Hamas' threat to delay next release of Israeli hostages raises fears for Gaza ceasefire

At least 55 civilians killed by militia fighters in northeastern Congo

Switching sides is Congress' culture: Punjab CM Mann

Only authentic version of Constitution be promulgated, any violation serious'



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DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025

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PRICE ₹8

Implement north-east peace accords in letter and spirit: Dilip Saikia

Dozen plus accords signed in the past decade with insurgent groups

Back and forth in Lok Sabha



NEW DELHI, Feb 11: BJP member Dilip Saikia on Tuesday urged the government to implement peace accords signed with several extremist outfits in the northeastern region in letter and

Raising the issue during Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, Saikia said the government has signed more than 12 peace accords with various insurgent groups in the northeast over the past decade.

He claimed that there has been a decline in insurgency related incidents and in casualties of the security forces and "I demand that the peace accords be

implemented 100 per cent on letter and spirit," Saikia said. Congress leader Manickam Tagore

wanted Railways Minister Ashwini

Vaishnaw to take steps to improve safety and security of women passengers of trains. He cited a recent incident of a pregnant woman thrown off a moving train by a man during an attempt to sexually molest her.

Congress member Manish Tewari expressed outrage over return of illegal Indian immigrants from the US in

"The illegal immigrants are not criminals or terrorists. They had only gone abroad to earn a living. Will they be brought back in handcuffs?" Tewari asked. He said there were 7.25 lakh undocumented Indians in the US of which 24,000 were in custody of the American authorities.

Tewari said 487 illegal immigrants have been handed over final deportation

orders of which 287 have been identified as Indian nationals.

BJP member Parshottam Rupala demanded that the Centre and the Gujarat government devise a scheme to ensure that the children of workers employed in the diamond sector in Surat do not face difficulties in education and healthcare due to recession in the industry.

Rupala, a former Union Minister, said that several workers in the diamond industry were facing hardships due to recession in the sector.

BJP member Hemant Savra demanded security, maintenance and public utility facilities at various historical forts in his Palghar constituency. Congress member Varsha Gaikwad demanded that the government re-instate railway concession

> prehensive Strategic Partnership," he said on the microblogging site.

Sarma also recalled Shanmu-

garatnam's visit to Assam in 2022

"We deeply appreciate Singa-

pore's partnership in #Advantage-

Assam2 and look forward to

strengthening our collaboration in

emerging sectors such as semicon-

ductors, green energy, and ad-

vanced technology," he added.

and shared the fond memories.

China constructing world's largest dam on Brahmputra raises serious concerns: Gaurav



NEW DELHI, Feb 11: The Brahmaputra is the lifeline of Assam and China's recent decision to construct the world's largest dam over it raises serious concerns about the country's water security, Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi said in Parliament on Tuesday.

Speaking during Zero Hour in Lok Sabha, Gogoi said he has written to both Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar regarding the disproportionate control of China over the water flow in the Brahmaputra, which is a major strategic asset of India.

"The Brahmaputra is the lifeline of Assam and a major strategic asset of India. China's recent decision to construct the world's largest dam across the Yarlung Zangbo-Brahmaputra raises serious concerns about India's water security,'

The deputy leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha demanded that water-sharing and management be a key component of India's diplomatic engagement with China, especially at the level of the prime minister, the National Security Adviser (NSA) and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

"We must have an agreement that China must always share hydrological data supporting flood forecasting and management. My question is, did this government know that China is constructing such a dam, and what has this government done to raise this issue at

the international forum?" he asked. The Union government has "taken note" of China's announcement of a mega-dam project on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo river in the Tibet Autonomous Region, the Centre in-

formed Parliament on February 6. Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh, in a written response to a query in Rajya Sabha, also said various issues relating to trans-border rivers are discussed with China under the ambit of an "institutionalised Expert Level Mechanism," which was established in 2006, as well as through diplomatic channels.

The ministry was asked whether China's decision to construct a hydropower dam on the Brahmaputra River, which flows into India and Bangladesh, has raised concerns about its potential impact on millions of people living downstream.

"The Government of India has taken note of China's announcement of a mega-dam project approved on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo (upper reaches of the Brahmaputra) River in the

Tribunal reviews ULFA's next hearing on March 4

HT Bureau DIPHU, Feb 11: The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal, chaired by Justice Michael Zothankhuma, recently convened a meeting to review the status of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) as an unlawful association under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The said meeting was held on January 28, 2025

Legal representatives from the Government of India and the state of Assam, alongside officials from the Home and Political Department, Assam Police, and the Judicial Department, participated in the proceedings.

After reviewing the ministry's evidence and considering an adjournment request from the

Assam Government, the Tribunal directed that a notice under Section 4(2) be served to ULFA and its affiliates, requiring a response within 30 days. The notice was disseminated via registered post, newspaper publications, and public announcements.

The next Tribunal hearing is scheduled for March 4, 2025, at 3:00 PM in Court No. 2 (Old Block), Guwahati High Court.

The Government of India had earlier issued a Gazette notification on November 25, 2024, declaring ULFA an unlawful association due to security con-

A subsequent notification on December 23, 2024, led to the Tribunal's formation to assess the validity of this declaration.

Manipur MLAs on selection of new CM

Himanta meets Singapore President; 'Unlawful Association' status, discusses state's role in strengthening ties



GUWAHATI, Feb 11: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday met Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and held discussions on the state's role in strengthening India's ties with the Asian country.

The Chief Minister's Office in a post on X said that Sarma, who is on a two-day visit to Singapore,

called upon Shanmugaratnam and discussed different issues, especially on the upcoming Advantage Assam 2.0 investment summit.

"It was a great honour to meet the President of Singapore, H.E @Tharman_S, today. Our discussions covered ongoing collaborative projects, with a special

Later, Sarma met Singaporean Foreign Affairs Minister Vivian Balakrishnan and the discussion focused on strengthening Assam's existing ties with the foreign nation

"We spoke on deepening the existing partnership between the State of Assam and the Republic of Singapore under the overall framework of India's Act East Policy," emphasis on Assam's role as a key he added. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

under India's Act East Policy.

'Everything is in BJP high command's hand': Union Ministry of Civil Aviation confirms greenfield airport in KA

IMPHAL, Feb 11: Manipur BJP MLAs Sapam Keba and K Ibomcha on Tuesday said that the party high command will decide on the new chief minister of the The two BJP MLAs, who held a meeting with BJP

Northeast in-charge Sambit Patra at a hotel in Imphal on Tuesday afternoon, said they requested the Centre to make efforts to restore peace in the strife-torn state.

Upon being asked by waiting journalists about the selection of a new chief minister, Sapam Keba said, "Everything will be decided by the high command. We urged the Centre through Patra to find ways to restore normalcy in the state. Within a couple of days, the Centre will decide on what things need to be

When asked if there is any time frame for the selection of a new chief minister, Keba said, "We didn't have any discussion on that.

Ibomcha said, "Everything is in the hand of the Centre. We cannot make any comment. We were here to make a courtesy call. The only thing we requested him is to bring peace to the state." Patra also met state Forest Minister Th Bishwajit separately at the hotel. Patra, who has been camping in Imphal since N Biren Singh resigned from the post of chief minister

on February 9, had held separate closed-door meetings



with several MLAs, ministers and Speaker Thokchom Satyabrata on Monday.

Restoration of peace in the strife-torn state was discussed during the Monday meetings, while the issue of selecting a new chief minister was "hardly deliberated upon", party sources said.

"Most of the closed-door meetings on Monday were focussed on restoring normalcy and ending the conflict," a BJP leader told PTI on condition of anonymity. "The issue of selecting a new chief minister was hardly discussed," another source close to a minister who attended (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

HT Correspondent
KHERONI, Feb 11: The Union Ministry of Civil Aviation has received a proposal for the construction of a greenfield airport in Assam's Karbi Anglong district, situated just 61 kilometres from Dimapur Airport, marking a significant step toward enhancing air connectivity and economic growth in the northeastern region. The union minister of state for civil aviation, Murlidhar Mohol, disclosed the development on recently while responding to an unstarred ques-

waha in the Rajya Sabha. Mohol highlighted that the Government of India has granted inprinciple approval for 21 new greenfield airports across the country, with 12 already opera-

tion raised by MP Upendra Kush-

As defined by the minister, a greenfield airport refers to infrastructure built entirely from scratch

on undeveloped land, emphasising its role in expanding aviation networks without existing constraints.

The proposed airport in Diphu, Karbi Anglong, has advanced significantly, with consultants SRV Techno Engineering Pvt Ltd & DSDNA (New Delhi) submitting the final Detailed Project Report (DPR) to Karbi Anglong AuChief Executive Member (CEM), Tuliram Ronghang. The Assam government has al-

ready acquired the necessary land

for the project, which was facilitated by the KAAC. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has been entrusted with soil investigation and topographical

surveys, with 90% of the allocated

funds for (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Tibet (CONTD. ON PAGE-2) **CEM** interaction promises developmental schemes

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Feb 11: In the ongoing CEM Interaction Programme, an interaction programme was held at Poisa Engti village under Langhin Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) constituency promising land pattas, school, bridge and office.

Addressing the meeting, the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang made a promise to provide land pattas free of cost to those who yet to get them provided a school at Upper Salavor namely Eklavya School with an estimated cost of ₹ 50 crore. A bridge will be built between Poisa Engti and Dentaghat which has been a long-standing demand of the villagers. The CEM further promised that land would be allotted to build the office of Karbi Cultural Society (KCS) Zonal Committee office. The programme was also attended by MLAs, Darsing Ronghang and Bidya Sing Engleng; local MAC Bili Mohon Khaklary

The US is world's largest consumer of plastic, oil and gas

World must explore solutions to environmental crises without relying on US: Experts

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: US President Donald Trump's decision to abandon efforts to curb plastic pollution has raised concerns among experts, who warn that the global progress in tackling the crisis could slow down and suggest the world must now look for solutions without relying on the United States.

Trump, who had already withdrawn the US from the Paris climate agreement, signed an executive order on Monday reversing restrictions on plastic straws, declaring, "Paper straws don't work."

But the move is about more than just straws. It signals a broader setback in the global fight against plastic pollution, especially as countries are negotiating a legallybinding treaty to address the crisis.



According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the world produces more than 430 million tonnes of plastic every year, two-thirds of which are shortlived products that soon become

waste, polluting oceans and even entering the human food chain. If no urgent action is taken, the

global plastic waste could nearly

triple to 1.2 billion tonnes by 2060.

Chandrabhushan, president and

CEO of policy think tank International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology, said Trump's stance is unsurprising. "The US under Trump will walk away from every environmental negotiation. The US is the world's largest consumer of plastic, oil and gas. Under Trump, the progress made in the past 20 years on climate change, plastic pollution and biodiversity conservation will be lost," he said

He added that rebuilding global trust and momentum will take at least a decade after Trump's tenure. 'The US has always been the biggest obstacle in intergovernmental negotiations, whether on climate change, biodiversity loss or plastic (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

PM woos investors in energy sector, says India offers many possibilities in next 5 years

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday invited global investments in India's energy sector, saying the country offers immense possibilities in its pursuit of ambitious renewable energy transition goals in the next five years. Referring to the target of having 500 GW of renewable energy, 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen per annum output by 2030 as well as the launch of fresh bidding rounds for oil and gas assets, the prime minister said "there are possibilities of new investments and I hope that you explore all possibilities in India"

"There are many possibilities of investment in these sector," Modi said addressing the India Energy Week 2025 (IEW'25) virtually. "You are not just a part of India energy week, you are an important part of India's energy ambitions," Modi told investors.

He further said, "All experts are saying that 21st century is India's century. Bharat is not only driving it's own growth but driving global growth.'

India's energy ambitions, he said, are based on five pillars. "We have resources which we are harnessing. We are encouraging our brilliant minds to innovate. Thirdly, we have economic strength and politically stability," he said.

Also, he said, India has strategic geography which



makes energy trade easier and more attractive. Besides, India is committed towards global sustainability and this is aiding new possibilities in the country's energy sector, the prime minister said.

For Viksit Bharat, the next two decades are very crucial, he said, adding that in the next five years we will cross many milestones. "Our energy goals are aligned with the deadline of 2030," he said. By 2030, we want to add 500 GW of RE capacity, Indian Railways will be net zero (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Indian firms can seek additional oil from the Middle East and elsewhere in the world in case of any shortage from Russia

IOC buying 'clean' Russian oil, says Chairman Sahney

Corporation (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, is buying "clean" Russian crude oil that does not risk running foul of US sanctions, its Chairman Arvindar Singh Sahney said on Tuesday.

India became the second biggest buyer of Russian crude oil since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022, with purchases rising from less than 1 per cent of the total oil imported to almost 40 per cent of the country's total oil purchases.

The rise was primarily because Russian crude oil was available at a discount to other internationally traded oil due to the price cap and the European nations shunning purchases from Moscow.

Last month, US slapped new sanctions against Russia's energy trade. The sanctions targeted Russian oil producers Gazprom Neft and Surgutneftegas as well as 183 vessels that have shipped Russian oil. Russia used these tankers to ship oil to countries like India and China after the Group of Seven countries in 2022 imposed a USD 60 a barrel price cap on exports by the Kremlin

This cap, introduced to limit Moscow's revenues to fund its war in Ukraine, meant that western shipping and insurance services

The Home Story announces

grand opening

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Feb 11: The Home Story, a pre-

mier interior and home decor destination, an-

nounced its grand opening at Saraswati Tower,

NH 37, beside Beharbari Flyover in Guwahati

Speaking on the occasion managing director

of The Home Story Raiesh Agarwal said that

the luxurious showroom promises to transform

the way people live and interact with their liv-

dealing in India's premium brands like Godrej

Interio home and office furniture, Godrej Mod-

ular Kitchen, Fenesta, Tata Pravesh, Skipper

lection of exquisite home decor and interior de-

Modular Kitchen, Laminates & Veneers, Ply-

wood, Home Furnishings & Mattress, UPVC

& Almunium, Steel Doors & Windows and Se-

curity Solutions to accessories, every item has

been carefully curated to provide customers

with an unparalleled shopping experience, the

statement added. "To further enhance the

shopping experience, The Home Story offers

team of expert interior designers. Whether

you're looking to revamp an entire room or

simply seeking inspiration, our designers will

work closely with you to bring your vision to

'The Home Story' boasts an extensive col-

in an official statement on Tuesday.

ing spaces.

life", it stated.

Furnishings etc," he said.

sign solutions under one roof.



were not available for any oil cargo that was priced more than USD 60 per barrel. To circumvent that, Russia used the so-called shadow fleet, insured by its own companies. This fleet has now been sanctioned.

On the sidelines of the India Energy Week, Sahney said sanctions will not have any impact or very marginal impact on the crude availability or energy security of the country. Enough supplies are available around the globe to meet the demand. The US has not sanctioned Rosneft, the primary entity supplying oil to India, he said adding out of the around 600 tankers used by Russia, only 183 have been sanctioned.

oil from the Middle East and elsewhere in the world in case of any shortage from Russia. In the worstcase scenario, the Russian crude, which India was getting at a discount, will not be available at a discount, sources said.

In an attempt to restrict funds for Russia's war machine, The Group of Seven (G7) rich nations, the European Union and Australia put an embargo on Russian crude and introduced a USD 60 per barrel price cap in December 2022.

Over the next 12 months, the price cap and embargo had a significant impact on revenues, and forced Russia to find new markets and ways to transport its oil.

Russia did this by offering deep discounts on its Urals grade crude This discount last month fell to USD 2-3 per barrel.

In the first year of the sanctions Russia was losing, on an average, 23 per cent of its Urals crude export revenues every month due to the price cap and embargo.

This figure has fallen sharply to a mere monthly average of 9 per cent in the second year of the cap. This is because Russia built a network of 'shadow' tankers, which could trade its oil above the cap to new markets in non-sanctioning

Indian firms can seek additional PMI India calls for global collaboration to combat illicit tobacco

Going forward Indian firms will

look to contract Russian oil that is

"clean" and not attract sanctions.

"We buy Russian oil on a delivered

basis which means that the sup-

plier makes arrangements for

transportation. We have to see that

the tankers carrying Russian oil are

not sanctioned and have proper in-

surance because no port will allow

any ship without insurance cover,"

he said. Sanctioned Russian

tankers will not be allowed to dock

at Indian ports, government

sources said, adding that the only

exception would be for Russian oil

cargoes booked during the wind-

down period.

international collaboration to combat the illicit tobacco trade. The company emphasized that eradicating the black market is critical for pro-'In our newly opened showroom we are tecting India's economic interests, national security, and public health.

According to the FICCI Cascade report, illegal trade is a global crisis, driving a shadow conomy worth an estimated \$2 trillion annu-

Around 11.6% of cigarettes consumed world-

The illicit trade undermines legitimate businesses, diverts crucial revenue from governments, funds criminal organizations, and

In India, the total loss to the government from The country recorded 30.2 billion illicit cigarette sticks that year, ranking it third globally

The World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control has identified India as both a transit hub and a key destination for illicit tobacco trade

The Government of India and enforcement agencies, including the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and Customs, have taken sig-

revealed that approximately 91 million sticks of foreign-origin cigarettes worth ₹179.82 crore

These operations demonstrate the sophistica-Navaneel Kar, managing director of PMI

India, emphasised the urgent need to curb the black market, stating that illegal tobacco trade

He highlighted PMI's commitment to combating illicit tobacco trade through research, intelligence, supply chain protection, partnerships, cooperation with law enforcement, and awareness campaigns. He also noted the company's collaboration with Indian law enforcement to track and secure supply chains using authentication and security technologies.

trade on Anti-Smuggling Day

GUWAHATI, Feb 11: On Anti-Smuggling Day 2025, Philip Morris International's (PMI) India affiliate, IPM India, has urged cross-sector and

ally—over 3% of global GDP.

wide are illicit, resulting in an estimated \$40.5 From stylish furniture for Home, office, billion in tax losses for governments.

> exposes consumers to unregulated products. illicit tobacco trade was ₹13,331 crore in 2022.

complimentary design consultations with its after China and Brazil, according to Euromonitor International's 2023 report.

Smuggling routes span the globe, making this a transnational issue that requires international cooperation.

nificant steps to combat the problem.

The DRI's Smuggling in India 2023-24 report were seized in India.

tion of smuggling techniques and the involvement of transnational criminal networks.

hampers economic growth and development.

Kar stressed that real change can only be achieved through stringent law enforcement, cross-sector collaboration, and public-private

India calls for just energy transition, sees role of fossil fuels in near term

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Calling for a nuanced understanding on 'energy transition', India on Tuesday said the shift from polluting fossil fuels to cleaner sources should be just where affordable energy is available to meet needs of developing nations.

Speaking at the inaugural session of India Energy Week, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said energy transition "is not outright replacement (of any fuel) but more shifting the primacy of one energy source over another." Developing nations like India meet most of the energy demand from fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas. While there is a call to shift from the polluting sources to renewables, India feels that move cannot be abrupt, with oil and gas as well as coal continuing to meet energy demand in the period when the cleaner sources are scaled up.

"The very notion of 'energy transition' requires a nuanced understanding. It is not outright replacement, but more shifting the primacy of one energy source over another," he said. "The transition isn't about eliminating hydrocarbons overnight but leveraging them strategically while scaling renewables to mitigate emissions."

For too long, energy transition has to be framed as a linear journey - from fossil fuels to renewables, from past to future, from problem to solution. "Even when renewables become the dominant energy sources, oil and gas will continue to play a pivotal role, not just in power generation but in stabilising grids, industrial hydrogen, and energy storage innovations," he said. "Energy justice must shape the new energy order. One thing has become absolutely clear to all stakeholders. Energy justice must remain at the core of the imminent transformation.'

A fragmented transition risks deepening inequality, leaving billions without reliable energy while



wealthier nations surge ahead. "If the transition is not just, it will not succeed because the political economy will not allow it." "I don't think anyone here would disagree with me when I say that last few years - encapsulated in the whirlwind events of 2024 - have left the global energy order in transition. These include major geopolitical shifts."

"Nobody can say, with any degree of certainty, what the new framework for global energy markets will look like. But we can be sure that it is going to be transforming at breakneck speed, driven by forces that are both accelerating and colliding," he said.

Puri said the world is witnessing a recalibration of strategy, prioritising near-term profitability while keeping long-term transition efforts in play. "Before anyone accuses me of ignoring our environmental obligations, I must state that the primary focus remains on increasing the adoption of biofuels, renewables, and hydrogen," he said adding the IEA estimated that global energy investment was going to exceed USD 3 trillion for the first time in 2024, with USD 2 trillion going to clean energy technologies and infrastructure. Climate change, he said, is no longer a looming threat. It is unfolding in many grave disasters, wildfires, floods, and

record-breaking temperatures are clear reminders that the world is running out of time.

The minister said three forces

that will play a pivotal role in shaping the energy landscape in the coming years are new drivers of demand - artificial intelligence and clean cooking, balancing immediate challenges with long-term vision and resilient supply chains for an orderly transition. AI, he said, is now one of the largest energy consumers, with data centre demand rising 18-20 per cent annually by 2030. India's AI-driven digital economy, projected to reach USD 400 billion by 2030, presents both a challenge and an opportunity. "The real question is not how we will meet this surge in demand, but how we will do so without destabilising grids or derailing climate commitments," he said.

Stating that renewables alone won't be enough, he said AI-driven demand requires round-the-clock reliability, meaning natural gas, coal with carbon abatement, and next-generation nuclear will remain essential. "But the potential benefits are immense. AI itself will enhance fossil fuel efficiency, reshaping the energy equation where intelligence, not just resources, dictates energy security. The next great energy leap will come from dismantling the idea of centralised

energy in the form of AI-driven grids that predict demand before it happens," he said.

On the other hand, expanding clean cooking access requires a multi-fuel strategy, scaling traditional LPG, augmenting bio-CNG, accelerating electrification, and channelling investments into areas such as integrating decentralised renewables like wind-powered micro-grids to support electric and induction cooking. Puri said the answer to energy transition lies in strategic investment across hydrocarbons and renewables. "The future lies in smart capital reallocation,? for instance, deploying wind and solar where intermittency is manageable, biofuels where liquid fuel demand persists, and gas where firm power is essential. That is how we ensure both affordability and decarbonisation."

India presents a compelling and diversified investment landscape, 7.6 billion tonne of discovered upstream resources, 500 million tonne of biofuel feedstock, and rising energy demand. At the same time, it is scaling renewables, targeting 5 million tonne of hydrogen by 2030, USD 96 billion in hydrogen investments, and a gas share increase from 6 per cent to 15 per cent, alongside USD 30 billion in refining and petrochemical expansion. He said supply disruptions whether in lithium for storage, nickel for EVs, or semiconductors for AI-driven grids - must not create winners and losers in the transition. "Without intervention, the growing gap in energy technology access could leave developing economies locked out of the transition. Governments and industries must act decisively to prevent disorderly shifts." "Policy cannot remain static while the world accelerates. Governments must craft frameworks that incentivise bold innovation, derisk essential investments, and ensure commitments beyond the short term." (PTI)

Implement north-east peace accords

for senior citizens. "You can discontinue facilities for MPs, but re-instate concessions in rail travel for senior citizens," said Gaikwad, a member from Mumbai North Central.

Contd. from Page 1...

Congress member Gaurav Gogoi sought to know whether the government was aware of China's plans to build a massive dam on river Yarlung Zangbo in Tibet, close to the border with India.

He said the dam will give China disproportionate control over the water flow in river Brahamaputra which was the lifeline of Assam. He also demanded that India must have an agreement with China to share hydrological data to support flood forecasting and management.

BJP member Anup Dhotre wanted the government to set up sports training centres in every district for the benefit of the youth, who were preparing for selection in the police and military services. (PTI)

China constructing world's

Autonomous Region," he said. As a lower riparian state with considerable established user rights to the waters of the transborder rivers, the government has "consistently conveyed its views and concerns to the Chinese authorities" and has urged them to ensure that the interests of downstream states are "not harmed by any activities in upstream areas," the minister said.

"Following the recent announcement by China of the mega dam project, we have amplified our concerns and demarched them on 30 December 2024, including on the need for transparency and consultation with downstream countries," he said. The issue was also raised during the visit of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to Beijing for a meeting of the Foreign Secretary-Vice Foreign Minister mechanism, he said.

During the visit, the two countries agreed to hold an early meeting of the Expert Level Mechanism to discuss the resumption of provision of hydrological data and other cooperation pertaining to trans-border rivers, Singh said in his response. (PTI)

Himanta meets Singapore President;

Earlier during the day, the CM met with industry leaders of the semiconductor segment of Singapore and discussions focused on potential collaborations, emphasising the significance of the sector in strengthening India-Singapore ties and partnering for the state's upcoming Electronic City in Jagiroad.

"Began my day in Singapore by engaging in a productive discussion with leaders from the semiconductor industry. Semiconductor is an important facet of India-Singapore cooperation and I have invited them to partner with us at Assam's upcoming #ElectronicCity in Jagiroad," Sarma said. Representatives from ASMPT, AEM, Besi, Temasek, Silicon Box, Nitto Denko Corp, Heller Industries and Meinhardt Group took part in the meeting. The CMO further said that Sarma also met Singaporean government-owned consultancy company Surbana Jurong's senior official Low Cher Ek and discussed their ongoing projects in Assam.

"Today in Singapore, I reviewed Surbana Jurong's existing projects in Assam along with Mr Low Cher Ek and his team. We seek to leverage Singapore's town planning expertise to build Assam's future cities and industrial parks and enhance the #EaseofLiving of our people," Sarma said. The Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit is scheduled to be held on February 25-26 in Guwahati. (PTI)

'Everything is in BJP high

one of the meetings said. On Monday, Patra also met Security Advisor Kuldiep Singh and Hill Areas Committee chairman D Gangmei separately.

Meanwhile, amid reports of a possible meeting of Manipur MLAs in Delhi on Wednesday, at least three legislators said they have no information about such a meeting nor have received any invitation. More than 250 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023. (PTI)

Union Ministry of Civil Aviation

these activities already disbursed. The airport, slated for Chotalangpher, Jamunapar Mauza under Diphu Revenue Circle, promises direct air connectivity to major cities like Kolkata, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Mumbai. Beyond travel convenience, the project is expected to generate employment and spur commercial development in the region, aligning with broader goals of regional upliftment.

This initiative forms part of the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed on September 4, 2021, under the Government of India's Special Development Project (SDP), which prioritises infrastructure development in Karbi Anglong. The airport is listed in serial number 15, a key project under the SDP's Annexure-II, underscoring its strategic importance. With the DPR finalised, the AAI will proceed with detailed surveys and construction planning, pending final approvals from central and state authorities.

Stakeholders anticipate the project will catalyse tourism, trade, and investment in Assam's underserved regions. The Karbi Anglong's greenfield airport symbolises a leap forward in India's aviation ambitions and regional equity, poised to bridge connectivity gaps while driving socio-economic transformation in the Northeast.

World must explore solutions

pollution," Chandrabhushan said. "The world now needs to rethink on multilateralism -- how regions can cooperate if a global consensus is not possible. We must explore solutions to climate change and other environmental crises, without relying on the US. However, if the global economy moves forward, the US cannot afford to lag. If everyone transitions to electric vehicles and green energy, how will the US sustain itself by selling oil?" he asked.

Harjeet Singh, climate activist and founding director of Satat Sampada Climate Foundation, called the US decision "a gift to the fossil-fuel industry and a betrayal of the global efforts to curb plastic pollution".

Despite being the largest historical contributor to fossil-fuel emissions and the biggest per-capita generator of plastic waste, the US is refusing to lead, undermining the plastics treaty negotiations and fuelling the expansion of petrochemicals, he said.

"This locks us into a future of more emissions, more waste and greater environmental injustice. It is unaceptable that the US is propping up the very industry driving the climate and ecological crises," Singh said. He said countries must push forward with bold solutions to global crises whether or not the US is on board. "But as the largest historical polluter, the US has the greatest responsibility to act and pay its fair share."

Suneel Pandey, director of the Circular Economy and Waste Management Division at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), highlighted that most polymers come from fossil fuel-based petrochemical industries. "The Trump administration has already signalled that oil companies will continue drilling, leading to more oil production. Naturally, plastic production will also continue. They are not looking to reduce plastic production

or consumption." he said. However, Pandey noted that India has already moved away from plastic straws, in line with its commitment to phase out single-use plastic. "This means that the US policy shift will not impact India's initiatives," he said. On the global plastics treaty negotiations, Pandey said a binding agreement remains difficult. "Some countries, led by Russia, oppose a legally-binding treaty. The US is also heading in that direction." Siddhartha Ghanshyam, deputy programme manager of the Solid Waste Management Unit at the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), said the US has never played a leadership role in the plastics treaty negotiations.

"The US rarely reveals its position in intergovernmental talks. It does not take a strong stand or actively participate. Traditionally, it has not done enough," he said. Ghanshyam warned that the US decision could embolden countries opposing strong plastic regulations.

"Right now, we are at a deadlock. But in the next round of negotiations, the situation may change," he said. Without US support, he added, funding for tackling plastic pollution could shrink. "What the world could have achieved in five years may now take a decade. Progress will be slow but the world will move forward," Ghan-

However, he emphasised that the outcome of the plastics treaty does not depend on a single country. "The US decision will affect negotiations but we should not give it more importance than it deserves," he said. (PTI)

PM woos investors in energy

by 2030 and we aim to achieve 5 MT annual output of green hydrogen, he said and stressed "whatever India has achieved in last ten years shows that these targets will be achieved". In last 10 years, India has become 5th largest economy from 10th largest. In last 10 years, solar generation capacity increased 32 times, he noted. Today India is the third largest solar power generating nation and its non-fossil fuel capacity increased three

India is the first country among G20 nations to meet its carbon emission reduction target set by the Paris global climate conference, he said. About ethanol blending with petrol, he said today India is blending 19 per cent ethanol and exuded confidence that India will achieve the target of 20 per cent ethanol blending ahead of the October 2025 deadline.

He boasted India's feedstock of 500 million tonnes and said the Global Biofuels Alliance formed during the G20 Summit in New Delhi has 28 member countries and 12 international organisations.

Addressing the gathering at the International Energy Week, the prime minister said that India is bringing out reforms to exploit the full potential of exploration and production of hydrocarbons in the country India is the fourth largest refining hub and it will expand its capacity by 20 per cent, Modi said and pointed towards new hydrocarbon discoveries in the country which are yet to be explored, and the government has

brought out open licensing acreage policy (OLAP). He also stated that the government has supported the energy sector by setting up exclusive economic zones and single-window clearance system. After amendments in the Oilfields Regulation & Development Act, stakeholders will get policy stability, extended leases and improved financial terms. He also noted that the natural gas supply is increasing due the

ramp up in pipeline infrastructure and discoveries. "There are a lot of upcoming possibilities of investments in these sectors," he said. India's major focus is on 'Make in India' and local supply chains, Modi said while highlighting the country's potential of manufacturing various types of hardware, including PV modules.

The prime minister noted that India is supporting local manufacturing, with the solar PV module manufacturing capacity expanding from 2 gigawatts to approximately 70 gigawatts in the past ten years About the opportunities for innovation and manufacturing in the battery and storage capacity sector, the

prime minister said that India is rapidly advancing towards electric mobility and emphasised the need for swift action to meet the demands of such a large country in this sector. Modi said that the current year's budget includes numerous announcements supporting green energy.

He remarked that the National Critical Minerals Mission will play a crucial role in building a robust supply chain in India. He also highlighted the promotion of the non-lithium battery ecosystem. The current year's budget has opened the nuclear energy sector, and every investment in energy is creating new jobs for the youth and generating opportunities for green jobs, he said, adding that ordinary families and farmers have been made energy providers. The PM Suryaghar Free Electricity Scheme was launched last year, and its scope is not limited to energy production, he pointed out and said the scheme is creating new skills in

the solar sector, developing a new service ecosystem, and increasing investment opportunities. Modi reiterated India's commitment to providing energy solutions that energize growth and enrich nature and expressed confidence that this Energy Week would yield concrete outcomes in this direction. (PTI)



Hojai Police apprehends **PLA** cadre

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025



HOJAI, Feb 11: The Hojai Police apprehended one cadre of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), Manipur, an unlawful and banned organization under Section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Preven-

Hojai SP said that police has apprehended one Yaikhom Tondonba Singh alias Pibatong, aged 29 years.

SP said an operation was carried out based on credible intelligence inputs and technical surveillance. It was executed with precision, ensuring the safe capture of the individual without any collateral damage.

SP said preliminary investigations have revealed that Yaikhom Tondonba Singh has been wanted in connection with several terror-

ist cases. He has been actively involved in insurgent activities, posing a significant threat to national security

"Following his apprehension, central investigative organisations have conducted thorough interrogations. Valuable information regarding his past involvement in insurgent activities and connections within the PLA has been obtained. This intelligence will aid to ongoing operagainst insurgent networks and contribute to dismantling terror infrastructures,' SP added.

He further said the security forces remain committed to safe-

contraband items worth guarding the nation's integrity more than ₹8.12 crore and will continue their efforts to neutralize threats posed by unlaw-HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Feb 11: The Rail-

Newly married woman mysterious death sparks outrage in Nagaon

HUSBAND ARRESTED

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Feb 11: A newly married woman named Ankita Bora, was found dead under mysterious circumstances at her husband's residence, located at Nonoi Tulsimukh in the district on Tuesday morning here. The incident has sparked widespread outrage and shock in the local

According to reports, Ankita's body was discovered in the morning with injury marks on her body. Her family alleged that she was subjected to physical and mental torture by her husband, Bishwajit Das, and his

Ankita, a resident of Kampur Dakshinpat Bhakatgaon village, was married to Bishwajit, a police personnel of the Assam Police Commando Unit, just a year ago. Her family claimed that Ankita was frequently beaten and harassed by her husband and his family.

Meanwhile the local Nonoi police arrested Bishwajit in connection

with Ankita's death. The police have started an investigation into the incident and are questioning Bishwajit and his family members Ankita's family has filed a complaint against Bishwajit and his family,

alleging that they were responsible for her death. The police were awaiting the post-mortem report to determine the cause of Ankita's death.

The incident has sparked widespread outrage in the community, with many demanding justice for Ankita and her family

Prohibitory order in Sonitpur in view of HSLC and HS exam

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Feb 11: The Sonitpur district admin has issued a prohibitory order U/S 163 of Bharativa Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 throughout all the examination centres of Sonitpur in view of the upcoming High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) Examination, 2025.

The HSLC exam is scheduled to be held from February 15 to March 3 and the Higher Secondary (HS) Examination is scheduled to be held from February 13 to March 17 at various centres.

"Accordingly, no person/guardian is allowed within the radius of 100 meters of Examination centres except the candidates appearing in the examination (with valid Admit card duly signed by the competent authority), the supervisory staff and checking squad associated with the examination, agencies of the Government involved in the enforcement of law and order and the maintenance of essential services and any Government employees/officials engaged in the conduct of the examination. No Parking and plying of vehicles will be allowed within the radius of 100 meters from the examination centres except that of authorized person on duty during the examination period. Use of high-volume loudspeakers, DJs, public addressing systems, microphones, and other similar equipment either in fixed mode or in the vehicles while plying on roads are prohibited within the radius of 100 meters of Examination centres. Mobile phones, calculators and any other electronic gadgets/communication devices such as any Bluetooth devices, Smartwatch, earphones etc. shall not be allowed inside the Examination centres/ premises except that of centre in-charge and authorized persons on duty. No food stall, shop including existing market will be allowed within the radius of 100 meters of Examination centres. No other person will be allowed to guide candidates for sitting on their allotted seats except the supervisory staff of Examination centre," a PR stated.

New executive body

HT Correspondent SIVASAGAR, Feb 11: The Anusushita Jati Yuva Chatra Parishad (SC Students and Youth Council) elected a new executive body with Dewan Das as president, Prabhat Das as vice president and Arindam Das as the secretary in an emergent meeting held in Aikya Conference Hall on Monday. Sunil Das and Madhov Das were nominated as the Central Committee

Hospital superintendent felicitated in Morigaon

HT Correspondent MORIGAON, Feb 11: Prakton Chatra Satirtha Sanmilan Morigaon district committee bid farewell to superintendent of Morigaon Civil Hospital Lakhidhar Das on Tuesday on his superannuation in the hospital. The organisation led by the GS Kuldip Goswami felicited Lakhidhar Das with a citation and a traditional gamusa .Lakhidhar Das joined as doctor in 1987 at Chapanala ,Nagaon district .Since then he has been serving people with honour.

Training camp reflected the deep-rooted tradition of Jhumoir dance

Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah takes stock of Jhumoir dance preparation

GUWAHATI, Feb 11: The Town Club Playground in Silchar turned into a vibrant cultural hub as Cachar's guardian minister and minister for PHE, housing & urban affairs Jayanta Mallabaruah, graced the Zonal Jhumoir Dance Training Camp alongside minister for food public distribution, mines & minerals, and Barak Valley development Koushik Rai, Silchar MLA Dipayan Chakraborty, Cachar district commissioner Mridul Yadav, and superintendent of police Numal Mahatto.

Dancers from Cachar, Hailakandi, and Srivhumi districts showcased their dedication and talent, refining their steps in preparation for the grand 'Jhumoir Binandini' program scheduled to take place at Sarusajai Stadium, Guwahati, later this month.

The training camp reflected the deeprooted tradition of Jhumui dance, an art form that has long been a symbol of cultural pride

Adding a special touch to the event minister Jayanta Malla Baruah actively engaged with the participants and even joined them

NFR recovers

way Protection Force (RPF) of

Northeast Frontier Railway has re-

covered contraband goods worth

more than ₹ 8.12 crore during the

sons for alleged involvement in

transportation of contraband/smug-

gled goods during this period.

Moreover, RPF of N F Railway has

been regularly conducting drives to

control the menace of touts. In re-

cently conducted checks and drives

over the zone from January 1 to 31,

RPF apprehended 15 touts and re-

covered 130 railway tickets worth

In a recent incident on January 23 RPF & Narcotics Control Bu-

reau (NCB) of Guwahati jointly

conducted checking in train No

12068 DN (Jan Shatabdi Express)

at Guwahati railway station. Dur-

ing checking, they apprehended

one lady and recovered 360 gms

Heroin worth ₹ 72 lakh (approx.)

from the train. Later, the appre-

hended lady along with the recov-

ered Heroin was handed over to

NCB/Guwahati for necessary legal

Moreover, in an incident on Jan-

uary 7 RPF team of Siliguri and

CIB team of New Jalpaiguri jointly

conducted a raid & search opera-

tion in a shop named, Maa Shakti

Travels located at Darjeeling,

(West Bengal). During the raid, the

team recovered 09 live E-Tickets

and 13 used E-Tickets worth

around ₹55,779/- and apprehended

one tout in this connection. A case

was registered under section 143 of

the Railways Act for further course

above ₹ 3.02 lakh from them.

RPF also apprehended 19 per-

period from of January 1 to 31.



in a spirited Jhumoir dance rehearsal, fostering a sense of unity and encouragement. His enthusiasm and participation were met with applause, further energizing the performers ahead of their grand stage performance in

Speaking to media persons after the event

Baruah expressed his admiration for the young talents and their commitment to preserving Assam's cultural heritage, "Jhumoir dance is not just a form of artistic expression but a reflection of our tradition and unity. It is heartening to see such dedication from our

ance at Sarusajai Stadium will leave an in mitted to promoting and preserving our rich cultural legacy," he remarked.

It is pertinent to mention here that the grand spectacle of cultural heritage is set to unfold on February 24 at Saro Sojaoo Stadium in Guwahati, as an impressive contingent of participants from Cachar, Sribhumi, and Hailakandi will come together to join a magnificent Mega Jhumoir Dance performance. A total of 180 participants from Cachar, including 100 dancers, 67 instrumentalists, and 13 master trainers, will showcase their talent alongside 64 participants from Sribhumi (20 dancers, 37 instrumentalists, and 7 master trainers) and 102 participants from Hailakandi, featuring 20 dancers, 76 instrumentalists, and 6 master trainers. This grand event promises to be a mesmerizing celebration of rhythm, tradition, and unity, highlighting the rich cultural essence of the region. With vibrant movements and soul-stirring music, the Mega Jhumoir Dance will undoubtedly leave an indelible mark on the hearts of all spectators.

Prohibitory orders in view of exam in Cachar March 17, 2025, at 28 schools and phones inside the examination

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Feb 11: Cachar dis-School

The order, issued by district

With the HSLC exams set to

colleges, authorities are leaving no

thorized gatherings within a 100meter radius of examination centers. Only candidates, authorized scribes, and officials directly involved in the examination process will be allowed entry, effectively curbing any external influence that might compromise

tions, a complete ban has been enforced on the possession of electronic gadgets, including mobile phones (even in switched-off mode), smartwatches, fitness bands, Bluetooth devices, elec-

halls. The use of programmable calculators, pen drives, textual materials—printed or handwritten and any other items that could facilitate unfair means has also been strictly prohibited. These stringent measures aim to eliminate opportunities for misconduct, ensuring that the examinations are conducted in an environment of integrity and discipline.

Violators of these orders will face strict legal consequences, with the administration warning of immediate action under relevant

Mobile phone use in class rooms banned

in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent
SIVASAGAR, Feb 11: Inspector of schools, Sivasagar Circle Devajyoti Gogoi through an order on Monday, banned use of mobile phones in the class rooms from now on. The order on the eve of the ensuing HSLC and HSSLC examinations in the district bears special significance as mobile phone use has become a nuisance among government teachers has considerably hampered teaching learning environment in the class rooms. The IS's initiative is appreciated by the conscious guardians if the district.

Eat Right Mela concludes

in Kokrajhar HT Correspondnet

KOKRAJHAR, Feb 11: A twoday Eat Right Mela was organised at Kokrajhar Government Higher Secondary & MP School playground in Kokrajhar to raise awareness about the importance of healthy and nutritious food which was concluded on Tuesday.

It was organised by the food safety department, Kokrajhar, under commissionerate of Food Safety, Assam, in collaboration with Kokrajhar district administration, which has aimed to raise awareness about the importance of healthy and nutritious food.

The Mela also laid emphasis on promoting millets, given their nutritional value and health benefits. As part of the programme an exhibles, with 30 stalls have been participating in the showcase.

An awareness rally was organised, which was flagged off by Kokraihar district commissioner Masanda Magdalin Pertin. Hundreds of students from vari-

ous schools, along with NCC cadets, actively participated in the rally. The event also featured food and quiz competitions to engage participants and spread awareness about healthy eating habits.

Awareness workshop for reducing absenteeism HT Correspondent DIBRUGARH, Feb 11: An

awareness workshop for reducing absenteeism was organised by ABITA, ACMS and the management of Khowang and Bhamun tea estate at Khowang Tea estate on Tuesday. Near about 60 chronic absentees, line chowkidar, sirdars ACMS garden office bearers were called to attend the workshop.

The financial losses the absenting workers have suffered in the form of PF, gratuity, pension, bonus, maternity benefits etc apart from wage loss & fringe benefits as a result of absenteeism were elaborately explained to these workers with examples jointly by management, ABITA & ACMS.

It is expected that the workshop will positively influence the workers to be more regular in work. Similar workshops were held in the recent past at Maud, Desam and Greenwood tea estates. Given the ill effects of absenteeism on the tea gardens and workforce, ABITA will continue to organise these awareness workshops in other estates in Brahmaputra valley in collaboration with ACMS.

LOST

I've lost my HS registration certificate bearing no 262907/2023-24. Arpan Jyoti Bora Son of Rupram Bora and Basanti Bora, Nagaon Choiali, Amulapatty.

stone unturned to prevent any disruptions. The administration has imposed restrictions, strictly barring unau-

trict administration has rolled out strict security protocols to prevent any form of malpractice or external interference upcoming High Leaving Certificate (HSLC) Examination 2025 and the Higher Secondary Final Examination 2025.

magistrate Mridul Yadav, enforces prohibitory measures under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, ensuring a free, fair, and transparent examination process

commence from February 15 and conclude on March 3, 2025, across 44 designated centers, and the Higher Secondary Final Examination scheduled from February 13 to In addition to movement restric-

tronic pens, scanners, and ear-

Yadav has reaffirmed the administration's unwavering commitment to maintaining the credibility of the examination process, urging students, parents, and the general public to extend their cooperation.

Workshop on vermin composting held sponsible citizens. Sagarika Patowary, assistant profes-

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Feb 11: The ECO Club of Nowgong Girls' College organised a day long workshop on 'Vermicomposting, Solid waste Management & Rainwater harvesting'. The workshop was supported by Ministry of environment, forest and climate change and implemented by Assam Science Technology and Environment Council under the Environment Education

The programme was started with the felicitation of the dignitaries and principal, Nowgong Girls' College Kulen Chandra Das delivered the welcome address, highlighting the need to restore ground water levels and emerging concerns of water scarcity, suggesting measures to conserve water. Das also elaborated on the alarming use of plastic waste and suggested measures for ensuring environment sustainability.

Zina Moni Shandilya, coordinator of Eco Club modrated the workshop and provided insights into the environment education programme initiated by Ministry of environment, forest and climate change

She also highlighted the various ongoing activities under Eco Club for creating awareness among the resor, North Eastern regional Institute of Water and Land Management(NERIWALM) was invited as resource person to provide training on rainwater Harvesting. She explained the concept of rainwater harvesting and its significance in water conservation. She elaborated the basic rainwater harvesting system,

including the catchment area, storage units, filtration mechanisms citing animated videos. She emphasized the famous concept of 'catch the rain where it falls'

Prarthana Priyom Hazarika, assistant professor, North Eastern regional Institute of Water and Land Management (NERIWALM) was also invited as resource person to provide training on vermicomposting techniques and creating the vermibed.

Hazarika thoroughly explained the methods, process, materials required and preventive measures involved in vermicomposting. She also highlighted the benefits of organic fertilizers and the significance of vermicomposting in reducing the solid waste. She carried out practical hands on session where the students were taught to layer the vermibed and release the earthworms

for initiating vermicomposting process.

'Sankardeva Study Award'

<u>HT Correspondent</u> NAGAON, Feb 11: Noted scholar of Sankari art and literature and researcher Tilak Chandra Majumdar was presented the 'Sankardeva Study Award' by the Paresh Baishya Foundation, Kamrup at a ceremony held at his residence on Sunday last here. The award, included a citation, a shawl, a Japie (a traditional Assamese hat), a souvenir, a gamosa (a traditional Assamese scarf), and a book, was presented to Majumdar by

Speaking on the occasion, Baishya said that the foundation was established with an initial fund of Rs 127 and has now grown to have over Rs 20 lakh currently. He also spoke about the foundation's objectives, which include promoting education and culture. Majumdar, who has dedicated his life to researching the life and works of Shankardey, a 15th-century Assamese saint and scholar, expressed his gratitude for the award. He said that he felt humbled by the recognition and acknowledged that his work on Sankardeva was a lifelong commitment.

Paresh Baishya, the founder of the Paresh Baishya Foundation.

Tilak Chandra Majumdar receives Miscreant in Sootea police net

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, Feb 11: Acting on a tip off, a team of Sootea police in association with the Cyber cell/PTL managed to apprehend a miscreant from Amoni, Chamuguri, Nagaon on Tuesday and seized a sum of rupees seven thousand from his possession.

The fraud has been identified as Suren Robi Das who originally hailed from Kumolia. According to information, an FIR was lodged at Sootea PS under case no 16/2025 U/S 318(2)/316(2) of BNS, 2023 which stated that the accused Suren Robi Das sold a model OPPOOF25 Pro 5G android mobile phone to one Tapan Biswas, a resident of No 2 Adabheti under Sootea PS with worth of 16, 000 at his Salon located at Karayani centre in the southern part of Sootea. The victim tried to trace the fraud but in vain and later lodged an FIR at Sootea police station on Sunday.

On the basis of the FIR, the police team tried to locate the whereabouts of Suren Robi Das and finally apprehended him from Amoni on Tuesday. Further investigation is on, informed Trilochan Das, officer in-charge of Sootea PS. The conscious people praised the timely action taken by the Sootea police against the miscreant

society," he said.

Bodo Mothers' Association demands initiatives against drugs and anti social activities

Organisations highlight evil effects of anti social activities

HT correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Feb 11: The Bodo Mothers' Association (BMA) and All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) have demanded initiatives against drugs and all anti social activities from the society to have a congenial human well-being.

The mothers' association and the ABSU jointly carried out an awareness and protest rally in this connection against various anti social activities across the district headquarters in the state of Assam on Tuesday, and sought strict social initiatives in the society. In Kokrajhar, the rally was started from

the Bodofa Children's Park, JD Road in Kokrajhar which has been aimed to raise awareness and lodge protest against various anti-social activities. Several hundred student activists, citizens participated in the rally with holding banner,

social injustices. ABSU vice president, Khwrwndao Wary flagged off the rally, and urged for a healthy

placards marching through the streets of

Kokrajhar town to voice their stand against



ABSU president, Dipen Boro stated initiatives against drugs and all anti-social activities from the society is the key objective behind the rally being organised by the Bodo

Mothers' Association and the students union.

He said that the rally aimed to raise

diate action against the rising menace of anti-social activities in our society.

awareness and a symbol to demand imme-

"This protest is not just a rally but a collective voice for justice, safety, and social reform. Let's stand united in eradicating these evils and securing a better tomorrow for our

tivities in our society," he said. The demands of the movement being organised by the Bodo Mothers' Association and All Bodo Students Union, include- eradication of drugs, alcohol, and illegal liquor, awareness against substance abuse. Eradicating child marriage as early marriage deprives children especially girls of their education, health, and rights. Prevention of women trafficking as women and young

"It is my great privilege to be part of a sig-

nificant movement as the Bodo Mothers' As-

sociation organised an awareness cum

protest rally across all district headquarters

in Assam, including the Bodoland Territorial

Region (BTR) which is aimed to raise

awareness and demand immediate action

against the rising menace of anti-social ac-

girls are being exploited through trafficking. The awareness and protest rally was also carried out in several districts of Bodoland Territorial Region as well as in different parts of the state of Assam that received a good response from the citizens.

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

I have spent the past ten years in just about every war zone there was -Christiane Amanpour

Selection of new Delhi CM

arvesh Sahib Singh Varma is the newly elected BJP MLA of New Delhi assembly constituency. He defeated AAP convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who was also the sitting AAP MLA from the same assembly constituency. Varma's electoral fight with Kejriwal was a tug of war with Varma matching Kejriwal trick for trick. In some ways Varma even outdid Kejriwal, like in distributing freebies from the footpath. Like getting down on the knees to fit sandals on dainty feet, a feat, which escaped Kejriwal's fertile mind. Parvesh Varma is a Jat and the BJP could do with a Jat Chief Minister for Delhi, which is surrounded by "Jat country." And Jat stronghold Haryana doesn't have a Jat CM! Therefore, the strategic importance of having a Jat as the Delhi Chief Minister. Varma's two daughters pumped up the energy and the clamour to make Parvesh Varma Chief Minister kept gathering momentum. Varma's victory over Kejriwal made him a 'giant killer'. There's a problem, though. Somebody is blocking Parvesh Varma's path to the Chief Minister's post. Somebody too powerful to be dismissed without a pause: Prime Minister Narendra Modi enjoys springing surprises. He also doesn't care what says who! No BJP leader will make the emphatic statement "Varma will be Delhi Chief

Prime Minister Modi is both albatross and Damocles Sword for every BJP leader worth his salt. Modi will name the Delhi Chief Minister. Till then, Parvesh Varma can sit tight, fingers crossed, and wait for Modi to return from the United States. The Prime Minister calls the shots, makes the decisions for the party. Modi reportedly has everybody's interest at heart but will follow only his heart, especially, when it comes to selecting Chief Ministers. So, who becomes Delhi Chief Minister is solely up to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Till then Parvesh Varma will sweat. A number of other newly-elected MLAs will also sweat and Modi will watch them sweat. Being top-gun has its pleasures, and its perks. Modi is the BJP's one and only Numero Uno! Still, there are fluttering hearts. There are people wanting to become Delhi Chief Minister. There's Ramesh Bidhuri, who Atishi defeated. There's the party's "purvanchali face", Member of Parliament Manoj Tiwari. There are also a couple of Delhi-unit office-bearers, who helmed the BJP elec-

The party is now in a limbo and Modi will have to land to break the limbo even as a number of 'woman names' are being spooked about including that of four newlyelected BJP woman MLAs -- Rekha Gupta, Poonam Sharma, Shikha Roy and Neelam Pahalwan. There's also Smriti Irani, who reportedly "silently campaigned" for the BJP. Bansuri Swaraj, whose mother Sushma Swaraj was also Delhi Chief Minister, also figures. Check the photos of the BJP's election campaign and Bansuri Swaraj is in every photo: On the stage with Prime Minister Modi, on the stage with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and on the stage with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath! Has Prime Minister Modi's mind been made up?

Bir Chilarai: Assam's master strategist

B ir Chilarai, born as Shukladhwaj in 1510 AD, was one of the greatest military generals in Indian history, yet his contributions remain largely unrecognized. He was a key figure in the Koch dynasty, which ruled over the western part of Assam and expanded its influence across northeastern India. As the younger brother of Maharaja Nara Narayan, the ruler of the Koch kingdom, Chilarai played a pivotal role in strengthening and expanding the empire through his military prowess and strategic brilliance. His name, "Chilarai," meaning "Kite Prince," was a testament to his swift and effective warfare, likened to the speed and precision of a kite in the sky.

The Koch dynasty rose to power after the fall of the Khen dynasty in 1498 AD. The kingdom of Kamata, which had been under the Khen rulers, came under the control of Maharaja Chandan, who ruled for thirteen years. However, as he had no heirs, the throne passed to Viswa Singha, the founder of the Koch dynasty. Viswa Singha laid the foundation of the kingdom, consolidating various tribal and ethnic groups under his rule. His efforts paved the way for the later expansion of the empire under his descendants, particularly his son Nara Narayan and his younger son Shukladhwaj, who would later be known as Bir Chilarai.

Bir Chilarai emerged as an extraordinary military leader who played a crucial role in expanding the Koch kingdom. He was not only a skilled warrior but also a brilliant strategist, capable of outmaneuvering his enemies with speed and precision. Under his leadership, the Koch army achieved significant victories against formidable adversaries such as the Ahoms, the Mughals, and the rulers of Bengal and Odisha. His campaigns led to the establishment of Koch dominance over a vast region, extending from Assam to parts of Bengal, Bihar, and even

One of the most remarkable aspects of Chilarai's military strategy was his ability to strike swiftly and decisively. His rapid movements and surprise attacks made him a feared commander, earning him the title "Chilarai."



His knowledge of the terrain, combined with his tactical brilliance, allowed him to defeat larger and betterequipped armies. His military campaigns were characterized by meticulous planning and precise execution, which enabled the Koch forces to maintain their dominance in the region.

Chilarai's contributions to the Koch kingdom were not limited to military conquests alone. He was instrumental in maintaining internal stability within the empire and ensuring efficient governance. His leadership skills extended beyond the battlefield, as he played a key role in strengthening the administrative framework of the kingdom. By securing strategic alliances and maintaining diplomatic relations with neighboring states, he ensured the long-term stability of the Koch

One of his most significant military achievements was his campaign against the Ahoms. The Ahom kingdom, which ruled over the eastern part of Assam, was a powerful state known for its formidable military and strategic acumen. Chilarai led the Koch army against the Ahoms and achieved a series of victories, successfully expanding the Koch influence into Ahom territories. However, despite his military successes, he also understood the importance of diplomacy. Instead of engaging in prolonged warfare, he negotiated treaties that en-

DEGREE OF THOUGHT By: Satyabrat Borah

sured peace and stability be-

tween the two kingdoms. Chilarai also played a crucial role in the Koch campaigns against the Mughals. The Mughal Empire, under Emperor Akbar, was expanding its influence in the eastern regions of India. The Koch kingdom, being one of the dominant powers in the region, inevitably came into conflict with the Mughals. Chilarai led his forces against the Mughal army, employing his superior tactical skills to counter the Mughal advances. His ability to adapt to changing battle conditions and use innovative strategies enabled the Koch army to withstand the Mughal pressure and

maintain its sovereignty. Another significant campaign led by Chilarai was against the rulers of Bengal and Odisha. These regions were under the control of various Muslim rulers who posed a threat to the Koch kingdom. Chilarai's military expeditions in these territories were marked by his characteristic speed and precision, which allowed him to secure crucial victories and expand the Koch influence into these regions. His campaigns not only brought territorial expansion but also economic prosperity to the kingdom, as the newly conquered regions contributed to the wealth and re-

sources of the empire. Despite his military achievements, Chilarai was known for his sense of justice and compassion. Unlike many other conquerors of his time, he treated his enemies with respect and ensured that the civilian population was not harmed during his campaigns. His leadership was characterized by a strong sense of duty and a commitment to the welfare of his people. He believed in the principles of good governance and worked towards ensuring peace and prosperity in the regions under his control.

Chilarai's contributions ex-

and governance; he was also a patron of art, culture, and religion. Under his influence, the Koch kingdom witnessed a flourishing of literature, architecture, and religious harmony. He played a key role in promoting Vaishnavism, a religious movement that emphasized devotion and equality. His support for Vaishnavite saints and scholars helped in the spread of the Bhakti movement in Assam and Bengal. This cultural renaissance under Chilarai's patronage contributed to the rich heritage of the region.

Unfortunately, despite his remarkable achievements, Bir Chilarai remains a relatively unknown figure in mainstream Indian history. While other great warriors and generals have been celebrated, Chilarai's contributions have often been overlooked. His legacy, however, lives on in Assam and northeastern India, where he is revered as a hero. His courage, military brilliance, and commitment to justice continue to inspire generations.

Chilarai's life came to an end in 1571 AD, but his legacy endured through the strength and stability of the Koch kingdom that he helped build. His contributions played a crucial role in shaping the history of Assam and the northeastern region of India. His name is still remembered with great respect in Assam, where he is honored through various cultural and historical commemorations.

Bir Chilarai was one of the greatest military strategists and leaders in Indian history. His role in expanding and consolidating the Koch kingdom, his brilliant military tactics, and his commitment to justice and governance make him a legendary figure. Despite being overlooked in mainstream historical narratives, his legacy remains alive in the hearts of the people of Assam. His life serves as a testament to the power of strategy, leadership, and unwavering dedication to one's homeland. Through his conquests, administrative reforms, and cultural contributions, Chilarai left an indelible mark on Indian history, making him a true hero of the Koch dynasty.

Mahabir Chilarai - Unmatched bravery in history



By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

ahabir Chilarai remains one of the most revered figures in Assam's history, celebrated for his extraordinary courage, military brilliance, and unwavering dedication to his kingdom. His name, Chilarai, was derived from the word "Chila," meaning kite, symbolizing his swift and precise battle strategies. His real name was Shukladhwaj, and he was the younger brother of King Naranarayan of the Koch dynasty. Throughout his life, he played a crucial role in expanding the Koch kingdom, securing its borders, and protecting its cultural and religious heritage. His fearless leadership and strategic acumen made him an unparalleled warrior, a patron of spiritual movements, and a defender of his people.

Born in 1510 to Maharaja Viswa Singha and Queen Padmavati, Chilarai grew up in an era of shifting political landscapes and constant warfare. His father, Viswa Singha, was the founder of the Koch dynasty, and his elder brother, Naranarayan, later became its ruler. Together, they shaped the destiny of Assam and its neighboring regions. Chilarai's early education in Varanasi exposed him to philosophy, administration, and military tactics, equipping him with the knowledge necessary to serve as both a statesman and a warrior. His intelligence and discipline were evident from a young age, and he quickly rose to prominence as one of the most trusted figures in the king-

Chilarai's bravery and military prowess were unmatched, earning him a place among the greatest warriors of medieval India. His campaigns were marked by speed, precision, and brilliant strategy. One of his most significant military achievements was his victorious campaign against the Ahom kingdom in 1563. The Ahoms, known for their formidable military strength, posed a major threat to the Koch dy-

and proving Chilarai's capabilities as a Following his victory over the Ahoms, Chilarai turned his attention to other regions. He launched campaigns against the Kachari kingdom, capturing its capital, Maibong, and forcing the Kachari king to accept Koch supremacy. His military conquests extended further to Manipur, Jaintia, and Sylhet, ensuring that the influence of the Koch kingdom spread far and wide. These victories were not motivated by personal ambition but by a vision of unity and security for the region. His ability to lead swift, calculated attacks allowed him to win battles with minimal losses, earning him immense respect among his soldiers and the

nasty. Chilarai led a swift and well-

planned attack, capturing the Ahom

capital, Garhgaon. This victory was a

turning point in Assam's history, solid-

ifying the power of the Koch kingdom

people of Assam. Despite his reputation as a fearless warrior, Chilarai was also deeply spiritual and played a crucial role in promoting Neo-Vaishnavism in Assam. He was a devoted follower of Srimanta Sankardeva, the great saintreformer who led the Bhakti movement in the region. At a time when Sankardeva and his followers faced persecution, Chilarai provided them with refuge and patronage. His support ensured the survival and growth of the Bhakti movement, which preached unity, equality, and devotion. Chilarai's close association with Sankardeva demonstrated his deep commitment to cultural and spiritual development alongside his military

His contributions to Assamese society went beyond warfare and spirituality. Chilarai was a visionary administrator who understood the importance of governance and public welfare. He implemented policies that improved agriculture, trade, and infrastructure in the kingdom. His leadership encouraged the construction of temples, roads, and water reservoirs, benefiting the common people and strengthening the economic foundation of the Koch dynasty. His concern for the well-being of his subjects set him apart as a ruler who combined strength with compas-

Chilarai's military discipline was matched by his sense of justice and fairness. He believed in treating both his allies and his enemies with respect, making him a beloved leader among his people. His ability to balance power with humility and wisdom made him a unique figure in Assam's history. His leadership was not just about expanding territories but about creating a strong and united kingdom where people could live in peace and prosperity.

Tragically, Chilarai's life was cut short in 1571 during a military campaign near the Ganges. His untimely death was a devastating loss for the Koch kingdom, which had flourished under his leadership. His soldiers and subjects mourned the passing of a leader who had dedicated his life to protecting and uplifting his people. Despite his death, his legacy lived on, and his contributions continued to shape

the region for years to come. Even today, the memory of Bir Chilarai is honored in Assam. His birth anniversary is observed as Bir Chilarai Divas, a day dedicated to celebrating his bravery and contributions. The Assam government has also instituted the Bir Chilarai Award to recognize acts of extraordinary courage and service. These efforts ensure that his legacy remains alive and continues to inspire future generations.

Chilarai's life is a testament to the power of courage, wisdom, and dedication. His military genius, combined with his deep spiritual faith and concern for the welfare of his people, made him a leader unlike any other. He was not just a warrior but a protector. a visionary, and a symbol of resilience. His story reminds us of the importance of leadership guided by both strength and compassion. For the people of Assam, Chilarai is more than a historical figure—he is an enduring source of inspiration, a hero whose legacy continues to shape the identity and pride of the region. (The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-magazine SAMPRO-TIK. He can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com or 9954812261,

Chilarai: The unyielding protector of Assamese culture and the Koch Kingdom's forgotten hero

By: Dipak Kurmi

The story of Chilarai, the remarkable general of the Koch Kingdom, is one that embodies bravery, intellect, and a profound sense of duty toward uniting and protecting a diverse and culturally rich region. While Lachit Borphukan's name has gained national prominence as a celebrated military hero from Assam, Chilarai remains an underappreciated figure in Indian history. Despite his extraordinary contributions to the political, cultural, and military landscape of medieval India, Chilarai's legacy has largely faded into obscurity. His life and accomplishments offer invaluable lessons about leadership, unity, and cultural preservation.

Chilarai, also known as

Shukladhwaja, served as the commander-in-chief under his brother, King Naranarayan, who ruled the Koch Kingdom during the 16th century. His military prowess earned him the moniker "Kite King," symbolizing his ability to swoop down swiftly and decisively on his enemies. According to historian Arnold Toynbee, Chilarai ranks among the world's three greatest military generals, alongside Chhatrapati Shivaji and Napoleon Bonaparte. His campaigns unified vast territories across eastern India, extending the Koch Kingdom's boundaries from modern-day Bangladesh to Assam, including parts of Bhutan, Manipur, and Meghalaya. Under his leadership, the Koch Kingdom not only emerged as a military powerhouse but also as a center of culture and learn-

One of Chilarai's most significant military feats was the subjugation of the Ahom Kingdom in 1561. His forces laid siege to Gargaon, forcing King Sukhampha to retreat to the Naga Hills. This victory solidified the Koch KingChilarai, also known as Shukladhwaja, served nesses to his legacy.

Despite his immense con as the commander-in-chief under his brother, King Naranarayan, who ruled the Koch Kingdom during the 16th century. His military prowess earned him the moniker "Kite King," symbolizing his ability to swoop down swiftly and decisively on his enemies.

dom's dominance in the region and underscored Chilarai's strategic genius. Yet, his approach to governance was not limited to conquest; he sought to establish stability and cultural unity across the territories he subdued. Regions like Karatoya, Mymensingh, and Guwahati, among others, came under Koch control, either directly or as vassal states. By incorporating diverse communities into the kingdom, Chilarai played a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity of the region, later known

as Kamrupa-Kamata. Chilarai's legacy, however, extends beyond his military conquests. His profound respect for Assamese culture and his pivotal role in preserving it make him a figure of immense historical importance. One of the most compelling chapters of his life is his association with Srimanta Sankardev, the revered saint and social reformer who propagated Neo-Vaishnavism in Assam. During his time, Sankardev faced relentless persecution from the Ahom rulers and Brahminical priests, who falsely accused him of heresy. King Suklenmung of the Ahom Kingdom ordered the execution of Sankardev's son-in-law, Hari Jowai, forcing Sankardev to flee Majuli.

When Sankardev sought refuge in the Koch Kingdom, it was Chilarai who recognized the saint's spiritual greatness and took it upon himself to protect him. At a time when his brother Naranarayan, a devout Shakti worshipper, was swayed by

fabricated stories against Sankardev, Chilarai intervened to ensure the saint's safety. He provided shelter to Sankardev in his palace and later facilitated his audience with Naranarayan, during which Sankardev sang the hymn Madhu Damara Dhara. This event marked a turning point, as Naranarayan became a patron of Sankardev, ushering in a golden age for Assamese culture.

Under the patronage of the Koch rulers, Sankardev composed many of his literary and artistic masterpieces, including the Kirtan Ghosa, Bhakti Ratnakar, and the Vrindavani Vastra. Chilarai's support allowed Sankardev's Neo-Vaishnavite movement to flourish, promoting a monotheistic and inclusive form of worship that stood in contrast to rigid Brahmanical traditions. The establishment of satras (monastic institutions) during this period laid the foundation for Assamese cultural and spiritual identity, a legacy that endures to this

Chilarai's contributions were not limited to military and cultural spheres. He also played a pivotal role in infrastructural development, constructing forts and roads that facilitated the administration of the vast Koch Kingdom. The Gohain Kamal Ali, a 650-km-long road built during his time, remains a testament to his vision for connectivity and governance. Though much of this infrastructure has disappeared, remnants of forts like those in Narayanpur and Chilapata Forest stand as silent wit-

tributions, Chilarai's later years were marked by tragedy. After his death in 1571 AD, internal divisions within the Koch Kingdom began to surface. His son Raghudev rebelled against Naranarayan, leading to the partition of the kingdom. The eastern territories fell under Raghudev, while Naranaravan's son Lakshminarayan ruled the western part. This division weakened the once-mighty Koch Kingdom, making it vulnerable to external invasions. By the end of the 16th century, the kingdom had lost much of its former glory, culminating in its eventual annexation by the Mughal Empire.

Chilarai's contributions to Assamese culture and the Koch Kingdom's legacy are unparalleled. However, the neglect of historical sites associated with him and the lack of widespread recognition for his achievements are disheartening. Monuments like the temples of Boro Mahadeo and Choto Mahadeo, the Bheladanga Satra, and the gold-plated chariot he donated for the Doul Jatra lie in a state of disrepair. The assimilation of Koch Bihar into West Bengal in 1950 further severed the cultural and historical ties of the region with Assam.

It is imperative that efforts be made to preserve Chilarai's legacy and honor his contributions to Indian history. By commemorating his life through research, restoration of historical sites, and educational initiatives, we can ensure that future generations recognize his role as a unifier, protector, and patron of Assamese culture. Chilarai was not just a military genius; he was a visionary leader whose legacy continues to inspire and resonate with the ideals of unity, resilience, and cultural preservation. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmiglpltd@gmail.com)

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025 Causes of unwanted hair growth (hirsutism)

By: Zawn Villines and Alina Sharon

ll female people have body hair. However, it may be more noticeable in some than in others. Hirsutism is when hair growth becomes excessive, and this may include facial hair growth.

All people experience typical hair growth on their bodies as they mature sexually. Hirsutism happens when hormones cause hair to grow in the female body after puberty in areas where it typically only grows in males.

Hirsutism can occur due to a number of underlying medical conditions. In some cases, there may not be an underlying cause. A person can remove unwanted hair cosmetically, and it is up to them to decide whether or not they wish to receive further treatment.

Sex and gender exist on spectrums. This article will use the terms "male" and "female" to refer to a person's sex assigned at birth.

Causes of excess body hair

Androgens are sex hormones that help develop the reproductive system and secondary sexual traits of males after puberty. One of the most common types of androgens is testosterone. Though doctors may refer to androgens as male hormones, they are present in both male and female bodies.

Both sexes are responsible for hair growth under the arms and in the pubic area after puberty. In males, they also stimulate the growth of other body hair, as well as facial hair such as mustache and beard.

Several medical conditions can cause people assigned female at birth to produce too many androgens and grow ex-

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) The most common cause of excess body hair in people assigned female at birth is polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), which is a hormonal disorder causing the body to produce too many androgens. The condition accounts for more than 70% of hirsutism cases.

Doctors do not fully understand the causes of PCOS. However, a person can manage the symptoms with birth control pills or other hormonal treat-

Congenital adrenal hyperplasia

rare group of disorders that affect the adrenal glands and can cause severe symptoms.

The female body may produce too many androgens when the adrenal glands do not work correctly. This can lead to a variety of symptoms, including excessive hair growth.

Doctors do screen for conditions that cause adrenal hyperplasia. However, mild cases may not be possible to diagnose until puberty.

Tumors

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, 0.3 percent of hirsutism cases happen due to a tumor that releases androgens.

The body hair appears rapidly in these cases and may include other symptoms, such as a mass in the stomach or pelvis.

Medication

Some medications can cause additional hair growth. A person who notices new hair growth after trying a new prescription drug should tell their doc-

Some drugs with links to hirsutism include:

- certain antipsychotic drugs • glucocorticosteroids
- · certain anti-seizure medications · certain immunosupressive medica-
- hormone drugs, such as testosterone, plus some drugs that alter hormone production

Hyperprolactinemia

Hyperprolactinemia is a condition that causes the body to produce high levels of the hormone prolactin.

Prolactin is primarily responsible for producing breast milk in breastfeeding people. People with this condition may lactate even if they are not nursing.

Some people with hyperprolactinemia may experience infertility or not have their periods. The condition can also cause hirsutism.

Thyroid disorders

The thyroid produces hormones that help regulate metabolism and body temperature. The two common thyroid disorders are hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism.

When the thyroid malfunctions, it may create an imbalance of hormones that causes excess body hair growth in



Other causes

Sometimes hirsutism has no apparent cause, and doctors can find no clear evidence of an underlying disorder. When hirsutism has no clear reason, a doctor may refer to it as idiopathic hirsutism.

This is typically a diagnosis of exclusion when a doctor can eliminate all known, possible underlying causes. Idiopathic hirsutism represents about 10% of all cases of hirsutism and 50% of all mild cases of excessive hair growth.

When the cause of hirsutism is unknown, it may be genetic. People of East Indian and Mediterranean origin who were assigned female at birth tend to have this type of hair growth.

'Normal' vs. 'abnormal' hair

It can be challenging to determine what counts as excessive body hair. It is typical for female people to have fine hair all over the body, including the face. Many may also notice thicker, darker hairs on the stomach, chin, and

The Ferriman-Gallwey scale

To help classify what counts as hirsutism, researchers developed the Ferriman-Gallwey scale. This scale assigns a score based on how much hair growth a person has on various body

According to the scale, fine hair is "normal," as are a few coarse strays. It is more likely to be a problem when hair is thick on many areas of the body. A score greater than 7 is typically indicative of excessive hair growth or The original scale was developed in

susceptible to androgen-related hair growth. Researchers later reduced this scoring system to focus on just nine areas, leading to what is now known as the modified Ferriman–Gallwey score. Variation across populations However, research has shown that

1961. It involves measuring the volume

of hair growth at 11 sites in the body

the cut-off score of 8 may not be applicable for people of different ethnicities and racial groups who were assigned female at birth. Some populations may be naturally predisposed to variable levels of hair growth.

People of Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, or Hispanic descent who were assigned female at birth typically need a score of 9 or above for hair growth to qualify as excessive.

The cut-off score for South American people assigned female at birth is 6, whereas the cut-off score is 2 for Asian people. In the United States and the United Kingdom, the standard cutoff score is 8 for both Black and white

Beyond the scale

Generally, any cut-off score under 15 may indicate mild hirsutism, and a score over 25 can indicate severe hirsutism. However, clinical practices by the Endocrine Society suggest that regardless of the scale, any person assigned female at birth who feels they have abnormal hair growth should speak to a medical professional.

Furthermore, the doctor's decision to refer their patient to testing or treatment should be patient-focused, meaning based on how the patient experiences the condition's symptoms.

If a person is troubled by their symptoms despite cosmetic measures, a doc-

tor should refer them to testing and treatment.

Diagnosing hirsutism In addition to looking at the Ferriman-Gallwey scale, a doctor will diagnose hirsutism usually by excluding other causes for excessive hair growth. If an initial exam suggests a person has excessive hair growth, a doctor must then look for the reason.

Tests may include:

• thorough physical exam • questions about the patient's family

history of similar symptoms, symptom onset, and any medications they may be taking

· bloodwork to measure androgen and other hormone levels

· charting of a person's periods and obtaining a detailed menstrual history • imaging scans to check for tumors and other growths

• pelvic exam in which the doctor will look for signs of androgenization or tumors

Natural treatment options

Natural treatments can help with unwanted hair growth due to PCOS.

These include:

 Diet changes: For people assigned female at birth who have insulin resistance, reducing their intake of sugars and carbohydrates can help. Some people also try specific PCOS diets. However, there is little research on how well these diets work.

· Weight management: Maintaining a moderate weight can help control many symptoms of PCOS. For many people assigned female at birth, the right combination of diet and exercise may be key.

• Mental health support: PCOS is a complex disorder that can change a person's appearance, fertility, and health. Many people find that support groups, therapy, and positive self-talk

Hair removal methods, such as shaving or using hair removal creams, can be effective. However, these methods will not address the underlying cause of excess hair growth

People without a diagnosis or who have an underlying medical condition should talk with their doctors about medical treatment.

Medical treatments for excessive hair growth

Medical treatments can help with excessive or unwanted hair growth due to PCOS. Many people assigned female at birth find that taking birth control pills helps to regulate their hormones and their periods while reducing hair growth. Others may need to use insulin to control diabetes.

Another medical treatment that might be useful is spironolactone, a drug that can control the effects of specific hormones. People who have PCOS and are trying to become pregnant may need artificial hormone treatments to induce ovulation.

When someone assigned female at birth has a condition other than PCOS, treatment depends on the disorder, their medical history, and other factors.

Hormone treatments can restore hormonal balance, though a person might also need additional treatments. For example, if there is a tumor that produces androgens, doctors may need to remove the tumor with surgery.

Takeaway

Hirsutism happens when someone assigned female at birth experiences the growth of excessive male-looking hair. When the cause is an underlying condition, a person can seek treatment for the underlying cause to reduce excessive hair growth.

Most hormonal disorders, including PCOS, respond to medical treatments. Proper treatment can reduce the amount of body hair a person experi-

However, the definition of excessive hair growth is not always medical.

Almost all female people grow body hair, and even healthy people may grow much more body hair than they believe to be desirable. In many mild cases, hair removal methods make it possible to quickly eliminate cosmetic concerns of excess hair

When a person is troubled by such hair growth and unable to control the hair growth cosmetically, this can be enough to qualify their condition as excessive hair growth and they can seek treatment. (Courtesy: Medical News

If you don't save your daughter, then where will you get a daughter-in-law from?

By: Priyanka Saurabh

here is a saying in Haryana, "If you don't save daughters, then where will you get daughters-in-law from?" While it is wrong to assume that all daughters are future brides, the phrase is effective in drawing attention to the dire consequences of sex-selective abortion in a state that has struggled with a "daughter shortage" for decades. India's sex ratio at birth (SRB) remains low despite advances in healthcare, education, and income. The SRB was put at 929 girls per 1,000 boys by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-21). This is a slight improvement over NFHS-4 (2015-16: 919 girls per 1,000 boys), but it still shows a persistent gender bias. Historically, some states have had more skewed ratios, particularly in northern and western India.

Despite the Pre-Conception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act of 1994, sex-biased sex selection has been made possible by prenatal sex determination techniques. Wealthier economic groups and higher castes have higher rates of SRB skewed towards males, indicating that monetary incentives alone may not be a sufficient deterrent SRB has improved in states such as Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana since the implementation of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao. SRB is declining in southern and eastern states. which are generally known to have better sex ratios. This is a worrying trend. Although states surrounding Delhi have improved, Delhi too has seen a decline in SRB. While here were the basic goals and strategies for the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

The PCPNDT Act must be enforced more stringently to prohibit sex selection on the basis of gender. Girls' education, safety, and survival must be enhanced. Delaying child marriage and increasing women's educational attainment is important. Efforts must be made at the state and national levels to tackle patriarchal beliefs. To prevent sex-selective abortions, the PCPNDT Act must be strengthened. Financial incentives such as Harvana's Ladli and Aapki Beti Hamari Beti programs encourage families to help girls. Providing funds for girls' education through educational empowerment, scholarships, and infrastructure support are effective steps. Limited effectiveness outside high inequality areas The impact of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao varies; some southern and eastern states are seeing a decline in SRB. This means that focused interventions in highinequality states are not enough.

Social norms that favor sons include the statement that "raising a daughter is like watering a neighbor's garden." Changing attitudes requires more than just financial incentives. Low female labor force participation is still one of the lowest in the world, even with improved educational standards. Women who experience economic insecurity are less able to resist pa-



triarchal systems. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2024, India ranks 127th globally in terms of pay equality, with women earning only ₹ 39.8 for every ₹ 100 earned by men. Conditional cash incentives (e.g., conditional cash transfers) are the focus of policy rather than systemic change. The underlying causes of gender bias are not addressed by the Ladli scheme. To achieve structural change in the areas of employment, property rights, and financial autonomy, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao must go beyond catchphrases.

Gender-sensitive policies are being strengthened. Instead of "saving girls," Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao needs to focus on "empowering women" in leadership, financial inclusion, and employment. Encourage more women to pursue entrepreneurship and careers by offering incentives. Address employment gaps and pay disparities. Enforce equal pay laws to reduce the gender pay gap. Encourage more people to work by providing maternity benefits, flexible work schedules, and childcare assistance. Increasing enforcement of the PCPNDT Act, monitoring diagnostic clinics, and taking strict action against illegal sex determination are all ways to strengthen legal and social reforms. Strengthen accountability systems at the local level of government. Ensure women's rights to property and inheri-

Make inheritance rights equitable, especially in areas where daughters are still not given equal property ownership. Encourage women to own property together within families. Drive community-driven behavior change and engagement. Increase grassroots participation through local leaders. Encourage teachers, religious leaders, and influential members of the community to oppose patriarchal traditions. Involve more men in conversations about gender equality. Campaigns that change the narrative of the value of daughters need to shift their focus from "protecting girls" to "empowering girls." Encourage uplifting messages about daughters as assets for the success of the family. The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao program has successfully raised awareness on the issue of son preference, but due to inadequate implementation and monitoring, it has failed to achieve its main goal in its current form.

The scheme is losing the momentum it has built up over the years due to the lack of district and state-level meetings. Therefore, the working committees at the district and state level should be represented by community-level workers, aware of the difficulties faced by female students, such as lack of toilets, and have effective monitoring and evaluation systems to show how well the schemes are working towards their goals. In India, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao has been a notable policy intervention to address gender-based discrimination. Although it has contributed to the improvement of SRB in some areas, its impact is still limited due to inherent patriarchal beliefs and structural barriers to women's economic advancement.

To ensure that women have equal access to economic, social, and legal opportunities as men, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao must replace its protectionist strategy with one focused on rights-based empowerment. Only then will we be able to move beyond conditional incentives and achieve lasting equality, thereby reducing the gender gap. Deeply ingrained cultural beliefs often make it difficult to implement laws that empower women, such as the right to property ownership, requiring community participation led by local leaders and influencers to question and change patriarchal norms. While this requires more subtle efforts than sloganeering and conditional cash incentives, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme has certainly been a positive step. Negotiating gender equality under patriarchal norms may not be of any use. Slowly but surely, we must change our approach.

Stock imaged NE tribal young woman

By: Nong-E Terang

n the age of social media coupled in India with the Cheapest in the world, where a single post can catapult an individual to overnight fame, Rasinza Tissopi, a young woman in her late 20s and medium build from Diphu in Assam's Karbi Anglong district, has phenomenon. Her photographs, shared innocently by herself on social media often in traditional dresses, have gone viral, but not in the way one might expect. Instead of being celebrated as an individual, her photos posted on social media has been downloaded and appropriated by restaurants, festival organizers, and even government agencies, all without her knowledge or consent. This raises important questions about privacy, attribution, and the ethical use of personal images in the

digital age. The Viral Journey of Rasinja's Image

Rasinja Tissopi, a resident of Diphu, never imagined that her social media posts would transcend their original purpose. Her photographs, which she shared on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, were meant to capture moments of her life and share them with friends and family. However, these images soon took on a life of their own. Her striking features and traditional attire resonated with many, and her pictures began circulating widely across the inter-

What followed was a series of unexpected uses of her image. A restaurant in Guwahati used her photograph as part of its décor, while another popular establishment in Humayunpur, Safdarjung, Delhi displayed her image prominently on a

During the Karbi Anglong Day 2024 celebrations, organized by the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council at Taralangso, her image was used as a gate decoration, becoming a symbol of the festival. Similarly, her photograph in traditional Arunachali tribal dress taken and posted on social media by herself was seen in an ethnic festival in Arunachal

Pradesh. Her image, particularly in Karbi traditional dress with her hands folded as if in welcoming someone has been reduced to a stock photograph of a NE young girl. It will not be a surprise even if someone, somewhere is selling it as such. If even not, those who are using the particular image are seeing the positive side effects to found herself at the centre of their establishment, the decan unexpected and peculiar orators are finding it useful and commercial places are getting footfalls. Even more strikingly, her likeness has been painted on at least one public wall in West Karbi Anglong, immortalising her in a way she never anticipated. The Absence of Ac-

knowledgement

Despite the widespread use of her image, Rasinja remains largely unknown to those who have appropriated her likeness. None of the entities using her photographs sought her permission, nor did they provide any form of attribution or acknowledgement. For Rasinja, this has been a surreal and disconcerting experience. While her image has become a part of public spaces and cultural events, she herself has been rendered invisible, her identity erased in favour of her visual representation.

This lack of recognition highlights a broader issue in the digital age: the ease with which personal images can be taken out of context and used without consent. In Rasinja's case, her photographs have been commodified, stripped of their personal significance, and repurposed for commercial and cultural ends. This raises important ethical questions about the rights of individuals to control the use of their own images.

A Symbol Without a

Voice Rasinja's image has, in many ways, become a symbol—a representation of the Karbi community, its culture, and its traditions. Yet, the irony is that the very people using her image do not know her name or her story. She has become a face without a voice, a symbol without agency. This disconnect between the image and the individual underscores the need for greater awareness

and respect for personal rights in the digital realm.

For Rasinja, the experience has been bittersweet. On one hand, she is proud that her image has come to represent her community and its cultural heritage. On the other hand, she feels a sense of loss, as her identity has been overshadowed by her viral fame.

"It's strange to see my face everywhere but not be recognized as a person," she says. "I never expected this to happen, and I wish people would at least acknowledge who I am.'

The Need for Ethical **Practices**

Rasinja's story is a cautionary tale about the ethical use of personal images in the digital age. As social media continues to blur the lines between public and private, it is crucial for individuals and organizations to respect the rights of those whose images they use. This includes seeking permission, providing attribution, and ensuring that individuals are not reduced to mere symbols.

In Rasinja's case, the widespread use of her image without consent highlights the need for greater awareness and accountability. While her photographs have brought her a form of fame, they have also exposed the vulnerabilities that come with living in a hyper-connected world. As her story continues to unfold, it serves as a reminder of the importance of respecting individrights

acknowledging the humanity behind every image. Conclusion

Rasinja Tissopi's journey from a young woman in Diphu to an unwitting symbol of her community is a testament to the power-and pitfalls—of social media. Her story is a call to action for greater ethical practices in the use of personal images, and a reminder that behind every viral photograph is a person with a name, a story, and a right to be recognized. As her likeness continues to adorn public spaces and cultural events, it is time for those who use her image to acknowledge the woman behind the face, and to give Rasinja the recognition she deserves. (The author can be reached at nongee.terang@gmail.com)

Hamas' threat to delay next release of Israeli hostages raises fears for Gaza ceasefire

threat to delay the next planned release of Israeli hostages from the Gaza Strip has jolted a fragile ceasefire that's seen as having the potential to wind down the war.

6 THE HILLS TIMES

It has brought new dismay for Israelis who watched the latest Hamas handover of hostages in growing horror over the weekend as the three emaciated men came into sight. Of the 17 hostages yet to be released from Gaza under this phase of the ceasefire, Israel has said eight are dead.

The next handover of three hostages had been scheduled for Saturday, and families say time is running out for those still alive. Israel now awaits what comes from a security Cabinet meeting Tuesday morning, moved up in response to Monday's Hamas announcement

The developments also have led to new fear in Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians have surged to what remains of their homes in the territory's north after fleeing in the war's earliest weeks.

The uncertainty, just over halfway into the ceasefire's sixweek first phase, complicates talks on the far more difficult phase. It also jeopardizes the pause in the devastating fighting and the increase in humanitarian aid for Gaza that it has made possible.

Already, there had been concerns that the war would resume at the end of the first phase in early



proceed as planned if Israel abides

There was no immediate public

The Hamas announcement

came as US President Donald

Trump pressed further on his stun-

ning proposal to remove the Pales-

tinian population from devastated

Gaza and have the US take "own-

ership" of the territory. He told

Fox News on Sunday that the

Palestinians would not have the

That deepened the shock among

Palestinians, who live with the

history of fleeing or being forced

from their homes in what is now

Israel during the 1948 war. And it

brought new condemnation from

Arab nations that have long

Trump's comments contradicted

some of his own administration

officials who had said the presi-

pressed for an independent Pales-

right to return.

tinian state.

by its obligations," it said.

reaction from mediators.

What's Trump saying?

holding up its end of the deal by initially delaying the return of Palestinians to northern Gaza over an earlier dispute, carrying out strikes across the territory and hindering the entry of humanitarian

The militant group, which quickly reasserted control over Gaza when the ceasefire began on January 19, said the next hostage release would be delayed "until further notice"

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz called the delay "a complete violation" of the ceasefire agreement, and he instructed the military to be on highest alert. The prime minister's coordinator for hostages said the government intends to live up to its end of the

A later Hamas statement called the postponement a "warning signal" to Israel and noted that five days remained for mediators - the United States, Qatar and Egypt -to pressure Israel to act. "The door

day made no mention of Trump's proposal, which they have rejected multiple times.

Who and what is at stake?

In immediate limbo is the planned release on Saturday of three more Israeli hostages, along with dozens more Palestinian prisoners from Israeli custody.

Such exchanges – five so far in a gradual release of 33 hostages – have been sometimes tense and chaotic acts of trust that have gradually pushed the ceasefire forward, allowing its other measures to fall into place.

But the latest release brought home like no other the bleak and dangerous conditions for those still held in Gaza.

Relatives of the newly released hostages, at times sobbing, have described people being chained or held underground for months and eating half a piece of pita per day. Freed hostages have described going months without showering.

The accounts have put furious new pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to begin the delayed talks on the ceasefire's second phase, which is meant to see more hostages released and bring a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from

"The hostages are in a clear and present danger. Their lives are at risk," a doctor working with families of hostages, Hagai Levine, warned Monday. "Delaying their release means that some of them

At least 55 civilians killed by militia fighters in northeastern Congo

Militia fighters killed at least 55 civilians in an attack on a cluster of villages and a camp for displaced people in northeastern Congo, local authorities said Tuesday.

Violence has surged across eastern Congo, where conflict has raged for decades. More than 120 armed groups are fighting in the region, most for land and control of mines with valuable minerals, while some are trying to protect their communities.

Armed men from the CODECO militia attacked the Djaiba group of villages, which is also home to a camp for the displaced, in the province of Ituri Monday night, Antoinnette Nzale, the leader of the camp, told The Associated Press. She said 55 civilians died but added that the death toll is likely higher, as bodies continue to be retrieved from the burned down houses

The Cooperative for the Development of Congo, or CODECO, is a loose association of militia groups mainly from the ethnic Lendu farming community. The group's attacks killed nearly ,800 people and wounded more than 500 in the four years through

2022, according to the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism

The United Nations has said some of the attacks could constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

'Almost the entire village was attacked." Nzale said, adding that the UN peacekeeping force known as MONUSCO and Congolese government troops intervened but were overwhelmed by the more numerous attackers.

Jean Richard Lenga, chief of Bahema Badiere district, where the villages are located, confirmed the attack, adding that at

higher as bodies continue to be retrieved

Most of the victims were displaced people who were killed with machetes and firearms, Mumbere David, a resident of Djaiba, told the AP over the

In September, CODECO fighters killed at least 20 civilians in Djugu, the same territory that was attacked on Monday night.

The conflict in eastern Congo escalated last month after Rwanda-backed rebels seized Goma, the capital of North Kivu province, which is about 350 km

dent was only calling for the Palestinians' temporary relocation. Concerned about ISIS-K's capabilities to plot, conduct attacks in Afghanistan, Pak: US tells UN



UNITED NATIONS, Feb 11: The United States said it remains concerned about terror group ISIS-Khorasan's (ISIS-K) capabilities to plot, conduct attacks and sustain recruitment campaigns, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

These remarks were made at the Security Council by Ambassador Dorothy Shea, Charge d'Affaires ad interim at the US Mission to the UN in her briefing on 'Threats to International Peace and Security by Terrorist

Shea also said "Countering ISIS and other terrorist groups around the world is a top priority for the Trump administration...President Trump's message is clear: The United States always stands ready to find and eliminate terrorists who threaten the United States and our allies."

She noted that ISIS affiliates in Central Asia, most notably ISIS-Khorasan, also pose a significant global threat.

'We remain concerned about ISIS-K's capabilities to plot and conduct attacks, as well as sustain recruitment campaigns, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan," she said.

In his remarks to the briefing, Under-Secretary-General United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov said that ISIL-K continued to pose a significant threat in Afghanistan, the region and beyond.

He said that in addition to attacks in Afghanistan, ISIL-K supporters plotted attacks in Europe and were actively seeking to recruit individuals from Central Asian States.

"There were also reports of small numbers of foreign terrorist fighters continuing to travel to Afghanistan," Voronkov said.

Voronkov recalled Secretary-General An-

tonio Guterres' "appeal to all member states to unite to prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a hotbed of terrorist activities.

In her remarks, Executive Director at the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), Assistant Secretary-General Natalia Gherman said that beyond the Middle East, "Da'esh remains agile, taking advantage of ongoing conflicts and regions experiencing growing instability."

Significantly, in her remarks Gherman also referred to the 'Delhi Declaration' that was adopted during India's 2021-22 tenure in the Security Council on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist

'As mandated by the Delhi Declaration, the Counter-Terrorism Committee just last month adopted the non-binding guiding principles on "preventing, detecting and disrupting the use of new and emerging financial technologies for terrorist purposes", also known as the 'Algeria Guiding Principles',"

The guiding principles have been prepared with the support of the CTED, highlight the importance of a comprehensive and riskbased approach, and provide practical guidance to Member States. Gherman added.

In October 2022, the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), chaired by India that year, organised a Special Meeting in New Delhi and Mumbai on the overarching theme of 'Countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes'.

As an outcome of the special meeting, the Committee adopted the 'Delhi Declaration' on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.

India, during its 2021-22 tenure as a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council, had assumed the chair of the CTC in

The meeting of UNSC CTC took place on October 28 in Hotel Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai, the site of the horrific 26/11 Mumbai attacks and in Delhi on October 29, where the Delhi Declaration was agreed upon.

Shea added that ISIS has expanded the frequency and lethality of its attacks in the Sahel, making this region the global epicentre for fatalities from terrorist attacks. As such, ISIS-Somalia, ISIS-Sahel, and ISIS-West Africa collectively pose a significant threat to stability and prosperity in Africa. (PTI)

Ukraine, Russia trade long-range attacks as officials probe possibilities for peace

KYIV, Feb 11: Russian forces targeted Ukraine's energy and gas infrastructure in a "massive" nighttime missile attack and Ukrainian drones struck an important oil refinery inside Russia, officials said Tuesday, as the almost three-year war rumbled on against a backdrop of renewed diplomatic efforts to end it.

Ukraine's state energy company, Ukrenergo, said it imposed emergency blackouts due to the Russian attack. Russia has repeatedly hammered Ukraine's power grid throughout the war.

Meanwhile, as part of its long-range drone campaign against targets deep inside Russia, Ukraine hit a refinery in Russia's Saratov region about 500 km from Ukraine's border, the Army General Staff claimed. The facility produces gasoline, fuel oil and diesel fuel for the Russian military, it said. Outside Ukraine, international efforts are afoot to

stop the fighting. President Donald Trump's senior advisers are expected to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy later this week on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference to discuss a path toward ending the war. Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco

Rubio and retired Lt Gen Keith Kellogg, Trump's special envoy to Ukraine and Russia, are among the US administration officials traveling to Germany for the Also, Zelenskyy said late Monday that Trump's

representatives will visit Ukraine this week, ahead of Munich, though he didn't provide details. The Ukrainian air force said Russia fired 124 Sha-

hed and decoy drones across Ukraine overnight. Also, at least 19 Russian missiles of various types

hit Ukrainian gas production facilities, it said. Reports in Russia of the claimed Ukrainian drone attack were sketchy. Officials rarely provide details

of successful Ukrainian attacks.

The governor of Russia's Saratov region, Roman Busargin, reported a Ukrainian drone attack that sparked a brief fire and inflicted damage on an unspecified "industrial facility". He said that the fire was put out within hours. One unconfirmed Russian media report identified the attacked facility as the Saratov oil refinery, part of Russia's state-run oil giant Ros-

Some other unconfirmed reports said the attack also targeted Engels, a city in the Saratov region that houses multiple industrial plants. In addition, the main base of Russia's nuclear-capable strategic bombers is located just outside Engels. It has come under repeated Ukrainian drone attacks since the early stages of the war, forcing the Russian military to relocate most of its bombers to other areas. (AP)

enforcement of foreign bribery law WASHINGTON, Feb 11: US the Adani group raised billions of President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing the De-

Relief to Adani; Trump pauses

partment of Justice to pause enforcing a nearly half-century-old law that was used to launch a bribery investigation against the Adani Group.

Trump signed an order to pause enforcing of the 1977 Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) that prohibits American companies and foreign firms from bribing officials of foreign governments to obtain or retain business

The President directed US Attorney General Pam Bondi to pause enforcement of FCPA, which was at the heart of some of the US Department of Justice's most highprofile cases, including an indictment against Indian billionaire and Adani Group head Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar.

Last year DoJ under President Joe Biden charged Adani for allegedly being part of a scheme to pay over USD 250 million (about ₹ 2,100 crore) bribe to Indian officials in exchange of favourable terms for solar power contracts.

This was concealed from the US banks and investors from whom

dollars for the project, the prosecutors had alleged last year citing FCPA that allows pursuing foreign corruption allegations if they involve certain links to American investors or markets.

The pause and the review is being seen as a relief to the Adani Group but it remains to be seen what stand the DoJ takes after the six month review period.

The order that Trump signed asked "the Attorney General to review guidelines and policies govinvestigations enforcement actions under the FCPA" in 180 days.

"During the review period, the Attorney General shall cease initiation of any new FCPA investigations or enforcement actions, unless the Attorney General determines that an individual exception should be made," it said.

Also it sought "review in detail all existing FCPA investigations or enforcement actions and take appropriate action with respect to such matters to restore proper bounds on FCPA enforcement and preserve Presidential foreign policy prerogatives". (PTI)

EU vows tough counter measures to US tariffs

BRUSSELS, Feb 11: European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen vowed on Tuesday that US tariffs on steel and aluminum "will not go unanswered", adding that they will trigger tough countermeasures from the 27-nation bloc. "The EU will act to safeguard its economic interests, von der Leyen said in a statement in reaction to US President Donald Trump's imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminum the previous day.

"Tariffs are taxes - bad for business, worse for consumers," von der Leyen said. "Unjustified tariffs on the EU will not go unanswered — they will trigger firm and proportionate countermeasures." In Germany, home to the EU's largest economy, Chancellor Olaf Scholz told parliament that "if the US leaves us no other choice, then the European Union will react united," adding that "ultimately, trade wars always cost both sides prosperity". Trump is hitting foreign steel and aluminum with a 25% tax in the hope that they will give local producers relief from intense global competition, allowing them to charge higher prices. He imposed similar tariffs during his first presidency but the move damaged relations with key US allies and drove up costs for "downstream"

Testimony in trial of man accused of trying to kill Salman Rushdie heads into 2nd day

WASHINGTON, Feb 11: Testimony is set to continue Tuesday in the trial of the man charged with stabbing famed author Salman Rushdie in a frenzied knife attack on a western New York stage.

Jurors in the trial of Hadi Matar, 27, on Monday heard from staffers at the arts institution where Rushdie

was set to give a speech in August 2022, when authorities say the Fairview, New Jersey man attacked the author on stage and stabbed him more than a dozen times. Rushdie himself is expected to testify during the trial.

Matar has been in custody since he was subdued by spectators after the attack. He has pleaded not guilty to attempted murder and assault. The 77-year-old author was blinded in one eye in the attack and spent months recovering, a process he detailed in a memoir released last year. A speaker

who was to appear with Rushdie also was wounded. The trial is projected to last up to two weeks. Jurors are expected to be shown video and photos from the day of the attack. They are unlikely, however, to hear about a fatwa issued by the late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini calling for Rushdie's death, according to District Attorney Jason Schmidt.

Rushdie, the author of "Midnight's Children" and

"Victory City," spent years in hiding after Khomeini announced the fatwa in 1989 following publication of the novel "The Satanic Verses," which some Muslims consider blasphemous

Schmidt has said discussing Matar's motive will be unnecessary in the state trial, given the attack was seen by the live audience that was present

to hear Rushdie speak. "This is not a case of mistaken identity," Schmidt said during his opening statements on Monday. "Mr. Matar is the person who attacked Mr. Rushdie without provocation." A public defender representing Matar, however,

told jurors that the case is not as

straightforward as prosecutors made it out to be. "The elements of the crime are more than `something really bad happened' — they're more defined," Lynn

Schaffer said. "Something bad did happen, something very bad did

happen, but the district attorney has to prove much In a separate indictment, federal authorities allege

that Matar was driven to act by a terrorist organization's 2006 endorsement of the fatwa. A later trial on federal terrorism charges will be scheduled in US District

'Back to plastic': Trump signs order for plastic straws as he declares paper ones 'don't work'

WASHINGTON, Feb 11: President Donald Trump said Monday he is banning federal use of paper straws, saying they "don't work" and don't last very long. Instead he wants the government to exclusively move to plastic.

"It's a ridiculous situation. We're going back to plastic straws," Trump said as he signed an executive order to reverse federal purchasing policies that encourage paper straws and restrict plastic ones. The order directs federal agencies to stop buying paper straws "and otherwise ensure that paper straws are no longer provided within agency buildings.'

The move by Trump - who has long railed against paper straws, and whose 2019 reelection campaign sold Trump-branded reusable plastic straws for \$15 per pack of 10 - targets a Biden administration policy to phase out federal purchases of single-use plastics, including straws, from food service operations, events and packaging by 2027, and from all federal operations by 2035.

Trump declared President Joe Biden's policy "DEAD!" in a social media post over the weekend.

While plastic straws have been blamed for polluting oceans and harming marine life, Trump said Monday that he thinks "it's OK" to continue using them. "I don't think that plastic is going to affect the shark very much as they're eating, as they're munching their way through the ocean,' he said at a White House announcement.

Several US states and cities have banned plastic straws, and some restaurants no longer automatically give them to customers. But plastic straws are only a small part of the problem. The environment is littered with single-use plastic food and beverage containers - water bottles, takeout containers, coffee lids, shopping bags

Around the world, the equivalent of one garbage truck of plas-



tic enters the ocean every minute from a range of sources, including plastic bags, toothbrushes, bottles, food packaging and more, experts say. As those materials break down in the environment, microplastics are turning up in the stomachs of fish, birds and other animals, as well as in human

blood and tissue.

And plastic manufacturing releases planet-warming greenhouse gases and other dangerous pollutants. More than 90% of plastic products are derived from fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas, and millions of tons of plastic waste enter the world's oceans

every year. Many multinational companies have moved away from plastic straws and have made reducing plastic use across their operations central to their sustainability goals, making Trump's decision an outlier in the business world

Trump's order is "more about messaging than finding solutions,? said Christy Leavitt, plastics campaign director for the environmental group Oceana, noting that most U.S. voters support requiring companies to reduce single-use plastic packaging and

foodware. "President Trump is moving in the wrong direction on single-use plastics,' Leavitt said. "The world is facing a plastic pollution crisis, and we can no longer ignore one of the biggest environmental threats facing our oceans and our planet today.

The plastic manufacturing industry applauded Trump's move. "Straws are just the beginning,"

Matt Seaholm, president and CEO of the Plastics Industry Association, said in a statement. "Back to Plastic' is a movement we should all get behind." More than 390 million straws

are used every day in the United States, mostly for 30 minutes or less, according to advocacy group Straws Turtle Island Restoration Network. Straws take at least 200 years to decompose and pose a threat to turtles and other wildlife as they degrade into microplastics, the group says.

"To prevent another sea turtle from becoming a victim to plastic, we must make personal lifestyle alterations to fight for these species,' the group said in a state-

Every year, the world produces more than 400 million tons of new plastic. About 40% of all plastics are used in packaging, according

to the United Nations. Globally, nations are creating a treaty to address plastic pollution. Leaders met for a week in South Korea late last year but didn't reach an agreement. Talks resume this year as more than 100 countries pursue a pact that limits plastic production as well as tackles cleanup and recycling.

The U.S., China and Germany are the biggest players in the global plastics trade. U.S. manufacturers have asked Trump to remain at the negotiating table, and to revert to Biden's previous position that focused on redesigning plastic products, recycling and reuse.

White House staff secretary Will Scharf, who presented the executive order to Trump, told him the push for paper straws has cost the government and private industry "an absolute ton of money and left consumers all over the country wildly dissatisfied with their straws. It really is something that affects ordinary Americans in their everyday

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025

Manipur Guv order scrapping assembly session 'illegal, unconstitutional': Congress

After Singh's resignation Manipur Guv declared previous directive as 'null and void'



IMPHAL, Feb 11: Manipur Congress president Keisham Meghachandra on Tuesday said that Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla's order scrapping the seventh session of the 12th Ma-

After the resignation of N Biren Singh from the post of chief minister on February 9, the governor issued an order, declaring his previas "null and void".

"The order issued by Hon'ble Governor of Manipur dated 9th February 2025, thereby declaring the order dated 24th January 2025 as 'null and void' is illegal and unconstitutional," Meghachandra said in a post on X.

There is no move to summon assembly session even if today is the last day for a constitutionally mandated sitting of Manipur Legislative Assembly," he added.

"Constitutional crisis will be faced after a few hours in Manipur. Hope PM Modi ji wants to impose Manipur under suspended animation or President's Rule. We will stand against the move of suspended animation or PR," he

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of India, Manipur State Council, on Tuesday said the state would face a more challenging situation if N Biren Singh is reinstated as the chief minister and demanded fresh assembly elections to establish a new administrative system.

Party secretary L Thoirel told reporters, "Democracy in Manipur has lost its meaning now. A fresh mandate of people is urgently required so as to establish a new administrative system which honours democratic institutions. Reinstating Biren Singh would lead the state to a more challenging situation." (PTI)

Manipur journalist 'abducted', released after tendering apology to armed group



IMPHAL, Feb 11: A senior journalist of Manipur was allegedly abducted from his home by a group of armed men on early Tuesday and was released after he apologised to a proscribed outfit for calling it a "surrendered group".

The family of journalist Yambem Laba said that on Monday, he had made certain comments in a media discussion on a local television channel on the situation in the state in the aftermath of Chief Minister Biren Singh's resignation.

At around 3 am on Tuesday, a group of armed men came to Laba's residence at Uripok in Imphal West district and forced the around 70-year-old scribe to go with them, officials said.

Laba, who is associated with The Statesman newspaper, later held a press conference from an unknown place with some select journalists.

Addressing them, Laba said, "Recently, I had called UNLF which had entered into a ceasefire with the Centre as a surrendered group. That is a mistake on my part and I withdraw that statement. I had also alleged that some armed men who (earlier) came to my residence as members of the UNLF (Pambei) group. They never said they were so. For this allegation also, I tender my apology and admit my mistake.

Led by Kh Pambei, the United National Liberation Front (UNLF-P) is an armed group in the Imphal

Valley, which entered into a ceasefire agreement with the government on November 29, 2023, and agreed to renounce violence.

Hours after the press conference, Laba reached home after visiting a police station in the Manipur capital Imphal, officials

Earlier in the day, Laba's elder brother Yambem Angamba told reporters: "Yesterday, during a media discussion, Laba spoke about the present political crisis after CM Biren Singh's resignation. He also talked about the contenders for the CM post. Police visited his house on Tuesday morning after the family lodged an FIR (after the abduction).'

Amidst growing discontent within the state BJP and calls for a change in leadership, N Biren Singh tendered his resignation as Manipur chief minister to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Sunday.

The governor accepted his resignation, along with that of his council of ministers, and requested him to continue in office until alternative arrangements were made.

Manipur has been in the grip of ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki communities since May 2023 and over 250 people were killed and thousands rendered homeless in the strife since then. (PTI)

on Manipur Guv

IMPHAL, Feb 11: BJP Northeast in-charge Sambit Patra and state party president A Sharda Devi on Tuesday called on Manipur Gover-nor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan here, amid a leadership crisis following the resignation of N Biren Singh from the post of chief minister. Patra and Devi were accompanied by Education Minister Th Basanta Kumar Singh, NPF's Manipur unit president Awangbou Newmai and JD(U) MLA Nasir.

The meeting with the governor lasted for around half-an-hour, sources said, adding the outcome is not yet known. Amid growing discontent within the state BJP and calls for a change in leadership, Singh tendered his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Sunday.

More than 250 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023. (PTI)

Assam Rifles convoy costs a civillian

SHILLONG, Feb 11: A 93-year-old milkman died after being run over by a vehicle in an Assam Rifles convoy in Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi district, police said on Tuesday.

The incident took place around 10:30 am when the elderly man was crossing the road on a bicycle, carrying a milk container, they said.

Superintendent of Police Vivekanand Singh said the convoy was en route to Guwahati when the accident took place. Jonga Bahadur was hit by the third vehicle in the convoy of the Assam Rifles DG, Singh said. He was rushed to the civil hospital at Nongpoh, and later referred to the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences, where the man succumbed to injuries.(PTI)

IMPHAL, Feb 11: Security forces arrested nine militants from Manipur's Imphal West and Tengnoupal districts, police said on Tuesday.

Two militants of the banned outfit Kangleipak Communist Party (Apunba) were apprehended from Rupmahal Tank area in Imphal West district on Monday, police said.

They were involved in extortion activities in the Rupmahal Tank area.

Big Boss contestant Chum Darang.

Pakam said.

Women panel condemns 'racist'

remarks against Arunachali actress

ITANAGAR, Feb 11: The Arunachal Pradesh State Com-

mission for Women (APSCW) has strongly condemned

'derogatory and racist' remarks made by social media in-

fluencer Elvish Yadav against former Miss Arunachal and

In a letter addressed to the National Commission for

Women chairperson, APSCW chairperson Kenjum Pakam

on Monday said that the remarks were not only an insult

Dalal, had made fun of other contestants Darang and Karan Veer Mehra, saying, "Karan Veer ko pakka Covid

tha kyuki Chum kisko pasand aati hai bhai, itna taste kiska

kharab hota hai? Aur Chum ke toh naam mai hi ashleelta

hai. Naam Chum aur kaam Gangubai Kathiawadi mai

kiya hai. (Karan Veer must have suffered from Covid, oth-

erwise who would like Chum? Who has such bad taste?

And there is vulgarity in the name of Chum. Her name is

Chum and she has worked in 'Gangubai Kathiawadi'

Such behaviour and derogatory comments create an at-

mosphere of fear and intimidation for women from the

Northeast pursuing careers in the entertainment industry,

The commission called for strict action against Yadav,

She said that discriminatory behaviour contributes to

Reiterating its commitment to advocating for the dig-

nity and rights of women, the commission has called for

stronger measures to prevent racial and sexist discrimina-

tion against individuals from the Northeast in mainstream

the marginalisation of individuals from the region and hin-

ders their professional aspirations.

media and public platforms. (PTI)

urging authorities to address the issue in accordance with

to Darang but also to women across Northeast India. Yadav, in a podcast with Big Boss 18 contestant Rajat

on Sunday arrested two militants belonging to the banned outfits United National Liberation Front (Koireng) and PREPAK from boundary pillar 85 in Tengnoupal district.

Security forces also arrested five members of banned KCP (Taibanganba) group from L Minou ridgeline in Tengnoupal district, police said on

The security forces seized One LMG rifle, one SLR rifle, two INSAS rifles and an AK 47 rifle along with 14 magazines, ammunition and other articles from the five arrested militants on

Police apprehended a man from Kawnpui area in Churachandpur district for weapons trafficking on Sunday. One Colt 7.65mm auto pistol and 9mm pistol (country-made) along with three magazines, 16 different ammunition and other articles were seized from his possession. (PTI)

No.DJHi/I/25/660

NOTIFICATION

The written examination scheduled to be held on 16/02/2025 (Sunday) in connection with direct recruitment to the three (3) nos. of sanctioned vacant posts of Process Server of this establishment is hereby postponed until further notice in view of examination for the post of Judicial Assistant to be conducted by Hon'ble Gauhati High Court on the same day i.e. 16/02/2025. The next date of examination would be notified later on.

District & Sessions Judge,

Janasanyog/D/12497/24/12-Feb-25 Hojai, Assam

LOST

I have lost my HSLC Registration card, Admit card and pass certificate (2007) vide Regd no - 13R-0062-003359-05roll B07-449 No. 0178, or 02.01.2025 journey Kheroni to mailoo .Mrs Rina kumari chauhan, W/O Rajesh Chauhan, vill - Jampather P.O. - Kheroni PS - Kheroni dist - West karbi Anglong phone number 7002285039

GOVT.OF ASSAM

OFFICE OF THE JT. DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES, KARBI ANGLONG DIST.

DIPHU.

E-mall: jtdhs.as.karbianglong@gmall.com

No.KA/Esstt/H&FW/Post/Advt./2025-26/199

Dated Diphu the 11th Feb' 2025

NOTIFICATION

In pursuance of KAAC's approval vide letter No. KAAC/FIN-A-436/Prior/Approval/2024/21 Dated Diphu the 20th January' 2025 and this office advertisement vide letter No. KA/Esstt/H&FW/ Post/Advt./2025-26/ 92 Dated Diphu the 22nd Jan' 2025, It is hereby informed to all concerned that the written examination for various categories of Grade-III Posts under O/o it Director of Health Services, Karbi Anglorg will be held as per Venue, Date and Time mentioned below:-

Date	Time	Posts	Venue	
15-02.2025 (Saturday)	09:00 AM to 12:00	1. Leprosy Injector	G.N.M. Training	
	PM	2. A.N.M.	School, Lumding	
		3. Ophthalmic	Road, Diphu, Karbi	
		Assistant	Anglong	
		4. Pharmacist		
	01:00 PM to 04:00 PM	1.Lower Division		
		Assistant		
		2.Staff Nurse		
		3.Dresser		
		4.Lab. Technician		

Sd/-

Member Secretary Selection Committee/ Board

> Jt. Director of Health Services,

Karbi Anglong District, Diphu. Dated Diphu the 11th Feb' 2025

Mcmo No. KA/Esstt/H&FW/ Post/Advt./2025-26/199-A

Dated:- 02/02/2025

No.GDB/15-FC/206/2022-23/851

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/1455

TENDER NO.13 OF 2024-25 INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

Selected tenders affixing Non-refundable court fee stamp of RS.8.25 (Rupees Eight & Twenty Five Paisa) only with at validity period of 180 (One Hundred Eighty) days which will subsequently to be covered and drawn up in the printed F-2 form are invited from the intending Registered Contractors of all categories of the Assam PWD (Bldg. & Roads) for submitting tender for the work below. The tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 2;30 PM 02-02-2025 to 22-02-2025 and will be opened on the date 22-02-2024 at 2:30 PM.

SI. No.	Name of Work	Apporx Estimated value of work	Tender Value	Earnest money 2% for GNL & 1% for ST/SC/OBC/MOBC	Cost of tender document	Time of completion
1	Const. of Community toilet at No-2 khtarbari Bathou Thansali, under (Tied Grant) 15 th -FC fund for the 2023-24 during 2024-25.	10,47,960.00	10,37,481.00	Rs .21,000/- & Rs. 10500'/-	Rs.300/-	3(Three month)
2	Const. of Community toilet at Goreswar Kali Madir area piran Bazar under (Tied Grant) 15 th - FC fund for the 2023-24 during 2024-25.	10,47,960.00	10,37,481.00	Rs .21,000/- & Rs. 10500'/-	Rs.300/-	3(Three month)

Detailed NIT may be seen in all working days in the Office of the undersigned. Tender paper will be issued to the contractor or their authorized agent up to 11;30 AM in all working days from 02-02-2025 to 22-02-2025 in the office of the undersigned on payment in the form of Banker Cheque/Bank Draft/ Demand draft duly pledged in favour of the BDO, Goreswar Development Block.

> Sd/-**Block Development Officer** Goreswar Development Block

Village- Kandulimari, P.O- Jugijan Bazar, District -Hojai, Assam have lost my Board of Second-Education, Assam HSLC Admit Card bearing Roll-B24-0839 No-0841 of 2024

LOST

I, Bikash Patel, S/o:-

Bimal Patel, resident of a

CROSSING USING ROBOTIC WELDING MACHINE

E-Tender Notice No. SCL-Engg-15-2025 Dated: 04-02-2025. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Brief Descriptio Crossing using Robotic Welding Machine under the jurisdiction of DEN/V/Silchar, Tender Value ₹95,13,321.48/-. Earnest Money ₹1.90.300/-. Date & Time of closin of Tender: 15.00 hrs. of 03-03 2025 & will be opened at 15.00 hrs. of 04-03-2025. The complete nformation with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs. of 03-03-2025. in website ww.ireps.gov.in DRM (W), Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

REPAIRS TO COLONY ROADS AND STATION APPROACH **ROADS AT SILCHAR** E-Tender Notice No. SCL/Engg/18 of

2025 Dated: 07-02-2025. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Brief Description of Item: Repairs to colony roads and station approach roads at Badarpur In Lalabazar, Silchar, Chandranathpur Hilara, Salchapra & Katakhal Jn. unde the jurisdiction of ADEN/Badarpu Ghat. Tender Value: ₹1,80,67,345/-Earnest Money: ₹2,40,300/-. Date & Time of closing of Tender: 15.00 hrs of 03-03-2025 & will be opened a 15.00 hrs. of 04-03-2025. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs, of 03-03-2025 in websit

DRM (W), Silchar NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

VIDENING OF PARKING AREA IMPROVEMENT TO COLONY ROADS & DIVERSION OF PNGE ROAD AT MALIGAON

E-Tender Notice No. 08 of 2025 Dated

07-02-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works Tender No. DCESTMLG-12-2025 Name of work & Location: (A) A Nambari: Widening of parking area ne Gosala market and provision of Pathwa From Gosala goal park to Gotanage Park including compound wall. (B) A Maligaon-Improvement to colony roads in the jurisdiction of SSE/W/Nambar (C) At Nambari Diversion of PNGB Road from W/Nambari colony to Kamakhya Station via West Gotanagar, BG Colony and Hanuman Mandir. Tender Value ₹11,86,86,889,79/-. Earnest Money ₹7.43.400/-. Date & Time of closin of Tender: 13.00 hrs. of 11-03-2025 k will be opened at 13.00 hrs. o 11-03-2025. The complete informat with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available in websit ww.ireps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Engineer/Estate, Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

SHILLONG, Feb 11: The Border Security Force (BSF), deployed along the Indo-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya, has claimed today that it had seized narcotics and other smuggled items worth over ₹40 crore and also

arrested around 300 individuals in 2024. "In 2024, the BSF seized narcotics and other smuggled items worth an astounding ₹ 41.5 crore while apprehending 172 Indian nationals and 127 Bangladeshi nationals involved in various border-related crimes," a

statement from the BSF said. The BSF statement then outlined the significant accomplishments of the Meghalaya Frontier, underscoring their unwavering commitment to maintaining vigilance and ensuring the security of the international border.

Noteworthy achievements include the successful rescue of 1,612 cattle and the confiscation of contraband items, including: 2,547,654 kg of sugar, 2,880 bottles of phensedyl, 11.50 kg of ganja, 4,204 tablets of yaba, 28 kg of silver ornaments, 22,832 bottles of liquor, and fake currency notes of India and Bangladeshi currency, the BSF also said. "The apprehension of 299 individuals (127

BSF nabs 300 people around Indo-Bangla border in 2024 Bangladeshi nationals and 172 Indians) during various operations highlights the BSF's dedication to tackling cross-border crimes. These efforts were bolstered by close collaboration with state and central agencies in joint operations aimed at maintaining peace and preventing illegal activities in the region," it said.

In addition to its border security duties, the BSF has demonstrated a profound sense of responsibility toward the welfare of the communities residing near the border.

The statement also said that, on 16 different occasions BSF came to help needy patients including the injured persons involved in accidents, who were evacuated to either Shillong or the nearest hospital. In addition to these 35 civic action programs were conducted in which free Medicines and other essential items were distributed to villagers /students. apart from organizing cultural activities, it further added.

"These initiatives have played a significant role in enhancing the well-being of the local population and fostered trust between BSF and the border communities. The BSF also actively participated in bilateral meetings to address cross-border issues and enhance coordination with the border guarding forces of Bangladesh," the statement also said.

"These efforts aim to promote mutual cooperation and ensure the welfare of people living in border areas, thereby contributing to the maintenance of friendly relations between the two nations. The Meghalaya Frontier remains committed towards ensuring border security, fostering cooperation, and supporting the development of border communities," it also added. (NNN)

'The people of Punjab are self-respecting and have mellowed the arrogance of many'

Switching sides is Congress' culture: Punjab CM Mann

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday dismissed speculation about dissent within AAP's state unit, asserting that Congress leaders have a history of switching parties while AAP leaders remain dedicated.

Mann's remarks came after Punjab Congress leader Partap Singh Bajwa claimed that over 30 AAP MLAs were in touch with his

"Switching sides is Congress" culture; they talk about others but do not worry about themselves. I will ask Pratap Singh Bajwa how many MLAs they have in Delhi." Mann said.

"Bajwa has made such claims for years, let him say it... He should not count our MLAs and instead, see how many MLAs Congress has in Delhi," he said.

Mann was speaking to reporters after AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal held a meeting with Punjab ministers and MLAs at Kapurthala House in Delhi. The meeting followed AAP's defeat in the Delhi Assembly elections, sparking speculation about instability in its Punjab unit.

Mann reiterated the unity within AAP, saying, "He (Bajwa) has been making claims earlier also that 20 MLAs or 40 MLAs are in touch with him. Let them say it. We have formed this party with our sweat and blood, going among people in the villages and towns in



Highlighting his government's achievements, Mann said, "Our party's national convenor Arvind Kejriwal has wholeheartedly thanked everyone for the tireless hard work done by the MLAs of Punjab in campaigning in the Delhi elections. Because of the work we have done, we are still getting the love of the people of Delhi. We will continue to work for public welfare in the future also."

Speaking on Punjab's law and order, he said, "The law and order situation in Punjab is better than most states. If it were not so, then why would industries come here? Being a border state, we have to make more efforts, and we are doing that.

Mann also spoke about his government's initiatives, stating, "We have done work beyond our guarantees. We have closed 17 toll plazas; now people save ₹ 62 lakh

every day. We have also stopped multiple pensions for MLAs. We did not give all these guarantees, but we have fulfilled them."

Discussing governance improvements, he added, "We are implementing the Delhi model in Punjab as well. There too, Aam Aadmi clinics are being built like Mohalla clinics. Along with this. Schools of Eminence have been built. We will make Punjab a model state and present it to the entire country. Punjab has contributed to the development of the country in the past and will continue to do so in the future.'

On the promise of financial assistance of ₹ 1,000 to women, he said, "It will be provided in the coming days. It's public money, and we are spending that money on the people only.

Following AAP's loss in the Delhi Assembly elections, Punjab remains its only state government.

Amid speculation that Kejriwal may play a bigger role in Punjab politics or contest for the vacant Ludhiana Assembly seat, AAP leaders have dismissed such re-

NATION

Punjab MLA Narinder Kaur also refuted claims of internal dissent before the meeting, calling the recent meeting a routine strategy session. "Congress should focus on why they got zero seats in Delhi instead of commenting on our party," she said.

AAP, which had governed Delhi for a decade, suffered a major setback in the February 5 elections, winning only 22 seats out of 70 in the Assembly elections. The BJP's victory ended AAP's rule in the capital, raising concerns over the party's future.

Meanwhile, the BJP has also intensified its attack on the AAP. Saffron party's leader and newly elected MLA from West Delhi's Rajouri Garden, Manjinder Singh Sirsa took a dig at Kejriwal for holding a meeting with Punjab MLAs despite AAP's defeat in Delhi.

"He is dreaming of becoming Punjab Chief Minister. Just like a fish out of water, Kejriwal can not live without power luxury," Sirsa

"The people of Punjab are selfrespecting and have mellowed the arrogance of many, so, Kejriwal should stop dreaming about be-

Only authentic version of Constitution be promulgated, any violation serious, says Dhankhar

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said the Constitution signed by its framers that includes 22 miniatures together with amendments by Parliament is the only authentic one that needs to be promulgated and any violation be taken seriously and dealt with sternly. He said this in the House after BJP MP Radha Mohan Das Agrawal raised the issue of 22 illustrations missing in most copies of the Constitution sold in the country today. He demanded inclusion of the original illustrations, which he alleged have been removed "unconstitutionally'

The issue led to a heated discussion in the House with the Congress staging a walkout, alleging that Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge was not allowed to complete his point on the issue.

"I have no doubt and I am categorical, the Constitution signed by the founding fathers of the Constitution, carrying 22 miniatures, is the only authentic one and it can include amendments by the Parliament. If there is any change effected by judiciary or any institution, it is not acceptable to this House.

"I will appeal to the Leader of the House to ensure that in the country only the authentic version of the Indian Constitution be promulgated. Any violation of this should be taken quite seriously by the govern-

Chairman said in the House.

Kharge was first given the floor to speak on the issue, who alleged that the BJP was unnecessarily raising the issue to create a controversy. "They are unnecessarily raising the issue and want to create a controversy on Ambedkar's Constitution. They never raised this issue when Ambedkar, Patel, others were alive...Now they are bringing new issues. This is an attempt to create a controversy and defame Ambed-

kar. This is wrong," Kharge alleged. When Kharge sought to speak further, the Chair gave the floor to the Leader of the House J P Nadda, who refuted the charges made by Kharge. At this, the Congress members staged a walkout from the House.

Nadda wondered what objection does the Congress have on the issue and they should have supported it and urged the government to take

"It is unfortunate that the Congress leader is trying to seek advantage of the issue by making it political by alleging that attempts are being made to defame Ambedkar and this should be expunged," he said, adding that the publishers should publish the Constitution keeping in view the spirit of the framers. He said they all respected Ambedkar.

Nadda said the copies of Constitution being published by publishers do not have the illustrations as pointed out by Agarwal.

He further said the government will ensure publishers publish copies depicting spirit of Constitution and only those are available in the market. The Chairman later said this was an extremely serious issue as the 22 illustrations carry the depiction of India's 5,000 year old tradition and heritage.

"A very valid issue has come to the attention of the Council of States. Dr. Radha Mohan Das Agarwal has rightly pointed out that the act of omission or commission either on our iPads or in any book without carrying the 22 miniatures of that Constitution of which architect is Dr. B R Ambedkar and signed by our founding fathers and the only variation, I reiterate, please note my words, the only change that can take place in the Indian Constitution can emanate only from the Indian Parliament,'

Kapil Sibal asks govt to spell out vision for AI, steps to tackle US tariff war

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Independent Rajya Sabha member Kapil Sibal on Tuesday asked the government to spell out its vision for artificial intelligence considering the impact that it can have on jobs in India, while criticising the lack of an overall vision for the future in Union Budget 2025-

Participating in the discussion on the Budget, Sibal also asked about the preparedness of the government to meet external challenges in the wake of US President Donald Trump's tariff

"Today ChatGPT, DeepSeek are new technological revolution that is taking place in the world. Where are we? What plans do we have for the future. We expected the finance minister to tell us what do we intend to do to deal

with these challenges," he noted. Sibal further said,"We can't afford to apply AI (artificial intelligence) to our systems because if we do we will lose jobs that we already have. The result will be. where we have jobs we will lose jobs but at the same time we need AI because we can't be competitive in the world (without AI)."

So, he asked,"What is the vision of this government for AI. All that the finance minister said was that we are going to set up 100 centres of AI but first understand what artificial intelligence is and what it can do."

Citing the Economic Survey, Sibal said,"The Economic Advisor has said that as far as AI is concerned it can only work in certain sectors in the economy. It won't work in rural India. That is his suggestion. Nothing about it (in the Budget)." Referring to Trump announcing tariff on steel imports in the US, Sibal said,"We have certain external challenges that we have to face.

He further said,"While the Prime Minister, who is going to America and will certainly have a dialogue with Trump, there are some imponderables that may happen in the course of time and as a country we have to be pre-

Giving a hypothetical example of the US imposing a 5-10 per



cent tariff on software exports from India, he said,"What is the consequence on our software industry? Phenomenal. We will be non-competitive. How do we deal with that problem? These are the issues I expected the finance minster to deal with in the course of Budget presentation.'

Lamenting the lack of vision for the future in the Budget, Sibal comes to power naturally people of India expect that government to give us a vision of what it intends to do in the next five years. This government has already had ten years and the delivery mechanism has been both slow and inconsistent.

He further said,"We were hoping that after the eighth (Budget) presentation of the Finance Minister we will get some vision as to what the government intends to do. Before you do that you have to identify what are the the challenges in front of us then only we will know what will we do going forward." Sibal said the biggest challenges ahead for India is educating its children and giving them quality education while making them healthy.

The country cannot achieve its 'Viksit Bharat' goal without educated children "entering the mainstream", he said adding till the child is healthy and educated he can't empower himself.

Hitting out at the government for not easing regulations, Sibal said,"What did the Economic Advisor say in the Economic Survey? He said roll back regulations, do you see a bit of that in this Budget? No, no roll back of regulations." (PTI)

Ramesh calls for scrapping Aravalli Zoo Safari projects, says focus should be conservation

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Tuesday backed calls for scrapping the proposed Aravalli Zoo Safari project in south Haryana. saying the purpose of any intervention there should be conservation and restoration, not destruction or mon-

Ramesh shared on X a letter written by a group of retired Indian Forest Services officers to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to put an end to the "destructive" Aravalli Zoo Safari project proposed in the

"Thirty seven retired Indian Forest Services officers from across the country have written a letter to the Prime Minister urging him to put an end to the destructive Aravalli Zoo Safari project proposed in south Haryana," the former Union environment minister said. The Aravalli forests in Haryana are arguably the most degraded forests in the country and are particularly important for ecological balance in a state that has the lowest forest cover in India, the former environment minister said.

"In this context, the primary purpose of any intervention in this eco-sensitive area should be conservation and restoration, not destruction or monetisation," Ramesh said.

The letter read that the Aravalli Mountain System is under highly stressed conditions due to anthropogenic activities and it needs PM Modi's attention to save the



"Recent scientific studies/researches have exposed the severe unrepairable environmental damages that have taken place due to ongoing land use changes in the Aravallis. The studies reveal that the continuous destruction of these fragile hill ecosystems is causing significant irreversible biodiversity losses," the letter said.

The officers said the primary purpose of any intervention in an eco-sensitive area should be conservation and restoration and not destruction.

"Around 2009, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram declared a biodiversity park and partnered with civil society, corporates and residents to plant trees and restore the forest. Today, it has nearly 200 species of native plants, 183 species of birds, numerous species of reptiles and insects," it pointed out.

Gurugram and Nuh Aravallis need rewilding of natural forests like this and not destructive zoo safari projletter dated February 6 said (PTI

Can't strengthen alliance at party's cost, say TMC MPs

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: The Congress has no base in West Bengal and the TMC will not try to strengthen the opposition alliance at its own cost, leaders from the Mamata Banerjee-led party said on Tuesday after she declared it will go solo in the 2026 assembly polls.

On Monday, Banerjee told party lawmakers at a meeting in Kolkata that the Trinamool Congress would fight alone in the 2026 assembly elections in the state, dismissing any possibility of forging a coalition with the Congress or any other She also expressed conparty. fidence about winning the elections with a two-third majority.

Asked about the TMC chief's decision, Bardhaman-Durgapur Lok Sabha member Kirti Azad used a Hindi phrase for the Congress - "Rassi jal gayi, par bal nahi gaya (the rope has burnt, but the knots remain)".

Launching a scathing attack at the Congress, Azad blamed it for the AAP's defeat in Delhi, and accused it of "backstabbing" allies.

He also said the Congress has no right to be in the INDIA bloc.

'The biggest problem with the Congress is that it does not have any base. If it had fought with the AAP in Delhi, they could have formed a government together. But it impacted the results in 14 seats

and AAP lost," Azad said. "Congress is a sinking boat, it is unable to understand that when the BJP was nothing, it came to power in states with others... It is a different matter that it backstabbed them. But the Congress is already drowning, yet it is backstabbing its own alliance

partners," he said. "It has so much arrogance, the way it is behaving with its own alliance partners, it has no right to stay in the alliance. You formed the INDIA bloc to remove the BJP, and people are saying that Mamata Baneriee should head the alliance." he added.

Lok Sabha member from Dum

cannot strengthen the alliance at its own cost. "Mamata is the supremo of our

party, what she says is the view of the party. She has proved in the past that TMC alone is strong enough to fight the BJP. We won 29 out of the 42 seats in Lok Sabha, and will improve it further next time. We cannot strengthen the opposition alliance at our own cost," he said.

Samajwadi Party's Rajya Sabha member Ram Gopal Yadav also backed Banerjee, saying, "This goes on in politics. It's true... Trinamool will finish whatever is left of BJP in Bengal.'

Congress leader Ujjwal Raman Singh, however, said while all parties have the right to decide for themselves, any decision on the future course of action will be taken by the INDIA bloc leadership.

"Every party has the right to decide for itself. INDIA alliance was in a national context, the leadership will decide the future policy. Everything is good in the INDIA alliance, it was formed for the Lok Sabha election to oppose the BJP and present an alternative. Discussions on states will be held separately," he said.

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha Rajya Sabha member Mahua Maji meanwhile said equations keep changing in politics, and the situation may change ahead of elections.

"Every political party wants to be stronger. Equations change some times, and the final equation emerges ahead of the election. It is not necessary that the situation will be the same later," she said.

"Political parties work together, last time the BJP had said it is enough for everyone on its own, but when the INDIA bloc was formed, they got parties which did not even have an MLA or MP to form an alliance. There is much time left in elections, the equations may change," she said.

Maji also said the JMM-Congress-RJD government in Jhark-

Congress always tries to get everyone on board NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Asserting When Bihar elections took place the issue which needs to be sorted

INDIA bloc must sit to work out strategy: Sibal

that the Congress always tries to get everyone on board with a consensus, Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Tuesday stressed the need for the INDIC bloc parties to sit together to decide on how they will contest elections going forward, and remove "confusion".

Addressing a press conference here, Sibal said questions should also have been asked of AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal when he fielded candidates in Haryana, Goa, Gujarat and other places against the Congress.

"This question should have been asked. The Congress always tries to get everyone on board with a consensus for moving forward. Sometimes problem happens.

and the Congress did not perform as per expectations, the RJD said it could not come to power because of Congress," Sibal said.

"Everyone will have to decide how they will approach the elections. The BJP's advantage is that they have a single command, and they get benefit of that. In Uttar Pradesh, the Congress fought the elections with the Samajwadi Party, and it helped. The same happened in Tamil Nadu. So, they need to discuss among themselves on how they should move forward," the former Congress leader said.

Noting that NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar had stated that INDIA bloc is a national alliance, Sibal said there is a confusion over

out. Later, speaking with PTI Videos, Sibal said the alliance has to decide whether its partners fight (elections) separately or together.

"Sharad Pawar has said that the alliance is applicable only at the national level, i.e., when general elections take place, the INDIA bloc fights together after an understanding on seats," Sibal said. On senior Congress leader Tariq

Anwar's remarks that the party needs to clarify on whether it wants to do coalition politics or go solo, Sibal said, "What Tariq Anwar has said, he should have said earlier if it was the right thing. When Kejriwal fielded candidates in Goa, Gujarat and Haryana, Tariq bhai did not say such a thing."(PTI)

Mamata says TMC to fight solo in 2026 Bengal polls, Cong hits back over 'panic' reaction During the meeting, Banerjee pointed out that both AAP and KOLKATA, Feb 11: West Bengal take of ignoring Congress after the Delhi polls. It was found in the Delhi assem-

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has asserted that the Trinamool Congress will return to power with a two-thirds majority in the 2026 Assembly elections in the state and ruled out the possibility of stitching any alliance with the Congress, according to the TMC's mouthpiece. The mouthpiece 'Jago Bangla'

reported that Banerjee made these remarks during a meeting of the TMC legislative party on Monday. According to that report, Banerjee told her legislators, "Trinamool will return to power with a two-

thirds majority in 2026. We do not

need anyone's help. We will fight

alone and win alone.' The report also stated that Banerjee expressed confidence that the TMC will form the government for a fourth consecutive term and said the party's preparation for the state elections should begin.

Banerjee's remarks evoked a strong reaction from the West Bengal Congress unit, which said such 'unnecessary remarks" were a result of panic in several parties that seem to have understood the mis-

bly elections that division of votes between AAP and the Congress led to the victory of the BJP in several In the wake of the recent Delhi

Assembly bypoll results, in which the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) faced huge setbacks, the winner BJP has drawn parallels with West Bengal, claiming that Banerjee's welfare schemes may not translate into electoral gains.

Referring to the loss of AAP, BJP leaders, including Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari and state party chief Sukanta Majumdar, have suggested that the people of Bengal, like those in Delhi, will reject the ruling party's "freebies."

Amid such discussions, 'Jago Bangla' quoted Banerjee as saying, The opposition's claims will not deter us. Our schemes have benefitted the people, and they will stand by us again."

The TMC's decision to go solo also holds significance in light of speculation over the Congress's



next move in West Bengal. After the removal of Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury as state Congress president and the appointment of gress in Bengal. Subhankar Sarkar, who is perceived to be softer towards the TMC, political circles were abuzz with talks of a possible Congress-

TMC understanding. However, 'Jago Bangla' quoted Banerjee as stating: "There is no question of an alliance. Trinamool will fight alone and secure a his-

toric victory. The Congress doesn't have any presence in Bengal. We don't need any alliance with Con-

Referring to AAP's defeat in the Delhi polls, Banerjee has blamed the lack of coordination between the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress for their poor performance in the Delhi Assembly elections. According to her, the absence of a united front led to their defeat, benefitting the BJP.

Congress had failed to coordinate in the national capital, similar to the situation in Haryana during the state elections last year.

"Just as the Congress remained rigid in Delhi, AAP did not work with Congress in Haryana. The lack of unity between them cost them dearly," the party mouthpiece said, quoting Banerjee.

Responding to Banerjee's remark, West Bengal Congress president Suvankar Sarkar wondered if his party did not really matter, why were the regional parties so bothered about the Congress?

"Actually, after the Delhi poll results, many regional parties have realised that it was a mistake to ignore the Congress in that election. The problem with parties such as AAP and those who think like them is that they are nothing more than the B-team of the BJP. The TMC seems to have forgotten that it was the Congress which helped the TMC come to power in 2011 by defeating the Left Front," he said. (PTI)

was killed in army firing from close range, the doctors have confirmed it, and the other was 25year Old Makhan Din who was tortured by police so much that he committed suicide. "In such a situation, we had expected that the chief minister would raise this issue with the

Omar should've raised Kathua, Sopore deaths with Amit Shah: Mehbooba SRINAGAR, Feb 11: Omar here. The former chief minister

Abdullah should have raised the death of two youths in Sopore and Kathua during his meeting with the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said. "There were two deaths re-

cently. A truck driver Waseem

Home Minister during his recent meeting," Mufti told reporters also flagged police brutality in the Union Territory, demanding that they be indicted. "He should have raised this issue with the Home Minister and told him that the militancy has to be fought against but if an innocent is harmed by an army personnel, that personnel should be identified and punished. We are not saying that the entire army is bad

"There are complaints against the SHO in Billawar that he is arresting youth and extorting money from them. Those who do not pay, he locks them up in militancy cases. You must have seen the video of Makhan Din. It was terrifying," she said. (PTI)

India will become developed country in 2047: Praful Patel in RS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025

NEW DELHI. Feb 11: Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MP Praful Patel on Tuesday said while earlier to give 'roti, kapda and makan' was the essence of political and economic discourse, people are today talking about a confident, self-reliant and a developed India.

Participating in the discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the president's address in the Rajya Sabha, Patel said India is no longer a third world country but a developing nation and it will become a developed country by

Complementing Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for delivering a historic budget, Patel said that India has become the fifth largest economy and it will become the third largest economy in a very short span.

Referring to the US president's 'Make America Great Again' slogan, Patel said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been saying since 2014 that India is on a new trajectory with programmes like 'Make in and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'

"What does it mean? Like America said 'Make America Great Again', we are also talking that 'make India big and proud again'," Patel said.

He stated that earlier India used to import a lot of goods and products but today we are exporting lots of crucial and important products.

The NCP MP praised the government programmes to build highways and super-highways, saying infrastructure boost is

important to develop a nation. He insisted that there is a need to develop connectivity in each and every part of the country to bring them into the mainstream for its equitable growth and development.

Thanking Prime Minister Modi for giving special focus on road and port connectivity in the country, he said, "Port infrastructure will go to the next

Patel also praised Prime Minister Modi for laying the foundation stone of a port in Maharashtra with an estimated cost of Rs 76,000 crore.

He said that he was the aviation minister for eight years and 75 airports were operational during his period, but the number of airports is 150 in 10 years.

Patel also commended the launch of Vande Bharat trains and government efforts for the bullet train project.

According to Patel, India entering into a new age in which solar energy and wind energy are being harnessed.

He also appreciated the tax relief to the middle class and said that now the middle class can save Rs 80,000 every year which they can now spend on paying EMI etc. (PTI)

Evolving global security scenario demands innovation, stronger partnerships: Rajnath

BENGALURU, Feb 11: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday asserted that the evolving global security scenario demands innovative approaches and stronger partnerships

Addressing the Defence Ministers' Conclave organised as part of the Aero India 2025 here, he said, India believes that international order and peace cannot be ensured from a position of weakness.

"Today, increasing number of conflicts is making our world, a more unpredictable place. New power plays, new methods and new means of weaponisation, increased role of non-state actors and disruptive technologies, have made the world order more fragile," Singh said

At the same time, the distinction between security of the borders and internal security is getting blurred, as hybrid warfare can target critical national infrastructure even during the peace time, he said, "the definition of front line is changing fast today. Moreover, the dimensions of cyberspace and outer space are challenging the es-

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: A Delhi court has pulled up

the CBI for concealing "something important" from

it in a Rs 2,435 crore bank fraud case in an act of

Special judge Sanjeev Aggarwal made the prima

facie observation in a case against CG Power and In-

dustrial Solutions and its former promoter Gautam

Thapar in an alleged fraud and wrongful loss to the

bedded in the files, i.e., the crime file," the judge said.

clear directions in an order passed on February 3, the

CBI failed to produce the crime files for its perusal.

The court on February 10 further said that despite

It said after passing the order, the CBI had sufficient

"Therefore, the non compliance of the order is an

time to examine it and challenge the same, if they de-

act of clear-cut defiance and recalcitrance on part of

the CBI, which kind of conveys in a subtle manner

that they do not care or obey the order(s) of the court.

which is a matter of grave concern, same is also con-

trary to the spirit of Article 21 of The Constitution of

India, which ensures fair investigations and conse-

The court directed the head of the CBI branch con-

The judge said without the explanation, which was

sought by the court, he was" handicapped" and not in

a "position to form an opinion" on whether further in-

vestigation should be ordered in the case aside from

examining the important aspects the agency might

cerned to ensure that the investigating officer appeared

along with the files on February 21 "without fail".

"clear-cut defiance and recalcitrance".

investigating

public money to the tune of

Rs 2.435 crore caused to

the State Bank of India, In-

dustrial Finance Branch,

agency has something ma-

terial to conceal from the

court, to which they want

to put a veil of secrecy, so

that truth should never

come out and see the light

of the day and remains em-

quent fair trial," it observed.

Mumbai.

"The



"It is my firm belief that the evolving global security scenario demands innovative approaches and stronger partnerships. India's engagements in the global stage exemplifies our commitment to fostering security and growth for all," he added.

According to officials, the Defence Ministers' Conclave, organised in hybrid mode, is aimed at strengthening defence cooperation

₹ 2,435 cr bank fraud: Delhi court slams

CBI for concealing 'something important'

with friendly nations amidst a rapidly-evolving global security landscape, and this year's theme 'Building Resilience through International Defence and Global Engagement (BRIDGE)' underscores the importance of supply chain resilience and strategic collaboration in defence

Officials had earlier said that representatives from more than 80 countries were likely to participate

On a prima facie reading, the court said, of the main

and the supplementary chargesheet revealed the probe

was not done properly but in a "perfunct" and casual

manner. It said the probe had to be carried out in a fair

"After the investigation is over, the final report is

The court noted it was a case of "huge magnitude,

It went on to add, "Non production of the crime

files may lead to an prima facie inference that the

probe agency was concealing something important

which they do not probably want to come out in open,

which itself per se makes out the existence of unusual

and extra ordinary circumstances, which warrants pe-

rusal of the crime file by the court." In its chargesheet,

the CBI alleged huge amounts of bank loans were di-

verted by the accused entities to related parties for which

The investigation showed the accused availed loans

against securities without disclosing credit facilities

availed from other banks, the agency said. The ac-

cused borrowed funds "by misrepresentation and fal-

sification of account books, entries and vouchers", it

added. The SBI reportedly had an exposure of 12.81

per cent in the default amount of ₹ 2,435 crore, on be-

half of the consortium of 11 other lender banks, in-

adjustment entries were made in the account books.

impinging upon the honest tax payers of the country

and the state exchequer".

as to what had transpired

from the registration of the

FIR till the culmination of

the chargesheet/final report

including the crime file,

which is part of the investi-

gations... Any concealment

or non production of the

crime file will only en-

hance the suspicion that in-

vestigating agency has

probably something to blot

out from the court," it said.

filed in the court, then the court has every right to see

fence Ministers in addition to Defence/Service Chiefs and Permanent Secretaries from friendly nations would attend the event.

Reiterating India's conviction on being strong to ensure peace, the Defence Minister said, "we have been working very hard, to bring about a transformation in our defence capabilities. We have put in place a very conducive policy regime which encourages investment in and production of an entire range of modern state-of-the-art land, maritime and air systems."

India's emergence as a global hub for research, development, and innovation in defence is a testament to our capabilities and aspirations, he added

"Today, we have a vibrant defence startup ecosystem within the larger Indian startup ecosystem, which ranks third globally in terms of unicorn count," Rajnath Singh

"Our thriving aerospace and defence sectors, supported by a significant Research & Development base and an entrepreneurial spirit, offer unparalleled opportunities for collaboration," he added. (PTI)

Farmers' protest: Delhi HC junks look out circular against two

High Court has quashed the look out circular issued against two persons in relation to the 2021 farmers' protest saying they fully cooperated in the investigation.

Justice Sanjeev Narula on January 31 said there was no specific order from a judicial authority directing the them to remain within the country and continuation of the look out circular (LOC) was "arbitrary and excessive".

No reasonable purpose would be served other than imposing an "undue and indefinite restraint" on their fundamental right to travel, added the court.

The court found no reason for the LOC to further continue against Thilakasri Krupanand and Shantunu Muluk as the 2021 FIR did not specifically implicate them and the probe remained inconclu-

The court therefore quashed the LOC that barred them from travelling abroad.

The high court said no material was placed on record to suggest their non-cooperation or an attempt to evade the legal proceedings against them. (PTI) Human-animal conflict: 'Ker govt taking all

'Not feasible to micro-manage cases sitting in Delhi': SC disposes of PIL on mob lynching NEW DELHI, Feb 11: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it was not feasible to micro-manage cases of of mob lynching while sitting in Delhi and disposed of a plea raising related concerns, particu-

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K Vinod Chandran referred to the apex court's 2018 verdict which passed a slew of directions to provide "preventive, remedial and punitive measures" to deal with offences like mob violence

larly cow vigilantism against Mus-

"However, sitting here in Delhi, we can't monitor the incidents occurring in different areas in different states of the country. In our view, such a micro-management by this court would not be feasible," the bench said while dispos-

and cow vigilantism.

ing of the PIL. The bench was hearing a PIL seeking directions to states to take immediate action in consonance with the 2018 verdict to effectively deal with incidents of lynching and mob violence, especially against Muslims by cow vigilantes.

It said the authorities were bound to follow the directions issued by the top court in the 2018 verdict

"When directions are issued by this court, the same are binding on all the authorities and courts in the country in view of Article 141 of the Constitution of India," the bench said.

The apex court also dealt with a prayer for providing redressal in cases of lynching and mob violence to the victims, their families and strict compliance of the punitive and remedial measures mentioned in the 2018 verdict.

It said if there was any non-compliance with the directions issued by the apex court, there was remedy available for the aggrieved person and could approach compe-

Dealing with another prayer for a direction to the authorities to provide a minimum uniform amount as compensation for injuries caused to the victims of mob lynching, the court said, "Again, as to what could be an adequate and reasonable compensation would differ from case to case."

Citing an example, it said if a person suffered a simple injury and another one sustained serious injuries in such incidents, a direction to pay a uniform compensation would be unjust.

The plea seeking such omnibus reliefs would not be in the interest of victims, it added.

steps; can't say when it'll end completely'



general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, referred to the 2018 verdict and said the top court had issued detailed guidelines.

"Now, under the new Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), mob lynching is a separate offence," he said.

The petitioner's counsel claimed there was "gross non-compliance" of the apex court's 2018 directions. "If the issue is already con-

cluded, can we again re-open it by

another writ?" asked the bench. Referring to the non-compliance of the apex court's directives, the petitioner's counsel said a pattern emerged across the states as appropriate steps were not taken by the

authorities in such cases. "In each state, the position would be different," the bench said, "are we going to decide upon the patterns?

It referred to its verdict in a matter concerning demolition of properties and said liberty was given to aggrieved persons to approach the competent jurisdictional courts.

"Otherwise, sitting here in Delhi, can we monitor something which is happening in the northeast?" it asked.

The petitioner's counsel said they had also challenged the validity of some notifications issued by different states on the issue.

The bench said it would be appropriate that those aggrieved by hese notifications approached the jurisdictional high courts to challenge the validity.

In July 2023, the apex court sought responses from the Centre and others on the PIL.

The plea sought urgent intervention of the apex court in view of the rise in cases of lynching and mob violence targeting Muslims despite clear guidelines and directions issued by the top court in 2018 with regard to cow vigilantes.

It underscored an "alarming rise" in such cases against the members of the Muslim community and sought an urgent relief saying states had failed to take necessary action against the perpetrators. In 2018, the court held the states had a principal obligation to see to it that vigilantism, be it cow vigilantism or any other vigilantism of any perception, did not take During the hearing, solicitor place, and issued guidelines. (PTI)

47 per cent decline in Naxal violence in Chhattisgarh: Govt

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Chhattisgarh has seen a reduction of 47 per cent in incidents of Naxal violence and a decline of 64 per cent in deaths of civilians and security personnel resulting from such violence during 2024 as compared to 2010, the government informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

In response to a question, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said the state recorded 267 cases of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) violence in 2024 as compared against 499 reported in

He said the deaths of civilians and security forces has also declined by 64 per cent as compared to 2010 when 343 such deaths were reported as against 122 reported in

Rai said the state has received over 43 per cent of the ₹ 1925.83 crore released to all LWE-affected states under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme during the last five years.

The SRE scheme provides funds to LWE-affected states for capacity building through provisions of exgratia to the families of civilians and security forces killed in LWE violence, training and operational needs of security forces, rehabilitation of surrendered Naxal cadres, community policing and compensation to security personnel and civilians for the damage of properties in

Naxal violence, he said. "Under this scheme ₹ 1925.83 crore have been released to all LWE-affected states during the last five years (from 2019-20 till date). This includes ₹ 829.80 crore for Chhattisgarh," the minister said.



The state has also received 21.6 per cent of the total ₹ 394.31 crore released to all LWE-affected states under the Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS) during the last five vears, he said.

The scheme aims to strengthen special forces, special intelligence oranches (SIBs) and district police. "This includes ₹ 85.42 crore for

Chhattisgarh. Seven hundred two fortified police stations (FPSs), including 147 for Chhattisgarh, have been sanctioned for LWE-affected states. Of these, 612 FPSs, including 125 in Chhattisgarh, have been constructed," he said.

He said that to give further impetus for development in most LWEaffected districts, funds are provided to the states under Special Central Assistance (SCA) Scheme to fill critical gaps in public infrastructure and services.

"Under this scheme, ₹ 2384.17 crore have been released to all LWE-affected states during last five years (from 2019-20 till date). This includes ₹ 773.62 crore for Chhattisgarh," he said.

Rai said Rs 654.84 crore have been given to central agencies during the last five years (from 2019-20 till date) for helicopters and addressing critical infrastructure in security camps in LWE-affected areas, under assistance to central agencies for LWE Management (ACALWEM) Scheme. (PTI)

Decide SP leader's appeal in 6 months: SC to Moradabad court

exposure at 11.75 per cent, it said. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed a Moradabad court to decide within six months the appeal of Mohammad Abdullah Azam Khan, son of SP leader Azam Khan, in a 2008 criminal

A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and Rajesh Bindal said the district and sessions court may treat Khan as juvenile on the date of offence while deciding his appeal against the conviction.

A case was registered in 2008 against Khan and his father at the Chhajlet Police Station in Moradabad under Sections 341 (wrongful restraint) and 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) of IPC. It was alleged that they had blocked traffic after their vehicle was stopped by police for checking.

Khan moved the apex court against an April 13, 2023 order of the Allahabad High Court, refusing to stay his conviction, which led to his disqualification as an MLA. (PTI)

the state, Kerala Forest Minister A K Saseendran said cluding Yes Bank, which has the second highest on Tuesday the government is taking all possible and effective measures to prevent the animals from entering human-inhabited areas. The minister noted it is still unclear when the issue

He stated that bringing the entire forest area in the high-range sector under camera surveillance is not practical, as manpower is also required to monitor the move-

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Feb 11: With reports

of wild animal attacks pouring in from various parts of

ment of wild animals in deep forests. The minister informed the state Assembly that steps are already underway to implement a multi-pronged strategy—Mission Food, Fodder, and Water—to find a permanent solution to the wildlife menace by ensuring adequate food and water for them within the forest region itself. Saseendran was replying to a question by

creasing wildlife attack menace in the state. The UDF legislator mentioned in the House the tragic death of a tribal woman in a tiger attack last month

Mannarcaud MLA A N Shamsuddin regarding the in-

when she had gone to pluck coffee beans in Wayanad. He questioned why the forest department had failed to detect the presence of the tiger in the forest fringe area despite the installation of surveillance cameras.

He also accused the government of trivialising the issue of human-animal conflict and giving repetitive re-

Saseendran, however, rejected the opposition MLA's allegations and said the "trivialising" remark was "regrettable.' "We cannot bring the entire forest area under camera

surveillance because there is green cover beneath the cameras, and wild animals move through the undergrowth below. Their movements can be tracked by monitoring these areas using manpower," he explained. Saseendran cited various factors—including climate

change, wildfires, waste deposition, food and water scarcity within forests, illegal tourism activities, and agricultural practices in fringe regions—as reasons for wild animals straying into human settlements.

"The government is making effective interventions to protect people living in the high ranges of the state from wild animal attacks," he said.

He also assured stringent action against wildlife officials who fail to take timely decisions and measures to curb human-animal conflicts.

Replying to a question raised by K P A Majeed (UDF), the minister said he could not specify when wildlife attacks would be completely eliminated in the

Adani Defence & Aerospace, DRDO Unveil India's Vehicle-Mounted Counter-Drone System

BENGALURU, Feb 11: Adani Defence and Aerospace in collaboration with DRDO unveiled India's Vehicle-Mounted Counter-Drone System at Aero India here on Tues-

Dr B K Das, Director General (Electronics & Communication System) of DRDO launched the platform in the presence of defence experts, and industry partners. According to the company, this state-of-

against evolving aerial threats. With the increasing use of drones in modern warfare for both reconnaissance and offensive operations, the need for a robust anti-drone mechanism has become impera-

the-art system marks a significant step in en-

hancing India's defence preparedness

"The Vehicle-Mounted Counter-Drone System ensures long-range protection, agility, and precision, making it a formidable asset for modern defence forces. It offers seamless protection through advanced sensor capabilities, including automatic detection, classification, and neutralisation of drones," it said in a state-



According to the statement, Integrated onto a single 4x4 vehicle, the system provides a highly mobile, agile, reliable, and self-sufficient counter-drone solution. It features a high-energy laser system for precise drone neutralization, a 7.62 mm gun for aerial threat engagement, and advanced radar, SIGINT, electro-optical sensors, and jammers for real-time target acquisition, tracking, and neutralisation within a range of 10 km.

The integration of multiple counter-drone technologies into a single platform ensures rapid response and operational flexibility, making it a critical asset for securing India's defence infrastructure.

Ashish Rajvanshi, CEO of Adani Defence and Aerospace said, "This unveiling is a testament to the success of India's defence innovation ecosystem, driven by DRDO's

world-class R&D and the Transfer of Technology (ToT) framework. Adani Defence and Aerospace is proud to translate DRDO's cutting-edge technology into an operationally ready solution that strengthens our armed forces' ability to counter evolving drone threats.

"By leveraging our advanced manufacturing capabilities, we are committed to ensuring that our armed forces have access to the most advanced, indigenous defence technologies to safeguard the nation's strategic interests," he said.

According to Dr B K. Das, the introduction of this System is a crucial step in enhancing India's defence preparedness against asymmetric threats. This system integrates multiple counter-drone technologies into a highly mobile platform ensuring rapid response and operational flexibility.

"DRDO remains committed to developing indigenous, next-generation solutions in collaboration with the Indian industry to strengthen national security.

We are confident that this system will play a pivotal role in securing key defence and civilian asset," he added. (PTI)

SANYA MALHOTRA REVEALS HER 'RED FLAGS' IN RELATIONSHIPS

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Actor Sanya Malhotra, who is garnering rave reviews for her latest release "Mrs", says while relationships demand numerous compromises, there are certain "red flags" such as disrespect and gaslighting that she would never overlook.

"Mrs" stars Malhotra as Richa, an aspiring dancer who is married off in a patriarchal family where she is reduced to doing household chores but ultimately resists her oppression.

Directed by Arati Kadav of "Cargo" fame and adapted from the hit Malayalam film "The Great Indian Kitchen", the movie is streaming on ZEE5. The actor, also known for films like "Dangal", "Pagglait", and "Kathal - A Jackfruit Mystery", said she has great men like her brother-in-law and friends around her.

"A relationship requires many compromises... There are major red flags which I will avoid like having no respect at all and if somebody is constantly gaslighting me, then no, or someone who's not ready to listen. These are my major red flags,"

Malhotra told PTI in an interview here. Easy communication is a "green flag" for her, she said.

"... When I'm able to communicate any thought that comes up in my head... It shouldn't be like I'm not comfortable talking to my partner about this. An easy, free flowing communication is a green flag. I like to communicate, I love talking... I can talk about my emotions, my career all the time," she added.

As someone who is a public figure, Malhotra said she wants to keep some aspects of her life just to herself.

Unlike other people in the film industry, the 32-year-old isn't a fan of the "hustle culture".

"Hustle culture in this industry... We celebrate it, romanticise it, and we also glorify it. Our industry does that 'Oh! We are ready to die on set!' or that 'We will spend all our life in front of the camera', which I don't believe in. So many people work with that intention. Not a lot of people have that balance in their lives. It becomes a bit difficult to navigate when I want to focus on my personal life, not

just my work. "If I want to grow as an actor, I want to live my life beyond the set. I also want to meet new people who are not from the film industry, who are not connected to this at all, to learn something new. But it's difficult because there is no timetable in our industry. People are working on Saturdays-Sundays, until 12 am, constantly and they are also glorifying that sort of behaviour." At times, Malhotra said one has to really put their "foot down".

"... Like 'I do not work on Saturdays-Sundays' or 'I will not reply to your message after 10-11 pm'. That's important to do... I also want my team to enjoy Saturdays-Sundays, I feel one must get at least two days in a week to have fun and enjoy and then come back to work feeling good," she added. "Mrs", also starring Nishant Dahiya and Kanwaljit Singh, is based on 2021's "The Great Indian Kitchen" directed by Jeo Baby. Malhotra will next be seen in "Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari", "Toaster", and director Anurag Kashyap's currently untitled film. (PTI)



Trouble mounts for Ranveer Allahbadia: YouTube blocks controversial episode, issue raised in Parliament

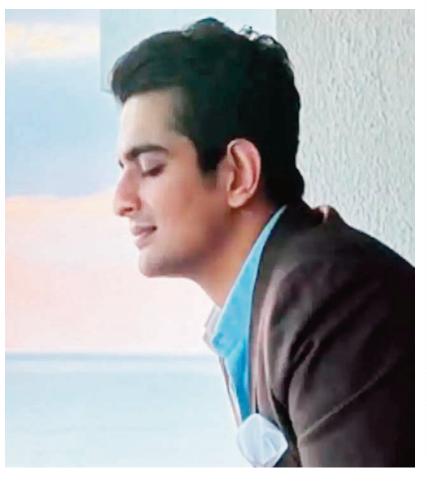
NEW DELHI, Feb 11: A day after he hit the spotlight with a comment on parents and sex, trouble mounted for influencer Ranveer Allahbadia on Tuesday with Mumbai police at his doorstep, YouTube pulling down the episode of "India's Got Latent" and the issue being raised in Parliament.

The internet personality, with over 16 million followers across social media platforms, landed in soup after the clip with his comments started making the rounds on social media on Monday and led to a massive debate on freedom of speech and what constitutes decency. Allahbadia tried to defuse the situation by issuing a video apology where he called his comment a "lapse in judgment," but the issue has refused to die down.

Raising the matter in Parliament during Zero Hour, Shiv Sena MP Naresh Mhaske called for a law to regulate social media. He said there was a need to enact a law to regulate social media platforms where influencers are posting "all kinds of nonsense" in the name of freedom of speech."

The inappropriate things they said yesterday should be censored. There should be censorship on influencers' content, and today I also raised this issue in Parliament, suggesting that action should be taken against them. If such individuals continue to spread negativity, action should be taken against them," Mhaske told PTI.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Tuesday expressed strong concern and asked Allahbadia, Samay Raina, Apoorva Makhija, Jaspreet Singh, and Ashish Chanchlani, as well as the show's producers Tushar Poojari and Saurabh Bothra, to appear before it on February 17 in New Delhi. The summons came after Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi said her ministry will seek a report from the NCW in this regard. The NCW also urged Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to take immediate regulatory measures to address the prevalence of obscene content on various over-thetop (OTT) platforms and social media streaming sites. Following orders from the government, YouTube India has blocked the episode in which the controversial comment was made. (PTI)



'Suzhal - The Vortex' season 2 to premiere on Prime Video on February 28

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Tamil series "Suzhal - The Vortex" will return for its second season on Prime Video on February 28, the streaming platform announced on Tuesday.

The new chapter of the award-winning show, written and created by Pushkar and Gayatri, set against the backdrop of the Ashtakaali festival, an annual festival held in the fictional village of Kaalipattanam in Tamil Nadu. Kathir and Aishwarya Rajesh are returning in lead roles in the second season of "Suzhal - The Vortex", which is directed by Bramma and Sarjun KM and produced by Pushkar and Gayatri's Wallwatcher Films. "The new installment picks up from the momentous climax of season one, with Nandini (Aishwarya) staring at an uncertain future in prison, while Sakkarai (Kathir) reaches a mystifying village with a sinister history. But an unexpected murder casts a dark shadow on the village and its natives, spreading far and wide," read the official synopsis.

Pushkar and Gayatri, who also serve as producers on the series, said "Suzhal - The Vortex" delves deeper into an even darker, mysterious, and absorbing crime that is entangled with the lives of the natives of a fictional village and the visually vibrant festival of Ashtakaali.

"Under the masterful direction of Bramma and Sarjun, the spectacular performances by Kathir, Aishwarya, and Lal, and the ensemble cast that includes an eclectic mix of experienced and fresh talent, the series highlights the versatility of local storytelling that can appeal to a wider audience. "We are delighted to collaborate with Prime Video to build on the franchise, as they not only empower creators while offering a much larger canvas for their creative vision but are also instrumental in showcasing content to a global audience through their service," they said in a joint statement.

Nikhil Madhok, Head of Originals, Prime Video, India, said the first season of "Suzhal - The Vortex" is a great testament to local stories breaking through at a global level, and winning appreciation from viewers and critics ce. "We're thrilled to bring a second season of this clutter-breaking series, as we build on this very successful collaboration with Wallwatcher Films. Experts at what they do, Pushkar and Gayatri are adept in crafting compelling narratives in the thriller-mystery genre with such rich cultural nuances, and we're confident that the second season too will delight our audiences," Madhok added. (PTI)

NOT EASY FOR TV ACTORS TO GET INTO FILMS, NEED TO STILL PROVE THEMSELVES: RASHMI DESAI

MUMBAI, Feb 11: Popular TV star Rashmi Desai says small screen actors still find it tough to make it to the film industry as they have to convince filmmakers to see them in different roles, which can be a chal-

Desai, known for starring in popular daily soaps such as "Uttaran" and "Dil Se Dil Tak" as well as reality show "Bigg Boss", said things have improved for better but not much.

"Earlier it was very difficult and even now it's not very easy to get into films. I'll be very honest because it is difficult to convince the other person (producer) as there are too many things that are involved at the end in the making of a film.

"The best way is to audition, but sometimes that also becomes a very lengthy process. After working for so many years, you need to prove yourself, prove that you are best," Desai told PTI.

"In TV, you have your commitment every day with your audience, when you're doing a reality show. As an actor, you want to go and convince people that I really want to try something new but it becomes a lengthy process," she added.

Despite the struggles, Desai said she is grateful for good projects she has been a part of, including the feature film "Hisaab Barabar", in which she shares screen space with R Madhavan.

"Hisaab Barabar" is a satirical drama film, which was released on streaming service ZEE5 recently.

It revolves around Radhe Mohan Sharma (Madhavan), a railway ticket checker who uncovers a small discrepancy in his bank account. It soon leads to a dangerous journey filled with fraud, deceit and corruption.

Desai, who earlier had a cameo appearance in "Dabangg 2", and also acted in Gujarati films like "Supertar" and "Mom Tane Nai Samjay", essays the role of Madhavan's neighbour in the movie.

"My character is different, she is a practical person... In this film, I've grey mindset, and they've shown it in a beautiful and comic way. I have really wanted to do a comedy for a long time, and I'm glad I got to play this role," she said.

Also starring Kirti Kulhari and Neil Nitin Mukesh, "Hisaab Barabar" is directed by Ashwni Dhir.

The film, which was released in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu, is produced by Jio Studios and SP Cinecorp. (PTI)



Complaint filed against Allahbadia in Indore over 'obscene' comments

INDORE (MP), Feb 11: A complaint was filed at a police station here on Tuesday against social media influencer Ranveer Allahbadia over his 'obscene and vulgar' comments in comedian Samay Raina's YouTube reality show "India's Got Latent", the police said. No First Information Report (FIR) has been registered yet, said Tukoganj police station in-charge Jitendra Singh Yadav. The complaint was filed by Aman Malviya, a local lawyer, Yadav told PTI. "No case has been registered. The complaint will be investigated and after that appropriate action will be taken," he said. Malviya said Allahbadia, Raina and other celebrities who featured in the show crossed all limits of indecency by misusing the freedom of expression. A few other lawyers also accompanied Malviya to the police station, demanding action against Allahbadia and Raina, and a ban on the show, Allahbadia, 31, stirred a major controversy with distasteful comments on parents and sex on Raina's show that went viral on social media on Monday. (PTI) WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025

Mumbai City look to prevail over FC Goa and move up in ISL points table

MUMBAI, Feb 11: Unbeaten in 13 matches against FC Goa in the Indian Super League (ISL), Mumbai City FC would look to prevail over their west coast rivals and move up to top-four in the points table in a crucial game here on Wednesday.

The Islanders will aim to extend their stranglehold against the Gaurs as their impressive unbeaten record in previous 13 ISL encounters includes eight wins and five draws.

A triumph on Wednesday will have Mumbai City cap off the league double over FC Goa for the fourth time, having done so earlier in 2017-18, 2021-22, and 2022-23.

FC Goa are placed second in the points table with 36 points from 19 matches, winning 10 games and drawing six. However, they faced their first away loss of the season when Jamshedpur FC beat the side 3-1 earlier this month.

As the ISL nears its business end, both these sides have different objectives coming into this match. FC Goa are 10 points behind the top-placed Mohun Bagan Super Giant (46), but their key objective right now is to safeguard their standing in the second spot.

A second place finish will mean that they qualify straight for the semi-finals and would not have to play the singlelegged eliminator in the playoffs. For that, they would have to fend off competition from the third-placed Jamshedpur FC (34), with both sides having played the same number of

Mumbai City, fifth in the



standings, have 31 points from 19 matches and they will move up to top four if they win on Wednesday. Their nearest challengers, NorthEast United FC have accumulated 29 points from 20 games. The home side will want to avoid any late slipups to secure a place in the top six. Furthermore, the contest on Wednesday can have a huge im-

FC Goa lose against Mumbai City, and Mohun Bagan Super Giant beat Kerala Blasters away on February 15, the Mariners will become the ISL 2024-25 League winners.

The two teams have played 27 matches against each other in the ISL, with Mumbai City winning 12 times and FC Goa

pact on the eventual title race. If emerging victorious in seven games. Eight games have produced draws.

> Mumbai City FC head coach Petr Kratky laid out the way he wants his team to approach the match against FC Goa.

"We want to keep the ball, be creative, and be dynamic and we need to continue working

FC Goa head coach Manolo Marquez refused to look too far ahead in the league stages at the moment

"The most important thing for us right now is the next game, and not the ones that follow. It doesn't matter what happened in the past. We need to consider the circumstances around this

Consistency and Candidates qualification on Vaishali's wish-list for 2025

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Unbothered by the drama over a handshake, focussed on being more consistent and determined to secure a spot in the Candidates -- R Vaishali has her priorities sorted for 2025 and the Indian Grandmaster says she would not let anything distract her from those goals.

The past year has already proven to be a remarkable chapter in the 23-year-old's career, with a series of career-defining milestones. These include becoming only the third woman from India to earn the Grandmaster title, playing a vital role in the country's gold medal-winning performance at the Chess Olympiad, and clinching a bronze medal at the World Blitz Championship.

"My main goal is to show consistent performance and play some good games," the 23-year-old told PTI. A slight blip came recently when she finished ninth in the Tata Steel Chess Tournament's challengers' section

More than the performance, she hit the headlines for a declined handshake with Uzbek Grandmaster Nodirbek Yakubboev.Following a wave of criticism. Yakubboev apologised to her with chocolate and flowers for refusing to shake hands due to his religious beliefs before a match between the

"I didn't know it was a big thing back in India. I was focused on the games and didn't know what was going on in the social media," she said of the episode.

"Later I got to know, and okay, we all know what happened. It didn't affect me in any way," she

"Tata Steel is a strong tournament, and I think my performance was decent," she said.

"Surely I could have scored a few points more, like I had some good positions, I failed to convert them, which I'll work on and try to improve. Going forward, I want to focus on showing more consistent performance."

The Women's Candidates Tournament determines the challenger for the World Chess Championship. The next edition is to be held in 2026 with the qualification process set for this year in which rankings will be of significance.

"Of course, by the end of the year, I aim to qualify for the Candidates Tournament. I had the opportunity to play in the Candidates last year, and I hope to qualify for it again," she said. Reflecting on her bronze at the Blitz World Championship last year, Vaishali said the result was important for her confidence, following some disappointing results. "It was an important result for my confidence especially, because I had a few bad tournaments in a row and it was nice to end finally with a good result last year," she said in a rather a modest assessment of her per-

Vaishali endured her fair share of lows that cost her valuable rating points but she views these challenges as valuable learning ex-

"I would say it was a mixed year. I achieved some good results, but I also lost some rating points. It was a very interesting experience," she reflected. (PTI)

Assam's 10-year-old Viraj bags Silver at Bangkok Rapid Chess C'ship

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Feb 11: Viraj Sarawgi, a grade 5 student at Royal Global School in Guwahati,

has emerged as a rising chess talent, showcasing his skills at the prestigious Bangkok Rapid Chess Championship. The tournament, held on Sun-

day at Kings College, Bang Phong Phang, Bangkok, with participation of around 250 players from seven countries, making it a highly competitive international platform.

Competing in the Under-12 category, Viraj secured an impressive silver medal, amassing 5.5 points out of 6 rounds. His performance was particularly noteworthy as he entered the event as an unrated player but managed to defeat two seasoned FIDE-rated opponents, Kultungkijsaree Poom (1502) and Juntongjin Prin (1496). His only loss came against the tournament's ultimate champion, Ayan Mukherjee (1596).

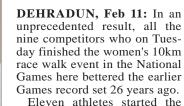
Viraj's success at the Bangkok Rapid Chess Championship is a testament to his dedication, sharp tactical play, and unwavering fighting spirit. He draws inspiration from Grandmaster D Gukesh and aspires to follow in his footsteps, aiming to become a world champion one day.

Viraj's journey has been guided by0renowned coaches Durga Nagesh Guttula and Shrikanth Malladi, who have played a crucial role in honing his skills and nurturing his talent.

Coach Durga Nagesh Guttula praised Viraj's natural talent and fearless approach to the game, stating, "Viraj is a natural talent with a fearless approach to the game. His ability to take on experienced, rated players with confidence speaks volumes about his potential. We are proud of his achievements and believe he has a bright future ahead."

Viraj's performance at the Bangkok Rapid Chess Championship has not only brought recognition to his talent but has also highlighted Assam's growing chess prowess. His achievement serves as an inspiration for aspiring chess players in the region and across the country. With his sights set on the upcoming Abu Dhabi Junior Chess Championship in August, Viraj is determined to continue his winning streak and make India proud on the international stage. His dedication, coupled with the guidance of his coaches, positions him as a promising young talent in the world of

All nine finishers in women's 10km race walk event better National Games record



Eleven athletes started the race but two could not finish. National record holder Priyanka Goswami entered her name but did not start the race, which returned to the National Games for the first time after the 1999 edition in Manipur.

Haryana's Ravina, who had won the National Inter-State and National Open Championships last year in 20km event, clinched the gold with a time 45.52 seconds, bettering the earlier Games record of 51.56 seconds set by Y Bala Devi of Manipur in the 1999 Games in Imphal. All the other eight athletes who followed Ravina at the finish line also clocked better times than the earlier Games record of 51.56 seconds.

They are Shalini (46.12 seconds) of Uttarakhand, Munita Prajapati (46:23) of Uttar



Reshma Patel (48.16) of Uttar Pradesh, Mansi Negi (48.32) of Uttarakhand, Sejal Singh (49.33) of Maharashtra and Monika (51.45) of Haryana.

Only Ravina's timing will, however, be considered as the new national record in the record books.

In the men's 20km event, six competitors out of 10 who finGurmeet Singh of Jharkhand in the 2011 edition. Servin Sebastian of Services,

who won the 20km race walk event at the National Open Championships, took the gold with a personal best time of 1:21:23. His earlier personal best was 1:21:39.

Uttarakhand's Suraj Panwar. who competed at the 2024 Paris Olympics in the marathon race walking mixed relay event along with Priyanka Goswami,

1:21:34, while Amanjot Singh of Punjab secured the bronze, clocking 1:21:42. Paramjeet Singh Bisht of

Services, who competed in the Paris Olympics 20km race walk event, was fourth with a time of :22:02. Ram Baboo of Uttar Pradesh, who won a bronze in mixed 35km race walk at the 2022 Asian Games, was fifth with 1:22:26, while Mukesh Nitharwal of Rajasthan sixth with 1:22:52. In fact, the race walk events

National Games here as the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) had decided to exclude them because it wanted the elite race walkers to participate in select competitions so that they could achieve their peak in major international events Later, on the request from the

were initially not in the 38th

Games organisers, the AFI reversed it decision and included the race walk events. But, instead of the women's 20km event, which has been held in the past seven editions, the AFI decided to have the 10km event. The men's 20km event was kept unchanged. (PTI)

Chairman of the Tour, Fixture & Technical Committee, Sankar Dutta Lahakar, ACA Chief Executive Officer Pritom Mahanta, Pradesh, Mokavi Muthurathiished the race bettered the ear-Member of the Tournament Committee, ACA Dr. Bishnu Ram nam (46.23) of Tamil Nadu, lier Games record of 1 hour, 23 Nunisa, and other members. HT photo minutes and 26 seconds set by Payal (47.36) of Uttarakhand, Putting an end to cash rewards for attaining

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Indian have to make some financial Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi believes the government's recent decision to stop cash rewards for attaining GM and International Master titles is "not ideal" for the parents of chess players as such incentives ease the fi-

nancial strain on them.

Starting this month, the sports ministry has eliminated the reward system for chess players, who were earlier receiving Rs four lakh for achieving a Grandmaster title and Rs 1.5 lakh for attaining an International Master or International Women Master (IWM) title. Prize money will now only be given for winning world-level compe-

"If it is actually the case that it is stopped now, then it's definitely not something that would demotivate a lot of young children as they don't care about the money aspect," Erigaisi told

"But it is maybe (demotivat-

calls, then what would happen after becoming a Grandmaster would be a question. "And if there is some motiva-

ACA Secretary Tridib Konwar and Treasurer Chiranjit Langthasa

chaired a joint meeting of the Senior Tournament Committee, Tour,

Fixture & Technical Committee, and Members Coordination Com-

mittee of the Assam Cricket Association on Tuesday at the ACA

Stadium office to finalise the venue and fixture for the 2nd round of

the APCC Tournament 2024-25 and the 4th Nilay Dutta Inter-Uni-

versity Cricket Tournament. The meeting was attended by the

tion like this, then there are more chances that they would encourage their children if they have to make a call between chess and studies. It's not something ideal.' After a remarkable 2024, in which he became the second In-

dian after Vishwanathan Anand to achieve a 2800 ELO rating and won the men's Olympiad gold, the 21-year-old from Warangal has had a less-thanideal start to 2025. Erigaisi finished 10th in the recently concluded Tata Steel Chess tournament.

"It was a very good year and I'm happy with the way things went, like with everything basically and this year hasn't been a good start but I hope to do better in the coming months.'

One factor that has coning) for the parents. When they tributed to his recent slump is



GM, IM titles not ideal: Arjun Erigaisi

style that has also brought him

his penchant for taking risks, a and I should be careful. I will tone it down but it doesn't mean that I won't take risks rather I'll "I was taking too many risks take them less rashly because

rash which just got punished. So I'll be taking risks but in a more clining rating.

Although the tournament didn't pan out the way he wanted it, Ergaisi did sign off from Tata Steel chess on a high -- defeating reigning world champion D

His victory against Gukesh brought R Praggnanandhaa into the equation, who eventually went on to win the tournament.

Praggnanandhaa later joked that he would get a gift for Erigaisi and true to his word, he brought him his favourite chips.

"He brought me paprika flavoured Pringles. It's my favourite flavour and once I was looking for it at some airport and he was there with me and I couldn't find it. He remembered it and we bought it there," Erigiasi said with a smile on his

he struggled to win games in the

some of my risks were way too Tata Steel event but the youngster is not bothered about his de-

"I don't care about rating points much, it's about mainly trying to qualify for the Candidates. And of course no one likes to lose ratings. The 21-year-old is keen to

take part in the Norway Chess tournament as it gives him the opportunity to rub shoulders with the likes of five-time world champion Magnus Carlsen and world number two and three Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura in the classical for-

"I'm very much looking forward to it. Magnus, I played him last in Classical in 2023 so

it's been a long time. "And Hikaro I've played only once (in classical). And Fabi also, realistically I played only once. So most of these top players I haven't played them that Erigiasi dropped as many as many times in Classical. So I'm 29 rating points in 10 days when quite looking forward to it," he added. (PTI)

Kohli's form in focus as India eye ODI clean-sweep over England

AHMEDABAD, Feb 11: A big knock from Virat Kohli's currently silent bat along with a series clean-sweep over England will be on Team India's wish-list when the two teams square off in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday, marking the end of their Champions Trophy build-up.

12 THE HILLS TIMES

While India hold an unassailable 2-0 lead with identical fourwicket wins in each of the first two ODIs, Rohit Sharma's men will be extra motivated to get a win here at the Narendra Modi Stadium where they had suffered a crushing ODI World Cup final loss in 2023.

Needless to say, having their batting mainstay Kohli among runs and a win would be perfect culmination to the home side's Champions Trophy preparations. The eight-team competition gets underway from February 19 in Karachi with India starting against Bangladesh the next day in Dubai as per a hybrid model of hosting.

The team has already got a shot in the arm by Rohit's return to form. His 90-ball 119 in the second ODI was a source of relief to both the side and to him after a prolonged run of poor scores.

Kohli hasn't looked completely out of touch but hasn't stayed at the crease for long enough to give himself a chance for a big knock

If he manages to click, Kohli is in with a chance create another record. He is 89 runs short of becoming only the third batter in history to score 14,000 runs in the format which arguably has been the run-machine's favourite.

India don't seem to have put a foot wrong in this series as they continue to make the most of their rich reservoir of talent.

The addition of Varun Chakravarthy has given additional ammunition to their lethal spin attack which will be vital for the Champions Trophy and Mohammed Shami's return after lengthy injury layoff has been



seamless too.

Shami's successful comeback has certainly been assuring given that the Indian team management will spend an anxious day on Tuesday awaiting news on their premier fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, whose availability for the Champions Trophy is still under

As per the original time-line, Bumrah was slated for a comeback in the Ahmedabad ODI, but the ace pacer is currently toiling at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru under the watchful eyes of specialists aiming to make the final squad that is set to be unveiled on Wednesday.

Bumrah's guile on varied pitches and conditions is something that no team across the world possesses and India would be desperate to have their trump card back in the mix as they chase another ICC trophy.

Both India and England will

enjoy an off day on Tuesday as

they have skipped training and

other pre-match routines to rest

and recuperate. Having ended his troubled run with the bat with a characteristic hundred in Cuttack, Rohit's confidence will certainly rub off on the rest of the side.

While Yashasvi Jaiswal could continue to warm the bench, India will expect better application and results from wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul, who is going through a lean patch himself.

But it would not be a surprise if India give the flamboyant Rishabh Pant a crack to get some game time and have another lefthanded batter in the mix to try out additional combinations.

India will need Shreyas Iyer's presence in the middle-order which has been bolstered by robust batting performances from rounder has shown immense maturity at No.5 in pressure situations of both the ODIs so far with knocks of 52 and 41 not out.

Patel's exploits with the bat have taken some pressure off Ravindra Jadeja, who has chipped away at England with six wickets so far, exploiting the spin-friendly conditions perfectly to warm-up for similar set-ups in the Champions Trophy.

But for Jos Butter's England, this tour has raised more questions than they would have ex-

England have suffered repeated implosions in their core batting line-up across the T20Is and ODIs which has undone the impressive work that the opening pair of Phil Salt and Ben Duckett has been putting up.

Buttler maintains his team remains a work in progress but exit of the talented Jacob Bethell due to injury hampers them further.

Harry Brook has blown hot and cold in ideal conditions for batting and Joe Root's impressive returns haven't got the adequate support from others.

Among bowlers, Adil Rashid has exploited the conditions perfectly but the onus will be on England batters to produce a unified show.

Teams:

India: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (wk), Rishabh Pant (wk), Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Mohd. Shami, Arshdeep Singh and Varun Chakaravarthy.

England: Jos Buttler (c&wk), Harry Brook, Ben Duckett, Joe Root, Philip Salt, Jamie Smith (wk), Tom Banton, Brydon Carse, Liam Livingstone, Jamie Overton, Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Saqib Mahmood, Adil Rashid and Mark Wood.

Match starts at 1:30pm IST.

Rahane's century, Dias' five-wicket burst put Mumbai in Ranji Trophy semifinal

before a nudged single towards

midwicket carried him past the

The Mumbai stalwart took his

helmet off, looked skyward and

seemed emotionally relieved as it

was his first hundred of the season.

milestone off 160 balls.

Anuj

with two wickets each.

that spirit in their chase.

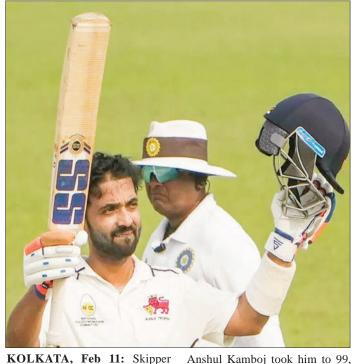
But Haryana failed to replicate

Barring a Lakshay Dalal and

Sumit Kumar sixth-wicket partner-

as they folded in 57.3 overs on a

Haryana losing nine wickets.



KOLKATA, Feb 11: Skipper Ajinkya Rahane conjured a typically gritty hundred and pacer Royston Dias supported his effort with a five-wicket haul as defending champions Mumbai completed a fine escape act, scripting a commanding 152-run over Haryana to enter the Ranji Trophy semifinals here on Tuesday.

Rahane, resuming on 88, wasted no time in the morning to notch 108 (180 balls: 13x4) -- his 41st first-class century, that guided Mumbai to 339 in the second innings for an overall lead of 353

Chasing 354, Haryana crumbled against left-arm pacer Dias (5/39) and Shardul Thakur (3/26), as the veteran quick completed a creditable nine-wicket haul for the

They were bowled out for 201 as the joyous Mumbai dressing room might have forgotten that worrisome period when they were 65/5 in the first innings.

Rahane made a bright beginning in the first session, as two exquisite boundaries off Sumit Kumar and

bled in the final hour, with Dias producing a career-best 5/39 in 10.3 overs -- his maiden fivewicket haul.

Shardul, who had taken six wickets in the first innings, was the first to strike. Steaming in from the High Court end, he extracted lateral movement on a docile pitch, bowling a relentless 10-over spell across two sessions that read 10-3-

From the Pavilion end, Dias provided perfect support, returning 6-2-12-2 in his first spell.

Just as it seemed Mumbai would wrap things up early, Haryana's Lakshay (64 off 130; 9x4) and Sumit (62 off 96; 10x4) dug in, stitching a doughty stand against the run of play.

On an eased-out fourth-day pitch, Sumit counterattacked, stepping out to Shams Mulani to negate the turn.

Rahane turned to Dube's military medium pace, but Mumbai remained frustrated as misfields crept in, offering easy singles, though the steep target remained their advantage.

Sumit soon reached his seventh first-class fifty in 72 balls, Rahane's sharp captaincy changed the

However, Mumbai, resuming The breakthrough came via offfrom 278/4, crumbled after his disspinner Tanush Kotian, who struck in his very first over. Shivam Dube (44 overnight) fell

Lakshay, attempting to drag a two runs short of a fifty, and Mumball from outside, gloved it faintly bai lost their remaining five wickto the keeper.

ets for just 25 runs in under 10 The umpire wasn't convinced, but Rahane immediately called for Thakral (4/70) led DRS and the UltraEdge showed a Haryana's charge, while Kamboj, clear deflection. Sumit and Jayant Yadav chipped in

Dias then delivered another blow, as Rahane's astute bowling change ended Sumit's counterattacking knock.

Brief Scores

Mumbai 315 and 339 in 85.3 ship worth 90 runs, Haryana's overs (Ajinkya Rahane 108, chase never gathered momentum, Suryakumar Yadav 70, Shivam Dube 48). Haryana 201; 57.3 overs day when the play was agreed (Lakshay Dalal 64, Sumit Kumar upon to be extended because of 62; Royston Dias 5/39, Shardul good light and also because of Thakur 3/26). Mumbai won by 152 runs. (PTI)

