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## Tauqeer Sheikh visited India 18 times, Himanta tells Assembly



**GUWAHATI, Feb 20:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said that the preliminary investigation has found that Pakistani national Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, who is allegedly linked to Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi's British wife, has visited India 18 times to date.

During a discussion on Motion of Thanks on the governor's speech, Sarma also claimed that the initial information in the case is "very fatal" for the Congress and will have a "huge impact" on the politics of Assam.

"Within three days, the Assam Police SIT on the case found that Ali Tauqeer Sheikh visited India 18 times. Now, we will know who invited and hosted him during those visits," he added.

The CM also stated he knows informally that the preliminary investigation has revealed some startling facts, the impact of which will be huge on Assam politics.

"As per the initial information, the facts are very fatal for the Congress party. As a responsible person standing inside the assembly, I am saying this. I promise to the Assam Assembly that we will break the network of Ali Sheikh. Give us three months and we will inform everything in the August session," he added.

Sarma said the investigation findings will put some people in an indefensible position.

"Sheikh apparently works in a climate action group. But his

tweets and social media activities are on Assam immigrants. These are an attempt to interfere in India's internal affairs," he added.

The Assam chief minister and the BJP have been attacking Gogoi, the Deputy Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha, over his wife Elizabeth Colburn's alleged connection with Pakistan's spy agency ISI.

The Assam Police on Monday constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe a case against the Pakistani national Ali Tauqeer Sheikh for his social media comments on Assam and India's internal affairs.

Sheikh, an advisor to the Pakistan Planning Commission and a former colleague of Colburn, was charged under various sections of the Bhatiariya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

After much hue and cry over Gogoi's wife's alleged ISI links, the Assam cabinet on Sunday decided not to register any case against the parliamentarian or his British spouse but instructed the DGP to file an FIR against the Pakistani national.

The state govt also announced that it will write to the Centre for probing Colburn's participation in Lok Sabha campaigns in the erstwhile Kaliabor constituency, which was won by the Congress MP twice, despite being a British citizen. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## CM assures to beef up security of Dhubri MP Rokibul, son come under attack in Nagaon dist

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, Feb 20:** Congress Dhubri Lok Sabha MP Rokibul Hussain and his personal security officers were attacked by unidentified miscreants at New Bazar in Rupahihat, Assam's Nagaon district, on Thursday.

The incident occurred when Hussain and his son, Tanzil Hossain, went on their way to attend a party meeting at Puthikhaiti in the district.

"A group of unidentified miscreants with their faces covered attacked Hussain, his son Tanzil Hossain, and his security personnel. The miscreants used cricket bats and sticks to assault them. Hussain's vehicle was also damaged in the sudden attack," said eyewitnesses.

They further stated that the security personnel accompanying Hussain fired in the air to disperse the attackers. However, the miscreants managed to snatch the keys of the vehicle, leaving Hussain and his team stranded.

"The gang of miscreants was so ferocious that they even leaped at the security guards and beat them up," they added. Hussain claimed that the attack was pre-planned and that he had informed the district administration and the police about the possibility of such an incident.

He demanded immediate action against the perpe-

trators and called for the resignation of the Home Minister. The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) strongly condemned the attack.

Making a statement in the Assembly, the Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the crowd had tried to prevent Hussain from entering the village when his PSO opened fire.

Despite the attack, the MP proceeded to the scheduled meeting venue, where the event was conducted in the presence of the district Superintendent of Police, he added.

The chief minister further assured that Hussain's security would be beefed up while he remains in the district, particularly in Samaguri and Rupohihat.

Director General of Police (DGP) Harmeet Singh told reporters that the situation was under control and that the SP concerned was investigating the incident.

"We will share further details as the investigation progresses," he said. The MP was unharmed, but two of his PSOs sustained minor injuries and are receiving necessary medical treatment, Singh added.

Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President Bhupen Borah condemned the attack, calling it a failure of the Chief Minister, who also holds the Home portfolio, in maintaining (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



## Shah asks NE insurgents to surrender



**NEW DELHI, Feb 20:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday appealed to insurgents in the Northeast to lay down their arms and join the mainstream saying their participation in India's development journey is most welcome.

Participating in the 'Unity Utsav

lay down the arms and join the mainstream. Your participation in India's development journey is welcome," he said.

The home minister said there has been 70 per cent reduction in violence in the Northeast in the last five years, 70 per cent less casualties in security forces and 85 per cent less deaths among civilians.

He said over 10,000 insurgents have surrendered in the last five years, 12 peace accords were signed with different outfits and two border agreements were also signed among the states.

"The Northeast wants peace, Northeast wants development, Northeast wants to work as an integral part of India," he said.

The home minister said if the youth of the Northeast put forward two steps to be part of India's development process, the whole country will put forward four steps with open heart to welcome them.

"I appeal to all those insurgents who have not surrendered yet to

## PM to be in Assam for 2 days from Feb 24 for investment summit, dance event: CM

**GUWAHATI, Feb 20:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will reach Assam on a two-day visit from February 24 to attend a world record making dance event and inaugurate a business summit, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said here on Thursday.

The Prime Minister will arrive on Monday afternoon and attend the Jhumoi dance by artistes of the tea tribe community at the Sarusajai Stadium.

Altogether 8,000 people will take part in the 'Jhumoi Binandini', an attempt to set a world record for the largest participants in a Jhumoi dance event.

Modi will then proceed to the infrastructure and investment summit site at the Veterinary College

Field at Khanpara to visit a related exhibition, the chief minister said at a press conference.

One gallery there will display exhibits highlighting the traditional industries of the state, titled 'Pride of Assam', while the other one - 'Future of Assam' - will reflect the modern industries and infrastructure development, Sarma said.

The Prime Minister was scheduled to spend around 45 minutes at the galleries on Monday, Sarma added. On Tuesday, the PM will inaugurate the summit scheduled to be attended by industrialists such as Mukesh Ambani, Gautam Adani, Anil Agarwal, Prashant Ruia and Sajjan Jindal along with entrepreneurs from Assam. Union ministers (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Attacks on minorities in B'desh did not take place: BGB DG

**NEW DELHI, Feb 20:** Attacks on minorities in Bangladesh after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government did not happen, the chief of that country's border guarding force claimed on Thursday as he termed reports in this regard as "exaggerated".

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) director general Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui also said "many new issues" under the common heads were discussed during his high-level talks with BSF DG Daljit Singh Chawdhary here.

Siddiqui, while speaking to reporters during a joint press conference with Chawdhary, asserted that authorities of his country took steps for the protection of the minorities as he gave example of his force "personally" extending security cover to Durga Puja pandals within 8 km of their jurisdiction along the international border. This was the first high-level meeting of the two forces after the regime change in Bangladesh in August last year.

The BGB DG also said they raised "objections" and "flagged a number of cases" during the bi-annual talks DG-level with regard to the fencing being done by India along the 150 yards of the IB and has requested for a "joint inspection" before the work is done.

"The attacks on minorities in the recent past, I would say, that this is an exaggeration and to be honest

such attacks on minorities per se did not happen."

"The substantiation for this is the recently held Durga Puja which was one of the most peacefully organised and arranged Hindu festival. The law enforcement agencies of Bangladesh were very precisely and strictly tasked by the government so that the Hindu community is able to perform... (the rituals)," the BGB chief said.

He said they got "several requests (from minority community), sometimes without any fear or any threat and even when there was nothing substantial (vis-a-vis threats against minorities), we provided security."

Siddiqui said such reports were more in the media, "tempting" the politicians to comment. There were such instances during the initial couple of months after August 5 (fall of Hasina government in 2024) but now it is not like that, he said.

Asked if there were any changes in the agenda points from both sides, post the regime change in Bangladesh, the BGB DG said while "the broad heads might be the same but the inner text, contextual differences... (had changes) and there were many new issues under the common broadheads..."

The BSF chief, however, said that the agenda points "more or less were the same with few changes here and there" as the Indo-Bangla (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Rekha Gupta is Delhi's new CM

**NEW DELHI, Feb 20:** Debutant legislator Rekha Gupta was sworn in as Delhi chief minister along with six ministers on Thursday in a grand show of strength full of colour and spectacle to mark the BJP's return to power in the city after more than 26 years.

The ceremony at the sprawling Ramliha Ground was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the top BJP brass and NDA leaders. Gupta is Delhi's fourth woman chief minister after her party's Sushma Swaraj, the Congress' Sheila Dikshit and AAP's Atishi.

The 50-year-old MLA from Shalimar Bagh, who took charge of her office at the Delhi Secretariat in the afternoon, is also the only woman in the NDA team of chief ministers and the second in the country after TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal.

The former student leader presides over an all-male cabinet that includes giant slayer Parvesh Verma, who defeated Arvind Kejriwal in the elections, Hindutva poster boy Kapil Mishra and the BJP's Sikh face Manjinder Singh Sirsa. Besides, Ashish Sood, Ravinder Indraj Singh and Pankaj Singh were also administered the oath of office by Lt Governor V K Saxena. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## The final day of the festival featured the concluding ceremony at Singmirjeng stage Curtains fall on 51st Karbi Youth Festival at Taralango



**HT Bureau**  
**DIPHU, Feb 20:** The mega cultural extravaganza -- 51st Karbi Youth Festival (KYF) -- concluded at in Diphu's Taralango on Wednesday evening.

It began on February 15, showcased the rich culture and traditions of the Karbi community

living in the hill districts of Assam.

Organised by the Karbi Cultural Society (KCS), the festival featured a blend of age-old traditions and modern performances, including folk songs, dances, traditional games and sports, fashion shows, rock contests, Miss and Mr. KYF competitions, an art and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## It can lead to severe neurological consequences, including permanent brain injury WHO identifies encephalitis as increasing global threat, matter of urgent public health priority

**NEW DELHI, Feb 20:** The World Health Organization and Encephalitis International have launched a critical Technical Brief on encephalitis which identified the infectious and autoimmune disease as an increasing global threat, making it an urgent public health priority.

The Technical Brief outlines the worldwide burden of encephalitis, key actions required to improve prevention, data collection and surveillance, diagnostics and treatment, aftercare and awareness, and research innovation.

"Encephalitis is an increasing global threat. Without urgent attention and investment, we will see more needless deaths and disabilities from the condition," said Dr Ava Easton, the chief executive of



Encephalitis International.

Encephalitis, caused by infectious and autoimmune factors, is an often-deadly brain inflammation that can affect anyone regardless of age, sex or ethnicity. It can lead to severe neurological consequences, including permanent brain injury.

It arises either from an infection invading the brain, such as Japanese Encephalitis and Scrub Typhus which are more prevalent in India or from the immune system mistakenly attacking the brain.

According to a survey in 2024, as many as 1,548 Japanese Encephalitis cases were reported from 24 states and Union Territories in the country.

WHO and Encephalitis International urged policymakers, public health professionals, healthcare providers, and researchers to implement its recommendations to save lives and reduce disability associated with encephalitis.

"WHO's recognition of encephalitis as a growing global threat marks a pivotal moment. We must act decisively to improve prevention, diagnosis, and care for those affected. Encephalitis disproportionately affects individuals in low-to-middle-income countries, where healthcare resources are often limited," (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Modi govt putting India's national security, territorial integrity at risk: Kcharge

**NEW DELHI, Feb 20:** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday hit out at the Modi government over reports that China was settling 90 new villages along the Arunachal Pradesh border and accused it of putting India's national security, territorial integrity and sovereignty at risk.

In a post on X, Kharge alleged that the priorities of the government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi were "PR stunts" and "false advertisements" and "not national security".

"Narendra Modi ji, you are adopting the policy of giving a 'red salute' to China instead of showing 'red eyes'. India's national security, territorial sovereignty and integrity are paramount, the Modi government is putting it at risk," he said in his post in Hindi.

"Our allegation is made with great responsibility and is based on facts. China has started settling 90



the last two years. This scheme was launched in February 2023 and out of the Rs 4,000 crore allocated fund, only Rs 500 crore has been spent," he said.

The Congress chief said that in Himachal Pradesh, where 75 villages need to be improved, the Modi government at the Centre has given almost no funds for it.

Kharge claimed that in December 2024, China announced plans to build the 'world's largest dam' on the Brahmaputra River, which could prove disastrous for our national security, environment and the north-eastern states.

The Brahmaputra River, he said, accounts for 30 per cent of India's freshwater resources, making its flow vital to India. The Congress president said according to a reply by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in the Rajya Sabha in 2022, your government said that "in March (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)





QUOTE OF THE DAY

For the mind disturbed, the still beauty of dawn is nature's finest balm — Edwin Way Teale

Hoping independence of EC

With Union Government of India making the appointments of the Chief Election Commissioner of India, and an Election Commissioner under the new law of 2023, while the law itself is pending adjudication in the Supreme Court of India, people's hopes and fears about independence of Election Commission of India running high.

A day after the appointment of new CEC Gyanesh Kumar and an EC Vivek Joshi, the petitioners who have challenged the law on the appointment of Election Commissioners requested the Supreme Court on February 18 to hear the matter on top priority on February 19 itself, fearing that the matter may not be heard at all since it was listed as no. 41 item.

The level of hope and fear on Vivek Joshi is much higher than on Gyanesh Kumar since, Lok Sabha Election 2019 would most probably be held under his tenure.

Assam's historic leap: New Accord cements indigenous rights and cultural safeguards

The recent agreement between the Assam government and the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) to implement 38 out of 52 recommendations of the Justice (Retd.) Biplab Sharma Committee marks a watershed moment in Assam's long-standing quest to safeguard its indigenous identity.

Clause 6 of the Assam Accord, signed in 1985 following the Assam Movement (1979-1985), mandates special constitutional safeguards to protect, preserve, and promote the identity of the Assamese people.

Language Policies: Strengthening the Assamese Linguistic Identity

Land Rights and Protection of Indigenous Ownership

enforcing Assamese identity from an early age.

To further elevate Assamese as the language of governance, the state government has decided that, from April 14 (Bohag Bihu, the Assamese New Year), all official government notifications will be published in both English and Assamese.

Recognizing the need for linguistic adaptation in the digital era, the government has proposed collaborating with institutions such as Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University to develop an AI-based translation tool.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Dipak Kurmi

Employment and Economic Empowerment for Indigenous Youth

The Assam government has also prioritized job creation as a means to strengthen economic security among indigenous communities.

Further, discussions are ongoing regarding employment reservations for Assamese people in government jobs, as recommended by the Biplab Sharma Committee.

While a final decision on this remains pending, the government has assured AASU that the issue will be revisited in upcoming negotiations.

Cultural Protection and Preservation of Religious Heritage

The agreement also entails measures to safeguard Assam's rich cultural and religious heritage. A dedicated commission will be established within the next three months to formulate policies for the protection of xatras and naamghars—traditional institutions that hold immense cultural and spiritual significance for Assamese society.

The government has also allocated Rs 100 crore for the development of Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra, Assam's premier cultural center.

Tripartite Talks and Future Roadmap

While the state government has made substantial commitments, several recommendations of the Biplab Sharma Committee fall beyond its jurisdiction and require intervention from the Union government.

Biswa Sarma has urged the Centre to initiate tripartite discussions involving AASU, the Assam government, and the Union government to address these recommendations comprehensively.

The next phase of negotiations is set to commence in March, with follow-up discussions scheduled in April.

A Step Forward, But Challenges Remain

The Assam government's proactive stance in implementing Clause 6 of the Assam Accord is a crucial step toward addressing long-standing grievances of the indigenous Assamese people.

However, the road ahead is fraught with challenges. Effective implementation of these measures will require consistent political will, robust legal frameworks, and vigilant monitoring.

From NATO to trade wars: Lasting impact of Trump's transactional diplomacy

By M. A. Hossain & Vishakhajha

For decades, U.S. alliances have been the backbone of global stability, fostering economic cooperation and collective security.

Trump's administration took a "Realist" stance, prioritizing national sovereignty, economic self-interest, and security over diplomatic cooperation.

Trump viewed alliances not as enduring commitments based on shared values but as transactional relationships in which the United States should only participate if they provided immediate national benefits.

The following year, Trump further alienated European allies by withdrawing from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran Nuclear Deal.



Nowhere was Trump's scepticism toward alliances more apparent than in his approach to NATO. Since its founding in 1949, NATO has been a pillar of U.S. and European security.

While previous U.S. administrations had also encouraged greater burden-sharing, Trump's rhetoric was uniquely confrontational.

Trump's questioning of NATO's value aligned with the 'Realist' perspective that alliances should be conditional and serve immediate national interests.

Trump viewed alliances not as enduring commitments based on shared values but as transactional relationships in which the United States should only participate if they provided immediate national benefits.

versaries such as Russia, which has long sought to exploit divisions within NATO.

Trump's trade policies further strained U.S. relations with key allies. His belief in economic nationalism—viewing trade as a zero-sum game—led to tariffs, renegotiations, and disputes that disrupted longstanding agreements.

Trump wanting Russia and Ukraine both at its backyard

By: Er.Rajesh Pathak

US is reported to be engaged in back-door dialogue in pursuing Iran to backtrack from its nuclear-programme.

On the other side in virtue of Modi's initiatives the things are edging closer to bring to an end the Russia-Ukraine war.

This development, at least, might ensure the relief from being dependence on vagaries of China for critical minerals to a great extent.

At present China only is the real rival of US. The China where besides rare earth minerals the 80% Polysilicon used in solar panel; 40% Copper; 50% Lithium; and Cobalt, more than 50% are refined. It is therefore Trumps wants to have Ukraine and Russia both at his backyard.

Completely swadeshi, the chip's fabrication is done in Semiconductor laboratory limited (SCL) Chandigarh; packaging done in TATA advanced system, Karnataka; Printed circuit board developed in PCB Power, Gujrat; And its assembly and integration is conducted in Syrma SGS, Chennai.













## NIKHAT KHAN HEGDE BOARDS MOHANLAL-STARRER 'L2: EMPURAAN'



**NEW DELHI, Feb 20:** Actor Nikhat Khan Hegde, known for films such as "Pathaan" and "Mission Mangal", is set to feature in "L2: Empuraan", fronted by Malayalam superstar Mohanlal.

Directed by Prithviraj Sukumaran, the action film will release in theatres on March 27 in Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Hindi.

"L2: Empuraan", a sequel to Prithviraj's 2019 release "Lucifer" which also starred Mohanlal, is produced by Lyca Productions and Aashirvad Cinemas.

Nikhat, who is the elder sister of Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan, will play a character named Subhadra Ben in the upcoming movie.

"Character No: 14 Presenting Nikhat Khan Hegde as Subhadra Ben in #L2E. The rise of #Empuraan continues! #L2E Releasing on 27th March 2025 | Malayalam | Tamil | Telugu | Kannada | Hindi @mohanlal @PrithviOfficial #MuraliGopy @LycaProductions #Subaskaran @gkmtamilkumar

@antonybvr @aashirvadcin @prithvirajprod #SureshBalaje #GeorgePius @ManjuWarrier4 @ttovino @Indrajith\_S @deepakdev4u #SujithVaassudev #NirmalSahadev #Mohandas #SilvaStunt #EMPURAAN #L2EFrom27March2025," Lyca Productions said in an X post.

In the second installment of the action franchise, Mohanlal reprises his role of Stephen Nedumpally aka Khureshi-Ab'raam.

Sukumaran also features in "L2: Empuraan" alongside Manju Warrier, Tovino Thomas, Indrajith Sukumaran, Saniya Iyappan and Arjun Das. (PTI)

## Indian Film Festival in Israel kicks off amid efforts to make the country a global film production hub

**NETANYA (ISRAEL), Feb 20:** Amid government efforts to make India a global film production hub, and in the build up to WAVES 2025, an Indian film festival kicked off here with the screening of filmmaker Kiran Rao's acclaimed feature "Laapataa Ladies".

"Dangal", "Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara", "Mimi", "English Vinglish" and "777 Charlie" are the other five movies to be screened in the film festival, which will run till March 8.

The lineup showcases India's diversity, rich traditional heritage, contemporary challenges and its creative genius.

"Laapataa Ladies", which was India's official entry to the 2025 Academy Awards, is a family drama about discovering oneself, womanhood, and life itself. The film drew huge applause from movie enthusiasts in Israel after the screening on Wednesday.

"I laughed and cried and had no control over my emotions as the beautifully crafted movie kept me spellbound all along. I had no control over my emotions", Lev Aran, a senior Israeli journalist, told PTI after the screening.

The film festival is being organised by the Embassy of India in collaboration with Movieland, Netanyahu.

India's Ambassador to Israel, JP Singh, discussed the role of the Indian Film Festival in providing the opportunity to explore the commonalities that unite the two countries. "As we celebrate these films, I am hopeful that this film festival shall not only provide a glimpse of quality entertainment to the audiences here, but also pave the way for further cooperation between the film industries of our two countries", Singh said.

Highlighting ongoing activities of cooperation, including several other screenings, delegational visits of film producers as well as interactions between filmmakers and other stakeholders of the two countries, the Indian Ambassador also mentioned that the first official film under the India-Israel Audio-Visual Co-production agreement is at an advanced stage of post-production.

"I would like to highlight that the Government of India is committed to making India a global film production hub by offering significant incentives, including up to 40 per cent reimbursement of production costs. India has stunning locations, skilled technicians, large market and cutting-edge technology, making it an ideal destination for international filmmakers," Singh said. Calling upon Israeli producers to explore opportunities for co-productions with India, Singh invited stakeholders from the Media & Entertainment (M&E) sector to attend the first edition of the World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Mumbai from May 1-4, 2025.

"With India's M&E industry poised for significant



growth with a potential market size of USD 50 billion by 2029, WAVES will shape its future", he stressed.

The Indian envoy also encouraged participation in the Create in India Challenge (CIC): Season 1, a precursor to WAVES 2025, featuring competitions across animation, gaming, comics, films, broadcasting, music, new media, emerging technologies etc.

In his remarks, deputy mayor of Netanya, Adir Benyamini, underscored the role of the India Film Festival in broadening the understanding of Indian cinema amongst the Israeli audience.

"Netanya is proud to host the Indian Film Festival 2025. An event that brings together culture, creativity and shared appreciation...We all hope that this event will not be a one time event but the beginning of a tradition", the deputy Mayor said.

"I believe that this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship", he said.

Tsahi HaLevi, one of the most well-known actors in Israel who featured in the popular series "Fauda" and also acted in Bollywood film Akelli, also participated in the event.

He recalled his visit to India where he met a lot of people from the Indian film industry and said he hopes that "there would be future opportunities to know it better and more cooperation between the two countries".

"It is also an opportunity to thank India as a whole for such a good, warm relationship with the state of Israel with the ongoing support of what we are experiencing...We truly believe that art is a great way to build bridges, to build friendships. So I truly believe that we will keep on developing this great relationship," HaLevi said.

He had the audience at their feet, singing the popular track "Tujhe dekha to ye Jaana Sanam" from Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's 1995 hit "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge". (PTI)

## Ibrahim Ali Khan's debut film 'Nadaaniyan' set for March 7 release on Netflix



**NEW DELHI, Feb 20:** "Nadaaniyan", the debut film of actors Saif Ali Khan and Amrita Singh's son Ibrahim Ali Khan, will premiere on Netflix on March 7, the streamer announced on Thursday.

Also starring Khushi Kapoor, the romantic drama film is backed by Dharma Entertainment, the digital arm of filmmaker Karan Johar's banner Dharma Productions.

The streamer shared the news in a post on Instagram along with a promotional video.

"Kuch Kuch Hota Hai aisi Nadaaniyan dekh kar. Watch 'Nadaaniyan', out 7 March, only on Netflix," Netflix said.

In the movie, Ibrahim essays the role of Arjun Mehta and Khushi stars as Pia Jai Singh.

Directed by Shauna Gautam, "Nadaaniyan" follows a South Delhi diva, a middle-class overachiever boy, and one outrageous plan.

"Hire him as her fake boyfriend to save her squad. But when real feelings crash their party, can they handle the mess of falling in love?" read the official synopsis of the film. The film's cast also includes Mahima Chaudhary, Suniel Shetty, Dia Mirza and Jugal Hansraj. Johar serves as a producer alongside Apoorva Mehta and Somen Mishra. Ibrahim earlier served as an assistant on Karan Johar's 2023 directorial "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani". Khushi, daughter of late star Sridevi and producer Boney Kapoor, made her acting debut with Zoya Akhtar's Netflix movie "The Archies", co-starring Suhana Khan and Agastya Nanda. She was most recently seen in "Loveyapa", opposite Aamir Khan's son Junaid Khan. (PTI)

## 'THE WHITE LOTUS' STAR JASON ISAACS ON HIS TRANSFORMATIVE INDIA TRIP: SAW MASSIVE WEALTH GAP

**NEW DELHI, Feb 20:** British star Jason Isaacs has vivid memories of filming his 2018 movie "Hotel Mumbai" in India where the massive wealth gap between the rich and the poor made him reflect on what material possessions mean. The actor, known for his performances in films such as "The Patriot", "Black Hawk Down", "The Death of Stalin", and the "Harry Potter" franchise, said the trip to India was quite transformative for him. "Hotel Mumbai" was based on the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. "I think about transformation a lot because I'm older... And I think probably the first time I really thought a lot about it was when I worked in India. Well, they made a film called 'Hotel Mumbai'.

"We travelled around India a lot and we saw the highs and the lows and the massive wealth gap there. It does make you reflect on what material possessions mean... It's something that I think about all the time," Isaacs told PTI in a round-

table interview.

His new show "The White Lotus" focuses on a group of tourists and how their lives change during the course of an ultra luxury vacation and Isaacs said he had a similar experience in Thailand where the third season of the HBO show is set. "I made some friends but also got to see a country where people live very differently with massive disparity. We're actors, we're endlessly curious about who people are, how they are, and choices they make. And also for me, different cultures, different politics, different attitudes to life and death... So, it was a very three-dimensional experience."

"The White Lotus", which currently streams on JioHotstar, is created by Mike White. Each season of the show revolves around the dynamics between rich guests and employees of a fictional resort chain, called White Lotus. The first season was set in Hawaii and the

second season was shot in Sicily, Italy.

"Mike chose Thailand for a reason because people go there for a spiritual odyssey as well as for all the normally entertaining things. He wanted to make the series have more resonance and he achieved it in spades," the 61-year-old actor said.

Isaacs plays the role of Timothy Ratliff, a US-based financier, who visits the resort with his family -- wife Victoria (Parker Posey), sons Saxon (Patrick Schwarzenegger), Lochlan (Sam Nivola) and daughter Piper (Sarah Catherine Hook). While on vacation, Ratliff gets to know that his business is in serious trouble. "I had some big acting to do. I mean, there's some extreme emotions. There's a pressure cooker which is exploding... His entire life and future. And along with all the other sex, drugs, and tofu that Mike writes about, this series has questions of identity and what is the self," he said about the new season.

According to Isaacs, the USP of White's writing is that it can't be slotted into easy categories.

"There are no cliches here. What he does so brilliantly is that you meet the characters and you think you understand who they are. Sometimes you can even make comparisons with previous characters in the show, but he's far too sophisticated for that.

"So how does it compare? Timothy is Timothy, and there's no one like him specifically, and his particular dilemma has never been seen before," he added.

In his long career, Isaacs has played some of the most compelling characters whether it is Lucius Malfoy from the "Harry Potter" movies, Colonel William Tavington in "The Patriot" or Georgy Zhukov in "The Death of Stalin".

Asked about his fascination for morally complex characters, the actor said they are the most interesting parts. (PTI)





