growing food sector. The State already has a well established ecosystem for the industry with specialised food parks and major companies already running their operations. Dr. Sarma emphasized that Assam looks forward to taking this momentum further with other companies joining the bandwagon.

During his visit to the Micron Memory facility, Dr. Sarma interacted with Joshua Lee, the company's Vice President and invited them to be a part of Assam's semiconductor growth story.

Jagiroad's Electronic Township is on the precipice of becoming a global semiconductor hub and firms like Micron, which is a pioneer in FAB technology, can immensely strengthen the semiconductor value chain in Assam. During the tour of Japan, honourable CM expressed his goal of achieving the GSDP target of 143 billion American Dollar by 2030 while talking to more than 80 industrialists of Japan. The plan of creating a 12 billion American Dollar infrastructure facility in Assam will be a great incentive for the foreign investors to plan their investments in Assam. In 2024, Assam got 4 billion dollars of foreign investments which is maximum uptil now. Honourable CM dian Oil Corporation Ltd. Dr.Sarma and his team asked them to consider

invited prospective investors to participate in Advantage Assam 2.0 during his stay at Osaka in Japan.

The CM met Pravin Choudhary, the head of India business of Kansai Paint ME in Japan where the team Assam discussed exploring opportunities at #AdvantageAssam2 to which they showed keen interest in establishing a Nerolac paint plant in the State and

Honourable CM had a productive conversation with Hara Shohei, the Senior Vice President of JICA and wished to work on the modalities as to how the Government of Assam can partner with JICA and JETRO\_InvestJP to establish an exclusive industrial park for Japanese companies. He even asked the representatives of Japan's leading Universities to explore linkages with Assam based universities; particularly through joint degree courses, student exchange programs and collaboration in research and skilling

hopefully it will be fruitful.

Dr. Sarma wished to provide more pathways for students in Assam to access Japan's university network. Honourable CM had a very fruitful meeting During their discussions with Terutoshi

scaling their presence in Assam and support the growing electronic and energy sectors in the State.

Honourable CM had a productive meeting with Takao Hosoya, CEO of Mizuho Securities India. The Team Assam discussed extending credit linkages to Assam-based companies and facilitating investments from Japanese firms. Mizuho Securities is a leading financial institution which is known for its expertise in providing innovative financial solutions and credit facilities. Dr. Sarma invited them to join all at #AdvantageAssam2.0 to finalize their plans for the state and explore opportunities for collaboration. Honourable CM also had a privilege to meet Her Excellency Akiko Ikuina, Parliamentary Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan.

He was deeply touched when Her Excellency greeted him in Assamese . She conveyed to Dr. Sarma Government of Japan's intention to offer India and particularly Assam's young and skilled work force, opportunities in Japan. Honourable CM met Takeshi Okubo, Executive Vice President of Tokyo Electron (TEL). TEL is a vital player in the semiconductor supply



Hamano and his team from TOYOTA in Tokyo, team Assam touched upon the possibility of setting up an automobile ancillary unit in the State and the efforts to bring a global automotive firm to Assam. Dr. Sarma asked Toyota to augment its existing skilling programs being offered in Assam Engineering Institute and Govt ITI, Nalbari to other institutes. Honourable CM met Yoshiaki Asakura, Vice President of Yokogawa which is a leading Japanese electrical engineering firm, working in Assam through their collaboration with Numaligarh Refinery Limited and In-

chain and specialises in designing equipments that create chips. Dr. Sarma invited them to partner with Assam.

Advantage Assam 2.0# initiative has so far invited the leaders of more than 200 companies all over the globe. Hopefully we will see an all compassing rainbow of hope on the horizon of our motherland Assam. (The author is the Assistant Development Officer, Evaluation & Monitoring Division, Transformation & Development Department, Government of Assam, Janata Bhawan, Dispur. He can be reached at 7002699011 & 9678785439 or digantaraju@gmail.com, digantabarooah@yahoo.com)



By: Sankalpajit Saikia

40-50 years. Seedlings are planted first By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Tea is the state drink of Assam. In 2011, the then Government of Assam led by Tarun Gogoi declared tea as the national drink of Assam. The two banks of Brahmaputra River in Assam and its climate is very suitable for tea cultivation. Assam is mainly a monsoon climate state. Assam receives an average daily rainfall of 250 to 300 mm and the temperature is especially hot during the summer months The average temperature reaches 36°c so the state of Assam is considered to be very suitable for tea cultivation due to its combination of dry environment and temperature. Although Assam generally produces black tea, it also produces some green tea and white tea Tea is the second largest commercial tea producing region.

from both cuttings and seeds There is shade among the tea trees in the garden Some large plants are planted from time to time to give. They are sandalwood, lemon, coconut. Fertilization is done in March-April. The leaves are then gradually picked.Assam produces about half of India's total tea production annually. In 2019, Assam accounted for 51% of India's total tea production and the world's total production 11% of India's total production in 51.95%, 51.53% in 2005, 51.07% in 2009, 53.08% in 2012, 52.04% in 2013, 50.61% in 2014, 43.53% in 2015, 54 in 11% is produced by Assam.

The workers and laborers employed in the tea plantations of Assam are brought to Assam during the British era. When the British introduced tea cultivation in Assam, the local people

were not interested in tea cultivation. Later these people they are mainly an Austrian people who speak the Mundari language. They have made an undeniable contribution to the rich culture of Assam. Their Jhumur dance is popular in other parts of Assam. The film is directed by Nirod Chowdhury and the story of Chameli

The history of the discovery of tea in Assam is very colorful and rich. At that time, Assam and India were ruled by the British. A British explorer named Robert Bruce wandered the forests of Assam He found the search.this The tree was used by the Singphou people. It was then that Maniram Dewan took Robert Bruce to a Singphou village. Robert Bruce collected the leaves and seeds of the tree from the chief of a Singphou village, Bisa Gam To the park sent for testing. Identified as a variety of Camellia sinensis. The Assam Tea Workers Union is working to ensure the protection and rights of the tea people. The Assam Branch Indian Tea Association and the Tea Council of India are working to ensure the protection and rights of the tea workers with the assistance of the Government of Assam and UNICEF They have been continuously working for improvement.

Tea cultivation is a long term crop. If tea seedlings are planted once, there is no need to plant them again for the next

Memchab shows the tea community of Assam. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika won the National Award for Best Music Director. Every song in the film symbolizes colorful and rich tea the community. There are many examples of how tea plantations and tea people are described in Assamese society, culture and songs. The economic importance of tea plantations was expressed in the songs of Jyoti Prasad Agrawal and Sudhakant Dr. Bhupen Hazarika.

In conclusion, tea is one of the limited resources we have to prove to the world as the pride of Assam. The green color of tea seems to bring endless joy to the hearts of every Assamese sometimes. They are not content with producing tea but within the tea plantations Therefore, the government and every Assamese should be aware of their rights and protection. (The author is a 4th semester student in the department of Political science, Nowgong college (Autonomous). He can be reached at sankalpasaikia006@gmail.com)

ournalism plays a foundational role in sustaining a democracy by informing citizens, holding power ac-J countable, and enabling the free exchange of ideas. It acts as a bridge between the government and the public, ensuring transparency while empowering individuals to participate meaningfully in democratic processes. Without a free and responsible press, democracy risks descending into ignorance, unchecked power, and public manipulation

At the heart of journalism's role in democracy is its function as a watchdog. Journalists serve as the eyes and ears of the public, investigating power structures and exposing corruption, abuses, and systemic failures. This investigative role has been crucial in democratic history. The Watergate scandal in the United States, which led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon, stands as a defining example of journalism's power in upholding democratic values. In India, the Tehelka exposé on defense procurement irregularities and the Cobrapost investigations revealed ethical lapses in governance and corporate practices. Such instances demonstrate that journalism can act as a check against the excesses of power, a role vital to the health of any democracy.

Equally significant is journalism's role in educating the public. A democracy thrives when its citizens are well-informed about societal issues, policies, and the functioning of government institutions. Quality journalism offers factual, context-rich reporting that empowers citizens to engage with public affairs critically. Elections, a cornerstone of democracy, illustrate this clearly. During electoral cycles, the press plays a crucial role in disseminating information about candidates, manifestos. and voting procedures. Without reliable journalism, electorates may fall prey to propaganda, misinformation, and emotional manipulation rather than making informed choices.

The press also acts as a platform for diverse voices, ensuring inclusivity in public discourse. A vibrant democracy values the representation of all its people, including marginalized communities. Journalism plays a critical role in amplifying these voices and shedding light on issues that may otherwise remain hidden. Movements such as the Chipko Movement and the Narmada Bachao Andolan gained national visibility through persistent media coverage, drawing attention to environmental concerns and the rights of indigenous communities. By providing space for dissent and alternative perspectives, the press prevents the monopolization of narratives by dominant power structures, thereby enriching democratic dialogue.

Moreover, journalism serves as a conduit for communication between the government and the public. The press relays policy decisions, legislative developments, and governance strategies to the people, while simultaneously giving voice to public concerns. This dual function fosters transparency, enabling citizens to question and engage with those in power. Press conferences, public debates, and interviews with policymakers often shape public opinion and influence governance. However, this function relies heavily on journalistic independence, as a press compromised by political affiliations risks becoming a propaganda tool rather than

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a neutral channel for information.

An essential aspect of journalism's role in democracy is its commitment to truth and ethical reporting. The integrity of the press rests on principles of accuracy, fairness, and impartiality. However, the rise of misinformation, sensationalism, and "fake news" poses significant threats to this ideal. Misleading narratives can distort public opinion, manipulate elections, and fuel social unrest. The spread of communal tensions in India due to misinformation on digital platforms highlights the dangerous consequences of compromised journalism. Ethical reporting, fact-checking mechanisms, and transparency in news production are therefore vital to preserving journalism's democratic function.

The commercialization of media presents another challenge to journalism's role in democracy. The pursuit of profit often leads media houses to prioritize sensationalism, entertainment, and politically motivated content over substantive public interest stories. Corporate ownership of media outlets can influence editorial policies, leading to biased coverage that serves private interests rather than public good. This conflict between profit motives and journalistic integrity underscores the need for independent media platforms that prioritize truth over commercial gain.

The advent of digital media has further complicated journalism's democratic role. On the one hand, digital platforms have democratized information dissemination, giving citizens access to a broader range of perspectives and enabling grassroots journalism. On the other hand, the proliferation of unverified content, clickbait culture, and opinion-driven narratives has diluted journalistic standards. The rise of social media influencers posing as journalists and the viral spread of misinformation challenge the credibility of the press, making media literacy essential for citizens to discern credible sources from misleading ones.

In India's diverse democracy, the press bears an even greater responsibility. With multiple languages, cultures, and socio-economic realities, the media must ensure balanced representation. Regional journalism plays a crucial role in highlighting issues that may be overlooked by national outlets, such as agrarian distress, local governance failures, and community-specific challenges. However, press freedom in India has faced increasing threats in recent years, with journalists facing harassment, censorship, and even violence for critical reporting. Such attacks undermine democratic values by silencing dissent and discouraging accountability.

For democracy to thrive, the independence of the press must be safeguarded. Legal protections against censorship, corporate monopolization, and political interference are essential to maintaining a free press. Furthermore, citizens must support quality journalism by prioritizing fact-based reporting and resisting sensationalist media consumption. Public awareness campaigns about media literacy can equip citizens to critically evaluate information, reducing the impact of misinformation and biased reporting.

Ultimately, journalism is not merely an accessory to democracy; it is its lifeblood. A free, ethical, and courageous press ensures that citizens remain informed. power remains accountable, and diverse voices find representation. While modern challenges such as misinformation, corporate influence, and digital fragmentation test the resilience of the press, the core principles of journalistic integrity remain indispensable for the survival of democratic ideals. As societies evolve, the continued defense of press freedom and journalistic responsibility will determine the strength and authenticity of democratic governance. (The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-magazine SAMPROTIK. He can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com 9954812261, 9864000260)



### WORLD

'The US cannot treat Colombian migrants as criminals'

# US pauses Colombia tariffs after agreement on acceptance of migrants all Colombian Nationals and

WASHINGTON, Jan 27: The US has paused sanctions and tariffs on Colombia after it agreed to accept all the terms of President Donald Trump, including accepting flights of deported migrants from America, the White House said.

The announcement comes after Trump and Colombian President Gustavo Petro threatened increased retaliatory tariffs after Petro turned away two US military aircraft full of detained Colombian migrants. But the White House late Sunday night said Colombia has agreed to all of President Trump's terms.

'The Government of Colombia has agreed to all of President Trump's terms, including the unrestricted acceptance of all illegal aliens from Colombia returned from the United States, including on US military aircraft, without limitation or delay," White House Press Secretary Karolina Leavitte said.

Based on this agreement, the fully drafted IEEPA (International Emergency Economic Power Act) tariffs and sanctions will be held in reserve, and not signed, unless Colombia fails to honour this agreement, she said.

The visa sanctions issued by the State Department, and enhanced inspections from Customs and Border Protection, will remain in effect until the first planeload of Colombian deportees is successfully returned, she said. Today's events make clear to the world that America is respected again, she said.



"President Trump will continue to fiercely protect our nation's sovereignty, and he expects all other nations of the world to fully cooperate in accepting the deportation of their citizens illegally present in the United States," Leavitte said. Earlier in the day, Colombian President Petro denied entry to US military planes carrying Columbian migrants. "The US cannot treat Colombian migrants as criminals. I deny the entry of American planes carrying Colombian migrants into our territory,' Petro said on X, a move that angered Trump. "I was just informed that two repatriation flights from the United States, with a large number of Illegal Criminals, were not allowed to land in Colombia.

This order was given by Colom-

bia's Socialist President Gustavo Petro, who is already very unpopular amongst his people," an outraged Trump said on Truth Social, a media platform owned by him. Petro's denial of these flights has jeopardised the National Secu-

rity and Public Safety of the United States, Trump said. The US President directed his administration to immediately take urgent and decisive retaliatory measures. He ordered visa restrictions and 25 per cent tariffs on all Colombian incoming goods, which would be raised to 50 per cent in one week.

"Visa Sanctions on all Party Members, Family Members, and Supporters of the Colombian Government. Enhanced Customs and Border Protection Inspections of **Rwanda-backed M23 rebels claim major Congolese** 

city, which Congo calls 'declaration of war'

The M23 has made significant terri-

torial gains along Congo's border with

Rwanda in recent weeks, after months

of regional attempts to make peace

failed. On Sunday night, the rebels

called on Congo's army to surrender

their arms and present themselves at a

local stadium by 3 am or they would

Goma serving with the U.N. peace-

keeping mission, said in a statement on

X late Sunday that some Congolese

soldiers have laid down their weapons.

"More than a hundred FARDC sol-

The Uruguayan army, who are in

take the city.

Cargo on national security grounds. IEEPA Treasury, Banking and Financial Sanctions to be fully imposed," Trump said.

"These measures are just the beginning. We will not allow the Colombian Government to violate its legal obligations with regard to the acceptance and return of the Criminals they forced into the United States!" Trump said.

The Colombian Government immediately responded by saying that it is sending a presidential plane for the dignified return of its people from the United States.

In a statement the Office of Colombian President Gustavo Petro said it has arranged for the presidential plane to facilitate the 'dignified return of Colombian nationals who were to arrive in the country today in the morning hours, coming in from deportation flights." "This measure is in response to the government's commitment to guarantee dignified conditions. In no way have Colombians, as patriots and subjects of rights, been or will be banished from Colombian territory," it said. However, Petro soon retaliated

by announcing a 25 per cent import tariff on American products. "American products whose

price will rise within the national economy must be replaced by national production, and the government will help in this regard," Petro announced on X. (PTI)



WASHINGTON, Jan 27: Law enforcement officials from the US Department of Homeland Security have started visiting gurdwaras in New York and New Jersey to check for the presence of illegal immigrants, drawing a sharp reaction from some Sikh organisations which see such actions as a threat to the sanctity of their faith.

Some of the gurdwaras in New York and New Jersey are believed to be used as a hub by Sikh separatists along with illegal and undocumented immigrants.

Within hours of Donald Trump being sworn in as the 47th President of the United States, acting Department of Homeland Security Secretary Benjamine Huffman in a directive rescinded the Biden administration's guidelines for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) enforcement actions that thwart law enforcement in or near so-called sensitive areas These sensitive areas included places of worship

like gurdwaras and churches.

This action empowers the brave men and women in CBP and ICE to enforce our immigration laws and catch criminal aliens including murderers and rapists who have illegally come into our country, а spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security said.

Criminals will no longer be able to hide in America's schools and churches to avoid arrest. The Trump administration will not tie the hands of our brave law enforcement, and instead trusts them to use common sense, the spokesperson said.

In a statement, the Sikh American Legal Defence and Education Fund (SALDF) expressed grave concern over the directive rescinding the guidelines that designated sensitive areas, such as houses of worship, where immigration enforcement actions were previously restricted.

"This troubling shift in policy comes in tandem with community reports of DHS agents visiting gurdwaras in the New York and New Jersey areas just days after the directive was issued," SALDF said.

We are deeply alarmed by the Department of Homeland Security's decision to eliminate protections for sensitive areas and then target places of worship



like gurdwaras, said Kiran Kaur Gill, executive director of SALDEF. Gill said gurdwaras are not just places of worship; they are vital community centres that provide support, nourishment, and spiritual solace to Sikhs and the broader community. "Targeting these spaces for enforcement actions threatens the sanctity of our faith and sends a chilling message to immigrant communities nationwide, Gill said. Sikh Coalition said the Trump administration's decision to rescind the DHS policy on protected areas (which also included hospitals, schools, social service providers, and more) opens the door to Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents conducting surveillance, investigations, arrests, and raids at gurdwaras.'

The idea that our gurdwaras could be subject to government surveillance and raids by armed law enforcement with or without warrants is unacceptable to the Sikh faith tradition. It will burden religious exercise by limiting the ability of Sikhs to gather and associate with one another in accordance with our faith, Sikh Coalition said.

It also harkens to dark periods in our collective memory when governments interfered in the ability of Sikhs to practice our faith freely with deadly consequences, it said.

"If Sikhs whether documented or undocumented are concerned with gurdwara raids and surveillance, gurdwaras may well be impacted by decreased attendance, and thus an inability to carry out essential religious practices in a meaningful manner," said Sikh Coalition. (PTI)

# Tanker with LPG explodes in Pak, killing 6 persons

LAHORE, Jan 27: A tanker filled with liquified petroleum gas exploded in an industrial area in Pakistan's Punjab province, killing at least six persons, including a minor girl, and injuring 31, authorities said on Monday.

The incident took place at the Industrial Estate in Multan's Hamid Pur Kanora area, according to rescue authorities.

The explosion in the LPG tanker that occurred on Monday triggered a massive fire, with debris from the shattered vehicle landing on nearby residential areas, causing significant destruction, Geo News reported. Rescue officials said that the fire was extinguished after hours of effort, involving over ten firefighting vehicles and foam-

based fire suppression. A total of five people were initially reported to have lost their lives in the deadly blast. However, the death toll rose to six after res-

GOMA, Jan 27: Rwanda-backed rebels claimed they captured eastern Congo's largest city, Goma, early Monday, as the United Nations described a "mass panic" among its 2 million people and Congo's government said the rebel advance was a "declaration of war." The M23 rebels announced the city's capture in a statement minutes before a 48-hour deadline expired that had been imposed by the group for the Congolese army to surrender their weapons. Early Monday morning, gunfire was heard throughout the city, according to two aid workers sheltering there who were not authorized to speak to the media.

In a statement, the rebels urged residents of Goma to remain calm and for members of the Congolese military to assemble at the central stadium.

The M23 rebels' offensive in the heart of the mineral-rich region threatens to dramatically worsen one of Africa's longest wars and further displace civilians. According to a United Nations report, over a third of the popwar which no longer hides itself behind diplomatic maneuvers." Rwanda's ambassador to the UN, Ernest Rwamucyo, did not confirm or deny Congo's claims. He blamed Congo's government, saying the crisis could have been been averted if it had "demonstrated a genuine commitment to peace."

The United States and France called for a ceasefire and appealed to Rwanda to withdraw its support to M23, with acting US Ambassador Dorothy Shea warning that the US would "consider all the tools at its disposal" to hold accountable those responsible for sustaining the armed conflict.

In the past 48 hours, two U.N. peacekeepers from South Africa and one from Uruguay were killed and 11 others were injured and hospitalized, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' spokesman said ahead of the Security Council meeting.

The UN chief reiterated his "strongest condemnation" of the M23 offensive "with the support of the Rwanda Defense Forces," and called on the rebel group to immediately halt all hostile action and withdraw, spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. Congo cuts ties with Rwanda

# New bid for TikTok from Perplexity AI could give US government 50% stake



WASHINGTON, Jan 27: Perplexity AI has presented a new proposal to TikTok's parent company that would allow the US government to own up to 50% of a new entity that merges Perplexity with TikTok's US business, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The proposal, submitted last week, is a revision of a prior plan the artificial intelligence startup had presented to TikTok's parent ByteDance on Jan 18, a day before the law that bans TikTok went into effect

The first proposal, which ByteDance hasn't responded to, sought to create a new structure that would merge San Francisco-based Perplexity with TikTok's US business and include investments from other investors. The new

News' Sunday Morning Futures that a new investor in TikTok could simply dilute down the Chinese ownership and satisfy the law. Mnuchin has previously expressed interest in investing in the company.

But the technology needs to be disconnected from China, he added. It needs to be disconnected from ByteDance. There's absolutely no way that China would ever let us have something like that in China. The Perplexity proposal comes as several investors are expressing interest in TikTok. President Donald Trump said late Saturday that he expects a deal will be made in as soon as 30 days. On a flight from Las Vegas to Miami on Air Force One, Trump also said he hadn't discussed a deal with Larry Ellison, CEO of software maker Oracle, despite a report that Oracle, along with outside investors, was considering taking over TikTok's global operation.

Numerous people are talking to me. Very substantial people, Trump said. We have a lot of interest in it, and the United States will be a big beneficiary. ... I'd only do it if the United States benefits. Under a bipartisan law passed last year, TikTok was to be banned in the United States by Jan 19 if it did not cut ties with ByteDance. The Supreme Court upheld the law,

cue officials recovered another body from a house damaged by the explosion. The deceased include a minor girl and two women, the report added.

The police reported that at least 20 houses surrounding the explosion site were completely reduced to rubble, while 70 were partially damaged.

Multan's City Police Officer (CPO) Sadiq Ali told Geo News that several houses were destroyed, and livestock perished in the blaze.

He said that gas had been leaking from one of the valves of the tanker truck parked in the Industrial Estate. Some of the people present in the area had already evacuated after smelling the gas before the tanker exploded, he added. Ali further stated that gas leakage from the tanker persists, prompting authorities to evacuate the area. Among the injured, 13 are reported to be in critical condition (AP)

ulation of North Kivu province where Goma is located are currently displaced and the capture of Goma will likely exacerbate the situation.

Late Sunday night, UN peacekeepers began to process members of the military who had begun to surrender on the outskirts of the city. Congolese government spokesman Patrick Muyaya made a statement in a video posted on X calling for the protection of civilians and saying that the country is "in a war situation where the news is changing."

Late Sunday, the UN's special representative for Congo told an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council that with the airport shut down and roads blocked in the vast region's humanitarian and security hub, "we are trapped." Congo late Saturday broke off relations with Rwanda, which has denied backing the M23 despite evidence collected by UN experts and others. The surge of violence has killed at least 13 peacekeepers over the past week. And Congolese were again on the run

diers are sheltered in the facilities of the "Siempre Presente" base awaiting the (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) process," the statement said. In photos shared with the statement, armed men are seen registering with the peacekeepers in a mix of military uniforms and civilian clothing. The UN special representative, Bintou Keita, told the Security Council that despite UN peacekeepers' support for the Congolese armed forces, M23 and Rwandan forces entered the Munigi neighborhood on Goma's outskirts, "causing mass panic." Munigi is 9 kilometers (5 miles) from the city. Keita said M23 fighters were advancing and using residents "as human shields" as others fled for their lives.

"M23 has declared the airspace over Goma closed," she added. "In other words, we are trapped." She said the UN was temporarily relocating nonessential personnel from the city.

Congo's foreign minister, Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, told the Security Council that Rwanda was committing "a frontal aggression, a declaration of

Congo, the United States and UN experts accuse Rwanda of backing M23, which is mainly made up of ethnic Tutsis who broke away from the Congolese army more than a decade ago. It's one of about 100 armed groups that have been vying for a foothold in the mineral-rich region, where a long-running conflict has created one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. Rwanda's government denies backing the rebels, but last year acknowledged that it has troops and missile systems in eastern Congo to safeguard its security, pointing to a buildup of Congolese forces near the border. U.N. experts estimate up to 4,000 Rwandan forces are in Congo.

Congo's foreign ministry said late Saturday it was severing diplomatic ties with Rwanda and pulling all diplomatic staff from the country "with immediate effect." (AP)

proposal would allow the US government to own up to half of that new structure once it makes an initial public offering of at least \$300 billion, said the person, who was not authorized to speak about the proposal. The person said Perplexity's proposal was revised based off of feedback from the Trump administration.

If the plan is successful, the shares owned by the government would not have voting power, the person said. The government also would not get a seat on the new company's board.

ByteDance and TikTok did not immediately responded to a request for comment.

Under the plan, ByteDance would not have to completely cut ties with TikTok, a favorable outcome for its investors. But it would have to allow a full U.S. board control, the person said. Under the proposal, the China-based tech company would contribute TikTok's U.S. busi-

ness without the proprietary algorithm that fuels what users see on the app, according to a document seen by the Associated Press. In exchange, ByteDance's existing investors will get equity in the new structure that emerges.

The proposal seems to mirror a strategy Steven Mnuchin, treasury secretary during Trump's first term, discussed Sunday on Fox

but Trump then issued an executive order to halt enforcement of the law for 75 days. Trump, on Air Force One, noted that Ellison lives right down the road from his Mar-a-Lago

estate, but added, I never spoke to Larry about TikTok. I've spoken to many people about Tik-Tok and there's great interest in TikTok.

TikTok briefly shut down in the US a week ago, but went back online after Trump said he would postpone the ban. Trump had unsuccessfully attempted a U.S. ban of the platform during his first term. But he has since reversed his position and has credited the platform with helping him win more young voters during last year's presidential election. TikTok CEO Shou Chew attended Trump's inauguration Jan. 20, along with some other tech leaders who've been forging friendlier ties with the new administra-

Congress voted to ban TikTok in the U.S. out of concern that TikTok's ownership structure represented a security risk. The Biden administration argued in court for months that it was too much of a risk to allow a Chinese company to control the algorithm that fuels what people see on the app. Officials also raised concerns about user data collected on the platform. (AP)

# Tens of thousands return to devastated northern Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, Jan 27: Tens of thousands of Palestinians returned to the most heavily destroyed part of the Gaza Strip on Monday as Israel lifted its closure of the north for the first time since the early weeks of the 15-month war with Hamas in accordance with a fragile ceasefire.

Massive crowds of people carrying their belongings on foot stretched along a main highway running next to the coast in a stunning reversal of the mass exodus from the north at the start of the war, which many Palestinians had feared Israel would make permanent.

Palestinians who have been sheltering in squalid tent camps and schools-turnedshelters for over a year are eager to return to their homes -- even knowing that they have likely been damaged or destroyed.

Many saw their return as an act of steadfastness after Israel's military campaign, which was launched in response to Hamas' Oct 7, 2023, attack, and as a repudiation of US President Donald Trump's suggestion that large numbers of Palestinians be resettled in Egypt and Jordan.

#### The joy of return

Ismail Abu Matter, a father of four who had waited for three days before crossing with his family, described scenes of jubilation on the other side, with people

singing, praying and crying as they were reunited with relatives.

It's the joy of return, said Abu Matter, whose relatives were among the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who fled or were driven out of what is now Israel during the 1948 war surrounding its creation. We had thought we wouldn't return, like our ancestors.

The opening was delayed for two days over a dispute between Hamas and Israel, which said the militant group had changed the order of the hostages it released in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. Mediators resolved the dispute overnight.

Hamas said the return was a victory for our people, and a declaration of failure and defeat for the (Israeli) occupation and transfer plans.

The ceasefire is aimed at winding down the deadliest and most destructive war ever fought between Israel and Hamas and securing the release of dozens of hostages captured in the militants' Oct 7. 2023. attack.

Israel ordered the wholescale evacuation of the north in the opening days of the war and sealed it off shortly after ground troops moved in. Around a million people fled to the south in October 2023, while hundreds of thousands re-



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mained in the north, which had some of the heaviest fighting and the worst destruction of the war

Defense Minister Israel Katz said Israel would continue to enforce the ceasefire, and that anyone violating it or threatening Israeli forces will bear the full cost.

We will not allow a return to the reality of Oct. 7, he wrote on the social media platform X.

Hostage dispute rattled week-old ceasefire

Israel had delayed the opening of the crossing, which was supposed to happen over the weekend, saying it would not allow Palestinians north until a female civilian hostage, Arbel Yehoud, was released. It also accused Hamas of failing to provide information on whether the remaining hostages set to be freed in the first phase are alive or dead.

Hamas in turn accused Israel of violating the agreement by not opening the crossing

The Gulf nation of Qatar, a key medi-

ator with Hamas, announced early Monday that an agreement had been reached to release Yehoud along with two other hostages before Friday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement that the hostage release which will include female soldier Agam Berger will take place on Thursday. That release will be in addition to the one already set for next Saturday, when three hostages should be released.

Hamas also handed over a list of required information about the hostages to be released in the ceasefire's six-week first phase.

Starting at 7 am, Palestinians were allowed to cross on foot without inspection through part of the so-called Netzarim corridor, a military zone bisecting the territory just south of Gaza City that Israel carved out early in the war. A checkpoint for vehicles was to open later with an inspection mechanism, the details of which were not immediately known.

#### A second and more difficult phase awaits

Under the first phase of the ceasefire, which runs until early March, Hamas is to free a total of 33 hostages in exchange for the release of nearly 2,000 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. The militants

have released seven hostages, including four female soldiers, in the current ceasefire, in exchange for more than 300 prisoners, including many serving life sentences for deadly attacks on Israelis.

The second and far more difficult phase of the agreement has not vet been negotiated. Hamas says it will not release the remaining 60 or so hostages unless Israel ends the war, while Netanyahu says he is still committed to destroying the militant group and ending its nearly 18year rule over Gaza.

Hamas started the war when thousands of its fighters stormed into southern Israel on Oct 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting another 250. Around 90 hostages are still inside Gaza, and Israel believes around a third of them are dead

Israel's air and ground war has killed over 47,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It does not say how many of the dead were combatants. Israel says it has killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Israeli bombardment and ground operations have displaced around 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million people, often multiple times, and flattened entire neighbourhoods. (AP)

#### TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025

### **NORTHEAST / REGION**

### THE HILLS TIMES 7

# Manipur Cong file petitions seeking disqualification of 4 NPP MLAs NPP had on November 17 last year withdrawn support to the BJP-led government

IMPHAL, Jan 27: Opposition Congress in Manipur on Monday filed disqualification petitions against four National People's Party (NPP) MLAs for extending support to the BJP-led government, despite the party officially severing ties with the ruling front two months ago.

Manipur Congress vice-president Hareshwar Goshwami filed four different petitions against the MLAs at the Speaker's Tribunal of the state assembly, the petitioner's advocate N Bupenda Meitei told PTI.

"My client has filed the petitions against four NPP legislators for extending support to the BJP-led government in the state. They had joined a meeting convened for the ruling MLAs by the chief minister," he said. Meitei said the NPP MLAs attended



tional president had already withdrawn support to the BJP-led government in Manipur. "Citing the Meghachandra case in

the meeting, although the NPP na- the Supreme Court for deciding pend-**Mizo students urge Centre to** 

reconsider decision to scrap FMR

pleas expeditiously," he said.

The four MLAs in question are Mayanglambam Rameshwar Singh, Thongam Shanti Singh, Irengbam Nalini Devi and Janghemlung Panmei.

The NPP had on November 17 last year withdrawn support to the BJP-led government in violence-hit Manipur, claiming that the N Biren Singh dispensation "completely failed to resolve the crisis and restore normalcy' in the northeastern state

The NPP had seven MLAs in the 60-member Manipur assembly, and the withdrawal of support did not affect the stability of the government, as the BJP enjoyed absolute majority in the House with 32 legislators.

three months of the date of filing of MLA N Kayisii, NPP Manipur pressuch petitions, he (Goswami) exident, died on January 18 after propressed confidence that the Speaker longed illness, leaving six party MLAs in the House at present. (PTI) would dispose of the disqualification

National Rock Contest at 51<sup>st</sup> Karbi Youth Festival <u>HT Bureau</u>

DIPHU, Jan 27: The National Rock Contest is set to take center stage at the 51st Karbi Youth Festival (KYF) in Taralangso, Diphu.

Organised by 'No-Tok-Let', a prominent event hosting group, the contest promises to be an electrifying experience. The last date for registration is February 5, and the grand finale is scheduled for February 18. The winning band will receive a prize money of Rs 4 lakh.

One of the event organisers Risim Rongpi said, "No-Tok-Let was founded in 2010 by musician Late Daniel Ingty and myself as an addition to the Karbi Youth Festival. We have successfully hosted two editions, creating a platform for local talents to shine and represent Karbi Anglong but financial constraints forced us to pause the event.

Rongpi announced that 'No-Tok-Let' is being revived this year, with the National Rock Contest being curated during the 51st Karbi Youth Festival

"We believe this revival will not only honour the festival's legacy but also inspire and empower our youth, providing them with an opportunity to connect through music and culture. The revival of 'No-Tok-Let' promises to be a momentous highlight to the 51st Karbi Youth Festival, and music enthusiasts are eagerly awaiting the event."

### Nagaland Congress protest against **BJP's remark on Ambedkar**

KOHIMA, Jan 27: The Congress in Nagaland on Monday staged a protest rally as part of the ongoing 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan Abhiyan' aimed to honour Dr BR Ambedkar and uphold the values of the Indian Constitution.

Addressing the protest, Member of Lok Sabha and Nagaland Pradesh Congress Committee (NPCC) President, S Supongmeren Jamir, stated that the protest is to protest BJP leaders' remarks against Dr BR Ambedkar, the Father of the Constitution, and their alleged attempts to undermine the Constitution. He emphasised the Congress party's commitment to protecting constitutional values and justice and equality for all. NPCC working president, Khriedi Theunuo expressed concern that the BJP's actions are eroding the roots of the Constitution and tarnishing the legacy of leaders like Ambedkar and Gandhi. Maintaining that a Nation like India cannot do justice to the rights and aspirations of its people without the Constitution, Theunuo highlighted the significance of constitutional principles in preserving the country's unity and democracy. (PTI)

# Nagaland govt urges stakeholders to work for elimination of TB

KOHIMA, Jan 27: The Nagaland government on Monday urged all stakeholders to work for eliminating TB from the northeastern state.

Nagaland Chief Secretary J Alam has urged all district commissioners to conduct review meetings, collaborate with local civil society organisations, church leaders and other influential community members to strategise on achieving the goals of TB elimination.

The chief secretary made the appeal during a meeting on the 100-day TB elimination campaign launched by the Prime Minister on December 7, 2024.

Alam highlighted 347 districts across the country, including three in Nagaland – Kohima, Mon and Wokha have been selected and identi-

fied as high-incidence districts in the state. "This campaign is crucial for us, as untreated TB is not only infectious but also fatal," Alam remarked, stressing the need for early intervention to prevent complications and reduce treatment costs.

A lot of outreach and awareness actions are required under this programme so that we can detect everyone who has this problem and they can be gien the treatment, Alam said.

The chief secretary expressed optimism that collective efforts would drive the success of the 100-day campaign and ultimately eliminate TB in the state.

Commissioner secretary of health and family welfare department, Anoop Khinchi said that with 28 lakh new TB cases annually in the country, the disease causes approximately 3.5 lakh deaths each year.

He also pointed out the bidirectional relationship between TB and undernutrition, noting that improving nutrition for TB patients has been shown to enhance treatment outcomes

"The Government of India is also providing financial assistance through the Nikshay motion, offering Rs 1000 per month to patients undergoing treatment," Khinchi said.

The initiative encourages community members to directly contribute towards the nutritional support of TB patients, thus aiding in treatment completion, he said.

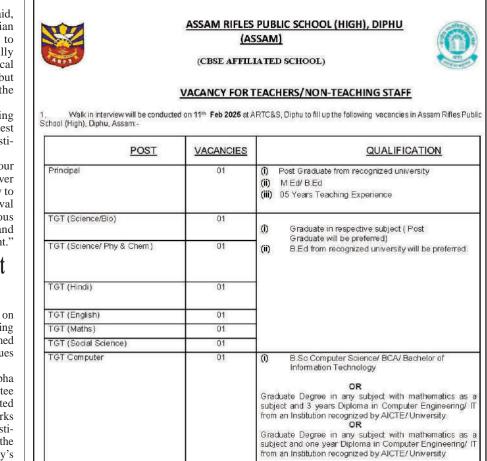
Focusing on increasing community participation to reduce stigma and enhance awareness about TB, he said, "A key part of our strategy is psychological support for patients, as stigma and fear of discrimination can delay recovery."

Noting that there are 3,843 TB patients undergoing treatment in the state, Khinchi urged government departments to disseminate infornation about TB in their offices and local communities, ensuring that people know the disease is treatable, curable, and preventable.

The campaign's goals are to accelerate case detection, reduce mortality, and prevent new cases, especially in high-burden districts like Kohima, Mon, and Wokha, she said, adding that new strategies, including x-ray screenings, molecular testing, and outreach activities, aim to identify and treat TB cases early.

The campaign also focuses on providing nutritional support to patients, with several stakeholders and departments involved in community awareness and support activities, she said.

State programme officer for National TB Elimination Programme in Nagaland, Dr Vezokholu Theyo, emphasised the importance of community participation and to encourage the donation of resources to support TB patients under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana maintaining that the campaign aligns with global Sustainable Development Goals to leave no one behind in the fight against TB. (PTI)



#### OR 'A' level from DOEACO

WELCOME TO NDIA-MYANMAR RIENDSHIP ROAD BERCE 25 BRT AIZAWL, Jan 27: Mizoram's apex student body,

Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah urging the Centre to reconsider its decision to 'scrap' the Free Movement Regime (FMR) and fence the Indo-Myanmar border.

The letter, sent through governor VK Singh, said the FMR with Myanmar has played a vital role in preserving and fostering the Mizo way of life as well as cultural ties between ethnic Mizos of the two countries ter said. (PTI)

## Tribal Youth Council to hold public meeting

IMPHAL, Jan 27: In response to the "inaction" of the Government of Manipur despite repeated appeals concerning "critical tribal issues", the executive council of the Tribal Youth Council Manipur (TYCM) has decided to hold a "public meeting" on February 1, at Tarung Community Hall in Imphal at 11 am to hear the concerns and voices of the tribal public on various "tribal vital issues". The issues include non-conduct of Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) elections,

titute (TRI), Manipur S

mission for Scheduled Tribes

(MSCST), and Manipur Tribal De-

velopment Corporation Ltd.

(MTDC), non-regularization of nine

contractual staff in the Manipur State

Commission for Scheduled Tribes

(MSCST), nomination of two

MSCST members on December 26,

2024, without due advertisement or

The TYCM "earnestly" appealed



their importance for both the armed forces and civilian use. During a meeting with Air Marshal Surat Singh, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C) of the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Eastern Air Command at Raj Bhavan here, Parnaik discussed enhancing non-recruitment for vacant posts in air connectivity and the operational the Directorate of Tribal Affairs & readiness of ALGs, an official Hills Department, Tribal Research

communiqué informed

ties, sharing of resources and participation in each other's cultural, religious ceremonies and community events "The proposed termination of the FMR and the fencing of the Indo-Myanmar border threaten to sever

by facilitating cross-border contact, economic activi-

these bonds, depriving us of our cultural rights and access to essential resources. This decision disregards the geographical, historical, and economic interconnectedness of our communities, which have long transcended political boundaries," the letter said.

'Such actions would not only infringe upon the rights of indigenous communities but also jeopardise the cultural and economic fabric of our lives," it said. The letter also said India was a signatory to the

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 2007 and is bound by Article 36 of the UNDRIP, which affirms the right of indigenous peoples to maintain and develop cross-border relation. "It is disheartening to witness the world's largest democracy act contrary to this principle, undermining the rights of its indigenous people," the let-

### Call for activating ALGs for boosting connectivity, tourism civilian helicopter services, partic-ITANAGAR, Jan 27: Arunachal

ularly to improve access to remote areas. He emphasised that these efforts

would significantly contribute to the state's tourism sector. Parnaik advised the IAF to

maintain high levels of preparedness to handle potential evacuations, disaster relief, and medical emergencies, as landslides during the rainy season often block roadways in the region

The governor also urged the Eastern Air Command to conduct awareness campaigns and recruit more youth from Arunacha

Air Marshal Singh assured the

governor that the issues would be

addressed through the appropri-

ing disqualification petitions within

ch operi area in 1 seized ) improets. two e phone. 'e been ir since t in the 2023. ive been

17ed

y forces

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peration

district.

endered e in the

an invitation for applications and other tribal issues. to leaders of youth clubs, civil society organizations, intellectuals, so-

cial workers from tribal communities, and former ADC members to participate in this important meeting.

"Your presence, valuable suggestions, and support will play a crucial role in shaping the collective efforts to uphold the rights and development of tribal communities in Manipur. Let us come together in solidarity for the advancement of our tribal society," the TYCM added. (NNN)

The discussions also highlighted Pradesh, promoting greater local ways to utilise ALGs for improvrepresentation in the defence ing tourism and connectivity in the forces region

ALGs are temporary airfields built for emergency operations. The governor suggested leveraging the IAF's Air Traffic Control (ATC) infrastructure to facilitate

ITANAGAR, Jan 27: A Memorandum

of Understanding was signed on Mon-

day between the Indo-Tibetan Border

Police and the Arunachal Pradesh Agri-

culture Marketing Board at Tuting in

tainable market platform for local farm-

ers and self-help groups (SHGs),

improving their livelihoods and boost-

ing the region's agricultural economy,

they said.

The partnership aims to create a sus-

Upper Siang district, officials said.

ate channels within the defence establishment, the communiqué added. (PTI)

# **(TBP, Arunachal agri marketing board ink pact to boost market access for farmers**

connectivity and limited market access, despite its high potential for producing fruits and vegetables, according to an official release.

With the support of the Block Mission Management Unit (BMMU) under the Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSRLM) and the agriculture department, significant strides have been made to connect SHGs and farmers to markets, it said.

ArSRLM has organised villagers into Tuting, a remote border town near SHGs and provided them with the tools Tibet, faces challenges like poor road and resources needed to enter the agri-

cultural market, it said.

transform the lives of Tuting's farmers by offering a reliable market platform and improving their economic condition. The initiative also sets the stage for greater market expansion and development in the region, the release added.

On Monday, SHGs from Zido village fulfilled their first vegetable and fruit supply order, which was delivered to

The collaboration is expected to

# Arunachal CM vows to bridge development gaps in Siang district

ITANAGAR, Jan Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Monday acknowledged that Rumgong region in Siang district has remained undeveloped for long and assured that every effort will be made to address the developmental gaps

Joining the Hiyom Banggo Unying Giidi festival at Rumgong, Khandu emphasised government's commitment to ensuring equitable progress for the region, leaving no stone unturned to improve infrastructure and quality of life for its residents.

Khandu termed road connectivity in the region as the main concern and assured that all unconnected villages of the assembly segment will be connected in the next couple of years.

To start with, Khandu informed that four roads have proposed under been



PMGSY-IV in Payum circle As a festival gift, Khandu that will boost connectivity in announced sanction of projthe region, an official stateects worth Rs 66 crore in the ment said here. area that include several roads, two circuit houses,

According to him, the four proposed roads are a 47-km school building and quarters for the Pessing Govt HS BRO road to Gate, which will connect the villages of Dupu, School and an ADC office Yio, Payum, Gacheng and building at Rumgong. Gate; an 8-km road from The CM informed that the Payum to Gaming; a 13-km state budget for 2025-26 will BRO road to Meying (Bogu); be presented in March and asand an 11-km BRO road to sured that the proposals for-

Sirum via Tuying.

minister and mentor secretary of the district with due consultations with the local legislator and district administration will be considered positively.

Highlighting the agriculture and horticulture potential of the region. Khandu said the state government would soon establish a fruit farm here to assist local farmers through value-addition of their produces and offer market link-

He urged the youths to avail schemes like the entrepreneurship development programme and the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Swavlamban Yojna to start their own business.

"Government jobs are limited. Not all can be accommodated. Therefore, our youths need to stand up on their own and become job givers rather than job seekers," he added. warded by the guardian Khandu said once the

Trans-Arunachal Highway from Kaying to Mechuka is completed, the Rumgong assembly segment will be well connected with rest of the state Further, he informed, that

once the ambitious 2500 km frontier highway is executed, the entire upper belts of Arunachal Pradesh will witness a huge boost in terms of tourism and agri-horti produces.

Responding to a five-point memorandum submitted by local legislator Talem Taboh, the chief minister assured that all the demands will be met. 'This is my first time at-

tending Unying Giidi festival. Due to time constraints, I will not be able fully enjoy it this

time but I promise that next time I will come prepared with time," he added. Lok Sabha MP Tapir Gao

accompanied Khandu to the festival. (PTI)

the ITBP for distribution and marketing. (PTI)

		AND (ii) Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) from an institute recognized by NCTE will be preferred.
PRT	08	0 Graduation.
FRI		(ii) B.Ed/JBT/ETT/Similar Qualification.
PRT (Computer)	01	() Graduation.
		(ii) PG Diploma/Diploma in Computers.
Art Teacher	01	<ul> <li>Higher Secondary/ Intermediate /Senior Secondary examination with minimum 4 years full time diploma in painting/ fine arts from a recognized institute</li> </ul>
		OR
		(ii) Graduate with Drawing and painting/
		Art/ Fine Art with minimum two years full time diploma from a recognized institute.
		(iii) M.A in Drawing and Painting/ Fine Art from a recognized University
Music Teacher	01	(i) Graduate in/ with Music from a recognized university     OR     (ii) The New Diploma/ Degrees awarded by the concerned agencies institutions.
PT Teacher	01	<ul> <li>Bachelor of Physical Education (B P Ed) Four Years Degree Course OR</li> <li>Three Years Gradation+ One Year B.P.Ed. Diploma OR</li> <li>B.Sc. Physical Education; Health Education &amp;</li> </ul>
Counselor	01	(i) Graduate/Post Graduate in psychology.
		OR (ii) Post Graduate in Child Development. OR (iii) Graduate/Post Graduate with Diploma in
Clerk	01	Career Guidance and Counseling.
	12.57.52	<ul> <li>Graduate or 1 year experience in a clerical wc /minimum 1 year in Computer diploma.</li> </ul>
		(ii) Typing with minimum speed of 40 WPM.
		(iii) Knowledge of Computer MS Office (speed 8000 key depression per hour).
		(iv) Basic knowledge of tally work.
Maid	04	(i) VIII th Pass.
Peon Cum Gardener	01	(i) VIII th Pass.
Safai Wala	01	(i) VIII th Pass.

2. Candidates who are willing to work in Assam Rifles Public School (High), Diphu only to apply. Application with valid mobile number of the candidates and copy of Aadhar card must be submitted by hand on or before 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025 at the following address

OIC	
Assam Rifles Public School (High), [	Diphu
ARTC&S	
Karbi Anglong	
Assam	
PIN: 782460	

For any queries, please contact 7896552458(School NCO)/ 9394601209(School Principal) or email at rhighschooldiphu@gmail.com

All expenses will be borne by the candidates themselve

Pay and perks will be as per prevailing scales in comparable institutions. Note: All candidates are required to carry PAN Card / UID or any other valid identity Card & original certifica Note: All candidates are requi for educational qualification

### NATION

DEHRADUN, Jan 27: Uttarak-

hand on Monday became the first

state in the country to implement

the Uniform Civil Code with the

ruling BJP fulfilling a major com-

mitment made ahead of the 2022

The UCC came into force as

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh

Dhami unveiled its notification, released the rules for its implementa-

Assembly polls.

in relationships.

said at the function.

next month.

Usha Tiwari from Korba.

Congress state unit in-charge

general secretary (organisation and

administration) Malkeet Singh

Gaindu is the party's candidate for

the mayor's post in Jagdalpur,

Nikhil Dwivedi in Rajnandgaon

Gaindu released the list of candi-

and Vijay Golchha in Dhamtari.

cials

# Dalit bodies hold protests; attempt to vandalise Ambedkar statue

AMRITSAR/CHANDIGARH, Jan 27: Dalit bodies held massive protests in Amritsar on Monday against an attempt to vandalise a life-size statue of B R Ambedkar by a man on Republic Day, while Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann asserted that exemplary punishment will be ensured in the matter.

Police on Sunday arrested Akash Singh, a resident of Dharamkot in Punjab's Moga district, for allegedly attempting to damage the Ambedkar statue at the Town Hall on Heritage Street that leads to the Golden Temple

A video clip purportedly of the incident went viral on social media, in which the man is seen climbing atop the statue using a steel ladder and carrying a hammer. He is seen hitting the statue multiple times with the hammer.

The man also caused damage to the Constitution book, which is part of the statue. He was later apprehended and handed over to police.

Describing the incident as unfortunate, Amritsar Police Commissioner Gurpreet Singh Bhullar said an FIR has been lodged under relevant legal provisions, including sections 299 (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion), 196 (promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion) and 324 (mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and sections of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Harmit Singh, who knows the family of Akash Singh, said he had gone to Dubai three years ago for work.

He was not in touch with his family, said Harmit Singh, who is also a resident of Dharamkot.

Akash Singh returned to India two-three months ago and started living in Amritsar, he said.

Meanwhile, members of Dalit communities held protests in Amritsar against the incident.

A complete "bandh" was observed in the city because of the protest call given by Dalit bodies. The protesters forced shopkeepers to down shutters. Educational institutions were also forced to shut. The protests were organised by the Balmiki Samaj

and supported by various political outfits.

Sant Baba Malkit Nath, leader of the Balmiki Samaj, requested the state government to ensure exemplary punishment for the accused.

A massive protest was held at the busy Bhandari Bridge area, where anti- government slogans were also raised. Heavy police security was deployed in the city. Mann said exemplary punishment will be ensured for the accused.

Describing the incident as unfortunate and tragic, the chief minister said it has bruised the psyche of everyone who respect Baba Saheb Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Constitution.

Requesting people to exercise restraint, he said no one will be allowed to disturb the hard-earned peace in the state and that evil designs of anti-Punjab forces to cause communal strife will be nipped in the bud.

His government is fully vigilant and committed to crushing the nefarious designs of anti-social and antinational elements who try to create unrest in Punjab, Mann said in a statement.

Bhullar said the mobile phone of the accused is under



Special police teams are questioning the man, the commissioner said, adding that the probe is being conducted in a scientific manner.

"I assure everyone that a fair investigation will be done," he said.

Preliminary questioning of the accused has revealed that he belongs to the Scheduled Caste (SC) community, Bhullar said.

On the ladder used by the accused to climb up the statue, he said it was already lying there as the members of an organisation had held a programme.

The ladder was not removed after the programme and it was misused by the accused, the commissioner said, adding that this aspect would also be investigated. Meanwhile, Congress MP Gurjit Singh Aujla and former state minister Raj Kumar Verma washed the statue with milk on Monday.

Aujla condemned the incident and claimed that the accused had even tried to set the statue on fire.

The incident took place when the entire country was celebrating the 76th Republic Day, he pointed out. Aujla said the Punjab government should consider

the seriousness of the incident and ensure exemplary punishment for the accused.

The incident has drawn widespread condemnation from all political parties.

Strongly condemn the desecration of the architect of Indian Constitution Baba Sahib Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkarji's statue at Heritage Street, Amritsar. We won't let anyone disrupt Punjab's communal harmony and perpetrators will face severe punishment," the ruling Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Punjab unit chief Aman Arora said in a post on X.

Opposition leaders condemned the incident as well, with some of them claiming that there could be a "deeprooted" conspiracy behind it.

Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring was among those who said there could be a "deeprooted" conspiracy behind the incident.

"There should be a high-level probe," the member of Parliament added.

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Tarun Chugh said the culprit should be given strict punishment and the conspiracy needs to be unearthed.

Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal condemned the incident and demanded a thorough inquiry to unravel the "conspiracy" behind it.

"Strongly condemn the attempt to desecrate Dr B R Ambedkarji's statue at Heritage Street in Sri Amritsar Sahib on Republic Day. This heinous act has hurt the sentiments of millions. I demand stern action against the culprit and a thorough inquiry to unravel the conspiracy behind this shameful incident. Let's stand united against such vile attempts to create divisions in our society," Badal said in a post on X. (PTI)

> "We coined the term 'guarantee' first in the country. After us, the BJP stole it, but the difference is, we fulfil our guarantees, and they do not," he said.

Kejriwal appealed to the voters to press and offering financial support to auto and the AAP's 'jhadu' button, associated with cab drivers. Goddess Lakshmi, the deity of wealth and prosperity, on the electronic voting machines and not the BJP's 'lotus' button. Of the 15 guarantees outlined in the manifesto, Kejriwal promised "robust" job creation for Delhi residents as his first priority. The second guarantee is ₹ 2,100 for women while the third is free healthcare for senior citizens under the Sanjeevani Yoiana

electricity and water benefits to tenants. Additionally, AAP has committed to improving Delhi's sewage system, issuing ration cards to those left out of the system,

candidates for the posts of chairpersons to 40 municipal councils and

102 nagar panchayats. On Sunday, the ruling BJP in the state declared candidates for all the 10 mayoral posts.

Elections to 173 civic bodies, comprising 10 municipal corporations, 49 municipal councils and 114 nagar panchayats, will be held in a single phase on February 11, while the three-tier panchayat elections would be conducted in three phases on February 17, 20 and 23. In the last urban body polls held

in 2019-2020, the then ruling Congress in the state got mayoral posts in all the 10 municipal corporations. Last time, the mayoral polls were held in an indirect manner - with the public directly electing corporators and the latter then electing mayor. The indirect method was intro-

duced in 2019 by then Bhupesh Baghel government. (PTI)

retired Supreme Court Judge Ranjana Prakash Desai was constituted on May 27, 2022, to prepare the draft of the UCC. The panel headed by Desai submitted a comprehensive draft of the

An expert committee headed by

pert committee to draft it.

UCC prepared after a prolonged dialogue with a cross-section of people to the state government on February 2, 2024.

A legislation on it was passed a few days later by the state Assembly on February 7. It was given president's assent nearly a month later paving the way for its implementation

An expert committee headed by former chief secretary Shatrughan Singh, who was also a part of the drafting committee to frame the rules and regulations for the implementation of the Act, submitted its report to the state government late last year.

The state cabinet gave its approval to the report recently and authorised the chief minister to decide a date for its implementation. (PTI)

## EAM Jaishankar embarks on 3-day visit to UAE

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday embarked on a three-day visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to further enhance India's comprehensive strategic partnership with the influential Gulf nation.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Jaishankar will meet the leadership of the UAE to review the close partnership between the two countries. "The external affairs minister will meet the leadership of the UAE to review the close partnership between the two countries and explore avenues to further enhance the bilateral relationship," it said.

It said the visit will provide an opportunity to "advance" the India-UAE comprehensive strategic partnership and "add new momentum" to the ties. During Jaishankar's trip, the two sides are also expected to review the situation in Gaza following the coming into force of the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas. (PTI)

### Rahul skipping rallies in Delhi; has decided to finish off Congress to save others: BJP NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Amid spec-

save others," Patra said.

Gandhi could not attend Congress rallies in the Madipur and Sadar Bazar constituencies in Delhi took a dig at him on Monday, say- earlier this month as he was unwell,

ing he has decided to finish off his party leaders said. Sources in the BJP said the suc-

### Delhi polls: From ₹ 2,100 for women to 24-hr **MUDA case: ED summons** CM Siddaramaiah's wife clean water, Kejriwal lists AAP's 15 guarantees NEW DELHI, Jan 27: AAP chief Arvind

BENGALURU, Jan 27: The ED has asked Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi B M to ap- Kejriwal on Monday released the party's pear before it on Tuesday in connection with the manifesto for the Delhi Assembly polls, MUDA land allotment scam.

The Additional Director of Enforcement Director Director of Enforcement Director of Enforcement Direct torate, Muralikannan has written to her submit ev- water, free healthcare for the elderly and a

featuring 15 promises such as ₹ 2,100

to the people of the state," Dhami

#### It is an instrument to put an end to all discriminatory practices the 2022 Assembly polls which saw meeting chaired by him cleared a against women regardless of their the BJP retaining power for a secproposal for the formation of an ex-Chhattisgarh urban body polls: Cong

RAIPUR, Jan 27: The opposition party's state election committee in Congress on Monday announced its the morning. candidates for all the 10 mayoral

Tirkey, the two-term mayor of posts in Chhattisgarh, the elections the Ambikapur Municipal Corporafor which will be held along with tion, won the post for the first time

the other urban bodies in the state in 2014-15. The Congress fielded him in the Incumbent mayors Dr Ajay 2023 assembly election from Ra-Tirkey and Janki Katju have been manujganj seat where he suffered fielded from Ambikapur and defeat.

Vinay Jaiswal served as an MLA Raigarh, respectively, former MLA from Manendragarh seat in the pre-Dr Vinay Jaiswal from Chirmiri, Dipti Pramod Dubey from Raipur, vious state assembly (2018-2023). Premlata Poshan Sahu from Durg, His wife Kanchan Jaiswal is cur-Pramod Nayak from Bilaspur and rently mayor of the Chirmiri Municipal Corporation.

Dipti Dubey, who has been fielded for the Raipur Municipal Corporation mayor's post, is the wife of former mayor and incumbent chairman of the civic body, Pramod Dubey.

Premlata Poshan Sahu is a former two-term corporator from dates following approval from the Durg. The party also announced

announces candidates for all 10 mayoral seats

#### tion and launched a portal created for the mandatory online registration of marriages, divorce and live-The event took place in the auditorium at Dhami's official residence religion, he said. It marks a historic moment as Utcalled "Mukhva Sevak Sadan" in tarakhand is the first state in indethe presence of his ministerial colleagues and a host of senior offi-

# of the Constitution

ing to all citizens, regardless of their religion as enshrined in Article 44 in a row. It is also the fulfilment of a major pre-poll promise made by Dhami to the people of the state at the time of

ond consecutive term, a feat never achieved by any other party in the state since its creation in 2000. pendent India to bring into effect a On several occasions, Dhami has UCC, modelled basically upon the attributed the historic mandate to the party's commitment to the elec-"The UCC, creating equal laws vision of a single set of laws applyfor every citizen across all religions, torate about bringing a UCC if comes fully into effect at this movoted to power for the second time ment. The credit for it goes entirely

As soon as Dhami formed the government again in March 2022, the state cabinet at its very first

**Uttarakhand becomes first** 

State to implement UCC, creating equal laws for every citizen across all religions, comes fully into effect'

idences and records.

Muralikkannan said he is investigating the matter under the provisions of the Prevention of Money - laundering Act, 2002. He said he considered Parvathi's attendance necessary to give evidence and for production of records in connection with the investigation or proceeding under PMLA. In the MUDA site allotment case, it is alleged compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where it developed a residential layout.

Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming residential layouts.

It is alleged Parvathi had no legal title over this 3.16 acres of land at survey number 464 of Kasare village, Kasaba hobli of Mysuru taluk.

The Lokayukta as well as the ED are probing the matter simultaneously. (PTI)

50 per cent metro fare concession for students. Kejriwal asserted that the AAP government's six existing 'revdis' (freebies), including free education, healthcare, bus rides for women, water and electricity will continue if the party retains power in the February 5 polls.

He also alleged that the BJP would stop all free schemes of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). As a result, the people of Delhi will have to bear a monthly burden of ₹ 25,000, he claimed.

At the launch of the manifesto titled 'Kejriwal ki Guarantee', the former Delhi chief minister signed a guarantee card pledging that the AAP will start giving women ₹ 2,100 per month as soon as it forms the government in the national capital.

"I, Arvind Kejriwal, guarantee that as soon as the Aam Aadmi Party government is formed, I will first start 'Mahila Samman Rashi Yojana' for my mothers and sisters," the guarantee card reads.

The AAP leader took a swipe at the BJP, accusing it of copying AAP's promisebased governance.

The fourth guarantee is to waive outstanding "hiked" water bills, while the fifth is of round-the-clock supply of clean drinking water to every household.

Among other key promises is a commitment to clean the polluted Yamuna River and make Delhi's roads world-class.

Under the Babasaheb Ambedkar Scholarship Yojana, the AAP has pledged scholarships for Dalit students to study abroad. Male students will also benefit, with free bus rides and a 50 per cent discount on metro fares.

The manifesto further promises ₹ 18,000 monthly financial aid to priests and gurudwara granthis and the extension of free

The party has also promised ₹ one lakh for their daughters' weddings and ₹ 10 lakh life insurance and ₹ 5 lakh health insurance policies.

Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) will also receive funds to hire security guards and address local safety concerns. Keiriwal emphasised that the AAP's existing free welfare schemes, which provide benefits worth approximately ₹ 25,000 per month to Delhi residents, would continue if the party retains power.

"The BJP has already made it clear that they will stop all these schemes if they come to power. I want to ask the people of Delhi -- will you be able to bear the cost if the BJP stops these benefits?" he asked.

The manifesto is being pitched as a reaffirmation of AAP's governance philosophy, which prioritises welfare and infrastructure improvements.

With the BJP threatening to disrupt the status quo, the upcoming polls are expected to be a high-stakes battle between the two parties. The results of the elections will be announced on February 8. (PTI)

This is a "kiss-miss" story, Bharativa Janata Party's national spokesperson Sambit Patra told a ress conference at the Delhi BJP office.

ulation over Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi skipping campaigning for

the Delhi Assembly polls, the BJP

party while "saving" others.

"Agar Rahulji karenge AAP ko kiss, to kaise nahi karenge AAP ke khilaf ho rahe campaign ko miss." he said, replying to a question over the Congress leader's absence from his party's campaigning for the February 5 Delhi polls.

If Gandhi "kisses" the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) behind the scenes, then of course he is expected to miss all the rallies of his own party, the BJP leader said, adding that even though the Congress leader was absent at the Republic-Day parade on Sunday and from his party's campaign events in Delhi, he was in Mhow on Monday to attend a "Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai

Samvidhan" rally. "Rahul Gandhi has decided to finish off the Congress in a bid to

cess of the party's strategy to come back to power in Delhi after a gap of more than 25 years also depends on the performance of the Congress that has fielded candidates from all 70 seats

In a triangular contest, a vote percentage of around 14-15 in favour of the Congress can prove crucial for the BJP in defeating the AAP, said a senior leader from the saffron party's Delhi unit.

"But the scenario could be different if the Congress fails to get enough votes by deliberately slowpeddling its campaign, which is being seen now as neither Rahul Gandhi nor Sonia Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra nor party chief Mallikariun Kharge has hit the streets," the BJP leader said.

The AAP routed both the Congress and the BJP in the 2015 and 2020 Delhi Assembly polls, winning 67 and 62 of the 70 seats respectively. (PTI)

# SC appoints retired Punjab and Haryana HC judge as observer

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: The Supreme Court on Monday appointed former judge of Punjab and Haryana High Court Justice (retd) Jaishree Thakur as an independent observer for the Chandigarh mayoral election to be held on January 30.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh referred to the "mutually agreeable stand" taken by by the sides and said, "We deem it appropriate to appoint Justice Jaishree Thakur, former Judge of Punjab & Haryana High Court as the independent observer."

The top court directed the election proceedings to be conducted in the observer's physical presence and ordered it should be duly videographed.

The bench directed the returning officer of the mayoral election to contact the independent observer and coordinate with the former judge well before the scheduled election date.

"The observer shall be paid an honorarium of Rs 1 lakh which shall be paid by the union territory

administration of Chandigarh within one week. All the necessary security arrangements shall also be made," it ordered.

Punjab advocate general Gurminder Singh, appearing for incumbent mavor Kuldeep Kumar, suggested a retired high court judge could be appointed as the independent observer.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, representing the Chandigarh administration, did not object to the appointment of an independent observer but said it should not become a precedent where all municipal corporations start moving the apex court. The bench said it was only concerned with fairness and transparency of the process while it recorded the submissions of both

"We may clarify in this regard that this court had no doubt at all on the objectivity, independence, or fairness of the authorities. However, the proposal to appoint an independent observer was mooted having regard to the apprehension expressed by the petitioner," it said. (PTI)

# I have Indian DNA, many Indonesians have Sanskrit names: President Subianto

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Indonesia has deep civilisational links with India and many Indonesian names come from Sanskrit, the country's President Prabowo Subianto has said, asserting that he has "Indian DNA". Subianto was the chief guest at India's 76th Republic Day celebrations on Sunday.

Speaking at the banquet hosted by President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Indonesian president also referred to his country's cultural links with India, saying he starts dancing whenever he hears Indian music.

Subianto said he had come to India for a few days, but he learnt a lot from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, programmes and commitment to alleviate poverty.

"Your (Modi's) commitment to help the marginalised, to help the weakest part of your society, is an inspiration for us... Why not follow a good example. especially when you have many good examples," he said.



Citing ancient civilisation links

between India and Indonesia,

Subianto said, "A very important

part of our language comes from

Sanskrit. Our names, many names

of Indonesia are actually Sanskrit

names. And, in our daily life the in-

fluence of ancient Indian civilisa-

tion is very strong. I think it is also

part of our genetics".

president' -- a few weeks ago, I had my genetic sequencing test and my DNA test, and they tell me that I have Indian DNA," he said.

The comments left Modi and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar, who were sitting adjacent to the visiting dignitary, and the entire gathering in splits.

Adding a touch of Bollywood to "I would like to report to the the event, an Indonesian delegation president, prime minister, vicealso sang the superhit song "Kuch

Kuch Hota Hai"

The Indonesian president said he was determined to accelerate the cooperation and the symbiotic relationship between India and Indone-

"In very important fields of health, pharmaceuticals, education, culture, capacity building, defence, security, digital cooperation, maritime safety and security, we have come to close understanding and we would like to implement all our substantial agreements and consensus." he said

Subianto said both sides had very intensive meetings and substantive agreements, consensus.

'We want to accelerate and substantiate the strategic and comprehensive partnership between India and Indonesia," he said.

Subianto said he was honoured because on India's first Republic Day celebration, the guest of honour was also the president of the Republic of Indonesia. "Our first president, and our

proclamator of Independence, Mr Sukarno... This is indeed a great honour for me. That means I am following in the footsteps of the founding father of the Republic of Indonesia," he said.

Welcoming Subianto, Murmu said that civilisational ties between India and Indonesia go back thousands of years.

"The values of pluralism, inclusiveness and rule of law are common to both countries and these shared values have given direction to our contemporary relations," she said.

She recalled "the millennia-old civilisational links", including the 'Bali Jatra' observed in Odisha, which commemorates the maritime journeys undertaken by Indian seafarers and traders in ancient times to Bali and other regions of the Indo-Pacific.

Murmu also noted that Indonesia is a key pillar of India's 'Act East' policy and Indo-Pacific Vision. (PTI)

#### TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025

### NATION

### THE HILLS TIMES 9

Sanskrit "shloka" devoted to the

Earlier in the day, the home min-

ister said in a post on X that the

Maha Kumbh is a unique symbol of

the continuous flow of the Sanatan

philosophy of Sanatan Dharma,

which is rooted in harmony. I am

eager to take a dip at the Sangam

and receive the blessings of seers at

this great festival of unity and in-

tegrity in the holy city of Praya-

According to the Uttar Pradesh

"The Kumbh showcases the life

Ganga river.

graj," he added.

culture

# RG Kar case: Cal HC reserves order on admission of appeal of state and CBI



KOLKATA, Jan 27: The Calcutta High Court on Monday reserved its order on the admission of two appeals, one by the West Bengal government and the other by the CBI, challenging a trial court order which sentenced RG Kar hospital rape-murder convict Sanjay Roy to life imprisonment till death.

Both the CBI and the state government separately prayed for capital punishment for the convict.

The court's division bench, presided by Justice Debangsu Basak, heard both the state government and the CBI, who argued that the January 20 order of the Sealdah sessions court sentencing Roy, the sole convict in the crime, to life imprisonment till death was inadequate.

The CBI claimed before the bench that only it has the right to move an appeal before the high court on the grounds of inadequacy of sentence since it was the investigation and prosecution agency of the case.

The state government argued that apart from the central agency, it too can move an appeal claiming inadequacy of sentence given by the trial court.

The parents of the victim doctor and the convict were represented before the court by their respective lawyers as per the earlier direction of the division bench.

Roy was sentenced to life imprisonment till the end of his natural life by the Sealdah sessions court here for the rape and murder of an onduty doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9, 2024.

Representing the CBI before the high court, additional solicitor general S V Raju submitted that the agency had registered an FIR in the rape-murder of the doctor after the case was handed over to it by the high court.

He said that on the order of the high court, papers related to the case were handed over by the Kolkata Police to the CBI.

Raju stated that the chargesheet was submitted by the CBI before the trial court on October 7 and the charge against Roy was framed before it on November 4

He further informed the division bench, also comprising Justice Md Shabbar Rashidi, that Roy was convicted by the Sealdah court on January 18 and the sentence was pronounced on January 20.

The ASG submitted that the state did not have any say in the investigation or the trial in the case and had not even submitted any application before the sessions court seeking to participate in the trial.

Raju stated that the state is suddenly showing interest in the matter at this stage, seeking admission of its appeal challenging the quantum of sentence awarded by the trial court

He claimed that the state's appeal is not admissible as it has no authority to do so.

The lawyers for both the complainant parents and the convict stated before the court that they have no submission to make on the question of admission of appeal by the state and the CBI.

Advocate General Kishore Dutta, representing the West Bengal government, submitted that the state can also move an appeal claiming inadequacy of sentence to a convict even if the investigation and prosecution was done by a central agency. (PTI)

## Guv Pillai meets Padma Shri awardee Libia Sardesai, lauds her role in Goa liberation movement

PANAJI, Jan 27: Goa Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai on Monday paid a visit to 100-year-old freedom fighter Libia Lobo Sardesai here and said the Padma Shri award given to her is a fitting tribute to her dedication for the country.

Sardesai had cofounded an underground radio station — 'Voz da Liberdade' (Voice of Freedom) — in strength During his half-an-hour long visit, Pillai expressed pride in Sardesai's recognition by the central government, stating the award was a fitting tribute to her dedication to the nation.

Responding to the governor's gesture for her contribution to Goa's liberation movement. Sardesai said.

Maha Kumbh: Amit Shah takes dip at Sangam, family performs rituals creation." In this post, he shared a

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR Jan 27: Union Home Minister Amit Shah took a dip at the Triveni Sangam here on Monday and described the Maha Kumbh as a unique symbol of the Sanatan culture's philosophy, which is rooted in harmony.

Shah took the dip around 1 pm, performed "jal aachman" (sipping of holy water) and offered water to the Sun, besides performing other rituals under the guidance of top seers.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who, along with the seers, entered the holy waters with Shah, moved behind when the senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader took the dip.

Soon, Junapithadheeshwar Mahamandelashwar Acharya Avdheshanand Giriji Maharaj asked Adityanath to come and join the others in performing the rituals and the chief minister came forward again

Yoga guru Ramdev was also among those present on the occasion. The home minister's family

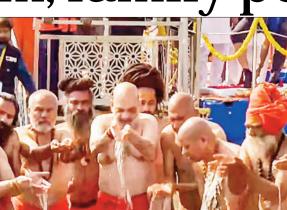
SOA'S former VC honoured with Padma Shri



GUWAHATI, Jan 27: Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Kumar Mahapatra, eminent neuro surgeon and presently Principal Advisor (Health Sciences) at Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) here has been chosen for the Padma Shri award announced on Saturday.

Prof. (Dr.) Mahapatra, who headed the neuro surgery department at AIIMS, New Delhi and was appointed the first Director of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, also served SOA as its Vice-Chancellor. He was also listed as one of the world's top 2 per cent scientists by the Stanford University in 2024

SOA's Founder President Prof. (Dr.) Manojranjan Nayak expressed his happiness at the honour bestowed on Prof. (Dr.) Mahapatra saying it was a moment of great pride for the university.



members, including son Jay Shah, the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), partook in the rituals, including "aarti" at the Sangam. Amit Shah's wife Sonal, daughter-in-law Rishita and grandchildren also took part in the rituals. The seers blessed Jay Shah and

Rishita's newborn as the ICC chairman held him in his lap while his elder daughter joined him for the "aarti"

The Shah family later visited the Akshayvata and offered prayers with Adityanath by its side. The Ak-

shayavata is an ancient tree holding mythological significance among Hindus. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also offered prayers at the Akshayvata during his pre-Maha Kumbh visit in December.

Before taking the dip, Shah held an interaction with Avdheshanand Giriji Maharaj and some other seers in a cottage on a floating jetty. Adityanath was seated next to the home minister.

Shah's visit was marked by an unprecedented security cover in the mela area as well as in Prayagraj.

Man suspected to have contracted GBS

dies in Maharashtra; cases top 100 in Pune

While the mela area was strictly made a no-vehicle zone, Prayagraj city had several route diversions in place, impacting the locals and visiting pilgrims.

In a post in Hindi on X, Adityanath said: "Today, in the holy presence of revered seers and spiritual leaders, Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah took a sacred dip at the holy Triveni Sangam in Tirthraj Prayag. May Ma Ganga, Ma Yamuna and Ma Saraswati bless everyone with prosperity and well-being. This is our prayer.

He also shared a Sanskrit "shloka" from the "Padma Purana", an ancient and revered text in Hinduism, signifying the importance of the holy bath in the Sangam during the Hindu month of "Magh".

In another post on the microblogging platform, Adityanath said: "In the sacred presence of revered seers, Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah performed the ritual worship and aarti of the ever-purifying Mother Ganga at

Prayagraj. May Mother Ganga's blessings remain upon the entire

government, more than 53.29 lakh people had taken the holy bath at the Maha Kumbh by 10 am on Monday. The mela area is hosting more

than 10 lakh "Kalpvasis" and over 13.21 crore people so far have taken the dip since the mega religious congregation started on January 13, the government said.

"Kalpvas" is a month-long practice of austerity and spiritual focus. The Maha Kumbh will continue until February 26. (PTI)

# SITUATION VACANT

BSc Royal teacher required for Menmeji English High school, West Karbi Anglong.

Pay norms as per Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council Adhoc Secondary School.

Last date of submission: 29th January 2025 to Headmaster Menmeji English High school, Menmeji contact. 9101209765.

# AFFIDAVI'I

I, Nurul Amin, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I am a citizen of India by birth and permanent resident of the below mentioned address. That my actual and correct name is Nurul Amin. That my name has been wrongly appeared in my previous Passport vide No. . K578055, FI(51)92.1802/92 as Mohammed Nurul Amin instead of Nurul Amin. That my father's actual and correct name is Eunus Ali but my father's name has also been wrongly appeared in the same Passport as Mohammed Eunus Ali instead of Eunus Ali, That Nurul Amin and Mohammed Nurul Amin are the same and one person who is myself and Eunus Ali and Mohammed Eunus Ali who is my fa-

tracted Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) has died in Maharashtra's Solapur district, while the number of cases of the immunological nerve disorder in Pune has crossed 100, health officials said on Monday. This is possibly the first death in Maharashtra suspected to have been caused by GBS. The 40-year-old man, a native of Solapur, had come to Pune, where he is suspected to

PUNE, Jan 27: A man suspected to have con-

have contracted the disease, according to officials. "The patient, suffering from symptoms like breathlessness, weakness in lower limbs, and diarrhoea, was admitted to a private hospital

(in Solapur) on January 18 as he was on ventilator support on and off. He died on Sunday,' Solapur Government Medical College Dean Dr Sanjiv Thakur said.

Following his death, the case was referred to the Solapur government hospital.

"A primary report has indicated that he had contracted GBS," the official said. Dr Thakur said they also performed a clini-

cal autopsy to ascertain the exact cause of death.

The primary report indicated the death was due to GBS, he said.

The blood samples of the deceased have been sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune for further examination, he added. A state health department official earlier

Wayanad's man-eater tiger Mumbai Police arrest woman

in the day said, "The total number of GBS cases in Pune on Sunday increased to 101, comprising 68 males and 33 females. Of these, 16 patients are on ventilator support. One suspected death has been reported in Solapur."

GBS is a rare condition that causes sudden numbness and muscle weakness, with symptoms including severe weakness in the limbs, loose motions, etc.

Bacterial and viral infections generally lead to GBS as they weaken the immunity of patients, and in the present case, the disease is suspected to have been triggered by contaminated water, according to doctors.

A team of expert doctors sent by the central government has also come to Pune, as per sources in the local civic body's health department.

State Health Minister Prakash Abitkar inspected a well in Nanded village on Sinhgad Road, from where the water is supplied to adjoining villages, and said the state health department and the Pune Municipal Corporation's health officials are taking necessary measures to curb the cases.

"I will preside over a review meeting, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be decided to address the causes such as contaminated water or any other causes," he said.

He said the source of water in the well was probed by expert teams, and based on their reports, a decision will be taken. (PTI)

a forested area in 1955 to rally people against the then Portuguese rule in Goa

Responding to the governor's praise, Sardesai humbly said she had not put in any extraordinary effort and did whatever came her way.

She was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian honour, by the President on the occasion of 76th Republic Day on Sunday.

When Goa was liberated on December 19, 1961, Libia Lobo Sardesai and her husband Vaman Sardesai travelled over Panaii and other parts of Goa in an Indian Air Force plane that had a radio transmitter onboard and a loudspeaker fitted to it.

They made announcements in Portuguese and Konkani and dropped leaflets, informing people that Portuguese rulers had surrendered, and Goa was free after 451 years of colonial rule.

Governor Pillai on Monday visited Sardesai's house in Panaji and congratulated her on behalf of the Goa government and the Centre, wishing her good health and

'I don't think I did anything extraordinary; I simply did what came my way.

"I thank God for this good fortune in my lifetime, even at this stage. Without God's grace, none of this would have been possible," she said.

The governor acknowledged that for six years, from 1955 to 1961, in the backdrop of the suspension of all civil liberties in Goa, Libia and Vaman Sardesai had set up an underground 'secret' radio station in a forest on the outskirts of Goa to counter Portuguese propaganda.

They would broadcast news, speeches of Indian leaders in Parliament, and updates on the nationalist movement and anti-colonial struggle.

The radio stations -- 'Goenche Sodvonecho Awaz' (Voice of Freedom of Goa) for Konkani broadcasts and 'Voz da Liberdade' for broadcasts in Portuguese -- also supported the Indian Army in setting up a transmission centre to send messages to the Portuguese rulers to surrender. (PTI)

# found dead with injuries

WAYANAD (KERALA), Jan 27: A 'maneater' tiger that killed a woman when she had gone to collect coffee beans in a forest-fringed estate two days ago, was found dead in Kerala's high-range district of Wayanad in the early hours of Monday, forest officials said. The death of the woman triggered widespread protest in the area, forcing the state government to declare the tiger as a man-eater

on Sunday and schedule it for culling. Forest officials who were engaged in combing operations day and night to spot the animal found it dead with deep injuries on its neck in the Pilakavu area here on Monday morning. After verifying the stripe pattern of the carcass, officials confirmed that it was the same tiger that killed Radha, a 46-year-old woman, on Saturday and triggered a widespread scare in the Pancharakolli area.

Chief veterinary surgeon Dr Arun Zachariah, who led the special search team, said there were clear wounds on the tiger's carcass, and the injuries might have been caused by a fight with another tiger.

Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF) Northern Circle, KS Deepa, said the exact cause of this tiger's death could be ascertained only

after a postmortem. She said the forest officials were constantly

visuals of cameras installed in various spots in the area. An attempt was made to tranquilise the big cat in the wee hours of Monday, but it didn't succeed, she said. Later that tiger was found dead in the Pilakavu area, she told reporters here.

"We recognised the presence of a tiger in the area at 12:30 AM. A forest department team, led by Dr Zachariah, was carrying out patrols and perambulation," she said.

"The team spotted the tiger by 2.30 am. Though they attempted to tranquilise it, the animal gave a slip. We continued the perambusaid, adding that there were injury marks on its carcass

Zachariah said that the big cat might have reached the area after getting injured in a fight occurred inside the forest.

"There were both fresh and old wounds on its body. There is a strong possibility that it had a fierce fight with other tigers," the expert said. (PTI)

KOLKATA, Jan 27: Mumbai Police on Monday conducted a search operation in West Bengal's Nadia district and arrested a woman in connection with the monitoring its movements by examining the attack on Bollywood superstar Saif Ali Khan, a source said.

in Bengal in Saif attack case

Investigation revealed that the SIM used by the Bangladeshi national, who was arrested earlier in Mumbai for the attack, was registered in the name of the woman, he said.

A two-member team of Mumbai Police arrived in West Bengal on Sunday.

"A woman was arrested by Mumbai Police from Chapra in Nadia district in the Saif Ali attack case. They may apply for transit remand to take her to Mumbai," the source in West Bengal Police told PTI.

The woman, Khukhumoni Jahangir Sheikh, was known to the arrested Bangladeshi, Shariful Fakir.

"Fakir had entered India illegally through the lation and later found the tiger dead," the CCF India-Bangladesh border near Siliguri in north Bengal and got in touch with this woman. She is actually a resident of Andulia in Murshidabad district of West Bengal," he said.

In the early hours of January 16, Khan was stabbed six times at his Bandra residence in Mumbai. The actor was rushed to the Lilavati Hospital where he underwent spinal and plastic surgery for his wounds. He was released from the hospital on January 21. (PTI)

Janasanyog /D/12019/24/28-Jan-25

Ecf. No.435062/15

Sd/-Nurul Amin S/O Late Eunus Ali. Vill+ PO- Punia No. 1 P.S. Kharupetia, Dist- Darrang (Assam)

### NAME CHANGE

I Hatneitling D/O Helthang Singsit residing Sitpijang Village, Manja, Karbi Anglong, Assam.Shall henceforth be known as Hatneitling Singsit as declared before the Notary Public Diphu court, Karbi Anglong, Assam Vide Affidavit no:IN AS93219693304775W Dated 05/06/2024Hatneitling and Hatneitling Singsit both are same and identical person.

# WHO urges governments to prioritise leprosy elimination

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: The World Health Organization (WHO) has requested governments to prioritise leprosy elimination and ensure sustained funding for surveillance, treatment, care and support, while calling upon them to include those affected by leprosy in policy and decision-making processes.

Celebrated annually on the last Sunday of January, World Leprosy Day serves to raise awareness about leprosy, a neglected tropical disease, and inspire the global community to unite to eliminate it.

"As we observe World Leprosy Day 2025, we reaffirm our commitment to this year's theme: 'Unite, Act, and Eliminate Leprosy'," Saima Wazed, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia, said.

"Longstanding stigma around this disease stubbornly persists, and misinformation only adds to the challenge. The social isolation of affected



persons and their families perpetuates discrimination and intensifies stigma," she said.

While significant progress has been made in reducing the burden of leprosy since the introduction of the multi-drug therapy (MDT) and the 1991 World Health Assembly resolution, challenges remain, Wazed high-

lighted

In 2023, 1,82,815 new cases were reported from more than 100 countries, with 95 per cent of those concentrated in 23 global-priority countries. Alarmingly, more than 5 per cent of the new cases were reported with Grade 2 Disability (visible deformity), highlighting delays in detection.

Wazed said 5.6 per cent of the new cases were among children, with some countries reporting child rates exceeding 30 per cent, indicating ongoing transmission. "Despite this, there are reasons for optimism," she addeed.

The Global Leprosy Strategy 2021-2030 has a vision of zero disease, zero disability and zero stigma and discrimination.

It was developed through a broad consultative process with all major stakeholders, including national programme managers, technical agencies, experts and persons or communities directly affected by leprosy, Wazed said.

Jordan became the first country to be verified and acknowledged by the WHO for elimination of leprosy, demonstrating what is possible with focused and concerted efforts. Wazed said. Additionally, in 2023, 56 countries reported zero new case of leprosy, a significant milestone. (PTI)

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ADMISSION NOTICE

Online Applications are invited from interested candidates for undergoing one year Certificate Course on Handloom Technology at various Handloom Training Institutes (HTIs) of the state under the Directorate of Handloom & Textiles, Assam for the academic session 2025-26 . The applicant must be an Indian citizen and permanent resident of the State of Assam.

Minimum Educational Qualification: The minimum qualification is class X passed or above and the applicant should passed one year artisan course of HTC.

Age: The age of the applicant should not be less than 18 years and more than 30 years as on 01-01-2025. The Age relaxation for SC/ ST/ OBC Candidates and admission for EWS candidates will be followed as per Govt, norms,

Reservation: Reservation of seats for the candidates belonging to reserved categories including OBC/MOBC, SC, ST(P), ST(H), Person with Disability (PWD), EWS will be as per Reservation Pol-

Stipend: The candidate will be awarded stipend @Rs2500/- month subject to satisfactory attendance and performance during the course.

How to apply: In order to make it convenient for trainees to apply for the course at their doorstep therefore, interested candidates may apply on online mode by visiting Sewa-Setu Portal as per the link given-https://sewasetu.assam.gov.in/site/service-apply/application-for-admission-to-the-courseat-handloom-training-institute-hti

The applicants can submit their online applications from 25th January, 2025 to 15th February, 2025 through the Sewa-Setu Portal. The applicant shall have to appear before the selection committee as and when called for at their own expenses. The candidate may contact the District offices of the Handloom and Textile department for detail information if required

> Sd/-Director, Handloom and Textiles, Assam, Ambari, Guwahati-1

### ENTERTAINMENT

#### **TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025**

# **COLDPLAY's FINAL INDIA CONCERT** Chris Martin celebrates Republic Day, sings 'Vande Mataram' at Ahmedabad concert

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: "Happy Republic Day, India!" Coldplay frontman Chris Martin greeted the crowd as he kicked off his final performance in the country at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium, where he touched many hearts by singing the patriotic anthem "Vande Mataram." It looked like a confetti of lights had spread throughout the stadium as fans switched on their flashlights to groove to the band's tunes in their last concert in India, which was streamed live on Disney+ Hotstar.

The atmosphere inside the stadium, with a capacity of over 1.25 lakh, was electric with excitement as the show began exactly at 8 pm.

Martin, dressed in a sea blue T-shirt and jeans, opened the show with "High Power," which had the audience singing along in unison. This was followed by two other hits - "Adventure of a Lifetime" and "Paradise." Taking a break from back-to-back tracks, Martin addressed the audience in Hindi and thanked them for turning up in large numbers from different corners of the country.

"Dhanyawaad pyaare dosto. Aap sab ka bohat swagat hai hamare show me. Aap sabka bohat dhanyawaad ki aapne hume yaha perform karne ka mauka diya. Ahmedabad me aake hum bohat khushi ho rahi hai. Aur namaste aap sabko jo hume live

stream par dekh rahe hai," he said, drawing huge cheers from the crowd.

"That is the every Hindi word I ever learned in my whole life. So thank you," Martin said, before briefly switching to Gujarati.

Martin also greeted Indian fans on the occasion of India's 76th Republic Day.

"We are so happy to be here, so grateful to be here. Happy Republic Day to everybody in India. We know how lucky we are to play in your beautiful country, especially on a day when all the planets are aligned and we have the best audience in the best stadium in the whole wide world," he said. The singer took a break from his playlist to hum a

few lines from music maestro A R Rahman's 1997 patriotic track "Maa Tujhe Salaam." Martin kept the energy high by constantly engaging with the crowd and taking time to read the signs they held up. He also noted the song requests that the audience had put up and assured them their favorite tracks were on the way. He performed tracks like "Yellow," "Charlie Brown," "All My Love," "Clocks," "People of the Pride," "Hymn for the Weekend," and "Viva La Vida." While performing "Everglow," Martin invited a young couple onto the stage to sing the song with him, saying they were there to represent every con-

certgoer. At one point, Martin announced he would sing for whoever appeared on the screen, as cameras panned across half a dozen faces. In a playful twist, he customised the lyrics of his song "Yellow" to captivate each of them. A major surprise for fans came with the presence of Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah in the crowd. Adding to the excitement, Chris Martin once again altered the lyrics, this time to

honor Bumrah's incredible cricketing achievements. He sang, "Well Jasprit, my beautiful brother. The best bowler in the whole of cricket. We do not enjoy watching you destroy England with wicket after wicket after wicket." The stadium erupted in cheers as the screen displayed clips of Bumrah bowling out England batsmen during a test match.

The band had teased Bumrah's presence earlier in the concert. Many fans took to social media to post photos of Bumrah's 93-number jersey draped over the piano. In the final moments of the show, Martin belted out hits like "My Universe," "A Sky Full of Stars," "Fix You," "Good Feelings," and "Feelslikeimfallinginlove." He thanked Indian fans for "treating us like your own." "Thank you for letting us feel what it's like to be an Indian... We had the best time and we are going to miss you. I hope we come back soon and hope to see you again," he said. (PTI)



# SIDDHARTH ANAND TO **DIRECT 'KING', CONFIRMS SHAH RUKH KHAN**

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Superstar Shah Rukh Khan has confirmed that his upcoming film "King" will be directed by Siddharth Anand. The film will mark the duo's reunion after 2023's spy action movie 'Pathaan'. There were reports that Sujoy Ghosh, who was previously attached to direct

"King", was no longer attached with the project. Shah Rukh made the revelation at the Global Village event in Dubai on Sunday. In a video shared by one of the actor's fan clubs on X, the 59-year-old actor said he is currently working on "King" "I'm shooting it in Mumbai now, when I go back... My director Siddharth Anand is very sweet. He made 'Pathaan'. I can assure you, the film will entertain you a lot, and you will have a lot of fun," he

added. "King" is also set to feature Shah Rukh's daughter Suhana Khan, who made her acting debut with Zoya Akhtar's "The

Archies" Shah Rukh, who will turn 60 in November, quipped how he looked young but age was slowly catching up. "I am turning 60 this year, but I look like 30. I just want to tell you, 'Main kuch cheezein bhool jaata hoon yaar (I forget a few things)" he said. The actor returned to the big screen in 2023 with "Pathaan" after a hiatus of almost five years. The same year, he starred in "Jawan" and "Dunki". (PTI)

# **Controversial dance** scene to be snipped from Vicky Kaushalstarrer 'Chhaava'

MUMBAI, Jan 27: Filmmaker Laxman Utekar on Monday said the "lezim" dance scene will be removed from his upcoming movie "Chhaava", based on the life of Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Sambhaji, after it faced objection from politicians and history enthusiasts.

The filmmaker announced his decision after he discussed the issue with Maharashtra

Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray at the latter's residence here earlier in the day.

The film's trailer, released earlier this week, has a sequenc in which Vicky Kaushal and Rashmika Mandanna, wh portray Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and Maharani

Yesubai, are seen dancing with the "lezim", a traditional musical instrument associated with Maharashtra's cultural heritage.

scene featuring Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj playing 'lezim', we will delete it. It was not our intention to hurt anyone's sentiments." The dance scene sparked outrage with social media backlash and criticism from politicians alleging disrespect to the historical figure.

Utekar said, "We are removing the scene because it is not a significant part of the film. If people feel that the portrayal is inaccurate, we



this change. Our goal has always been to honour and showcase the greatness of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj to the world." "This film is a result of four years of research by our team. The aim is to eduate the world about

the contributions of

Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj as a great warrior and king. If any part of the film tarnishes this vision, we have no hesitation in address-

are willing to make



Talking to reporters, Utekar said, "The meeting with Raj Thackeray was to seek his advice. His knowledge of history, especially regarding Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, is extensive. He provided valuable suggestions for changes, which we will implement. As for the

ing it," Utekar said.

Maharashtra Minister and Shiv Sena Uday Samant, who had demanded the removal of objectionable scenes, welcomed the film director's decision and said he hoped this would bring the matter to a close. (PTI)

# **HUGE FAN OF SRIDEVI, HER COMIC TIMING STILL UNMATCHED: YAMI GAUTAM**

MUMBAI, Jan 27: Actor Yami Gautam, who will next be seen in the comedy film "Dhoom Dhaam", on Monday said she is a fan of late superstar Sridevi whose comic timing remains unmatched even today.

Directed by Rishab Seth, the upcoming movie revolves around newlyweds Koyal (Gautam) and Veer, played by Pratik Gandhi, who find themselves in far-from-perfect situations on their wedding day.

"Dhoom Dhaam" is produced by Gautam's husband Aditya Dhar and Lokesh Dhar of B62 Studios, and Jyoti Deshpande of Jio Studios. The story and screenplay is cowritten by Aditya Dhar and Aarsh Vora.

At the trailer preview of "Dhoom Dhaam", Gautam praised Sridevi's range as an actor.

"I've been a huge fan of Sridevi ji. Her comic timing is still unmatched. I met her one or two times briefly. Her demeanor was calm, straightforward, and professional. "It's phenomenal... Just to watch her on-screen and perform.

Be it 'Chaalbaaz', 'Mr. India or 'Sadma'... I hope that more such characters are written for

women..." she told reporters here.

The actor, known for films such as "Vicky Donor", "Bala", "Kabil", and "Article 370" also rued the dearth of female characters in the comedy genre. "I'm thankful to people sit-

ting here for giving me such brilliant opportunities as an actor for writing such fantastic characters. I feel very few characters are written for women in comedy where women can perform," she added.

Gandhi, who shot to fame with 2020 web series "Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story", said going forward he hopes to play as many different characters as possible.

"I want the audience to love them all and accept me (as those characters). Every actor wishes this.

"The good thing is that writers and directors are seeing this possibility with me and I am getting such opportunities. I'm happy that the audience

remembers my character Harshad Mehta ('Scam 1992') and my other comedy characters like 'Do Aur Do Pyaar', and last was 'Agni'. If the actor is known for his character, then



it is the best thing (possible)" he said.

Gautam, who welcomed her first child with Aditya Dhar last year, said she has become busier after becoming a parent.

"There was a time when people, especially actresses, used to hide their marriage ...

We are not even talking about children. But I have never been more busy in my life... It's a blessing that I am getting a chance to showcase my work to people.

"I am doing the work which I finally wanted to do' versus 'I am doing a film because that is the only option I had'. I

-🐼-

have seen that time and it was an important time.

But it's not a very good feeling when you're not enjoying what you're doing," she said. "Dhoom Dhaam" also stars Eijaz Khan and Prateik Babbar. It will start streaming on Netflix from February 14. (PTI)

# 'Sky Force' earns over ₹92 crore at worldwide box office in three days

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: "Sky Force", featuring superstar Akshay Kumar and newcomer Veer Pahariya. has earned ₹ 92.90 crore at the worldwide box office collection in its first weekend.

Billed as the untold story of India's first and deadliest airstrike ever, the film released on January 24 ahead of Republic Day. It is directed by Sandeep Kewlani and Abhishek Kapur.

Production banner Maddock Films posted the box office collection on social media on Monday.

"'Sky Force' soars to new heights, emerging as the audience's favourite watch over the Republic Day weekend! #SkyForce in cinemas near you," read the caption.

The attached poster shared a day-wise breakdown of the domestic box office collection of the film.

After opening with ₹ 15.30 crore, the film went on to earn ₹ 26.30 crore and showed significant growth after getting ₹ 31.60 crore on Sunday, according to the makers.

The total box office collection in India of "Sky Force" made ₹ 86.40 crore and ₹ 92.90 crore at the worldwide box office, they said.

The film revolves around IAF officer T Vijaya (Pahariya) who goes missing in action during the 1965 India-Pakistan War. Kumar plays his fellow IAF officer KO Ahuja who embarks on a mission to find Vi-

jaya. "Sky Force" also stars Nimrat Kaur and Sara Ali Khan. (PTI)

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### SPORTS

# THE HILLS TIMES 11

# PANDYA'S COMMITMENT TO DOMESTIC CRICKET CRUCIAL TO CAPTAINCY CHANCES: MANJREKAR

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Hardik Pandya's commitment to domestic cricket and changes in BCCI's selection committee would determine whether he can become a long-term option for India's white-ball captaincy, feels cricketer-turned-commentator Sanjay Manjrekar.

Pandya led India in 16 T20Is before chairman of selection committee Ajit Agarkar and newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir picked Suryakumar Yadav to lead the national team in the shortest format.

'The dynamics of Indian cricket can change with new management in the BCCI or Hardik was India's go-to

the selection committee. Everyone has a unique approach. For Pandya, the key will be to show his willing-

ness to play consistently. "He hardly plays first-class cricket, but if he starts doing so, it will strengthen his case," Manirekar was quoted as saving Star Sports' programme

'Deep Point'. He emphasised Pandya's track record in ICC tournaments, recalling his vital contributions during the 2019 World Cup in England.

"Pandya has always been good at ICC tournaments. Not many people remember that during the 2019 World Cup,

bowler on those pitches," Manjrekar remarked. However, he also highlighted the critical role

Pandya's fitness will play in determining his effectiveness over the course of a 50-over tastic strike rate of 110 plus tournament. You have to run a lot, espeand has also taken 84 wickets.

cially in the middle overs. T20brings a different set of pressures, but the physical demands in ODIs are much higher-especially for an all-

rounder who bowls 7-10 overs and then bats at No. 5 or 6. Physical fitness is crucial," Manjrekar added. Former India batting coach Sanjay Bangar, on the other hand, feels that Pandya has the

India has been trying a lot of people since Dhoni last played that role till 2019 World Cup. 50-over matches, "In Pandya has come the closest

to replicating MS Dhoni's role as a finisher. Dhoni used to take games deep, and his influence is most visible on Pandya," Bangar said.

"We've seen him take games

ability to replicate Mahendra to the 49th or 50th over and Singh Dhoni's role as a finsecure wins. At the same time, isher in the Indian ODI set-up. he's capable of rebuilding an India's premier all-rounder innings if the team is strugin white-ball cricket has gling at 30-4. His ability to played 86 ODIs in which he adapt to various situations is has scored 1769 runs at a fanamazing," he explained.

Bangar praised Pandya's composure and maturity during the transition, saying, "It takes a person with a big heart to face everything with a smile. His graciousness in passing the captaincy to Suryakumar was commendable

"Deep down, every cricketer aspires to grow, and I believe Pandya will hope for another chance to captain the Indian team." (PTI)



# Punjab FC look to arrest slide against playoff-chasing Jamshedpur FC

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Aiming to end their six-match losing streak, Punjab FC face a tough test when they face Jamshedpur FC in the Indian Super League (ISL) here on Monday.

Jamshedpur FC, fourth on the points table, have tallied 28 points from 16 matches, boasting nine wins and a draw.

Punjab FC are placed ninth with 20 points from 15 games, five behind sixth-placed North-East United FC, but with two games in hand.

Despite their current struggles, Punjab remain in playoff contention if they can capitalise on their opportunities.

The hosts are enduring a rough patch, going winless in their last six games (two draws and four losses) and conceding goals in every match during this stretch.

They'll aim to avoid a seventh consecutive game without a clean sheet, which would mark their longest such streak in the ISL.

Punjab FC have also never defeated Jamshedpur in their three previous encounters, drawing once and losing twice. Luka Majcen will be key for

Punjab, with six goals and three assists in 11 games this season. His 28.6% shot conversion



rate is the league's highest with players having a minimum 20 shots.

The team's defence has been outside the box all season, a trait they'll rely on heavily.

an opportunity to consolidate their playoff position and close the gap on second-placed FC Goa (32 points).

After a narrow 2-3 defeat to Hyderabad FC in their previous outing, the Red Miners will also be eager to return to winning ways.

Jamshedpur's offence has been potent, scoring multiple goals in their last two away matches, including a 3-0 win over Mumbai City FC.

Javi Hernandez and Jordan Murray have led the charge, with six and five goals, respectively.

However, the team's defence must address its vulnerability to long-range strikes, having conceded nine such goals this season -- one shy of the ISL record.

Punjab FC's head coach Panagiotis Dilmperis is optimistic about his side's chances with a full-strength squad.

"It's a positive thing that after a long time, we have everyone available. It will help us regain our success in the final month and a half of the season," he said. Jamshedpur coach Khalid Jamil emphasised teamwork.

"It's an important game for both teams. We must take responsibility as a unit and play as one team," he said. (PTI)

style draws comparisons to Novak Djokovic MELBOURNE, Jan 27: Of all good enough to avoid any break the praise bestowed on Jannik

Australian Open

champion Jannik Sinner's

points against Zverev — and Sinner is certainly formidable.

Those Djokovic-like tendencies are not mere coincidence. Sinner, who is from Italy, modeled himself after the Serbian star.

"Game style-wise I looked up to him, trying to understand what he's doing, how he handles the pressure moments and important moments," Sinner said. "I still believe we are different as players, because everyone is different, but for sure we have similarities. The similarities are having quite clean ball-striking from the baseline, having good movement, understanding a little bit where your opponent (is going to play) the ball."

The swift improvement Sinner has made over the past couple of years is unmistakable.

It's why he ascended atop the rankings last June and hasn't budged. It's why he is 80-6 with nine titles since the start of last season. It's why no one wants to play him these days.

Zverev was 4-2 against Sinner before Sunday, including wins at the U.S. Open in 2021 and 2023. How much has Sinner

Sinner, still just 23, is a long changed since then?

strong against long-range efforts, conceding only once from

For Jamshedpur, the match is

Cup: England book semi-final berth



KUCHING (MALAYSIA), Jan 27: England joined defending champions India in the semifinals of the U-19 Women's T20 World Cup with a sixwicket victory over New Zealand here on Monday.

Tilly Corteen-Coleman and Prisha Thanawala starred with the ball, taking seven wickets between them as New Zealand went from 49 for no loss to 89 all out, leaving England with a modest target of 90.

Corteen-Coleman took 4/8 and Thanawala had 3/19 as the spin twins, in conjunction with impressive glovework from wicket-keeper Katie Jones, proved destructive in sparking a New Zealand collapse with 10 wickets falling for 40 runs.

England made steady work of their total, with openers Jemima Spence and Davina Perrin doing the heavy lifting with 29 and 21 runs respectively as their side required just 11.4 overs to reach their target.

The victory ensured England will finish in the top two of Super Six Group 2 alongside South Africa.

New Zealand started their innings brightly in Borneo, with openers Kate Irwin and Emma McLeod combining for their side's best start of the tournament. The pair raced to 44 without loss before a rain delay

stymied their momentum with 7.3 overs bowled. That proved pivotal, as their progress slowed down after the restart and Trudy Johnson made the breakthrough for England in the next over as Irwin was caught at mid-on by

Phoebe Brett. Johnson struck again to dismiss Anika Todd for five and Brett then got a wicket of her own, McLeod stumped after looking to hit the England spinner down the ground.

New Zealand looked to settle down after the loss of three wickets for 11 runs, but Thanawala made a devastating impact with the ball to ensure the collapse continued. The spinner first had Eve Wolland out for two before Hannah Francis and Darcy-Rose Prasad fell in consecutive balls to leave

New Zealand 79 for six. Corteen-Coleman then finished off the innings for England, as New Zealand made just 10 more runs for the fall of their last four wickets.

Brief Scores: New Zealand 89 all out in 20 overs (Kate Irwin 35, Emma McLeod 18; Tilly Corteen-Coleman 4/8, Prisha Thanawala 3/19).

England 90/4 in 11.4 overs (Jemima Spence 29, Davina Perrin 21; Rishika Jaiswal 2/22, Francis 1/6) Result: England win by six wickets. (PTI)

# U-19 Women's World Olympic medallists, global icons grace BVL Finale in Tezpur

HT Correspondent TEZPUR, Jan 27: Tezpur transformed into a festive hub, hosting the grand finale of the Brahmaputra Volleyball League (BVL) from January 23 to 26. The event drew the attention of sports enthusiasts from across the nation and attracted Olympic medallists and renowned players from across the globe. The finale marked a significant

milestone for the BVL, showcasing its rapid growth and impact on the budding sports talents of the region. The tournament, which started with teams competing fiercely from various corners of country as well as abroad, culminated in a match that highlighted the rising profile of volleyball in India. The presence of Olympic medallists and international volleyball legends added an air of

prestige to the event, emphasising the importance of the BVL in nurturing young talent. The grand opening ceremony of the globally acclaimed event witnessed the presence of international vollevball icons Vladimir Grbic, Elizabeth Brast, Nootsara Themkon and Indian sports dignitaries Hitesh Malhotra state sports minister Nandita Garlosa alongwith many a local administrative officials. FIVB President Fabio Azevedo praised the enthusiastic participation of young players in the Under-12 and Under-16 categories. "These budding talents are the future of world volleyball and the organizers must be appreciated for providing such an adequate and beautiful platform for ushering up their talents." He also appreciated the replica of a pure rural environment displayed in the polo field

designed by noted journalist and dedicated sports organiser Aswini Borah. The curtain of the four day event fell yesterday evening with prize distribution with witnessing the success of the finale and the growing popularity of volleyball in India

The closing ceremony featured prize distribution, with Dibrugarh's boys' team and Sivasagar's girls' team winning the Under-12 championships. The Under-16 champions were Tezpur (boys) and Dhemaji (girls). Runners-up included Marigaon (boys) and Tezpur (girls) in the Under-12 category, and Mangaldai (boys) and Bajali (girls) in the Under-16 category. The BVL finale celebrated the growing popularity of volleyball in India, providing young players with invaluable experience and a platform to shine.

way from achieving just a fraction of what Djokovic has at 37, of course. And just as Djokovic had a

Sinner after he won his second

consecutive Australian Open

championship, and third Grand

Slam title overall, nothing felt as

significant as the comparison

made by runner-up Alexander

Facing Sinner, particularly on

hard courts, reminded Zverev a

lot of trying to solve the chal-

lenge presented by none other

"He's very, very similar to

Novak when he was at his best.

They barely miss. Like, barely

miss. They make you think like

you have to overhit all the time

to have a chance in a rally against

them," Zverev said after losing to

Sinner 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-3 at Mel-

a point from the back of the court

against them — against Novak

and him," said Zverev, who is

ranked No. 2 but felt much fur-

ther away from No. 1 Sinner in

Rod Laver Arena. "(Both) move,

obviously, tremendous. They're

constantly on the baseline. They

don't give you any space. They

don't give you any time."

"It's very, very difficult to win

bourne Park on Sunday night.

than 24-time major champion

Novak Djokovic.

Zverev.

couple of hurdles by the names of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal to deal with, Sinner is not alone among the newest generation of tennis stars. His top rival at this point is Carlos Alcaraz, who has four Slam victories at age 21 - and won all three matches he played against Sinner in 2024.

Still, it made sense to think of Djokovic while watching Sinner extend his record in major finals to 3-0, which includes a U.S. Open title in September.

The never-give-an-inch court coverage. The squeaking sneakers while sprinting, stretching, sliding to reach shots that most other players wouldn't. The ability to flip from defense to offense in a split second. The wherewithal and reflexes to neutralize even the biggest servers.

He serves better. He returns better. He hits his forehand better. He hits his backhand better. He moves better. He volleys better. I mean, there's nothing that he doesn't do better right now," Zverev said. "I remember those matches. Before, I always felt like once I was getting on top of the rally, I was winning most of those rallies. Now it's like he's prime Novak. It's so difficult to go through him."

The upcoming task will be to get better on clay and grass, the surfaces at the French Open and Wimbledon. Before play begins at Roland Garros in May, Sinner has a hearing scheduled in April in the World Anti-Doping Âgency's appeal of a ruling that cleared him in a doping case.

"At the moment, I'm not thinking about this," Sinner said. "Of course, you have your moments, (on) certain days, where you feel like: I wish I would not have this

Add it all up — plus a serve problem." (AP)

# We are not worried about leaking runs, we are just thinking wickets: Mark Wood

bowling attack has been told not to worry about leaking runs and rather just focus on taking wickets against an ultra-aggressive Indian batting unit, senior pacer Mark Wood said on Monday.

Wood, who is in the middle of his first international commitment since July, has bowled decently in the series thus far. Fellow pacer Jofra Archer, however, conceded as many as 60 runs in four overs in the previous game in Chennai with Tilak Varma taking him to the cleaners. India have taken their T20 game to the next level under skipper Suryakymar Yadav and

England must find a way to counter them in third T20I here on Tuesday. India lead the five match series 2-0.

RAJKOT, Jan 27: The England wickets. I don't think (Brendon) McCullum wants us to worry about runs too much, he's all about how can we impact the game that way," Wood said on the eve of the third T20I.

> "We bowled well in the last game as a group. With the target they were chasing (167), we were always looking for that attacking option of taking wickets. Some might have went for a few runs at times but I also felt what was going to win us the game was trying to bowl them out." England have struggled against the Indian spinners while the pace group led by Wood has posed a few challenges for the host team's batters. Rajkot pitch usually offers plenty of runs, making it a batters versus batters contest.

"Speaking of pace against spin, "We'll just be trying to take I still think we've got one of the



best spinners in the world in Adil said Wood.

Rashid, he's a huge weapon for "And we've got a lot of opus and every time he plays, he tions: Livingstone, Bethell, if he comes back. As a pace bowling looks like he's going to get wickets. I wouldn't count him out of group, the other night maybe our attack, he's a vital part of it," there was one or two overs we games since then. (PTI)

might have changed but in general we kept coming at the India batters

"One guy played exceptionally well (Tilak Varma), if the luck was slightly different: a top-edge that went for six over the wicketkeeper, if that goes straight up in the air, it's a different story," explained the 35-year-old.

Coming back to action after a long lay-off, Wood is satisfied with the pace he is generating but is seeking more accuracy.

"I felt a little bit hit and miss -I've done a couple of good things, it's great that my pace has been up there and I feel it's coming out my hand well but the accuracy at times hasn't been quite where I wanted it. But when I haven't plaved since August, it's pretty much expected - I've played two

### **S**PORTS

#### **TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025**

# ICC AWARDS: Bumrah is Test Cricketer of the Year

DUBAI, Jan 27: Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was chosen for the men's Test Cricketer of the Year, while big-hitting batter Smriti Mandhana bagged the women's honour in the ODI format as Indian cricketers dominated the ICC individual awards that were rolled out on Monday.

ICC announced three more awardees from its annual list this afternoon, continuing a process that started on Friday. The final two honours -the men's and women's Cricketer of the Year -will be revealed on Tuesday and Bumrah is in contention to bag a double after having been named in the Test Team of the Year.

Bumrah was a standout performer in the last 12 months in which he dominated all opposition teams, grabbing 71 wickets from a mere 13 matches at a brilliant average of 14.92.

Bumrah bowled a phenomenal 357 overs in Test cricket in the cycle, maintaining a strike-rate of just 30.1

Bumrah, who was instrumental in India's home series victories over England and Bangladesh, was the fourth Indian bowler to take 70 or more

wickets in a calendar year after Kapil Dev, Anil Kumble and R Ashwin. "I am really happy to win the ICC Men's Test

Cricketer of the Year award. This format is always close to my heart. The last year was really special, to be having a lot of learning and wins.

"I am happy to play a lot of cricket this year, and a lot of wickets have been special. But the wicket of Ollie Pope (England) at Visakhapatnam was really special because that shifted the momentum in our favour," Bumrah was quoted as saying in an ICC release.

The 31-year-old's brightest moments came during India's tour to Australia, where his astonishing 32 wickets across five Tests earned him the Player of the Series award, despite India going 1-3 down in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

During the series Down Under, Bumrah crossed the 200 Test wickets milestone, becoming the 12th Indian bowler to achieve the feat.

Bumrah also set a unique record while achieving the feat, becoming the only bowler in Test history with a minimum of 200 dismissals to have



an average less than 20 (19.4). The pacer also led the team in the Perth Test, which India won by a whopping 295 runs, in the absence of Rohit Sharma, who was on a paternity leave.

It was also India's biggest Test win ever by runs. He is the first male Indian cricketer to bag Matthews, to shade. an individual ICC honour since 2018, when Virat Kohli claimed the Test player of the year as well as the cricketer of the year.

Charismatic opener Smriti Mandhana brought further joy for Indian fans as she was named as the women's ODI Cricketer of the Year. She earlier featured in the women's T20 International and ODI Team of the Year.

The India vice-captain, who was the ICC women's Cricketer of the Year in 2018 and 2022, racked up 747 runs in 13 innings in 2024 to bag the prestigious award.

"I thank ICC for giving me the honour of ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year. I was happy to contribute to the team.

"I would like to thank my coaches and family for all the support and most importantly the teammates who have been with me through all the ups and downs," Mandhana told ICC.

She put several batting stalwarts, including South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt, England's

Matthews, to shade.

The left-hander's tally was the highest among the leading run-getters in Women's ODIs last year, way ahead of Wolvaardt (697), Beaumont (554) and Matthews (469).

She scored four ODI centuries, a record in the women's game, and found the boundary more than a hundred times in the year, hitting 95 fours and six maximums.

The 28-year-old cricketer's runs came at an average of 57.86 and an impressive strike rate of 95.15.

Some of her best innings came against highcalibre opposition, including her back-to-back centuries which guided India to a 3-0 series win against South Africa in June.

Mandhana also smashed a ton in the series de cider against New Zealand in October.

She went on to showcase her ability to dominate the best bowling in the world with another defiant century in Perth against Australia in a losing cause in December. (PTI)

Stars missing as

Uttarakhand National

# Guwahati Open Jr Tennis Tournament begins today HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Jan 27: The 8th

Guwahati Open Junior Tennis Championship 2025, organised by Guwahati Tennis Association (GTA) will begin on January 28 at the RG Baruah Sports Complex, Nehru Stadium, here. Organising secretary of the event Bhaskar Sarma has informed that the championship will be held for both Boy's and Girl's Singles under 12, 14, 18 years and Boy's/Girl's (Combined) under 10 years and Boy's and Girl's Doubles under 18 year respectively. The championship will carry a total ₹ 2.20 lakhs as scholarship money. All winners will be awarded with cash scholarship. Altogether 230 players from various parts of the region is taking part in it. The championship is sponsored by Pride-East Entertainment Private Limited and co-sponsored by Oil India Limited, Campa and sports goods manufacturer HEAD.

The championship will be inaugurated by former national level tennis player and chairman and managing director of the Pride-East Entertainment Private Limited Riniki Bhuyan Sarma who will be attending the function as chief guest while former national tennis champion Susan Das Chaudhuri will attend as guest-of-honour.

The organisers have requested all sports lovers to attend the function and also to witness the exciting matches during the competition to encourage the budding talents to showcasing their skills to achieve their goals.

IOA sets up helpline to ensure athletes' safety at National Games

# Runs due from skipper Suryakumar's bat as India on course to seal series

RAJKOT, Jan 27: India captain Suryakumar Yaday will be expected to get back to his belligerent best after a prolonged lean run when his uber-aggressive unit takes on a struggling England in the third T20 International, aiming for a series-sealing win here on Tuesday.

Since Suryakumar took over as captain last year, India have hardly put a wrong but his own form has dipped. The year gone by was the least productive for arguably the world's best T20 batter as he totalled 429 runs in 17 innings at an average of 26.81.

Suryakumar averaged close to 35 in 2021, his first vear in international cricket, before raising it to 45 plus in the following two years.

The 34-year-old from Mumbai is yet to fire in the five-match series against England and has a point to prove following his exclusion from the ODI Champions Trophy squad.

Though he is India's very own 'Mr 360', Suryakumar is at his finest when he is toying with the opposition attack with runs behind the wicket. He perished while attempting his signature pick up shot of a slower ball in the seriesopener before playing one on to his stump in the last game.

Tilak Varma's individual brilliance got India over the line in Chennai but besides Suryakumar's lack of runs, Sanju Samson's short ball shortcomings were highlighted. Samson, who had a memorable series in South Africa, has been



dismissed to the short ball from Jofra Archer twice in the series. It is something he would look to correct on a Rajkot pitch which is usually full of runs and is expected to be another happy hunting ground for the Indians after wins in the first two games of the five-match rubber. Though Archer and Mark Wood have posed a few challenges to the home batters, one man who has totally looked comfortable against extra pace is Tilak

The southpaw's pick up shot off Archer at Chepauk spoke a lot about his class.

With Rinku Singh and Nitish Reddy unavailable due to injuries, there is a possibility of either Shivam Dube or Ramandeep Singh getting a game. Dube, who was tasked with smashing the spinners in the middle overs during the T20 World Cup, could come in handy against the leg-

West Indies levels series with a 120-run win against Pakistan in 2<sup>nd</sup> test within three days

MULTAN, Jan 27: West Indies spun out Pakistan for 133 on a rank turning pitch to record a series-leveling 120-run win inside three days of the second and final test on Monday. Pakistan, which needed a further 178 runs for an improbable win on its own engineered spinning wicket, fell quickly to Jomel Warrican's left-arm spin on Day 3 as

the morning and Warrican clean bowled

nightwatchman Kashif Ali in the next over. Mohammad Rizwan (25) and Salman Ali Agha (15) added 39 runs while trying to use their feet against the spinners before both fell to the left-arm spin of Warrican. Salman had already survived a close stumping chance off Warrican but was finally deceived by a loop-

ing delivery and was out lbw, while Rizwan

spin of Adil Rashid. Arshdeep Singh has been the lone specialist pacer in the playing eleven thus far with Hardik Pandya providing support. The team management is likely to keep that combination

have been relying on Ravi Bishnoi and Varun Chakaravarthy to do the job in the middle overs and have used as many as five spin options in Chennai. "We've been playing with an extra batter since the last two-three series. We want that cushion and also that batter gives us two-three overs in the game," said Suryakumar following the close finish on Saturday night.

ever and it's the batting that needs to step up and do the job.

Squads:

India: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Sanju Samson, Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Ramandeep Singh, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammed Shami, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Washington Sundar, Dhruv Jurel.

England: Jos Buttler (c), Rehan Ahmed, Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Jacob Bethell, Harry Brook, Brydon Carse, Ben Duckett, Jamie Overton, Jamie Smith, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Saqib Mahmood, Philip Salt, Mark Wood.

Match starts 7 PM IST. (PTI)

Games begin today the established stars will be missing in action but thousands of other

athletes, including the up and com-India, who prefer to play with eight batters, ing ones, will get the platform to make a mark in 32 disciplines when the 38th National Games, spread over seven venues in the hill state, begin here on Tuesday with the official opening ceremony.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will declare the Games open at the Leg-spinner Adil Rashid has been frugal as Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium here to kick-start the 18day national showpiece, which will see participation of around 10,000 athletes and officials from 38 teams.

In terms of sheer number of athletes, the event is among the biggest in the world, though its relevance in the country's international success has been debatable. This time, the Games will be held in seven cities of Uttarakhand

with Dehradun being the main venue. The other venues of the Games, which will continue till February 14, are Haridwar, Naini-

DEHRADUN, Jan 27: Most of tal, Haldwani, Rudrapur, Shivpuri and New Tehri. The last edition in Goa in 2023 saw competitions being held in five cities.

Hosting the National Game holds a special significance for Uttarakhand as the state is celebrating the 25th year of its creation.

'Mauli', inspired by Uttarakhand's state bird 'Monal', is the Games mascot, symbolising the region's unique natural beauty, diversity and cultural heritage.

The Games will feature all the top Olympic sports like athletics, swimming, shooting, wrestling, badminton, hockey, boxing, weightlifting, football, tennis and table tennis. Alongside, some traditional games like kabaddi and kho kho will also be making an appearance. Four sports -- kalarippayattu, yogasana, mallakhambh and rafting -- will be demonstration (non-medal) sports.

Except for shooting, a major Olympic sport, most of the top stars in other disciplines are skipping the National Games due to various reasons. (PTI)

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**DEHRADUN, Jan 27:** In a bid to prevent harassment, abuse and other forms of interpersonal violence during the National Games here, the IOA and the event's organising committee on Monday established a helpline to promote safety and well-being of athletes and coaches. The Games, scheduled to open on Tuesday, will run until February 14 in multiple locations across Uttarakhand. "The Indian Olympic Association and the National Games Games Organising Committee have established a safeguarding telephone helpline as part of a focused initiative to promote safety and wellbeing as well as to prevent and address adverse incidents during the Uttarakhand National Games 2025," said an IOA release. (PTI)

the West Indies gained its first test win in Pakistan in over 34 years. "We haven't won here in a while so to come here and do it as a young group is incredible," West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite said, referring to the tourists' last win in Pakistan by seven wickets at Faisalabad in Nov. 1990.

"On this pitch, there's a ball with your name on it around the corner... it was a good experience. When you get on better pitches, you can have a similar mindset and it will help you in the long run."

Warrican claimed 5-27 to finish the series with a series-leading 19 wickets and also pushed Pakistan to the bottom of the World Test Championship table as both teams ended its two-year campaigns.

Resuming at 76-4 Monday, Pakistan lost both overnight batters without adding to the total, as Kevin Sinclair (3-61) had Saud Shakeel caught in the slips off the third ball of

couldn't read Warrican's brilliant delivery that spun back into him and knocked back the stumps. The spinner then wrapped up West Indies' famous win with more than an hour to go until lunch on Day 3 by clean bowling Sajid Khan. It was a remarkable turnaround for West Indies which lost the first test by 127 runs at the same venue and were 7-38 on Day 1 of the second test before its tailenders lifted them to 163 all out for a slender first innings lead of nine runs. Captain Kraigg Brathwaite's half century

in the second innings then led West Indies to post 244 for an overall lead of 253 runs before Pakistan's batters fell into their own trap of a turning pitch against the tourists spinners. Pakistan captain Shan Masood believed his bowlers allowed the opposition's tailenders too many runs in the first innings and that pushed his team behind in the game.(AP)

# *IPL owners, tech giants in 'final' race* for Hundred franchise teams

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Four Indian Premier League franchises -- Mumbai Indians, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Lucknow Super Giants, Delhi Capitals' co-owners GMR Group -- along with a consortium of global tech giants featuring leaders from Google, Microsoft, Adobe have made it to the final shortlist of the Hundred, according to a report.

According to the report in ESPNcricinfo, London-based franchises Oval Invincibles and London Spirit have drawn significant interest, with five-time IPL champions MI and the tech consortium competing for the Invincibles.

Meanwhile, Lancer Capital, led by Manchester United co-owner Avram Glazer, has expressed strong interest in both London-based teams

RPSG Group's Sanjeev Goenka, who owns the Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL, has shown interest in London Spirit and Manchester Originals.

The Manchester Originals franchise has also seen considerable interest.

"All the investors shortlisted will need to make one final financial bid, which will be binding, with the highest bid determining the winner for each of the eight franchises," stated the report.



Lancashire, the host county, has shown flexibility in allowing potential franchise owners to manage cricketing operations, "which is a big factor for several investors, especially the IPL teams".

The tech consortium vying for franchises includes high-profile names such as Sundar Pichai (Google CEO), Satya Nadella (Microsoft CEO), Shantanu Narayen (Adobe CEO), Egon Durban (Silver Lake Management CEO), and Satyan Gajwani (co-founder of Major League Cricket and vice-chairman of

Times Internet). Led by Nikesh Arora, CEO of cybersecurity firm Palo Alto Networks, the consortium has been shortlisted for both the Oval Invincibles and London Spirit franchises.

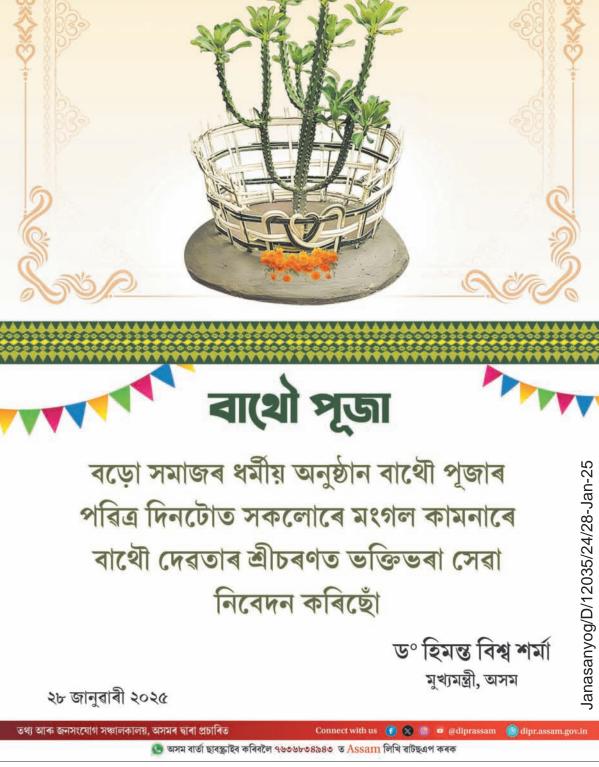
Sunrisers Hyderabad owners, the Sun Group, are "understood to be on the shortlist" for three franchises: Trent Rockets (Nottingham), Northern Superchargers (Leeds) and Welsh Fire (Cardiff).

CVC Capital Partners, who own Gujarat Titans in the IPL, are bidding for Birmingham Phoenix, the report stated. Some IPL franchises that initially expressed interest -- such as Chennai Super Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders, Rajasthan Royals, and Punjab Kings -- are currently not on the shortlist, it added.

"It could not be confirmed whether the Super Kings and Knight Riders, who have teams in overseas T20 leagues outside India, have been shortlisted," the report stated.

It further stated US-based entrepreneur Sanjay Govil, who owns Washington Freedom, is "interested" in three franchises outside of London.

The bidding process is still not over, and the ECB is expected to announce the schedule for  $202\hat{5}$  Hundred season this week, while the new owners will take control from 2026. (PTI)



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