

**6 WORLD**

- Shooting attack on bus carrying Israelis in occupied West Bank kills 3
- Bangladesh's ICT issues second arrest warrant against ex-PM Hasina

**8 NATION**

- Tamil Nadu Governor Ravi walks out of Assembly
- Congress promises ₹ 2,500 to women per month if voted to power

25 YEARS OF DEDICATED JOURNALISM

www.thehillstimes.in

# THE HILLS TIMES

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU Voice of the hills people

Vol .No. XXV Issue No. 356 RNI-ASSENG/2000/12862 DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2025 PAGES 12 PRICE ₹ 8

## Coal mine tragedy in Dima Hasao district ● Rescue operations on 15 miners feared trapped in mine



**GUWAHATI, Jan 6:** An unspecified number of workers were feared trapped inside a coal mine in Assam's Dima Hasao district on Monday, after a sudden gush of water flooded the site.

the authorities did not confirm the number. "Distressing news from Umrangshu, where labourers are trapped in a coal mine. The exact number and status are yet unknown. The DC, SP and my colleague Kaushik Rai are rushing to the site. Praying to God for everyone's safety," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a post on X.

The army's assistance has been sought in the rescue operation, he said.

"The State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are also on their way to the incident site to aid in the efforts," the CM said.

Dima Hasao Superintendent of Police (SP) Mayank Jha told reporters that several labourers are feared trapped.

Eyewitness accounts and initial assessments suggest that the flooding occurred unexpectedly, leaving the workers unable to escape from the mine.

Rescue operations were launched immediately with teams consisting of local authorities, emergency responders and mining experts working to locate and free the trapped workers, the officials said. (PTI)

## China says its world's biggest dam over Brahmaputra will not impact water flows to India



**BEIJING, Jan 6:** China on Monday reiterated its plan to build the world's biggest dam over the Brahmaputra River in Tibet near the Indian border, saying the planned project has gone through rigorous scientific verification and will not have any negative impact on downstream countries -- India and Bangladesh.

The project, estimated to cost around USD 137 billion, is located in the ecologically fragile Himalayan region along a tectonic plate boundary where earthquakes occur frequently.

"On the hydropower project in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River, China has made its position clear. Let me reiterate that the decision to build the project was made after rigorous scientific evaluation and the project will not have a negative impact on the ecological environment, geological conditions and the rights and inter-

ests related to water resources of downstream countries," Foreign Ministry's new spokesman Guo Jiakun told a media briefing here.

"Rather, it will, to some extent, help with their disaster prevention and reduction and climate response," he said, replying to a question that India has expressed its concerns over the dam and the issue figured in the Indian officials

talks with the visiting US National Security Advisor Sullivan.

Sullivan, currently visiting Delhi, held talks with External Affairs minister S Jaishankar on Monday broadly reviewing the trajectory of the India-US global strategic partnership in the last four years under the Biden administration. Sullivan is on a visit to India two (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

## Five Indian-origin men charged with murder of Indian man in US

**LAS VEGAS, Jan 6:** Five Indian-origin men have been charged with murder in the US in connection with the death of a 35-year-old man from India.

Sandeep Kumar, 34, of South Ozone Park, New York, was charged with murder and conspiracy to commit murder in connection with the death of Kuldeep Kumar in Manchester Township around October 22, 2024, according to a statement on Saturday by Ocean County prosecutor Bradley Billhimer and Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police Colonel Patrick Callahan.

Investigation into Kuldeep's death revealed that Sandeep acted in concert with other defendants in carrying out Kuldeep Kumar's murder.

Other defendants in the case are Sourav Kumar, 23, Gaurav Singh 27, Nirmal Singh 30, and Gurdeep Singh 22, all from Greenwood, Indiana.

On December 14, 2024, the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office Major Crime Unit was contacted for

## Do not hire illegal B'deshi labourers, Himanta to biz houses

**MUMBAI, Jan 6:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday exhorted industrialists not to hire illegal Bangladeshi migrants in their units for "cheap labour".

Addressing a press conference here after meeting a slew of industrial leaders from corporate houses including the Tatas, Adani Group and Mahindras, Sarma said there is a need to "strike at the roots" of the illegal migration from Bangladesh problem by not hiring such migrants.

He explained that there are middlemen hired by the industry to get cheap labour from Bangladesh, and the industry has to decide not to employ such labour.

When asked if the issue featured during his discussions with industry captains over the weekend, Sarma said there is no need to "re-emphasise" an issue on which Assam has been fighting since 1979.

The state is looking at investment commitments of ₹ 1 lakh crore from the central government and entities allied with it at the upcoming "Advantage Assam 2.0" investment summit to be held in Guwahati in February.

Attracting investments in sectors such as tourism, semiconductors and defence is the other focus area of the summit to be held on February 25-26.

He said the Tata group's mega ₹ 27,000-crore investment for a semiconductor assembly plant is on schedule, and the first phase will be inaugurated in either November or December this year.

Apart from that, the Tatas have also evinced interest to set up a 500-MW solar capacity in the state, he said, adding that an industrial policy is in the works where fallow land being held by tea estates can be converted to put (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

## 21 terrorists arrested by Assam Police's STF since March 2023

**GUWAHATI, Jan 6:** The Special Task Force (STF) of Assam Police has arrested 21 terrorists, including 16 belonging to Islamic extremist groups, since March 2023, Special DGP Harmeet Singh said on Monday.

Altogether 16 Islamic extremist group members, one each from ULFA and Maoist outfits and three others from Manipur-based extremist organisations have been arrested between March 1, 2023 and December 31, 2024, Singh said at a press conference here.

The STF also recovered four rifles, one 7.65 mm pistol, 31 rounds of ammunitions, one round of AK-series ammunition, 17 bullet pellets, a grenade with explosives, materials used for making IEDs, along with several other arms and ammunitions, he said.

In operations against drugs and narcotics, 59.41 kgs of heroin, 9,67,898 psychotropic tablets, 37,000 bottles of banned phensedyl cough syrup, 3999.68 kgs of ganja, 37.26 kgs of opium

and one kg of methamphetamine were also seized during the period.

In operations against smugglers, 1.10 kgs of pure gold and 20.37 kgs of fake yellow metal were also recovered during the period, Singh said.

Two rhino horns, 14 ivory, two tiger teeth, 15 rhino hooves, 1,792 kgs of pangolin scales and one antler were also recovered.

The STF seized 134 vehicles and 361 mobile phones during operations, he said.

Altogether 254 operations were carried out while 137 people were arrested and 111 cases were registered by the STF during the same period. (PTI)

## BJP leader found dead in Guwahati

**GUWAHATI, Jan 6:** A BJP leader was found dead with his scooter lying beside him in Maligaon area of Guwahati on Monday, police said.

Family members of the deceased, BJP Jalukbari Mandal president Kamal Dey, raised suspicion of foul play, though the police said that prima facie, he died because of an accident.

Dey was a prominent social and political activist of Jalukbari, the assembly constituency represented by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

He was found lying on a road in Sankar Nagar area by morning walkers. Dey was taken to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

According to CCTV footage, it appears that the BJP leader died due to an (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

## District Council Court building inaugurated

**DIPHU, Jan 6:** The long-awaited District Council Court (DCC) building was finally inaugurated on Monday by the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang in Karbi Anglong.

The DCC is tasked to deal with civil suits between tribal parties under the jurisdiction of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC).

"The construction of the building started in 2005 and after a long wait it is inaugurated on Monday. People like former EM of KAAC, Elwin Teron, and former MLA Dr Dharamsing Teron have significantly contributed to the commencement of the functioning of the Court. In DCC pity cases adultery, theft, marriage law, land and prop-

erty suits will be dealt," Ronghang said while attending the event.

The CEM also mentioned about the setting up of village police after the proposal was agreed upon by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

"Very soon the KAAC will have its own police force," he reiterated.

Along with Tuliram Ronghang, the event was attended by other dignitaries including KAAC Chair-

## HMPV enters India: 3 cases reported from Karnataka and Gujarat

**NEW DELHI, Jan 6:** Three infants tested positive for the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in Karnataka and Gujarat on Monday, the first reported cases of the virus in India.

The Union health ministry sought to assuage fears, asserting that it was well-equipped to handle any potential increase in respiratory illnesses.

HMPV is a globally recognised respiratory virus that recently gained attention after its outbreak was reported in China. It is a viral pathogen that causes respiratory infections in people of all age groups.

While the Karnataka, Gujarat and Maharashtra governments assured that there was no cause for alarm, the Delhi government directed all hospitals in the capital to remain fully prepared to manage a potential surge in respiratory illnesses.

Two of the three cases were detected in Karnataka by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) through routine surveillance for multiple respiratory viral pathogens.

A three-month-old female infant with a history of bronchopneumonia was diagnosed with HMPV after being admitted to Baptist Hospital in Bengaluru. She has already been discharged, the health ministry said.

An eight-month-old male infant with a history of bronchopneumonia tested positive for HMPV on January 3 after being admitted to Baptist Hospital. He is now recovering, it said.

It is important to note that neither of the patients have any history of international travel, the ministry underlined.

A two-month-old boy admitted to a private hospital in Ahmedabad also tested positive for HMPV. The infant, who hails from Durgapur in Rajasthan, was admitted to the hospital on December 24, 2024, with symptoms of respiratory infection.

Initially, the child needed ventilator support but his condition is stable now, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation medical officer Bhavin Solanki said.

The Union health ministry emphasised that HMPV is already in circulation globally, including in India, and (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

## Private sector reluctant to invest in India as no-confidence in govt: Congress

**NEW DELHI, Jan 6:** The private sector's reluctance to invest in India is a corporate motion of no-confidence in the Narendra Modi government, the Congress claimed on Monday.

The opposition party also urged the government to take measures in the upcoming Union budget to stimulate and sustain domestic investment in the country that, it claimed, was on the decline.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the investment environment in India had been sluggish in the "Modi decade".

In a post on X, he said the Gross Fixed Capital Formation had fallen from an average of 32 per cent of GDP during Manmohan Singh's prime ministerial decade to consistently being below 29 per cent of GDP in the past 10 years.

"Investment is sluggish because mass consumption is not accelerating, tax and other authorities are threatening and intimidating businesses, and because of the growing perception that only four-five business groups can grow in the Modi regime," he said.

"Now comes fresh evidence of the private

sector's reluctance to invest in India under this government -- net foreign direct investment (FDI) fell to a 12-year low in April-October this year (2024). Gross FDI inflows have stagnated," he added.

Indian firms are increasingly choosing to invest abroad rather than at home, Ramesh claimed. "This is a corporate motion of no-confidence in the Modi government."

Asserting that FDI was very important, he said, "But more fundamental is DI -- Domestic Investment. How to stimulate and sustain DI has to be the central concern of the Union budget, to be present 26 days from today."

The Union budget will be presented on February 1. (PTI)

## 'The government is committed to transforming logistics through sustainable solution' Maiden scheduled freight service docks at Pandu port

**GUWAHATI, Jan 6:** A total of 1500 tonnes of cement was successfully transported to Pandu port from Kolkata on Monday via the Indo Bangladesh Protocol Route (IBPR), marking a noteworthy achievement for the Jalvahak scheme, said an official statement.

As per the statement, the consignment was transported by the scheduled freight service completing its maiden journey as the MV Trishul, with dumb Barges Ajay and Dikshu.

The shipment proved the efficacy of the scheduled freight service launched by the Union minister of ports, shipping & waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal under Jalvahak scheme from Kolkata recently.

The 'Jalvahak' cargo policy incentivises the movement of long-haul cargo via National Waterways 1 (river

Ganga) as well as for National Waterways 2 (river Brahmaputra) and National Waterways 16 (river Barak).

The Fixed Day Scheduled Sailing Service ply vessels between Kolkata - Patna - Varanasi - Patna - Kolkata stretch of NW 1 and between Kolkata and Pandu on NW 2 via IBPR.

"The successful completion of MV Trishul's maiden voyage marks a significant milestone for India's inland waterways and the Jalvahak scheme. This achievement highlights the tremendous potential of waterways as an economical, eco-friendly, and efficient mode of transportation, helping decongest railways and roadways," the official statement quoted Sonowal as saying.

Hailing PM Modi's vision for enormous growth in the sector, he said, "Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government is committed to transforming logistics through sustainable solutions. The Jalvahak scheme incentivises long-haul cargo movement on National Waterways 1, 2, and 16, offering businesses a cost-effective and reliable alternative."

"The launch of regular scheduled freight services ensures timely delivery of cargo, (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

significant milestone for India's inland waterways and the Jalvahak scheme. This achievement highlights the tremendous potential of waterways as an economical, eco-friendly, and efficient mode of transportation, helping decongest railways and roadways," the official statement quoted Sonowal as saying.

Hailing PM Modi's vision for enormous growth in the sector, he said, "Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government is committed to transforming logistics through sustainable solutions. The Jalvahak scheme incentivises long-haul cargo movement on National Waterways 1, 2, and 16, offering businesses a cost-effective and reliable alternative."

"The launch of regular scheduled freight services ensures timely delivery of cargo, (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)





THE HILLS TIMES

VOL. XXV, ISSUE 356, DIPHU, TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2025

QUOTE OF THE DAY

There is little that can withstand a man who can conquer himself -Louis XIV

Trump and H-1B visa policy

As the US President-elect Donald Trump prepares to take office on January 20, he faces a unique challenge. The issue of immigration and the H-1B visa has become a contentious point among the two key groups. He is trying to satisfy the conflicting interests of the billionaire tech community, who heavily fund his campaigns, and his 'America First' base. Trump's recent favourable statements on H-1B visas for foreign skilled workers have sparked renewed discussions on the future of this critical programme.

The Maha Kumbh Mela: A spiritual and economic powerhouse for Uttar Pradesh and India

The Maha Kumbh Mela is arguably the largest and most significant social and cultural event in India. A festival of immense religious and spiritual importance, it brings together people from across the country and the world in a celebration of faith. However, what is often understated is the colossal economic impact this event has, not just on the local economy of Uttar Pradesh, but also on India as a whole.



will participate in the festival, which will push the expenditure to much higher levels. Such a scale of expenditure has profound implications for local businesses, transport providers, food vendors, and countless other stakeholders in the ecosystem. The hospitality industry, too, will see a remarkable boost during this period.

tween the river and various accommodations. A massive security apparatus will also be in place, with 23,000 CCTV cameras installed to ensure the safety and security of attendees. The suppliers of such services and products will benefit greatly, as these investments not only improve the experience for visitors but also drive significant revenue for local businesses.

workforce to ensure its smooth operation. To facilitate the event, over 1.5 lakh mobile toilets will be set up to meet the needs of the massive crowds. The construction, maintenance, and cleaning of these facilities will create significant employment opportunities, with over 10,000 staff hired specifically for this purpose.

items will see a boom in business during the festival. The government has already made efforts to educate these vendors about the logistics of managing such large crowds while maintaining hygiene standards. This will ensure that they have a steady stream of customers, providing a lifeline for small businesses in the region.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT
By: Dipak Kurmi

India to witness labour reforms in 2025 in a big way Freedom of Expression Browbeaten

By: Dr. Gyan Pathak

The year 2024 saw the Union Government of India meticulously preparing the ground for proposed labour reforms, including the four controversial labour codes, and Employment Linked Incentive (ELI), though could not roll them out because of a range of issues, including hesitant attitude of India Inc and opposition from the joint platform of the 10 Central Trade Unions (CTUs).



year, again due to a range of issues, including the hesitations among the employing companies of the country in participating in the programme. Union Government had announced this programme as a major step towards incentivising job creation, promoting formalisation in job market, and improving employability. Three Schemes announced for large number of decent job creation under ELI and two other schemes as part of the five-package schemes had a total outlay of Rs 2 lakh crore and was expected to benefit around 4.1 crore young people over the next five years.

ment is trying hard to roll out the scheme in the current financial year 2024-25 ending on March 31, 2025 itself. EPFO is not even ready with its Centralized IT Enabled System (CITES 2.01) to have an integrated, centralized data-base, bringing efficiency in the process. The IT upgrade involving hardware and software upgrade, is targeted to be completed by January 2025.

By: Asad Mirza

As if the new American President-elect, Donald Trump was not enough to handle for the world, now the world also has the tech czar Elon Musk, to deal with. Musk, who seems to have been moulded from the same mould as that of Trump, is becoming an incessant irritation to global leaders and politicians, due to his social media barbs targeted at different countries.

month Trump refuted claims that he had "ceded the presidency" to Musk. UK politicians are not alone in being the target of Musk's increasingly eccentric interventions. He has described Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany as a "fool" and the country's head of state, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, as "an anti-democratic tyrant".

governments - and news desks - learned to pause and take a moment before responding to - or reporting - the latest electronic missives from the White House. Thus far the Conservatives have chosen to engage with and echo Musk's agenda. The party leader, Kemi Badenoch, said a full national inquiry into organised grooming gangs was "long overdue".

The recent seemingly eccentric and uncalled for comments by X's owner Elon Musk against global leaders and governments, has once again brought the issue of setting the limits for Freedom of Expression, as per the democratic and decency norms of the society, not as dictated by an individual.

commenting on the US government's Visa policy and other issues. Meanwhile Trump's latest social media comments criticised the UK government's decision to increase taxes on oil and gas firms working in the North Sea, in part to help fund renewable energy. On Trump-owned platform, Truth Social, Trump responded to a report about a US oil firm leaving the region, saying: "The UK is making a very big mistake. Open up the North Sea. Get rid of Windmills!"













# PAYAL KAPADIA'S 'ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT' MISSES OUT AT GOLDEN GLOBES

**NEW DELHI, Jan 6:** Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light" on Monday failed to convert its two nominations at the 82nd Golden Globe Awards into wins as the film lost to "Emilia Pérez" in the Best Non-English Motion Picture Category and to Brady Corbet of "The Brutalist" fame in the Best Director segment.

Hours after the ceremony, Kapadia shared a throwback photograph with her producers Thomas Hakim, Julien Graff, and Ranabir Das as they were heading to the Golden Globes.

"We didn't win anything but had soo much fun (sic)" she captioned her Instagram Story.

The filmmaker also gave a shout-out to designer Payal Khandwala and stylist Indrakshi Patanaik.

"And a special thank you to @payalkhandwala for this amazing outfit... and @styledbyindrakshi for being the kindest, smartest stylist who helped me feel so confident," wrote Kapadia, who wore a black silk jumpsuit designed by Khandwala.

"All We Imagine As Light", about two Malayali nurses working in Mumbai and their friend, a cook, was nominated in the Best Motion Picture Non-English Language category alongside France's "Emilia Pérez", "The Girl With the Nee-

dle" (Poland), "I'm Still Here" (Brazil), "The Seed of the Sacred Fig" (Germany) and "Vermiglio" (Italy).

The Best Director Motion Picture category was equally competitive with nominees, including Jacques Audiard ("Emilia Pérez"), Sean Baker ("Anora"), Edward Berger ("Conclave") and Coralie Fargeat ("The Substance").

An official India-French co-production, "All We Imagine..." stars Kani Kusruti, Divya Prabha, and Chhaya Kadam. The Malayalam-Hindi movie is produced by Petit Chaos, Chalk & Cheese, and Another Birth.

"All We Imagine As Light" may have missed at the Golden Globes, but the film has been on a winning streak at international platforms since it scripted history by becoming the first film from India to win the Grand Prix trophy at the Cannes Film Festival last year.

The film is nominated in the Best Foreign Language Film category at the 30th annual Critics Choice Awards, to be held on January 12.

The movie was named the Best International Film by New York Film Critics Circle and won an award in the same category at the Gotham Awards recently.

It also claimed the top spot at the Sight and Sound magazine's annual list of 50 best movies of the year.

It is also expected to earn nominations at the BAFTAs where it features in the longlist.

Corbet's "The Brutalist" revolves around a visionary architect and his wife, who flee post-war Europe in 1947 to rebuild their legacy and witness the birth of the modern United States. But their lives are changed forever by a mysterious, wealthy client.

"The Brutalist" was also crowned Best Drama Film and Best Actor for Adrian Brody.

The genre-shifting trans musical "Emilia Pérez" won Best film, Comedy or Musical. It also won Best Supporting Actress for Zoe Saldña, Best Song ("El Mal") and Best Non-English Language Film.

"Emilia Pérez", which is also France's official entry to Oscars 2025, follows four remarkable women in Mexico, each pursuing their own happiness. Cartel leader Emilia enlists Rita, an unappreciated lawyer, to help fake her death so that she can finally live authentically as her true self.

The Golden Globe Awards, telecast in the US on Sunday night, streamed live in India on Monday on Lionsgate Play. (PTI)



## Glad our film will finally hit big screen: Kangana Ranaut on 'Emergency'

**NEW DELHI, Jan 6:** Actor-filmmaker Kangana Ranaut shared the trailer of her much awaited film "Emergency" on Monday, calling the journey to the release of the political drama a long one "filled with challenges". Starring Ranaut as former prime minister Indira Gandhi, the film missed out on its September 6, 2024 release date as it was unable to obtain the clearance certificate from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

"Emergency" was mired in controversy after Sikh organisations, including the Shiromani Akali Dal, accused it of misrepresenting the community and getting facts wrong.

Ranaut, who also serves as director and producer on the film, said she is looking forward to its release on January 17.

"I'm glad that our film 'Emergency' will finally hit the big screen on 17th January. This story isn't just about a controversial leader; it delves into themes that remain profoundly relevant today, making the journey both difficult and significant," the actor-BJP MP said in a statement. "Releasing just a week before Republic Day, it's the perfect time to reflect on the resilience of our Constitution and experience the film with your loved ones," she added.

Ranaut shared the trailer of the film on her X handle.

She captioned her post as: "1975, Emergency - A Defining chapter in Indian History. Indira: India's most powerful woman. Her ambition transformed the nation, but her #EMERGENCY plunged it into chaos." "Emergency" delves into the emergency that was imposed by Indira Gandhi for 21 months from 1975 to 1977 and its aftermath. "As we mark 50 years since the 1975 Emergency, this film isn't just a historical retelling—it's a reflection on the resilience of democracy and a tribute to those who fought to protect it. 'Emergency' is a cinematic milestone that challenges audiences to question, engage, and remember the cost of freedom," added producer Umesh KR Bansal. (PTI)



## Top filmmakers to mentor 'MAMI Select-Filmed on iPhone' initiative

**NEW DELHI, Jan 6:** The Mumbai Academy of Moving Image (MAMI), organizers of the MAMI Mumbai Film Festival, on Monday announced the second edition of 'MAMI Select - Filmed on iPhone' initiative, which will be mentored by eminent filmmakers Konkona Sensharma, Vetri Maran, Vikramaditya Motwane and Lijo Jose Pellissery.

The initiative is aimed at nurturing four new filmmakers from across India. They will be provided with a grant, the iPhone 16 Pro Max to shoot the film and the MacBook Pro to edit the film.

Four emerging filmmakers will be selected from across the country and they have to make four short films, each between 20 and 40 minutes long and presented in four languages: Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, and Tamil. The four selected filmmakers will be mentored by an illustrious panel, including actor and director Sensharma, Malayalam filmmaker Lijo Jose Pellissery, director-producer Vikramaditya Motwane and Tamil filmmaker Vetri Maaran.

From pre-production to post-production, these mentors will guide the filmmakers in pushing the boundaries of storytelling using cutting-edge technology.

The completed short films will premiere at a special screening event, followed by their release on the MAMI YouTube channel, ensuring widespread accessibility and audience engagement.

"As we embark on a new year with a new inclusive vision for MAMI to encourage in-

dependent cinema and fresh voices, I am delighted to announce MAMI Select - Filmed on iPhone where for the first time we have opened the call for applications across the country to make films in four regional languages," said Shivendra Singh Dungarpur, Festival Director, MAMI.

Motwane, who was part of the first initiative, said he is happy to be returning as a mentor again.

"I was completely blown away by the quality of the storytelling and the technical finesse of the short films last year and I cannot wait to see what kind of magic the new batch of filmmakers create this year. I'm also honoured and excited to be working with my fellow mentors and genius filmmakers Konkona, Lijo and Vetri Maaran."

Sensharma said she is happy to partner with MAMI on this initiative, given its focus on enabling and providing a platform to fresh young filmmaking voices.

Pellissery called "MAMI Select - Filmed on iPhone" an excellent initiative to foster the talent of budding filmmakers across India.

"Given the diversity of Indian cinema, I was so happy to hear that the aim of this programme is to identify and support filmmakers from different regions of India and to give them a platform to show their films. I am honoured that I was invited to be a mentor for the Malayalam film and I look forward to my interactions with the filmmaker and sharing my knowledge and experience." (PTI)

## Wish they become bigger than us: Ajay Devgn on nephew Aaman, Raveena Tandon's daughter Rasha

**MUMBAI, Jan 6:** Superstar Ajay Devgn on Monday said he hopes newcomers Aaman Devgan and Rasha Thadani, who are set to make their acting debut with "Azaad", go on to become bigger stars than him and colleague Raveena Tandon.

Aaman is Devgn's nephew and Thadani is the daughter of film distributor Anil Thadani and Tandon, who has worked with Devgn in films such as "Dilwale" (1994) and "Divya Shakti" (1993).

Devgn plays a pivotal role in "Azaad", a pre-Independence period drama directed by Abhishek Kapoor. The Hindi film is set to be released on January 17.

"I wish they go beyond us, they become bigger than us. (I hope) Whatever little we achieve, they get more than that. A lot of things have changed."

"When we came into the industry, there was a certain rawness to us. Today's new generation is coming prepared which is a good thing. We were learning on the sets," the "Singham Again" star told reporters at the trailer launch of "Azaad" here.

Devgn said audiences earlier would be a little more "forgiving" towards new actors, but today it isn't so.

"Audiences used to forgive our mistakes somewhere but today's audience doesn't forgive anyone. So you have to come prepared. Hopefully, I feel these children have prepared well and Abhishek has guided them well... I feel no matter what you prepare it always feels less because I know the audience doesn't

forgive anyone today." The actor said the next generation needs to embark on their own journey.

"If you follow someone, then you will never succeed. You can take inspiration from many people but you need to figure your own path," he said.

Aaman said it was his uncle's 2002 period drama "The Legend of Bhagat Singh" which inspired him to become an actor.

"The best advice I got from him (Devgn) was no matter how much success you achieve, you need to be grounded. If you genuinely want to achieve something, you have to be a good person," he added.

Rasha said her mother asked her to follow the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita.

"Putting in your best and then whatever happens is up to god. This stuck with me because in this industry, there are a lot of emotions, overthinking, and, of course, a lot of trolls. If you listen to everyone, it will drain you," she said.

While Tandon and Devgn have worked together, the debutante said she first met him on the set of "Azaad".

"I was nervous. (But) He has this aura that just makes everyone feel comfortable. So, luckily throughout we felt secure and nice. It's just been such a fun experience." "Azaad" also features Diana Penty and Mohit Malik in pivotal roles. The film is written by Ritesh Shah, Suresh Nair, and Abhishek Kapoor, and produced by Ronnie Screwvala and Pragya Kapoor. (PTI)



## Jaideep Ahlawat's Hathi Ram Chaudhary sets out to unravel new mystery in 'Paatal Lok 2' trailer

**NEW DELHI, Jan 6:** Actor Jaideep Ahlawat is returning as the world-weary 'jamunapar' police inspector Hathi Ram Chaudhary in "Paatal Lok 2", whose trailer, released on Monday, promises a new mystery that takes its primary characters to Nagaland.

The eight-episode series, which is slated to stream on Prime Video from January 17, is directed by Avinash Arun Dhaware. Produced by Clean Slate Flimz in association with Eunoia Films, the crime thriller is written, created and executive produced by Sudip Sharma.

Ahlawat, who shot to great acclaim after the season one premiered in 2020, said the first season was a "milestone" in his career and the love he received for it still humbles him.

"Hathi Ram Chaudhary wasn't just a character, it became a mirror reflecting the complexities of society and humanity, striking a chord with millions worldwide. With Season 2, we delve even deeper into Hathi Ram's psyche. This season unravels the raw, vulnerable side of him as he grapples with new adversities, uncharted moral dilemmas, and his own shadows," he said in a statement. (PTI)



