

6 WORLD

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- Qatar says Israel-Hamas ceasefire to go into effect at 8:30 am on Sunday
- 'Spirit of Cinema & Sports' mini-festival celebrates films as driver of India-UK ties
- Delhi polls: AIMIM, BSP step up campaign with street plays, wall paintings
- Nitish Kumar govt's caste survey was to befool Bihar people, alleges Rahul Gandhi

India, US seal pact to enhance cooperation in cybercrime investigations

NEW DELHI, Jan 18: Days before it hands over power to President-elect Donald Trump, the Biden administration signed a pact with New Delhi that provides for boosting cooperation in combating cybercrime and related challenges such as terror financing and violent extremism.

The agreement on cybercrime investigations, signed in Washington on Friday, allows the agencies concerned of the two countries to step up the level of cooperation with respect to cyber threat intelligence and digital forensics, according to an Indian readout.

It is the second such move in the last few days by the outgoing Biden administration that reflected the overall upward trajectory of relations between the two nations. The US on Wednesday removed restrictions on three Indian nuclear entities -- Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre (IGCAR) and the Indian Rare Earths (IRE).

The lifting of the restrictions is aimed at implementation of the



historic India-US civil nuclear deal sealed around 16 years ago.

The Memorandum of Understanding or MoU on cybercrime investigations was signed by Indian Ambassador Vinay Kwatra and Acting US Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Kristie Cane-gallo. "Cybercrime has intricate linkages with the common security challenges faced by India and the US such as terrorism and violent extremism, terror financing, drug

Ex-gratia cheques given to families of those killed, trapped in Umrangso coal mine

'The dewatering process in the mine is still going on'

GUWAHATI, Jan 18: Ex-gratia cheques were on Saturday given to families of miners whose bodies have been recovered and those still trapped in the flooded Umrangso coal mine, even as the dewatering process of the mine continued.

Assam Mines and Minerals minister Kaushik Rai handed over the cheque of ₹ 10 lakh each to the next of kin of the four miners whose bodies have been recovered.

The families of the five miners who remained trapped inside the mine were given cheques of ₹ 6 lakh, with the remaining amount to be handed to them later, an official statement said.

The coal mine in Kalamati area of Umrangso in Dima Hasao district was flooded on January six when water had gushed in suddenly, trapping nine workers inside. Four bodies have been recovered since then in the rescue operations. The



state Cabinet had decided on Thursday that the ex-gratia of ₹ 10 lakh will be given to the next of kin of all nine miners, including those whose bodies have been recovered and those who remained trapped. An amount of ₹ 6 lakh has been given

from the Assam Chief Minister's Relief Fund and the remaining ₹ 4 lakh from the Assam State Disaster Management Authority.

Speaking at the cheque distribution programme held at Umrangso police station premise, Rai conveyed condolences to the bereaved families on behalf of the chief minister. "It is really painful that such an unfortunate incident has occurred where lives have been lost. Although value of life is immeasurable and the ex-gratia that we are offering today is nothing in comparison to lives lost, the small amount is only to support the bereaved families and show our solidarity," he said.

The minister said the dewatering process in the mine is still going on and that around 1 crore litre of water is extracted daily.

He added that as per another Cabinet decision, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) is being constituted to enquire into the entire incident on the basis of the FIR already registered on the matter.

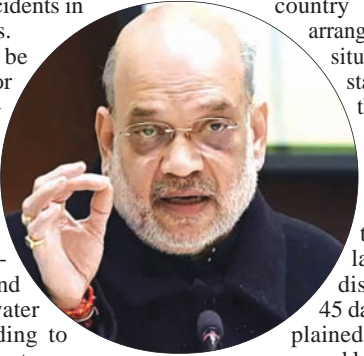
The Assam Cabinet had also announced a judicial enquiry into the incident. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Amit Shah orders inter-ministerial team to investigate Rajouri deaths

NEW DELHI, Jan 18: Union Home Minister Amit Shah has ordered the constitution of an inter-ministerial team to visit a village in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district to ascertain the causes of deaths in three incidents in the past six weeks.

The team will be headed by a senior Union home ministry officer and consist of experts from the ministries of health and family welfare, agriculture, chemicals and fertilisers, and water resources, according to an official statement.

The team will also be assisted by experts from the animal husbandry, food safety and forensic science labs. The central team will proceed on Sunday and, in collaboration with the local administration, also



work on providing immediate relief as well as taking precautionary measures to prevent such incidents in the future, according to the statement. Experts from some of the most reputable institutions in the country have been arranged to manage the situation and understand the causes of the deaths.

At least 16 people have died of a mysterious illness in the Budhal village of Rajouri district in the past 45 days. People complained of fever, pain, nausea and loss of consciousness before dying within days of their admission to hospitals. A girl continues to remain critical.

Earlier, a Jammu and Kashmir government spokesperson said investigations (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Renowned dignitaries voice concern against minority treatment in B'desh

JORHAT, Jan 18: Former Judge of Gauhati High Court Ajit Borthakur has expressed concern over the hostile situation prevailing in the neighbouring state of Bangladesh.

Speaking as the chief guest during a panel discussion on the topic named 'Violation of human rights laws against Hindus and other religious minorities' organised by Adhivakta Parishad, Jorhat district unit, at the Jorhat Law College on Saturday, Borthakur highlighted that the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of Bangladesh for protection of citizens are now in question.

"Incidents of the kind prevailing in Bangladesh are not at all acceptable, especially in a civilised world. The global community has taken note of it and is keeping a close watch," Borthakur stated citing the recent affairs in the state against the Hindu community and other religious minorities under the present caretaker government are a matter of concern. On the other hand, Monishankar Dutta, assistant professor of the Department of Juridical Studies, Dibrugarh University, in his address, emphasised on historical background regarding human rights violations in Bangladesh.

Stating that this is not the first time that atrocities against Hindus have been committed, Dutta said, "Every citizen has a right to get legal aid and engage a lawyer of his own choice to represent himself before the judiciary."

Dutta was also the guest of honour at the event.

Earlier, Kuldeep Baishya, state general secretary of Adhivakta Parishad, said that the event was not merely a discussion on the issue, but a call for the protection of human lives and a protest against ongoing gross human rights violation of Hindus and other religious minorities in Bangladesh at present.

Bankim Sarma, state vice-president of the lawyers' body, in his address, too expressed anguish over the prevailing situation in Bangladesh over the attacks on Hindus and other religious groups.

Monu Baruah, president of the Jorhat district unit of Adhivakta Parishad, gave his presidential remark, while Angshuman Baruah, general secretary of the Jorhat district unit of the body, offered the vote of thanks.

Meanwhile, S Keyel, zonal secretary of Akhil Bharatiya Adhivakta Parishad, also attended the programme.

RG Kar verdict

Kolkata court pronounces accused Sanjay Roy guilty of rape-murder of on-duty medic

KOLKATA, Jan 18: A Kolkata court on Saturday found Sanjay Roy guilty of raping and murdering an on-duty doctor at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, a heinous crime that ignited nationwide outrage and led to prolonged protests.

The Sealdah court, where Roy's trial was held, will announce his sentence on Monday. Additional District and Sessions Judge Anirban Das said. The verdict was delivered nearly two months after the in-camera trial began in November 2024, and 162 days after the brutal crime on August 9, 2024.

Roy, arrested a day after the crime, was found guilty under Sections 64 (rape), 66 (punishment for causing death), and 103(1) (murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Section 103(1) carries a possible punishment of death or life imprisonment. The judge stated that Roy was found guilty of sexually assaulting the doctor and strangling her to death, and that the CBI had proven all the charges against him.

Das noted that Roy had entered the hospital around 4 am and attacked the

on-duty doctor while she was asleep in the seminar room of the hospital.

"You sexually assaulted the doctor. You throttled her and covered her face and she ultimately died owing to the attack," he said.

"On the basis of these allegations, charges were framed against you under Sections 64, 66 and 103(1) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). On the basis of the statements of the witnesses and the documents produced in this matter, your guilt has been proved and you are being pronounced guilty," the judge said.

Das said Roy's statement will be heard at 12:30 pm on Monday, and the sentence will be pronounced thereafter.

At the time of the delivery of the verdict, Roy claimed in court that he was framed. In his defense, Roy said, "I wear rudrakash necklace, and if I had committed the crime, it would have snapped." Following the verdict, Roy was escorted under strict police security to the Presidency Correctional Home, preventing waiting media persons from speaking to him.

(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



Modi wanted to throw away Constitution, but ended up bowing before it: Rahul



PATNA, Jan 18: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had harboured a wish to "throw away" the Constitution, but ended up bowing before it after the BJP's below-expectation performance in the Lok Sabha polls.

The Leader of the Opposition made the charge at a 'Samvidhan Suraksha Sammelan' here while mimicking the PM, evoking peals of laughter from the

crowds. Holding a copy of the Constitution close to his head, Gandhi said, "When Modiji entered Parliament after winning a third term, he did like this. He wanted to throw the Constitution away. But our concerted fight made him give up his boast of a 400-plus seat win for the BJP."

Notably, remarks by a few BJP leaders that the Constitution might be "changed" if the party won more than 400 seats in the 543-strong Lok Sabha were latched on by the opposition INDIA bloc, led by Congress, in last year's general elections.

According to many surveys, the refrain "Constitution in danger" had resonated with a section of Dalits and backward classes who felt reservations could be done away with and refused to vote overwhelmingly in favour of the BJP-led NDA, causing the saffron party to fall short of majority and becoming heavily dependent on allies.

Gandhi, who spoke for a little over 30 minutes, also linked the Constitution with a long chain of progressive ideas in the country, starting from the Buddha, and continuing till the times of newer icons like Ambedkar, Narayana Guru (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

One killed, several injured as school bus overturns in Dima Hasao

HAFLONG, Jan 18: A 10-year-old class 3 student lost her life, and several others were injured after a school bus overturned in the Dima Hasao district on Saturday, an official said.

The incident occurred between 8:00 and 8:30 AM near the 19 KM area under Umrangso Police Station in Dima Hasao district.

In an official statement, Debojit Borah, field officer of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), said that the student, identified as Dalimar Ronghangpi, died on the spot due to the impact.

"Six students sustained severe injuries and were immediately transported to Hojai Ham Hospital for urgent medical attention. The injured students are Arklingson Hanse, 9 years old; Felyha Chingthongpi, 10 years old; Sarmukrang Terang, 8 years old; Divya Ronghangpi, 15 years old; Ruplin Engtipi, 17 years old and Malyn Terompti, 18 years old," Borah added.

He further stated that 16 students suffered minor injuries. Some received medical attention, while others were treated on-site. A thorough investigation is underway to determine the cause of the accident, and authorities are taking all necessary measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

Census indicates increase of avian guests at Pobitora

MORIGAON, Jan 18: A waterbird census was conducted at Assam's Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary on Saturday, with initial estimates indicating an increase in the number of avian visitors, an official said.

Pranjal Baruah, the regional forest officer of the sanctuary, said the survey was carried out by the forest department in collaboration with NGOs, experts and local people.

"The sanctuary was divided into 10 zones and a total of 12 teams completed the bird count. Compared to the last count of around 8,000 birds from 56 species in 2023-2024, this year's count has identified around 10,000 birds," Baruah said. "This initial estimate indicates an increase in bird population and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BJP, Congress to clash with Constitution-Ambedkar rallies, campaigns over next few days in MP

BHOPAL, Jan 18: Top leaders of the BJP and Congress will take part in several programmes in Madhya Pradesh related to the Constitution over the next few days as both parties continue their acrimonious political fight over the apex document and its chief architect Babasaheb Ambedkar.

For the ruling BJP, Union ministers Amit Shah, JP Nadda, Nitin Gadkari among others will address rallies from January 20-21 under the party's 'Samvidhan Gaurav Abhiyan', with a leader telling PTI on Saturday that the dates of these visits will be finalised soon.

The BJP launched Samvidhan Gaurav Abhiyan in MP on January 11. The Congress will hold a mega rally on January 27 in Mhow, the birthplace of Babasaheb Ambed-

kar, near Indore, in which party president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will participate.

The Congress' rally in Mhow will launch its 'Jai Babu-Jai Bhim-Jai Samvidhan' campaign with the aim of saving the Constitution and people's rights. AICC general secretary in charge of MP and Assam political affairs Jitendra Singh had said last week.

Ambedkar was born on April 14, 1891 in the military cantonment of Mhow, now officially known as Dr Ambedkar Nagar. "Under the Samvidhan Gaurav Abhiyan, several programmes are being held and senior leaders will take part. The campaign will end on January 25," (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Few countries can tell the world that they have Met services 150 years old' Strong Met services key to development, India model for developing countries: WMO chief

NEW DELHI, Jan 18: India is very well positioned in terms of the quality of climate services and it understands the critical role of strong meteorological services in the development agenda, World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) chief Celeste Saulo has said.

Saulo told PTI in an interview here that meteorological and climate services play a critical role in all sectors of the economy, including logistics, transportation, tourism, energy and agriculture.

However, she also pointed out that unlike India, many developing countries have not yet fully integrated these



services into their various sectors.

Highlighting the role of weather services in renewable energy, Saulo said, "If you think about renewables -- wind, solar and hydro -- they all depend on weather. Energy transition needs a strong Met service. While India understands the critical role of the Met service in the whole development agenda, many developing country colleagues are not there yet."

"India is very well positioned in terms of the quality of the meteorological and climate services that they provide, thanks to the India Meteorological Department," said Saulo, who at-

tended the IMD's 150th year celebrations here.

She said the IMD turning 150 is a unique achievement.

"Few countries can tell the world that they have Met services 150 years old. This speaks of history but it's also a policy within the country that understands that new technology and climate are important. You need to invest in them," she said.

The WMO chief called for a shift in how meteorological services are perceived.

"What I expect from a developing country like India is reinforcing the role of the Met services, not just as the provider of the weather forecast on the TV but (also) as the provider of critical information for climate adaptation, productivity, energy transition, and securing people's lives," she said.

Underscoring the broader economic implications of accurate weather forecasts, she said, "The value of good weather prediction is huge for investors, businesses, productivity, logistics, transportation, tourism (and) everything. Can you think of an activity that is not impacted by weather?"

"What we need to put in the agenda is the role of Met services in the decision-making that impacts the economy and the sustainability of the economy of every single country, and that is particularly relevant for the developing world," she added. Saulo stressed that failing to integrate weather data into decision-making processes is a missed opportunity for growth.

"If you don't use weather information in your decision-making process, you lose (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Several pressing issues including provision to conduct special Teacher Eligibility Test raised Education minister assures to resolve issues related to Bodo medium

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Jan 18: Assam education minister Ranaj Pegu has assured to resolve the issue and problems of the Bodo medium related grievances within the short span of time in the state.

Minister Pegu on Friday held a significant meeting with representatives of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) at Janata Bhawan, Dispur in Guwahati, to discuss on various issues and problems related to Bodo medium and language of the Bodo community.

The delegation team of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and ABSU, include ABSU president Dipen Boro, general secretary Khanindra Basumatary, Bodo Sahitya Sabha general secretary Nilo Kanta Goyary.

The meeting addressed several pressing issues, which included the provision to conduct special Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) for Bodo medium, provincialisation of schools and colleges in the region, upgrading high schools to higher secondary institutions along with establishment of



new Bodo medium ideal schools in BTR, similar to the Tea Garden Adarsha Schools, recruitment of Bodo medium teachers, setting up a new Udalguri campus of Bodoland University.

During the discussion, minister Pegu emphasised the government's commitment to

implementing these initiatives to improve the education system for the Bodo community.

The dialogue has been seen as a constructive step towards addressing long-standing educational challenges in the region and ensuring the promotion of the

Bodo language and culture through enhanced educational infrastructure.

ABSU president Dipen Boro stated that the meeting with education minister was a milestone achievement for education in Bodo medium as Assam government pledged key reforms in response to ABSU & BSS joint memorandum submitted to the government of Assam.

"Following January 8 dharna programme, a crucial discussion was held with Assam's education minister, Dr. Ranaj Pegu, at Janata Bhawan, where significant commitments were made for the development of Bodo medium education.

He mentioned that the education minister Pegu has given several key assurances to resolve the issues and problems related to Bodo medium and language which include special TET in Assam and BTR in Bodo Medium to address the shortage of qualified teachers, creation and appointment of 54 teaching posts in newly upgraded higher secondary schools, 35 Model High Schools for Bodo medium, similar to Tea Garden Model Schools.

Over 13 illegal rat-hole mines sealed in Margherita

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Jan 18: Over 13 illegal rat-hole mines along with two rooms were sealed, 4 illegal coal miners arrested, one kirkloskar generator, and excavators have been seized on Saturday from Bitu Pahar of Namdang colliery under Margherita Co-District, on morning hours where four illegal coal miners were also arrested in this connection.

The executive magistrate of Margherita co-district administration Pritom Gogoi, director general of police G P Singh, Margherita police officials, officials from North Eastern Coalfields, Coal India Ltd Margherita and officials from Assam Power Distribution Company Limited's Margherita sub-divisional engineer office were present during the time of raid and

sealing of the rat-hole mines.

The decision followed a meeting of the Assam Cabinet, held on January 16 in Morigaon, where it was decided that all rat-hole mines in the North Eastern Coalfields of Assam will be permanently closed, and an SOP in this will be issued.

It may be mentioned that the action was taken following a tragic incident at an illegal rat-hole mine in Umrangso, Dima Hasao, where many coal miners tragically lost their lives.

Gogoi said that the operations and arrests were carried out following the instructions from Dispur and all arrested illegal coal miners and seized excavators will be brought to Margherita police station and further investigation will be done under the law.

Pakke Paga festival held at Seijosa



HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Jan 18: The Pakke Paga Festival has been held in Seijosa in Pakke Kessang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

The festival is celebrated every year in Seijosa in Pakke Kessang district of Arunachal Pradesh to raise awareness among the tribal people. The Pakke Paga Festival is celebrated every year with various activities among the tribal people. Pakke Paga which was first launched in 2015 enters its 10th year now. The festival aims to create awareness on protection of bats, other animals, birds and butterflies living in the sanctuary. It is seen that this festival has been able to raise awareness among the ethnic people. PCCF N Tam, who was the chief guest at the opening ceremony of the Pakke Paga Festival-2025, said

that the poaching of animals has stopped and many poachers have surrendered and handed over illegal air guns to the administration. "It is our supreme responsibility and duty to protect the animals, birds, etc. living in our naturally created forests. In recent days, the State Government has also taken appropriate measures to conserve valuable resources as well as biodiversity. Therefore, the number of animals in the forests of the state has increased more than ever before," the PCCF said.

The festival was attended by ZPM Tana Naya of Pizirang, Pakke Kessang district superintendent of Police Tachi Damang, additional commissioner of Seijosa Kechang Owangdu and Biyuram Wahge minister of health and planning, Yapu Lishi wahge among others.

Bike riders from Arunachal echo conservation efforts

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Jan 18: The Patron cum spokesperson of Arunachal Super Bike Club, Gomi Bassar along with distinguished bikers of the group from distant Naharlagun arrived at Pakke Paga Festival on Saturday.

A group of members of the club led by Gomi Bassar arrived at the Pakke Paga festival ground after traveling through Itanagar on Sophisticated bikes. The main objective of this bike ride is to create awareness on conservation of natural beauty and biodiversity.

Bassar said it is also an attempt to convey a message to the people of Seijosa to protect the animals of the Pakke Tiger Reserve in Seijosa. The club also presented a package of funds to the DFO of the Pakke Tiger Reserve Satya Prakash Singh for the conservation of biodiversity.



National-level seminar on Orality and Bharatiya Darshan

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Jan 18: The DSK College, Dibrugarh is all set to host the two-day national seminar on Orality and Bharatiya Darshan.

The Folklore Society of Assam, in collaboration with the Research and Development Cell and the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of DSK College, Dibrugarh, is going to organize a two-day national-level seminar on Orality and Bharatiya Darshan from January 24 to 25 at D H S Kanoi College.

This prestigious event will bring together academicians, researchers, and scholars to explore

various aspects of Orality and Bharatiya Darshan, emphasizing their cultural, philosophical and literary significance.

The seminar will be inaugurated by professor (Retd) Madan Sarma from the department of English and Foreign Languages, Tezpur University. The keynote address will be delivered by professor Sujay Kumar Mandal from the department of Folklore, Kalyani University, a renowned expert in the field.

Bhim Kanta Baruah will grace the occasion as the chief guest. The seminar will also witness the inauguration of the peer-reviewed journal Jana Kristi, a significant

platform dedicated to folklore research and scholarship.

The journal will be inaugurated by professor Kandarpa Kumar Deka, former vice-chancellor of Dibrugarh University and Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya, Nagaon on the first day of the seminar. This seminar aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue and promote innovative approaches to folklore studies.

Researchers from across the nation will present papers, exchange ideas, and contribute to the growing body of knowledge in this field. In addition to the keynote speakers and invited dignitaries, about 20 esteemed delegates from

the Folklore Society of Assam have consented to participate in the seminar as special guests of DSK College.

Their involvement will enrich the discussions and contribute to the exchange of knowledge in the field of folklore studies. All arrangements for the seminar have been meticulously planned and executed by DSK College under the visionary leadership of the college's Principal Sashi Kanta Saikia.

The commitment of the college administration, faculty, and staff has ensured a well-organised event that promises to provide an engaging platform for all participants.

Awareness programme on road safety



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Jan 18: A special awareness programme was organised by Nehru Yuva Kendra, Kamrup (Metro) in association with district administration as well as transport department at Arya Vidyapeeth College in Guwahati on Saturday.

The programme was organised as part of the National Road Safety Week from January 17 to 23 aiming to raise awareness about road safety and reduce accidents.

Pramathesh Chakraborty, deputy director of Nehru Yuva Kendra, explained the purpose of the programme, highlighting the importance of road safety and the need to follow traffic rules.

The programme featured various events, including a quiz competition, essay writing, and painting contests, all focused on road safety.

A street play and a mime show were also performed to convey the importance of road safety.

Additional district commissioner of Kamrup

(Metro), Ajit Kumar Sarma, and other distinguished guests, including Guwahati Municipal Corporation ward councillor Ratna Singh, assistant commissioner of transport department Gautam Das, and associate professor of Arya Vidyapeeth College Dr Papari Devi, Dr Sewabrata Baruah, professor Bholanath Baruah College, addressed the gathering.

They emphasized the need to follow traffic rules, such as wearing helmets and seatbelts, avoiding speeding, and not using mobile phones while driving. They also highlighted the importance of creating awareness about road safety among students, youth, and the general public.

The programme was attended by over 500 students, youth, and volunteers. The Nehru Yuva Kendra's District Youth Officer, Chayan Suklabaidya, thanked the guests and participants, and announced that the awareness program would continue until January 23, 2025, across various locations in Guwahati, a press note added.

Milk Booth set up near Ganesh Mandir in Ganeshguri Purabi Dairy sells 2 lakh litres of milk per day during Magh Bihu

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Jan 18: Purabi Dairy has recorded sale of over 2 lakh litres of milk and products per day during the current year's Magh Bihu celebrations.

The record achievement marks a significant milestone in the dairy's journey, reflecting growing trust and preference of consumers for Purabi products. This surge in sales during Magh Bihu highlights the brand's strong market presence and its ability to meet the heightened festive demand. The dairy cooperative on Friday said that it achieved 35% higher sales volume as compared to last year's Magh Bihu. The curd sales grew by a whopping 70% this year, underscoring the trust of the people of Assam. In the same period, cream sales also increased by 40% as compared to last year.

"We are happy to note that the people of the state love our products which are in fact made from milk produced by the farmers of Assam. This success reflects our consistent efforts in ensuring quality and expanding distribution networks," said Mr. SM Hussain, Marketing Head, WAMUL.

On Friday, the dairy cooperative further strengthened their sales network by setting up a Purabi Milk Booth near Ganesh Mandir in Ganeshguri, Guwahati. The milk booth was inaugurated by Assamese actors Moloya Goswami, Sagarika Goswami and Debajit Mazumdar, director

Achinta Sankar and director Atulananda Barman in presence of Sameer Kumar Parida, managing director, WAMUL and Satya Brata Bose, managing director, North East Dairy and Foods Limited (NEDFL). Franchisee of the booth Bhabarnab Jyoti Barman was also present on the occasion.

Speaking about the new booth, Sameer Kr Parida, managing director of WAMUL, said, "We are delighted to inaugurate the fifth Purabi Milk Booth in Guwahati today. The growing popularity of Purabi Dairy, not only in Guwahati but across Assam, has encouraged us to expand further. We plan to establish 10 more booths across Guwahati, ensuring our milk and milk products are more accessible to our valued customers."

Parida further added, "What sets us apart is the freshness and quality of our products, sourced directly from farmers across Assam. This commitment to quality has been validated by our consumers, especially during Magh Bihu this year, when our milk and milk product sales reached an unprecedented 2 lakh litres per day. We remain confident in our growth trajectory and are dedicated to contributing to the vision of our Honourable Chief Minister and supporting the aspirations of farmers across Assam."

WAMUL, which owns the cooperative brand Purabi, set up the milk booth under the World Bank funded APART Project of



Government of Assam.

The booth, introduced under the Company Owned Franchisee Operated (COFO) model, will enable citizens to procure fresh milk and dairy products, including lassi, flavoured milk, ice-cream, curd, fresh cream, ghee, paneer, etc.

Satya Brata Bose, managing director of NEDFL, said, "Purabi products have always been warmly embraced by the people of Assam. Our newest offering, Purabi Flavoured Milk, was launched towards the end of summer last year as part of a strategic plan to ensure its availability across all our distribution points. While we anticipated positive reception, the overwhelming love and demand for this product have exceeded our expectations. Currently available at over 2,500 sales points, Purabi Flavoured Milk has achieved remarkable

repeat sales, even during the winter months. With its extended shelf life, we are now poised to expand beyond state boundaries, leveraging our robust distribution network to bring this product to a wider audience."

He further added, "We are deeply appreciative of the extensive support from the Government of Assam. The Honourable Chief Minister, Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, has approved the establishment of dairies in Jorhat and Dibrugarh, with plans to extend similar facilities to Silchar and Dhemaji. These initiatives will position the Purabi brand to handle 10 lakh litres of milk annually within the next seven years. The Assam Dairy Development Plan, approved by the Government, will play a crucial role in advancing cooperative dairy models. Under the guidance of the Na-

Gunotsav from Jan 20-22 in Hojai



HT Correspondent

HOJAI, Jan 18: Hojai district commissioner Bidyut Bikash Bhagwati stated on Saturday that Gunotsav will be organised from January 20 to January 22 in the 971 school within Hojai district. He said total 1,27,413 students of the district will be covered in the Gunotsav. He further said around 5,656 plus manpower will be deployed in the process, where noted educationist from Nagaon, Dispur, trained external evaluators will visit schools and evaluate the teaching environment and educational infrastructure of Class 1 to 9 of the schools.

"The evaluation will help us in upgrading the quality of education and infrastructure of schools in the district. He also informed MLA's of three LAC's will also visit the school," the DC said.

The DC emphasised that the education department has always remained foremost priority for them. He said he will try to visit maximum schools.

Gunotsav begins in Jorhat

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Jan 18: The second phase of Gunotsav programme 2025 began in Jorhat district on Friday along with 14 other districts in the state. A district administration official quoting Samagra Shiksha Axom (SSA), Jorhat, sources, informed that in all Government, provincialised, tea garden model schools and tea garden-run schools numbering 1211 in the district, the self-evaluation exercise was conducted on Friday.

The official stated that from January 20 to 22 altogether 492 external evaluators would inspect the schools. Senior Government officials including the district commissioner, ACS officials and forest department and other government department officials, along with faculty members of various colleges have been deputed as external evaluators.

Jorhat DC to review departmental activities

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Jan 18: Jorhat district commissioner Jay Shivani will hold weekly review of activities undertaken by all Government departments and agencies across the district.

Shivani said that during the monthly District Development Committee (DDC) meeting chaired by him at the Conference Hall of the DC office complex on Friday he announced that all departments and agencies would have to submit a weekly progress report of works being done, to him. The DC stated that departments and agencies have been clubbed into five groups with each group having departments and agencies whose work were inter-related.

Hoping that constituting the groups would enable better coordination amongst the departments and agencies and contribute to achieving the targets smoothly, Shivani said that he would be taking stock of the activities carried out in a week groupwise and if there was any issue amongst the constituents of a group then that could be sorted immediately.

Editor's pick

India and Russia at a crossroads

By: Ivan Shchedrov

In Russia, 2024 was perceived as one of the most eventful years in the modern history of bilateral relations. Against considerable odds, the Indian prime minister, Narendra Modi, made a double visit to Russia. His first visit was in July as a part of the agreements within the 2000 Declaration on Strategic Partnership, followed by a second one in October to participate in the 16th BRICS summit in Kazan. While repeated visits are not rare—former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Russia twice in 2009 and 2013, and Narendra Modi in 2015—this time, however, this gesture holds significance. It indicates India's commitment to secure traditional political ties and is thus considered to have more value than ever before.

From this perspective, India's message to the international community is reminiscent of 2009, when Indian leadership participated in the BRICS meeting and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Ekaterinburg, Russia, for the first time, shortly after the Indo-United States (US) civil nuclear agreement was signed in 2008. By reaffirming its commitment this year, India also placed the onus on Russian leadership, with 2025 slated to be the year of a reciprocal visit from Russia's President, Vladimir Putin. Although the scope of future proposals is still unknown, the early announcements about Putin's upcoming visit, in stark contrast to the unexpected trip of Narendra Modi, may indicate that the Russian side is preparing well in advance for the meeting.

Global aspirations as a backbone of bilateral ties

In 2024, bilateral relations were shaped by India's global posturing on the international stage. In other words, the country's growing aspirations placed the global agenda above certain regional and bilateral issues. In July, during his first visit to Russia, Prime Minister Modi highlighted that India is pursuing important peacekeeping efforts aimed at resolving the Ukrainian conflict. This visit to Russia was also Modi's first after his re-election, breaking the tradition of prioritizing countries in India's immediate neighbourhood. The reasoning behind this decision seems to be quite obvious—relations with the Maldives had been tense, Bangladesh was grappling with an acute social and political crisis, and Sri Lanka was entering a new electoral cycle.

Additional reasoning comes from India's participation in multilateral meetings. The invitation to visit Italy for the G7 Summit in June was perceived as being of top importance, especially since it provided ground to amplify the voice of the Global South, as well as to hold talks with the Ukrainian president. In some regards, it was placed at a higher priority than participating in summits of important regional formats, for example, the SCO Summit in Astana and the second India-Central Asia Summit, which was scheduled in 2024. Participation at the BRICS summit in Kazan in October is another great example. The decision to take part in the meeting of a non-binding organisation with global ambitions counters some observations about the limited benefits that India could get from the format. Despite some disagreements among its members and abstention from India on the issues of de-dollarisation and the extension of memberships, BRICS is still considered the only group actively pushing for a balanced approach, thanks to its focus on promoting global multipolarity.

In bilateral and multilateral relations with Russia, India has effectively highlighted the visibility of fruitful cooperation, yet it has been cautious about making any political commitments. For Russia, this policy may be deemed sufficient today, but shortly, it will require more tangible outcomes.

Economic relations: Nuanced but paramount

In the absence of political commitments tied to financial negotiations, 2024 also gave bilateral economic relations new value, but the prospects for growth are still unknown.

During the 25th session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGEC-TEC), the volume of bilateral trade was said to have reached US\$66 billion, indicating positive growth. Russia has reached the fourth position among India's trade partners and is the second-largest exporter to India after China.

However, challenges become evident when we examine these numbers more closely. Although in January-August 2024, trade broke records, the volume of Russian exports has approached its local maximum. During this period, it constituted US\$43.4 billion (mainly energy resource exports)—a modest increase of 5 percent compared to the previous period. As a result, the next stage of trade and economic cooperation will hinge on Russia's ability to diversify its export basket and expand India's export base. In the mid-term, Russia's key objective is to curb its inflation rate, eliminate the socio-economic imbalances caused by an overheated military-industrial complex, and ultimately facilitate a seamless transition from military to civilian production. For India, it will be necessary to resolve infrastructure and socio-economic problems to maintain its attractiveness to foreign investors and increase production and overall gross domestic product (GDP) growth.

Chronic imbalances remained a key problem in bilateral trade—India's imports from Russia were 12 times greater than its exports to the country between January and August.

The two countries acknowledged the importance of promoting export in India through increased investments in export-oriented production.

This measure is also highly necessary to solve payment-related issues. For instance, Russia's exporters could theoretically use ruble transactions to secure payments with Indian importers and conduct foreign currency transactions with Indian counterparts. However, in practice, such a system is limited by the huge negative trade balance. Nonetheless, 2024 showed some progress in that regard—from January to August, the combined exports of India to Russia constituted US\$4.2 billion, marking a 35 percent increase compared to 2023. Considering the current pace of incremental growth, the target of US\$100 billion trade turnover by 2030 that the countries have set seems to be more indicative than prescriptive.

Conclusion

This year demonstrated that, despite prevailing prejudices, India's commitment to its traditional ties with Russia remains resilient and not prone to sudden shifts. However, it also brought to light the challenges that need to be addressed in the coming years. Many of these, particularly in the military and political spheres, are speculative. In areas like trade and investment, despite record performances, both countries will require structural reforms. To further strengthen their ties, they must address these challenges swiftly and effectively in 2025. However, success will hinge on shifts in Russia's approach to the West, as well as the stability of India's positioning. (Courtesy: ORF)

Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal is a great news but the follow up depends on Netanyahu

Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas have agreed to a ceasefire deal; Israel, Qatar and the United States have said, after more than 460 days of a war that has devastated Gaza. Apparently, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, under intense American pressure had to convince a lot of his coalition partners to seal the deal. Additionally, this deal comes as a win for Donald Trump, even before he starts his next stint as the 47th American President.

The Israeli Prime Minister's office was the last to confirm on early Friday morning (17 January 2025) that a deal has been agreed upon with Hamas. The agreement, which US officials expect to take effect Sunday (19 January), would see a pause in fighting in Gaza and lead to the phased release of hostages and Palestinian prisoners.

Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani had said on Wednesday that the ceasefire deal would come into effect on Sunday, but added that work on implementation steps with Israel and Hamas was continuing. Apparently, the American President-elect Donald Trump wanted the deal to be effective before his inauguration ceremony on Monday.

Trump had repeatedly indicated he would prefer to avoid inheriting the Israel-Hamas war as he prepared to take office on 20 January, and analysts say his impending return to the White House had injected renewed urgency into negotiations on a deal.

Reportedly, Trump and outgoing US President Joe Biden both took full credit following the announcement of the ceasefire deal Wednesday after the two American administrations worked together to mediate the truce. The cooperation between the two camps was "almost unprecedented," a senior Biden administration official said after the deal was clinched, made possible by a rare intersection of interests between bitter rivals who both saw an opening following Trump's election victory.

The deal includes a temporary ceasefire that will also, finally, allow displaced Palestinians to return to their homes—though after Israel's deliberate destruction campaign, which increased in ferocity, 86 Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks after the announcement of the deal, and which has rendered many homes no longer habitable. But the Palestinians of the occupied territories wanted to return to their homeland as soon as possible and they welcomed the announcement with cheers and tears.

Reportedly, the peace deal consists of three phases. The first phase will last six weeks, and will involve a limited prisoner exchange, the partial withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and a surge of aid into the enclave. However, these conditions, which have yet to be voted upon by the Israeli cabinet, are at odds with the stated positions of many of the far-right wing



Israeli forces will reduce their presence in the Philadelphi Corridor, the border area between Egypt and Gaza, and then withdraw completely no later than the 50th day after the deal comes into effect.

Details of the second and third phases, though understood to be agreed to in principle, are to be negotiated further during the first phase, US President Joe Biden has said that the ceasefire will continue even if the negotiations on the second and third phases go beyond the initial six weeks of the first phase.

Critically, Israel has insisted that no written guarantees be given to rule out a resumption of its attacks once the first phase is complete and its civilian captives returned.

However, according to an Egyptian source cited by the Associated Press, the three mediators involved in the talks—Egypt, Qatar and the United States—have given Hamas verbal guarantees that negotiations will continue and that all three would press for a deal that would see the second and third stages implemented before an initial six-week window has elapsed.

If it is determined that the conditions have been met for a second phase, Hamas will release all the remaining living captives, mostly male soldiers, in return for the freeing of more Palestinians held in the Israeli prison system. In addition, Israel would initiate its "complete withdrawal" from Gaza.

However, these conditions, which have yet to be voted upon by the Israeli cabinet, are at odds with the stated positions of many of the far-right wing

members of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet, which he relies upon for support, as well as Netanyahu's own past positions, in which he has repeatedly used the presence of Hamas in Gaza to prolong the conflict.

The details of a third phase remain unclear. Should the conditions of the second stage be met, the third phase will see the bodies of the remaining captives handed over in return for a three- to five-year reconstruction plan to be conducted under international supervision.

Additionally, there is currently no agreement over who will administer Gaza beyond the ceasefire. The United States has pressed for a reformed version of the Palestinian Authority to do so.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday (14 January) said the post-war reconstruction and governance envisions the Palestinian Authority inviting "international partners" to stand up an interim governing authority to run critical services and oversee the territory.

Other partners, notably Arab states, would provide forces to ensure security in the short term, he said in a speech at the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based think tank. Israel has yet to suggest an alternative form of governance in Gaza.

There was staunch opposition to the deal from the far-right members of Netanyahu's government, such as Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich. They have been quite outspoken over the last week about their position on a deal, saying that it is bad for Israel's national

security and that they might not vote for it. They have gone so far as to say that they are willing to topple Netanyahu's government if they do not get their way.

Further, a small number of families of the captives in Gaza are saying "No" to a deal. Many members of the Tikva (Hope) Forum fringe group, including settlers in the occupied West Bank, hold right-wing ideologies. They oppose the release of Palestinian prisoners in Israel as part of the deal, arguing that a partial release of Israeli hostages from Gaza is unacceptable. Instead, they insist that defeating Hamas through strong military action should be the top priority, and is the best strategy to retrieve hostages.

The moot question is if the ceasefire will survive beyond that first phase. It entails even more negotiations meant to begin within weeks. In those talks, Israel, Hamas, and the US, Egyptian and Qatari mediators will have to tackle the tough issue of how Gaza will be governed, with Israel demanding the elimination of Hamas.

Hostage release also is a tricky issue, as not all hostages are held by Hamas, so getting other militant groups to hand them over could be an issue. In exchange for bodies handed over by Hamas, Israel will free all women and children it has detained from Gaza since the war began on 7 October, 2023.

Furthermore, Israel has said it will not agree to a complete withdrawal until Hamas' military and political capabilities are eliminated and it cannot rearm—ensuring Hamas no longer runs Gaza. Hamas says it will not hand over the last hostages until Israel removes all troops from everywhere in Gaza.

Trump had made a big issue of Middle East peace during his campaign and attacked Biden's failure to secure a ceasefire. Steve Witkoff, his surprise appointment as Middle East envoy, was dispatched to Qatar on 22 November—less than three weeks after his election victory.

Witkoff, a close friend of Trump who is also known to Qatari officials through his real estate business, had suddenly become the chief negotiator in an unlikely negotiating team led by Biden's top Middle East adviser Brett McGurk. In directing their envoys to co-ordinate, Biden and Trump both temporarily put aside their fierce personal and political rivalry—a small miracle in its own right.

However, in reality a lot hinges on what Netanyahu is able to deliver, in face of challenges from his coalition partners, if he is indeed able to deliver and the ceasefire lasts, then that too will not be a lesser miracle, given the ever-changing geopolitical dynamics of the middle eastern region. (IPA Service)

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Asad Mirza

Global economy to weaken in 2025, says 56 percent of Chief economists

By Satyaki Chakraborty

The global economy is set to face significant challenges in 2025, with 56% of chief economists surveyed expecting conditions to weaken, according to the latest Chief Economists Outlook from the World Economic Forum. Only 17% foresee an improvement, pointing to heightened uncertainty in key regions and the need for measured policy responses worldwide.

While the United States appears poised for a short-term boost—with 44% of chief economists predicting strong growth in 2025, up from 15% when they were asked in August last year—the outlook for the year ahead remains less optimistic for other major economies. Europe continues to rank as the weakest region for the third consecutive year, with nearly three-quarters (74%) expecting weak or very weak growth. Meanwhile, China's economic momentum is projected to slow amid subdued consumer demand and weaker productivity, further illustrating the uneven and uncertain nature of any global recovery.

"The latest Chief Economists Outlook released by World Economic Forum on January 16 reveals a global economy under considerable strain," said Aengus Collins, Head of Economic Growth and Transformation, World Eco-

nom Forum. "The growth outlook is at its weakest in decades and political developments both domestically and internationally highlight how contested economic policy has become. In this environment, fostering a spirit of collaboration will require more commitment and creativity than ever."

The new report underscores the significance of the recent US presidential election, with 61% of chief economists characterizing the impact for the global economy as a long-term shift rather than a short-term disruption. Major changes are expected in areas such as trade, migration, deregulation, fiscal policy and industrial policy. The chief economists' solid outlook for US growth in 2025 is in line with their expectation of near-term stimulus and of rising wages. However, they remain mindful of risks, with almost all expecting a rise in public debt levels (97%) and higher inflation (94%).

In addition to subdued global growth prospects, the Chief Economists Outlook reveals intensifying pressures on the world's economic interconnectedness. A vast majority of respondents (94%) predict further fragmentation of goods trade over the next three years, while 59% expect services trade to follow a similar path. More than three-quarters also foresee higher barriers to labour mobility, while almost two-

thirds point to rising constraints on technology and data transfers.

The financial sector stands out as an exception, with less than half (48%) expecting an increase in fragmentation, likely reflecting the pivotal role of cross-border financial flows in modern economies. Nevertheless, domestic and international political developments, supply-chain realignments and security concerns loom large. These shifts are likely to push up costs for businesses and consumers alike over the next three years. Business responses to the increasing fragmentation of the global economy are expected to include restructuring supply chains (91%), regionalizing operations (90%) and focusing on core markets (79%).

Nearly half (48%) of chief economists anticipate an increase in global trade volumes in 2025, underscoring the resilience of global commerce. However, a large majority expect intensifying trade tensions, both between major powers and more widely. Protectionism is identified as the primary factor that will drive lasting changes to global trade patterns, with other prominent contributors including conflict, sanctions and national security concerns. Some 82% of respondents predict greater regionalization of trade over the next three years, alongside a continuing gradual shift from goods to services. (IPA Service)

Excessive social media use has detrimental effects on teenagers

By: Shahruk Ahmed Mazumdar

The Australian government passed a law prohibiting teenagers under 16 from having social media (SM) accounts; nevertheless, they are permitted to view SM in a 'logged out state'. SM firms will face fines if they fail to comply with the law. The ban is expected to take effect by the end of the following year.

However, a global debate has erupted about whether a ban on SM is the best way to address the detrimental effects of excessive use in teenagers. Yet, the government has come under criticism for passing the law too soon without considering the results of the trial, which is likely to be held next year to decide how the SM ban will be implemented in Australia. It is being monitored to see if such measures could be taken elsewhere in the world.

Social media is a useful tool for learning and connection, but if not used responsibly, it can have major health consequences. Sleep interruption is a severe issue. Browsing mobile platforms before bedtime can lead to poor sleep quality and quantity, particularly in teenagers. This results in daytime

drowsiness. Sleep deprivation complicates emotional control and raises stress. Another disadvantage of SM for teenagers is their poor attention span.

A recent study, "Accelerating Dynamics of Collective Attention," published in Nature, shows that human attention spans have drastically decreased, going from 2.5 minutes twenty years ago to 45 seconds today. Rapid attention shifting between digital stimuli impairs focus on school-work and other non-digital tasks. Overuse of social media disrupts children's social lives and prevents them from learning essential social skills. The face-to-face interactions, such as reading facial expressions and body language, are crucial for empathy and social cue comprehension. Academic performance suffers as a result of the time spent on social media since it interferes with study and homework time. Aggression is another aspect of the detrimental effects of social media on teens' social lives. These days, video games and social media expose teenagers to violent and provocative content. The World Health Organisation states against exposing newborns under a year old to any electronic de-

vices, including laptops or mobile phones, and against allowing children ages one to five to spend more than an hour a day in front of a screen.

According to studies, youngsters who use social media for more than three hours a day are twice as likely to suffer from mental health conditions like depression and anxiety because they are exposed to pictures of things they lack in their lives. Body dysmorphia is prevalent among young individuals and has grown in recent years. Those in their early teens are frequently resistant to constraints and could rebel against them. They may believe they are entitled to the same technological resources as their peers elsewhere. This resistance may cause confrontations between parents and children, resulting in interpersonal tension and mistrust. Bans, therefore, are ineffective. For example, prohibiting alcohol can often lead to increasing use. As a result, tech-savvy children may find ways to evade it, such as setting up secret accounts, utilising fake identities and VPNs, or accessing dangerous areas of the internet, thus increasing their exposure to hazardous content rather than decreasing it. Social media frequently turns into a tool for

validation since humans are social creatures with an innate need for acceptance and belonging. Many people use the quantity of likes on their posts or photos as an instrument to assess someone's appearance, intelligence, and even personal value.

According to experts, compulsive notification checking can cause addiction-like symptoms in which people struggle to detach, affecting their mental well-being. Online conversations are frequently superficial, missing the emotional depth and nonverbal communication that characterise face-to-face interactions. This leads to an emotional separation. Furthermore, people prefer to present only the positive elements of their lives on social media, resulting in a false depiction of happiness and success that can make others feel even more alienated in their troubles. The way a tool is used determines its potency. The systemic and contemporary issues around social media use regulation must be addressed. A social media ban doesn't help young people learn or manage anything; it just delays their exposure to these platforms. The same algorithms will still be in place when they eventually begin utilising these plat-

forms, influencing users' views and behaviours and keeping both young and old users interested. In theory, algorithms present only contents that a user could find interesting. The content is actually tailored to promote spending more time on the platform.

Digital literacy and education are a better way to help children learn self-discipline when using their devices and to explain the advantages and disadvantages of social media. Establish a family media use plan, ban screens for at least an hour before bed, establish limits on content access, promote family communication and conversations, and refrain from using social media in the mornings, as this wastes teens' productive time and deters them from starting the day with energy. Every week, have a conversation with your teen about social media so they feel comfortable sharing their experiences with you without fear of criticism. Set boundaries for your own social media use and encourage the children to follow your lead by asking them about their experiences on social media, how they perceive what they see there, and how they would react to different scenarios they might come

across online.

Teenagers in India may find that social media detoxification—the practice of distancing oneself from social media apps and preventing them from interfering with daily life—is a necessary lifestyle habit. Bringing life back on track with creativity, productivity, and a healthy dose of enthusiasm for the future is the ultimate goal. The children have an unquenchable desire to follow the latest trends and are impacted by social media influencers for the majority of their decisions. A social media detox can begin with specific hours of the day and then progress to days and weeks.

Parents and educators can initiate discussions regarding the psychological effects of social media, such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and online comparison, to educate children about the risks involved. Schools can take the lead in this area by integrating media literacy and mental health awareness into the curriculum. According to a 2023 survey, 78% of students who received such instruction choose to use social media responsibly. (The author can be reached at shahruktechnical@gmail.com)

Madan Kamdev: The Khajuraho of Assam



By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Madan Kamdev, a magnificent yet lesser-known archaeological site in Assam, is often referred to as "The Khajuraho of Assam." This comparison draws from the site's intricate and sensuous sculptures that bear a striking resemblance to the famed temples of Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh. Nestled amidst the verdant hills of Dewangiri, roughly 40 kilometers from Guwahati, Madan Kamdev's rich history, spiritual significance, and artistic achievements create an enigmatic allure that remains largely underappreciated on the global stage. However, to view Madan Kamdev as a mere reflection of Khajuraho would be to overlook its distinct narrative, cultural identity, and importance within the broader context of India's heritage.

The origins of Madan Kamdev trace back to the 9th and 10th centuries during the rule of the Pala dynasty, a period marked by a flourishing of art, religion, and architecture across the eastern regions of India. The Palas, who were known for their patronage of both Hinduism and Buddhism, established a tradition of temple-building that celebrated intricate design and storytelling. It is believed that the temples at Madan Kamdev were constructed primarily as an homage to Lord Shiva, evident in the numerous lingams and depictions of Shiva found among the ruins. The name "Madan Kamdev" itself invokes the spirit of Kamadeva, the Hindu god of love, adding layers of myth and meaning to the temple complex. According to legend, Kamadeva attempted to awaken Lord Shiva from deep meditation to restore love and passion to the world. Shiva, angered by the disturbance, opened his third eye and reduced Kamadeva to ashes. Some traditions hold that Madan Kamdev represents the spirit and essence of Kamadeva, making the site a symbol of love, passion, and divine wrath.

The architecture and sculptures at Madan Kamdev capture the quintessence of human emotion and divine connection. The carvings at the site are distinguished by their explicit representation of sensuality and love, themes that align with the classical Indian understanding of kama as

an essential aspect of life and spirituality. The intricately carved stone figures depict scenes of divine beings, humans, celestial dancers, and mythical creatures, many of which are portrayed in romantic or erotic poses. These depictions, far from being merely ornamental, reflect a worldview that regarded love and sexuality as sacred, intertwined with devotion and the path to spiritual enlightenment. Such representations align with the tantric traditions that were prevalent in parts of medieval India, where physical intimacy and love were viewed as a means to attain a higher spiritual state.

The artistic brilliance seen in the sculptures of Madan Kamdev speaks volumes about the mastery of Pala-era artisans. These craftsmen achieved a high degree of sophistication in their work, showcasing lifelike figures with detailed expressions and dynamic postures. The fluidity and grace in these carvings suggest advanced knowledge of human anatomy and a deep understanding of movement and balance. One can almost imagine the artisans meticulously shaping each figure, infusing stone with vitality and emotion. The figures of apsaras, gods, and goddesses appear caught in the midst of dance and embrace, while intricate floral and geometric patterns frame the scenes. This level of detail is indicative of an era that valued both the aesthetic and the symbolic, merging artistic beauty with deeper cultural and spiritual meanings.

The ruins of Madan Kamdev, spread over a large area on Dewangiri Hill, invite exploration and reflection. Despite their current state of partial destruction, the surviving structures and fragments convey a powerful sense of what once was. Scholars and archaeologists have long debated the reasons for the site's decline. Some suggest that natural calamities, particularly earthquakes—common in Assam—may have played a role. Others believe that political conflicts, invasions, and the subsequent shift in dynastic power could have led to the temple's abandonment and eventual ruin. Regardless of the cause, the fragmented pillars, scattered stone carvings, and remnants of what once was a grand temple complex evoke a haunting

beauty, a reminder of the impermanence that underscores even the most extraordinary human achievements.

The rediscovery and study of Madan Kamdev in the 20th century reignited interest in its historical and cultural significance. Excavations have unearthed not only the stunning sculptures but also artifacts that suggest a vibrant religious and social life in the area. These findings include stone inscriptions, fragments of other temples, and smaller shrines that provide context to the main temple complex. The site likely served as an important religious center, a place where rituals and celebrations were intertwined with daily life and devotion. Madan Kamdev's sculptures, with their emphasis on love and divine union, point to a society that saw spirituality as deeply connected to human experience, encompassing both the sacred and the sensual.

Visiting Madan Kamdev today is an experience steeped in history and mystery. The journey itself, through the dense forests and rolling hills of Assam, sets the tone for an encounter with the past. The site, surrounded by the sounds of nature and the play of light and shadow on ancient stones, evokes a sense of timelessness. It is easy to stand amidst the ruins and imagine the site as it once was, with worshippers gathered, rituals performed, and stories shared. The air seems charged with the echoes of hymns and the footfalls of dancers who once moved in time to sacred music.

Despite its profound historical and artistic value, Madan Kamdev has not received the same attention as more renowned sites like Khajuraho. This relative obscurity has contributed to challenges in preservation and conservation. The Assam government, along with various cultural heritage organizations, has made efforts to increase awareness and promote the site as a destination for cultural and historical tourism. However, there is much work to be done. Preserving Madan Kamdev requires a concerted effort that balances tourism with the need to protect and maintain the site's delicate carvings and fragile structures. Initiatives

aimed at educating the public about the site's significance, investing in infrastructure, and fostering sustainable tourism are key to ensuring that Madan Kamdev's legacy endures.

Madan Kamdev is more than just an archaeological site; it is a symbol of a cultural ethos that celebrated life in its fullest expression. It serves as a reminder that art and spirituality were once viewed as complementary, with love and desire seen as divine gifts that connected the mortal with the eternal. The narratives carved into the stone at Madan Kamdev invite us to explore not only the artistic mastery of an ancient civilization but also its worldview—a perspective that embraced the complex nature of human existence and found divinity in every aspect of life.

The future of Madan Kamdev hinges on efforts to ensure that this historical treasure is preserved and respected. Initiatives that incorporate community involvement, responsible tourism, and continuous research can help unlock more of the site's secrets while safeguarding it against further degradation. The art and stories of Madan Kamdev have survived centuries of neglect and natural wear, but preserving them for future generations requires commitment and reverence for what this site represents.

In conclusion, Madan Kamdev stands as a compelling chapter in India's cultural and spiritual history. Its sculptures and ruins are a testament to an era when art was used not only for decoration but as a medium to express complex philosophical and religious ideas. Though often overshadowed by more prominent sites, Madan Kamdev is a unique marvel that tells the story of Assam's rich past—a story of divine love, artistic brilliance, and the enduring power of myth. To visit Madan Kamdev is to step into a world where stone speaks, recounting tales of gods, mortals, love, and devotion, frozen in time yet timeless in their appeal. *(The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-magazine SAMPROTIK who can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com)*



The historical and cultural legacy of Assam

By: Dipak Kurmi

Nestled in the northeastern frontier of India, Assam stands as a gateway between South Asia and the broader world beyond, its significance amplified by its position bordering Tibet, China, Burma, and erstwhile East Pakistan. This land, once considered a relatively overlooked province during British rule, has emerged as a region of profound historical and cultural importance, deeply rooted in its ancient heritage and the resilient spirit of its people. The legacy of Assam is not merely a chronicle of political transitions but a tapestry of cultural fusion, historical inquiry, and intellectual pursuits that continue to resonate in the present day.

Assam's recorded history dates back to antiquity, when it formed a part of the illustrious kingdom of Pragjyotisha or Kamarupa. Ancient texts, including the Epics, Puranas, and works of luminaries such as Kalidasa, immortalized this mighty kingdom. The visit of the Chinese pilgrim Hsien Tsang in the seventh century provides one of the earliest detailed accounts of the region, highlighting its wealth, governance, and cultural sophistication under Kumar Bhaskar Varman, a ruler tracing his lineage to the mythical Narakasura. Even then, Assam was not an isolated realm; it was a vibrant polity with significant interactions with the rest of India and beyond.

The name "Assam" itself owes its origin to the Ahoms, a Mongoloid race that arrived in the thirteenth century and established a dominion that endured for six centuries. Their rule not only fortified the region against external threats, such as the relentless incursions of Muslim powers from the west, but also left an indelible mark on its political and cultural landscape. The Ahoms were not merely conquerors; they were integrators who absorbed and adapted to the Aryanized culture of the conquered, resulting in a unique fusion that gave rise to the Assamese identity. This synthesis of Aryan and non-Aryan elements defined Assamese culture, setting it apart from other parts of India.

Assam's historical narrative is enriched by its unparalleled commitment to chronicling its past. The Ahoms, with their keen sense of history, institutionalized the practice of preserving detailed records in the form of Buranjis—historical chronicles that documented events, governance, and cultural life with remarkable fidelity. Written in both Ahom and Assamese, these manuscripts have preserved a wealth of information about the political machinery, social structures, and interactions with neighboring kingdoms. The Buranjis are not just records of Ahom rule but also repositories of insights into other contemporary entities, including the Kacharis, Jaintias, and even the Mughal court.

This historical literature provides a vivid picture of Assam's evolution. It recounts the foreign incursions repelled by the Ahoms, the rise and fall of neighboring kingdoms, and the socio-religious transformations that shaped the region. The neo-Vaishnavite movement led by Srimanta Sankaradeva in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a watershed moment that brought about a literary and cultural renaissance. This movement not only revitalized Assamese literature and language but also contributed to the creation of biographical texts, the Charit-Puthis, and accounts of religious institutions that provide invaluable historical insights.

The collapse of Ahom rule under the weight of Burmese invasions in the early nineteenth century and the subsequent annexation of Assam by the British in 1826 marked the beginning of a new chapter. While the British dismantled the royal archives, they inadvertently paved the way for the modern study of Assam's history. British administrators like Edward Gait and Sir Charles Lyall initiated efforts to collect coins, inscriptions, and manuscripts, laying the groundwork for systematic historical research. Gait's History of Assam and the establishment of institutions like the Kamarupa Anusandhan Samity in 1912 signaled a growing recognition of Assam's historical significance.

The preservation and study of historical manuscripts gained momen-

tum with the creation of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Assam in 1928. Under the stewardship of scholars like Dr. S. K. Bhuyan, the department edited and published numerous Buranjis, bringing Assam's historical treasures to a wider audience. These efforts, though hampered at times by financial and personnel constraints, have ensured that the chronicles of Assam's past continue to illuminate its rich and complex heritage.

Assam's cultural and historical legacy is not confined to the study of its past. Its ruins, architectural remains, and iconography offer invaluable insights into the broader history of India. The fusion of Aryan and non-Aryan traditions, reflected in its religious practices and artistic expressions, exemplifies the dynamic interplay of influences that have shaped the region. The Buranjis, with their detailed accounts of political and social institutions, remain a testament to the intellectual and administrative sophistication of the Ahoms.

The journey of Assam from a land of legendary kings and ancient epics to a modern state within the Indian Union is a story of resilience and adaptation. Its history is a bridge that connects the ancient with the contemporary, the local with the universal. It is a reminder that even in the remotest corners of the subcontinent, the currents of history flow with vigor, shaping identities and destinies. Assam is not merely a geographical entity; it is a repository of experiences, a crucible of cultures, and a beacon of historical inquiry.

As modern scholarship continues to unearth and reinterpret Assam's past, the region stands as a testament to the enduring relevance of history and culture in shaping our understanding of the present. The chronicles of Assam, from the ancient tales of Pragjyotisha to the meticulous records of the Ahoms, serve as a clarion call to cherish and preserve the rich heritage that defines us all. In the echoes of Assam's past, one hears the resonance of a timeless frontier, forever bridging the divides of time, space, and human experience. *(The writer can be reached at dipakkurmi@gmail.com)*

Ernest Hemingway: A Literary Icon

By: Satvabrat Borah

Ernest Hemingway was one of the most influential writers of the 20th century, known for his unique style of writing and adventurous life. Born on July 21, 1899, in Oak Park, Illinois, Hemingway grew up in a quiet suburban town. His father, Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, was a doctor, and his mother, Grace Hall Hemingway, was a music teacher. The family environment was strict, shaped by conservative values. From a young age, Ernest showed a deep love for nature, which he often explored during family trips to Michigan. These experiences would later inspire many of his stories.

After graduating from high school in 1917, Hemingway decided against college and began working as a reporter for "The Kansas City Star." It was here that he learned the principles of concise and straightforward writing, which became hallmarks of his style. In 1918, during World War I, he volunteered to serve as an ambulance driver for the Red Cross in Italy. While on duty, he was severely injured by mortar fire. His time in the war and the injuries he suffered had a profound impact on him, both physically and emotionally. These experiences became the foundation for his novel "A Farewell to Arms", a story about love and loss during wartime.

After the war, Hemingway returned to the United States but soon grew restless. In 1921, he married his first wife, Hadley Richardson, and they moved to Paris. In Paris, Hemingway became part of a group of expatriate writers and artists, later known as the "Lost Generation." He was mentored by Gertrude Stein, who introduced him to other prominent figures like F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Joyce, and Ezra Pound. This period in Paris was crucial for Hemingway, as it helped him refine his craft and develop his unique style. His first collection of short stories, "In Our Time", was published in 1925 and received critical acclaim for its sparse, direct prose.

In 1926, Hemingway published his first major novel, "The Sun Also Rises". The book captures the disillusionment and aimlessness of the post-war generation and is considered one of his finest works. The story, set in Spain and France, revolves around a group of expatriates searching for meaning in their lives. Hemingway's depiction of

the running of the bulls in Pamplona and the bullfights became iconic, showcasing his fascination with Spanish culture and traditions.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Hemingway continued to travel extensively. He visited Spain, Africa, and Cuba, drawing inspiration from these experiences for his writing. His novel "A Farewell to Arms", published in 1929, was another major success, solidifying his reputation as a leading American author. The book tells the story of an American ambulance driver and a British nurse who fall in love during World War I. The novel's tragic ending and realistic portrayal of war left a lasting impression on readers.

Hemingway's love for adventure often influenced his writing. He was an avid hunter, fisherman, and bullfighting enthusiast. In the 1930s, he went on several safaris in Africa, where he hunted big game and marveled at the beauty of the wilderness. These experiences inspired his nonfiction work "Green Hills of Africa" and short stories like "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." His vivid descriptions of nature and the struggles of man against the elements captivated readers.

In 1940, Hemingway published "For Whom the Bell Tolls", a novel set during the Spanish Civil War. The story follows an American dynamiter working with Spanish guerrilla fighters. The book was a critical and commercial success, earning Hemingway a nomination for the Pulitzer Prize. It showcased his ability to blend historical events with deeply personal narratives, creating a powerful and moving story.

Hemingway's personal life was as dramatic as his fiction. He married four times and had three sons. His relationships were often tumultuous, marked by infidelity and emotional strain. Despite his fame, he struggled with depression and alcoholism. These challenges did not stop him from writing, though, and his works continued to receive widespread acclaim.

During World War II, Hemingway served as a journalist and war correspondent, covering significant events like the D-Day invasion and the liberation of Paris. His bravery and willingness to put himself in danger earned him respect and admiration. After the war, Hemingway settled in Cuba, where he wrote some of his most memorable works.

One of Hemingway's greatest

Poem

Why Would Trees Not Be Afraid of People?

By: Mowsam Hazarika

By the banks of the river,
In my grandfather's time,
The trees swayed with the wind,

Echoed the songs of birds,
Drenched themselves in rain,
And offered shelter from the sun.

But now—
They stand no more.

People cut them down,
To build a bridge.

Why do you need the bridge?
To reach nature?
Or to escape from it?

In the heart of the forest,
Young trees dreamed of touching the sky.

But before they could grow,
They were felled—
To make way for industries.

Roots severed, branches broken,
Their dreams lay scattered on the ground.

And the birds—
Where did they go?

Even their shadows
Have vanished from the earth.

Now they say we need bridges
To take people away from nature.

Because 'development' demands

That trees must fall.
Why would trees not be afraid of people?

Pebbles of Sand

By: Shahnaz Islam

In the grains of pebbles,
The sun and stars meet sand and stone—
Her scar, an aesthetic mark,
Etched in the white sand's embrace.
Voyaging toward dawn,
Leaving behind a dusky tale,
The fisherman's net ensnares her pearl—
A treasure beyond life's larger catches.

Each day, every day,
The ocean gives more than fish.
At evenfall, the fisherman rests,
Straining with the roaring waves,
His heart rhyming with the moonlight.
Delight, hope, romance, and greed—
All weave through the tides like
Lust, wealth, and beauty,
A kingdom of desires to reign.

achievements came in 1952 with the publication of "The Old Man and the Sea". The novella tells the story of an aging fisherman named Santiago and his epic struggle to catch a giant marlin. The story is a profound exploration of perseverance, pride, and human resilience. It won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1953 and played a significant role in Hemingway receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. The Nobel Committee praised his "powerful, style-forming mastery of the art of narration." Despite his success, Hemingway's later years were marked by declining health and mental instability. He suffered from various ailments, including high blood pressure, liver disease, and depression. These issues were compounded by a series of accidents, including two plane crashes during a trip to Africa. Hemingway's physical and emotional pain became overwhelming, and he struggled to write.

In 1960, Hemingway moved to Idaho with his fourth wife, Mary Welsh Hemingway. His condition worsened, and he was hospitalized for severe depression. Tragically, on July 2, 1961, Hemingway took his own life at the age of 61. His death shocked the literary world and marked the end of an era.

Ernest Hemingway's legacy endures through his works, which continue to be studied and admired worldwide. His writing style, characterized by simplicity, clarity, and precision, revolutionized modern literature. Hemingway's ability to convey deep emotions with minimal words remains unmatched. His stories, often centered around themes of courage, love, and the human struggle, resonate with readers of all generations. Hemingway's adventurous life also adds to his mystique. He lived boldly, embracing the joys and dangers of the world. Whether on the battlefields of Europe, the plains of Africa, or the waters of the Gulf Stream, Hemingway sought experiences that would fuel his imagination and enrich his writing.

Today, Hemingway is remembered not only as a great writer but also as a cultural icon. His life and works have inspired countless writers, filmmakers, and artists. From his early days in Oak Park to his final years in Idaho, Hemingway's journey was one of passion, creativity, and relentless pursuit of excellence. His influence on literature and popular culture is immeasurable, ensuring that his name will be remembered for generations to come.

Manipur NPP MLA N Kayisii dies at 58

IMPHAL, Jan 18: Former Manipur minister and National People's Party (NPP) MLA N Kayisii died here on Saturday after a prolonged illness. He was 58.

Kayisii, a Naga, is the MLA from Tadubi constituency in Senapati district and also the NPP state president.

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh condoled the death of Kayisii and said his service to the people of Manipur will always be remembered. The CM visited the residence of Kayisii and offered his condolences.

Singh said, "Kayisii was soft-spoken, a very good man and a good leader. I had contacted him twice while he was ill. Very sorry over the loss."

Later in a post on X, the CM said "I am deeply saddened by the passing of N Kayisii, the respected MLA of Tadubi assembly constituency. His service to the people of Manipur and his commitment to the well-being of our state will always be remembered." "At this moment of grief, my heartfelt condolences go out to his family, loved ones, and all who held him in high regard. May his soul rest in peace, and may we honour his memory by continuing the work he was so passionate about," he added. (PTI)

Kaling Moyong elected Arunachal BJP president

ITANAGAR, Jan 18: Former MLA Kaling Moyong was on Saturday unanimously elected as the new president of the BJP Arunachal Pradesh unit.

Moyong, who was a two-time MLA representing the Pasighat East assembly seat since 2014, lost his seat in the April 2024 elections. He was the only candidate to submit nomination papers for the post. He will replace Biyuram Wahge as the state BJP president.

Union Ports, Shipping, and Waterways minister Sarbananda Sonowal, the returning officer, announced Moyong's election as well as the appointment of three national council members from Arunachal Pradesh.

The three national council members include former party vice presidents Tagin Siga and Yelam Taga Borang, and former Tirap district president Kamrang Tesia.

Sonowal said the BJP's national election committee had tasked him with selecting the state party president and national council members after consulting party leaders and workers.

"Honouring this responsibility, I convened meetings with party workers and leaders and selected Kaling Moyong as the new president along with three national council members," Sonowal said, adding that the election process concluded successfully.

He praised the dedication of BJP workers, saying, "Because of the commitment of our party workers, India has become a strong nation under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

Sonowal highlighted the significant progress made by Arunachal Pradesh and the northeast under Modi's leadership.

He also praised Chief Minister Pema Khandu, noting that Arunachal Pradesh had become one of the top ten developing states in India under his leadership. Khandu in his address, congratulated Moyong on his new role and urged party workers to work together to meet the expectations of the people.

He assured government support for the party's policies and programmes and emphasised the importance of public outreach to raise awareness about development schemes. "To understand the issues faced by people, the government has decided to hold cabinet meetings in every district. The first meeting will be held in Kurung Kumey district," Khandu said.

The chief minister also mentioned that guardian ministers and mentor secretaries had been assigned to every district to identify problems and suggest solutions.

"The feedback from guardian ministers will be incorporated into the planning process, ensuring schemes address real needs and minimise wasteful expenditure," he added.

Khandu further announced that the BJP plans to field 20 women candidates in the 2029 assembly elections in line with the Women Reservation Bill. He urged district presidents to start preparing women candidates for the elections.

In his address, Moyong expressed his gratitude to the party for entrusting him with this responsibility. (PTI)

Woman found dead in Agartala suburbs, one held

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Jan 18: A gruesome murder in Maheshkhala, West Tripura District, has shocked the local community. On Saturday, a married woman, Kalpana Debnath, was found dead in what police believe to be a premeditated crime stemming from an alleged extramarital affair. According to police sources, Kalpana, originally from Jogendra Nagar, had been living with Shankar Sutradhar as a tenant in Maheshkhala. Kalpana reportedly left her children behind several months ago to move in with Shankar, with whom she was allegedly in a relationship. The tragic incident came to light on Saturday morning when Kalpana's daughter received word of her mother's death. Rushing to the scene, she discovered her mother's lifeless body lying on the ground, while Shankar sat nearby on a bed, seemingly indifferent. The daughter's anguished cries attracted the attention of neighbors, who quickly gathered at the residence.

Tripura BJP District President Elections on January 20, nominations today

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Jan 18: The elections for the District Presidents of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Tripura are scheduled to be held on January 20. Nominations and scrutiny will take place on January 19, as per an official order issued by the State Returning Officer, Samarendra Chandra Deb.

According to the notification, the elections will be conducted in the respective BJP District Offices across the state. All concerned party members have been urged to actively participate in the Sangathan Parv election process to elect their District Presidents.

The schedule outlined in the notification states that nominations can be submitted on January 19 from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM at the designated District Offices. The scrutiny of nominations will commence immediately afterward at 1:00 PM. The voting and declaration of results are slated for January 20.

Nomination forms can be collected from the designated officers at the district offices and must be submitted in the prescribed format within the given timeframe. The decision of the designated officer regarding the scrutiny process and election results will be considered final.

No. CHD/UDD/2/15th FC/Tied/ 1st Inst./2024/NIT-CS/3367 Dated Kokrajhar the 27th December/2024

PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Council Head of Department, Urban Development Department, BTC, Kokrajhar invites bid for the following scheme under 15th FC Tied Grant (1st Installment) for the year 2023-24 during 2024-25.

| Group No. | Name of Schemes | Bid cost(Rs.) | Tender Value (Rs.) |
|-----------|---|---------------|--------------------|
| Group-I | Supply of Cesspool for collection of sludge from Septic Tank (4000 Ltrs.Capacity) at Kokrajhar Municipal Board. | 600.00 | 18,88,850.00 |

Last date of submission of completed tender is 20.01.2025 (up to 2:00 PM) and will be open on the same day. The detail tender documents may be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours till 19.01.2025.

N.B.: The bill of contractor will be paid only after receiving the fund from BTC.

Sd/-CHD
Urban Development Department,
BTC, Kokrajhar

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/1323

GOVT. OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS::
KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT CIRCLE,
D I P H U
No. E-1/Grade-III/Apptt./Sec./2024/2786
Dated Diphu the 17/01/2025.

NOTICE

It is for information of all candidates who have applied for the post of L.D.A. (Grade-III) and Grade-IV under Secondary Education Department in the Office of the Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong District Circle, Diphu in response to the advertisement issued from the Office of the Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong District Circle, Diphu vide memo no. E-1/Grade-III/Apptt./Sec./2024/02-10 Dated 18-06-2024 that the Written Test Examination for the said post is scheduled to be held on 09th February, 2025.

Therefore, all candidates are informed to collect their calling letters for appearing the said Written Test Examination for the post of L.D.A. (Grade-III) and Grade-IV under Secondary Education Department from the Office of the Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong District Circle, Diphu during office hours w.e.f., 28th January, 2025 to 07th February, 2025.

Sd/-
Inspector of Schools,
Karbi Anglong District Circle,
Diphu.

GOVT. OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS::
KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT CIRCLE,
D I P H U
No. E-1/Apptt./IS/2024/
Dated Diphu the /_/2025.

ADVERTISEMENT

In pursuance of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu's letter no. KAAC/Esstt-679/P(B)/Ele.Edn./Prior Approval of Post/2023-24/14 Dated Diphu the 30th July, 2024, applications are invited from the intending candidates who are citizens of India as defined under Article 5-8 of the Constitution of India and permanent residents of the administrative jurisdiction of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council for filling up of 01 (One) no. of post of Planning Assistant in Education Department of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, in the Office of the Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong District Circle Diphu as per details given below:

| Sl. No. | Name of post | Pay Band | Grade Pay | No. of posts | Education Qualification |
|---------|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|---|
| 1. | Planning Assistant | Rs. 22,000/- Rs. 97,000/- | Rs. 9,400/- | 01 (One) | A Post Graduate Degree with at-least 55% Marks for General/OBC/Others and 50% Marks for ST/SC Candidates who are having atleast 1 (One) Year Diploma/Degree in Computer Application are allowed to apply for the said post from any Recognized University with the following subjects:- 1. Sociology. 2. Economics. 3. Geography. 4. Psychology. 5. International Relations. 6. Anthropology 7. Archaeology. 8. Linguistics 9. Political Science. 10. Social Work 11. Education. 12. History. 13. Management and Business Studies. |

Terms and conditions:

- Age-Candidate should not be less than 18 years and not more than 40 years for General, 43 years for OBC/MOBC and 45 years for ST/SC candidates, 42 years for Ex-Servicemen and 50 years for Person with Disabilities as on 01/01/2025.
- The ST/SC/OBC and MOBC candidates should submit caste certificate along with the application.
- Incomplete applications shall be summarily rejected on the spot
- The last date of receipt of application is 30th January, 2025 upto 04.00 PM. If the last date of submission of application is holiday, then the next working day will be considered as the last date.
- Application received either by post or by hand after the last date of submission of application will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- The Candidate of General/OBC/MOBC/ST/SC must submit Voter ID for residential proof
- Upto date Employment Exchange Registration Certificate should be enclosed along with the application.

How to apply:

- The candidate should apply in duly filled up prescribed standard form application along with all self-attested certificates, testimonials and Karbi Anglong Autonomous Councils' Fee Stamp of Rs. 10/- (Rupees Ten) to the office of the undersigned on or before 30th January, 2025. In service candidate should apply through proper channel along with NOC from their employer otherwise their application shall be rejected.
- 02 (Two) Copies of Passport size Photograph.
- Contact number of the applicant along with full signature on the application form.
- The Undersigned retains the right to correct any inadvertent of typological error to cancel, alter any terms and condition of advertisement at any stage if the need arises.
- Canvassing in any form will be disqualification of the part of the candidate.

Sd/-
Inspector of Schools,
Karbi Anglong District Circle,
Diphu.

GOVT. OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS::
KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT CIRCLE,
D I P H U
No. E-1/Grade-III/Apptt./Sec./2024/2784
Dated Diphu the 17/01/2025.

NOTICE

It is for information of all candidates who have applied for the post of Grade-IV under Elementary Education Department in the Office of the Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong District Circle, Diphu in response to the advertisement issued from the Office of the Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong District Circle, Diphu vide memo no. E-1/Grade-IV/Apptt./Ele./2024/01 Dated 18-06-2024, that the Written Test Examination for the said post is scheduled to be held on 09th February, 2025.

Therefore, all candidates are informed to collect their calling letters for appearing the said Written Test Examination for the post of Grade-IV under Elementary Education Department from the Office of the Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong District Circle, Diphu during office hours w.e.f., 28th January, 2025 to 07th February, 2025.

Sd/-
Inspector of Schools,
Karbi Anglong District Circle,
Diphu.

Saif Ali Khan, in recovery after knife attack, has 'Jewel Thief', 'Kartavya' and 'Race 4' in pipeline

MUMBAI, Jan 18: Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan, currently recuperating at a Mumbai hospital after suffering injuries in a knife attack at home, had recently wrapped up filming for his next movie "Jewel Thief - The Red Sun Chapter" and has few other projects lined up. The 54-year-old actor suffered multiple stab wounds, including on his neck and near the spine, in a brutal attack at his house in Bandra in the early hours of Thursday. He was rushed to Lilavati Hospital, where he underwent emergency surgery.

Khan was most recently seen in Jr NTR's "Devara: Part 1", which was released in theatres across the country in September 2024. The Koratala Siva-directed movie, which featured Khan in the role of the antagonist, marked his debut in Telugu cinema. It also starred Jahnvi Kapoor. The actor is expected to return for the film's follow-up as well. Though the makers are yet to officially announce the second part. Khan's upcoming movie is "Jewel Thief - The Red Sun Chapter", a heist drama. The film, directed by Robbie Grewal, also stars Jaideep Ahlawat. "Pathaan" fame filmmaker Siddharth Anand is producing the upcoming feature with his wife, Mamta Anand, under their banner Marfix Pictures. It reunites Anand and Khan after 17 years. The duo previously collaborated on "Salaam Namaste" and "Ta Ra Rum Pum". According to a source, the actor had completed filming for the movie, which is set to release in March 2025. Besides "Jewel Thief", Khan will be seen in "Kartavya", an upcoming drama from filmmaker Pulkit of "Bhakshak" fame. "The film with Saif is ready, we are dealing with the release. The producers are the best to comment on the release date," the director told PTI. In October 2024, veteran film producer Ramesh Taurani had announced that Khan will be returning for the fourth chapter of the "Race" franchise.

Taurani, the founder of production house Tips Films, said "Race 4" will see Khan leading an ensemble cast. The film will go on floors in September, he added.

"Saif will be back in the 'Race' franchise, and we are excited to have him on board. He did a great job in the first two films. The film will boast an ensemble cast, and we are finalizing the script and cast. We haven't finalised the director either. We will announce the film officially before we go on floors, most likely next year," Taurani had told PTI in an earlier interview.

Known for its high-octane action, glamorous settings, and intricate plots, the franchise began with the 2008 movie "Race", featuring Khan and Akshay Khanna as two brothers, Ranvir and Rajiv, embroiled in a complex web of betrayal and deceit. Khan returned for the movie's 2013 sequel, "Race 2", which starred John Abraham as the villain. Both films were commercially successful and received positive reviews from critics.

However, the franchise's third part "Race 3" featured an entirely new cast led by superstar Salman Khan. The film performed poorly at the box office. Khan was also in negotiations for various other projects with filmmakers like Priyadarshan, and "Animal" director Sandeep Reddy Vanga for his next movie "Spirit", which features Prabhas in the lead role. (PTI)



Diljit Dosanjh's 'Punjab '95' to release internationally on February 7

NEW DELHI, Jan 18: Punjabi star-singer Diljit Dosanjh has announced that his much-awaited film "Punjab '95", based on the life of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khrala, will be released globally on February 7 without any cuts.

"Punjab '95", directed by Honey Trehan and produced by Ronnie Screwvala's banner RSVP Movies, will not be releasing in India for now. The movie was delayed after running into trouble with the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

It also stars Arjun Rampal and Suvinder Vicky of "Kohraa" fame.

On Friday evening, Diljit shared a trailer of the movie, in which he portrays Khrala. The film sheds light on his relentless pursuit of justice during Punjab's tumultuous militancy period, highlighting his investigations into human rights violations and the disappearances of Sikhs.

"Punjab '95' releases in Cinemas Internationally only on 7th February. P.S. Full Movie, No Cuts #ChallengeTheDarkness," he wrote.

In 2023, "Punjab '95" was scheduled to have its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) but was removed from the line-up without any official statement from the organisers.

Khrala investigated the mass cremation of thousands of unidentified bodies in Punjab between 1984 and 1994. In 1995, he mysteriously disappeared, and a decade later, in 2005, four police officers were arrested for his alleged abduction and murder. In 2007, the Punjab and Haryana High Court extended their initial seven-year sentence to life imprisonment. (PTI)



'Deva' most complex character I've ever played, says Shahid Kapoor

MUMBAI, Jan 18: Shahid Kapoor is no stranger to complex characters and yet he considers his portrayal of a cop in "Deva" the most challenging performance of his career. The action thriller revolves around a rebellious police officer (Kapoor) tasked with solving a high-profile case that unravels layers of deceit, betrayal, and a dangerous conspiracy. The movie is helmed by noted Malayalam director Rosshan Andrews, known for blockbusters such as "Salute" and "Kayamkulam Kochunni".

"This is the most complex character I've played having said that, I've played a few. But if there's any character that has challenged me yet again, to ask myself whether I'm capable of doing this or not, then that is Deva. "Roshan created this character and we both developed this year for a year and then shot for it," said Kapoor, known for films such as "Haider", "Kabir Singh", "Jersey", and "Jab We Met".

The 43-year-old actor was speaking at the trailer launch of "Deva", which also stars Pooja Hegde as an investigative journalist and Pavail Gulati as a fellow cop.

Kapoor said he is always looking forward to doing roles that will help him grow as an artist, and "Deva" seemed like a perfect opportunity.

"As an actor, you always want to do something that lets you grow and takes you to another level as an artist. I can't do just anything, I've to do things as per the requirement of the story and character, and I know I would hopefully do well.

"After a while, I got an opportunity as an actor to do something that would make me happy. There's an overwhelming personality that Deva has which gives him that charisma and star quality, so it needed to be a combination of both those elements," he added.

Andrews said the action sequences in "Deva" are designed in such a way that they don't feel like they have added for the sake of it.

"I always believe in myself, in my instinct, and I don't get bothered about what's happening in other (action) films. I wrote all the action sequences in "Deva" myself. Action is part of the screenplay and story structure, it's not that we've added action sequences just for the sake of it," the director said. (PTI)

'SQUID GAME 2' STAR WI HA-JOON ON GLOBAL POPULARITY: MY RESPONSIBILITY INCREASES

NEW DELHI, Jan 18: With great popularity comes more responsibility as an actor and person, says "Squid Game" star Wi Ha-joon, who is motivated by the global success of the Netflix series to deliver his best.

Ha-joon, already a popular name for K-drama lovers with his roles in hit shows such as "Something in the Rain", "Romance is a Bonus Book", "Little Women" and "The Worst of Evil", became a known face world over when the series became one of the most watched shows ever on the streamer after its premiere on 2021.

The 33-year-old actor plays Hwang Jun-ho, a detective whose search for his missing brother leads him to an island where he gets to know about a secret organisation that hosts deadly games involving poor and debt-ridden people for a prize money of 45.6 billion won.

Because the first season of "Squid Game" became such a big success, I did feel a lot of pressure. Jun ho is featured a lot in episode one and two (of the second season), so I thought Jun ho is responsible for opening the show and I have to perform well. Jun

Ho is a character I love, so I was happy to be back as him," Ha-joon told PTI in an interview from Seoul.

"As I become more and more known to the global audiences, I believe my responsibility as a person and actor increases and this is a great motivation for me," he added.

In Hwang Dong-hyuk's "Squid Game 2", Seong Gi-hun (Lee Jung-jae), who won the prize money in the previous season, returns to the games to uncover the secrets behind it and warn participants about its deadly nature.

Ha-joon's character learned at the end of the first season that the brother that he was searching for is actually at the front of the organisation. In the second part, he has been demoted and works as a traffic cop but reunites with Gi-hun in his mission.

South Korean creators have successfully explored the rich-poor through their stories, whether it is Bong Joon-ho's Oscar-winning film "Parasite", Netflix's period zombie series "Kingdom" or "Squid Game".

Ha-joon believes it has to do with the historical and social

background of Korea.

"Korea had to go through a lot of painful experiences like losing independence to Japan, Korean (civil) war, industrialisation and democratisation. And the social and economic injustices and unfairness that people had to go through, led to the pain in their daily lives and that became the background for the success of (such) Korean stories," he said.

If he were to win the prize money of 45.6 billion won that's offered in the series, Ha-joon said, he would simply donate it.

"Honestly, in Korea and around the globe, there are many heart-wrenching stories I am hearing so I would love to help those in need with the money," he added.

Ha-joon also said he would be happy if he gets to "do an international collaboration".

Is a collaboration with Indian creators also a possibility? "Of course, I would love to visit India if there is an opportunity," he added.

"Squid Game 2" also features Lee Byung-Hun, Yim Si-Wan, Kang Ha-Neul, Park Gyu-Young, Park Sung-Hoon and Jo Yu-Ri. (PTI)



New 'Anaconda' movie adds Thandiwe Newton, Steve Zahn

LOS ANGELES, Jan 18: British star Thandiwe Newton and "Silo" actor Steve Zahn are set to feature in Columbia's comedic reimagining of the 1997 horror movie "Anaconda".

According to entertainment news outlet The Hollywood Reporter, the two actors will star alongside Paul Rudd and Jack Black.

Selton Mello, who appears in the critically-acclaimed Brazilian movie "I'm Still Here", has also boarded the film, which will mark his English-language debut, along with actor Ione Skye.

Tom Gormican, director of the Nicolas Cage meta-film "The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent", is co-writing the script with his collaborator Kevin Etten and will also direct the feature.

The story will reportedly follow a group of friends facing mid-life crises who are remaking their favourite movie from their youth. They head to the rainforest, only to find themselves in a fight for their lives against natural disasters, giant snakes and violent criminals. (PTI)

