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Himanta gets fresh ammo in Ripun's revelation

'Startling confession by Cong leader on Gaurav's wife being on Pak govt payroll'

GUWAHATI, May 26: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday claimed that a senior Congress leader has made a "startling confession" that his party MP Gaurav Gogoi's British wife was on the "payroll of the Pakistan government".

Sarma maintained that they were not "previously aware of these details" and the statement of Congress leader Ripun Bora will be recorded and further action taken in the matter.

The Assam CM and the BJP have been attacking Gogoi over his wife's alleged connection with Pakistan's spy agency ISI.

He said Gogoi's British wife Elizabeth Colburn had travelled 19 times between India and Pakistan.

Bora, a former Rajya Sabha MP, had on Sunday said Colburn works in an international NGO, which has a network in Pakistan and other countries.

"In this connection, she had re-



ceived a salary from Pakistan and visited the country multiple times for work. But can this be grounds to question one's patriotism? Many Indians and Pakistanis are legally working in each other's countries," Bora was quoted as saying in a press release issued by the Congress.

"Yesterday, senior Congress

leader Sri Ripun Bora made a startling confession — he admitted that the British wife of Hon'ble MP Sri Gaurav Gogoi was, in fact, on the payroll of the Pakistan Government," Sarma said in a post on X.

He maintained that if Bora's statement is true, "it raises deeply alarming questions about national security".

"The continued presence of an

individual linked to a hostile foreign state — right within the inner circles of a sitting Member of Parliament — poses a serious and unacceptable threat to the integrity of India's institutions," Sarma maintained.

"We were not previously aware of these shocking details. Now that this revelation has come to light, the matter is being examined with the seriousness it demands," he said. The chief minister asserted that national security is non-negotiable and added, "We will record Bora's statement and take further action in this matter."

Earlier, Gogoi had slammed Sarma over his accusation of the MP's alleged Pakistani links and questioned his mental state due to issues at the home front.

He even said the CM's remarks were "ridiculous, baseless, insane and nonsense" and that he was behaving like an "IT cell troll" without checking facts. (PTI)

Gauhati HC grants interim bail to ex-AASU gen secy in assault case

GUWAHATI, May 26: The Gauhati High Court on Monday granted interim bail to former AASU general secretary Sankarjyoti Baruah, who was arrested for an alleged physical assault at a petrol pump in Dibrugarh district.

He is likely to be released from prison on Tuesday, said senior advocate Angshuman Bora, who appeared for the former student leader.

Baruah was arrested on May 19 in connection with the alleged assault at a petrol pump, an incident that triggered protests by several regional student, youth and other organisations.

Bora said two cases had been registered against Baruah in Duliayan police station, and he had already got bail in one of the cases from a local court.

"Both the cases were bailable initially. But police later added a charge of 'attempt to murder', making one of the cases non-bail-



able. Baruah has now been granted interim bail in the other case also," the advocate said.

"He is likely to be released tomorrow, but we can be sure only after getting the certified copy of the order," Bora added.

A controversy had erupted over handcuffing Baruah while being

produced in the local court, with the chief minister later claiming that the charges against the ex-AASU leader led the police to use the handcuffs.

The chief minister said police have been instructed not to use handcuffs on Baruah again.

A 12-hour Duliayan bandh was also called last week by several organisations, demanding action against police personnel who had handcuffed the ex-AASU leader.

Last year, Baruah had resigned as the general secretary of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) amid controversy surrounding his personal life and allegations of sexual harassment of a law student.

The present AASU leadership had distanced itself from its former general secretary, maintaining that it has no 'reason' to support Baruah, a person who had left the students' body to 'avoid expulsion' due to the allegations of sexual misconduct against him. (PTI)

CM Himanta meets Defence minister



GUWAHATI, May 26: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi and discussed the issue of establishing a defence corridor in the state.

The chief minister also called on Union Civil Aviation minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu and discussed expanding air connectivity and infrastructure in the Northeast Region.

"Had the honour to call upon Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Adarniya @rajinathsingh Ji today in New Delhi. We spoke about establishing a defence corridor in Assam. This will serve multiple purposes - fortify the needs of our armed forces in the Eastern Frontier, strengthen Hon'ble Prime Minister's 'Make in India' vision and create new economic opportunities in the North East", the CM posted on X.

Sarma had earlier in the day called upon the civil aviation minister who assured that work for Silchar's greenfield (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam govt hands financial assistance to families of two Pahalgam victims from Maha

GUWAHATI, May 26: The Assam government on Monday handed over financial assistance to the kin of two victims of the Pahalgam terror attack from Maharashtra.

State minister Chandra Mohan Patowary met the families of Kaustabh Sudhir Ganobate and Eknath Jagdale in Pune and handed over the ex gratia payment, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a post on X.

The state government is providing ex gratia assistance of ₹ 5 lakh each to the families of all 26 victims of the April 22 attack.

"Hon'ble Minister Shri @cmpatowary visited the families of Late Kaustabh Sudhir Ganobate and Eknath Jagdale in Pune, unfortunate victims of the #PahalgamTerroristAttack and offered a support amount of ₹ 5 lakh on behalf of the people of Assam," the CMO said.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "Kaustabh Ji's loss in the tragic Pahalgam massacre has left an irreplaceable void in his family. Today, my colleague Shri @cmpatowary visited the family in Pune (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India, Maldives explore ways to boost strategic ties

NEW DELHI, May 26: India and Maldives on Monday explored ways to boost trade and strategic cooperation even as Maldivian foreign minister Abdulla Khaleel backed New Delhi's fight against terrorism.

Khaleel, accompanied by a high-level delegation, is on a three-day visit to India to review the implementation of the comprehensive economic and maritime security partnership that was agreed during Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's trip to New Delhi last October.

The Maldivian foreign minister led his country's delegation at a meeting of the High Level Core Group (HLCG) that was tasked to oversee progress in the implementation of the India-Maldives vision document on comprehensive economic and maritime security partnership.

The discussions at the core group meeting focused on ways to intensify political exchanges, defence and security cooperation, development partnership, trade, economy, health and people-to-



people linkages, the external affairs ministry said.

Khaleel "strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Pahalgam" on April 22 and expressed the Maldives' "solidarity with the people and government of India and its firm support to India in the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations", the ministry said. Khaleel also held a meeting with external affairs minister S Jaishankar.

"Welcome Maldives' support and solidarity in combating terrorism. India remains committed to Maldives' progress and development," Jaishankar said in a social media post.

In a statement, the ministry of external affairs said Khaleel "expressed Maldives' solidarity with the people and government of India and its firm support to India in the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations".

"Foreign Minister Khaleel also thanked the government of India for the timely emergency financial assistance extended to Maldives, which has made a positive impact on the everyday life of Maldivians," it said.

"Maldives is India's key maritime neighbour and an important partner in India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and Vision MAHASAGAR that is Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions," it added. "The visit has strengthened the Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership between the two countries," the ministry said.

The ties between India and the Maldives came under severe strain after Muizzu, known for his pro-China leanings, took charge of the top office (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Cong appoints Gaurav as Assam unit chief

Jakir Hussain Sikdar, Roselina Tirkey and Pradip Sarkar new working president

NEW DELHI/GUWAHATI, May 26: Ahead of next year's Assam assembly elections, the Congress on Monday appointed Lok Sabha MP Gaurav Gogoi as the new president of its state unit, replacing Bhupen Kumar Borah.

The Congress also appointed three new working presidents - Jakir Hussain Sikdar, Roselina Tirkey and Pradip Sarkar - to its Assam unit.

Former Congress MLA and minister Ripun Bora has been appointed as the chairman of the state's Election Management Committee with immediate effect.

The term of the current assembly in Assam is up to May 20, 2026, and the Congress is going all-out in its bid to wrest power from the BJP after losing two consecutive state polls.

"Congress President has appointed Gaurav Gogoi as the President and three Work-



ing Presidents of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, with immediate effect," a statement from AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said.

Gogoi, the son of former Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi, is currently the deputy leader of the Congress party in Lok Sabha. His appointment comes at a time when Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and the BJP have been attacking him over

his British wife's alleged connection with Pakistan's spy agency ISI.

Following his appointment, the Jorhat MP expressed gratitude to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Venugopal and general secretary in-charge of Assam, Jitendra Singh.

"Former PCC President Shri @BhupenKBorah led the party from the front and made a tremendous contribution. I would not have been here without the guidance of my parents and the support of my family, especially my wife and children," Gogoi said in a post on X.

He also said that it was a blessing to work with many dedicated and inspiring senior leaders and workers in the Congress party in Assam. "Their wisdom, experience and dedication to the party has taught me many things. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Day after PM lauds caste census decision, Cong takes swipe at him with two videos



NEW DELHI, May 26: A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the decision to conduct a caste census, the Congress on Monday took a swipe and posted videos of him from the past two years criticising the opposition's party's demand for such an enumeration.

Prime Minister Modi asserted on Sunday that caste census is a step towards bringing those left behind into the mainstream of development, as he emphasised that his government does not believe in caste politics but in the empowerment of the marginalised.

He made the remarks at a conclave of NDA chief ministers and deputy chief ministers. Two resolutions — one hailing the valour of the armed forces and PM Modi's brave leadership in the context of the recent military action and another praising the decision of caste enumeration in the next census — were passed at the conclave.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared two video clips of the prime minister in which he is heard criticising the opposition's pitch for a caste census.

"On April 30, 2025, in the period between the Pahalgam terror attacks and the launch of Operation Sindoor, the Modi government unexpectedly and suddenly announced a caste census. Yesterday, the PM expectedly took full credit for it in the NDA CMs meeting," Ramesh said.

"But just listen to what the PM had said - First on October 2, 2023, when the findings of the Bihar caste survey were released. Second on April 28, 2024, when asked about the INC's demands for a caste census," Ramesh said and tagged the two clips. In the first clip, Modi is heard saying, "They (the opposition) used to divide the society on the basis of caste and continue to commit that sin even now". In the second, the PM, when asked about the Congress demand for a caste census, says it is part of the "urban naxal mindset".

In another post, Ramesh took a swipe at Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with an old video of him talking about the opposition's caste census demand.

"The PM called caste census an urban naxal idea. What does the man who (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Stingless bees could be used for pollination without fear of being stung' Nagaland university researchers identify stingless bee species to increase agricultural yield

NEW DELHI, May 26: Researchers at Nagaland University have identified stingless bee species that can be used to increase quality and quantity of agricultural yield through pollination, according to officials.

The stingless bee species identified are Tetragonula iridipennis Smith and Lepidotrigona arcifera Cockerell.

The research has been published in several reputed, peer-reviewed journals, including International Journal of Farm Sciences.

According to Avinash Chauhan, Scientist and Principal Investigator (AICRP Honeybees and Pollinators), Department of Entomology, School of Agricultural Sciences, Nagaland University.

"Stingless bees could be used for pollination without fear of being stung. They are known for their popular medicinal honey and pollination potential, which paves the way formulation of crop pollination calendars to benefit all stakeholders. The honey produced by the bees during the experiments also provided extra income besides good crop production," he said.

"Our team found that chilli crop, when pollinated by these bees, increases the crop production and quality as compared to crop where pollination is not accomplished. For supplementing the pollination deficit in chilli, stingless bees and honeybee species like A dorsata, A florea and other wild bees like halictid bees, syrphid bees and



Amegilla bees need to be conserved," Chauhan said.

In king-chilli the per cent fruit set was increased to 29.46 pc over

non pollinated crop (21.00 pc). Likewise in Chilli (Capsicum annum), the fruit set and healthy fruits were increased by 7.42 pc

and 7.92 pc over non-pollinated crop. Similarly, seed weight which is an indicator of viability or germination increased by 60.74 pc when pollinated by stingless bees.

This is the maiden attempt to work out the pollination potential of stingless bees and quality production of honey, which led to increased income and sustainable livelihood. Earlier, it was difficult to use honeybees for pollination of crops (inadequate pollination) due to their natural attributes.

"The research outcomes of last seven to ten years provided the different stakeholders with lots of opportunities to rear the stingless bees for quality honey production without fear of mixing of impurities in honey (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NITI report suggests adoption of Turkiye's program to address skill gaps in India

NEW DELHI, May 26: A NITI Aayog report on Monday mentioned Turkiye as one of the nations from which India can adopt global best practices for addressing skill gaps in the country's medium enterprises.

The report titled 'Designing a Policy for Medium Enterprises' listed programmes of Turkiye in addition to Canada, Singapore and Australia for encouraging medium enterprises.

The report said Turkiye's "KOSGEB provides distance training on entrepreneurship; an effective, easy and flexible entrepreneurship training without time and space constraints by E-Akadem Programme ... Entrepreneurship Support Programme, with preferential treatment for women, youth and handicapped entrepreneurs."

Also, observing that Turkey's e-Academy is an online training platform providing subsidised courses, enhancing accessibility for SMEs across regions, the report said, "online training programs can be offered at a subsidised rate, and free of cost for marginalized groups (as provided in Turkey's e-Academy)."

Turkiye is facing backlash in India



for its support to Pakistan during Operation Sindoor, which was launched by the country to destroy terror infrastructure following the Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 people including tourists, were killed.

India's aviation security regulator BCAS earlier this month revoked the security clearance of Turkish firm Celebi Airport Services India on grounds related to national security

with immediate effect. The NITI report said for medium enterprises to succeed in a globalized market, there is a clear need for a tailored, data-driven approach to skill development that can align with industry needs and ensure a competitive, skilled workforce. To address challenges faced by medium enterprises, it recommended the introduction of a working capital financing scheme linked to enterprise

turnover, a Rs 5 crore credit card facility at market rates and expedited fund disbursement mechanisms through retail banks, overseen by the Ministry of MSME. The report also suggested the upgradation of existing technology centres into sector-specific and regionally customised India SME 4.0 Competence Centers to promote the adoption of Industry 4.0 solutions.

The Aayog also recommended the establishment of a dedicated R&D cell within the Ministry of MSME, leveraging the Self-Reliant India Fund for cluster-based projects of national significance. The MSME sector contributes approximately 29 per cent to India's GDP, accounts for 40 per cent of exports, and employs over 60 per cent of the workforce.

Despite its critical role, the composition of the sector is disproportionately weighted -- 97 per cent of registered MSMEs are micro-enterprises, 2.7 per cent are small, and only 0.3 per cent are medium enterprises.

Medium enterprises, though only 0.3 per cent of MSMEs, contribute 40 per cent of MSME exports, showcasing immense untapped potential. (PTI)

India to become 4th largest economy by end of 2025: Virmani

NEW DELHI, May 26: NITI Aayog member Arvind Virmani on Monday said India is set to become the fourth largest economy in the world by the end of 2025, an assertion which came days after NITI CEO BVR Subrahmanyam claimed India has already overtaken Japan to reach that spot.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its World Economic Outlook (WEO) report released in April had said that India is expected to be the fourth largest economy in the world with a GDP of USD 4.19 trillion in 2025, ahead of Japan. "India is in the process of becoming the fourth largest economy, and I am personally confident that will happen by the end of 2025 because we need (data) of all 12 months GDP to say that, you know, to assert that. So to say till then, it remains a forecast," Virmani told PTI.

Asked to comment on NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam's remark that India has become the fourth largest econ-

omy in the world, the eminent economist said: "So this is a complicated question, and I really do not know what the words anybody has used. Perhaps there was some word which was missed or something." Citing IMF data, Subrahmanyam, last week, said that the size of the Indian economy today is larger than Japan's.

"We are the fourth largest economy as I speak. We are a USD 4 trillion economy as I speak," the NITI Aayog CEO had said.

It is only the US, China and Germany which are larger than India, and if we stick to what is being planned and what is being thought through, in 2.5-3 years, we will be the third largest economy," Subrahmanyam had said.

Explaining further, Virmani said, "When we discuss the size of economies publicly, we generally use US dollar current prices." Virmani further pointed out that "when we compare economy, we generally do it in terms of annual GDP".

Virmani said IMF in its WEO report released in April gave a precise number, which showed that India's GDP for the full year 2025, would become higher than that of Japan.

"I would say that I am pretty confident that that will happen, but the exact data will probably not be available till January or February, because we are talking about the whole year," he observed.

India's nominal GDP for 2025 (FY26) is expected to be USD 4.187 trillion marginally more than the likely GDP of Japan which is estimated at USD 4.186 trillion, the IMF had said.

According to IMF data, India's per capita income has doubled from USD 1,438 in 2013-14 to USD 2,880 in 2025.

The IMF in its WEO report also said the Indian economy is projected to grow at 6.2 per cent in 2025-26, slower than earlier estimated rate of 6.5 per cent, due to escalated trade tensions and global uncertainty. (PTI)

Andhra Pradesh leads solar manufacturing push, Jupiter plans ₹ 2,700 cr facility

AMRAVATI, May 26: Jupiter Renewables will invest ₹ 2,700 crore to set up a solar cell manufacturing plant in Andhra Pradesh, becoming the third company to establish operations in the state, which is rapidly positioning itself as a leader in solar module and cell production. Jupiter Renewables, a subsidiary of Kolkata-based Jupiter International, plans to set up a 4.8 gigawatt (GW) solar photovoltaic (PV) cell and 1.5 GW module manufacturing facility at Rambilli in Anakapalli district, with an investment of ₹ 2,700 crore, according to state government's Industries & Commerce Department order approving the investment.

The project will be set up in two phases (Phase-1 ₹ 1,504

crore and Phase-2 ₹ 1,196 crore), which has an employment generation potential of 2,216 persons, the order said.

Phase-1 comprising 2.4 GW solar PV cell and 1.5 GW solar PV module manufacturing is to be commissioned by March 2026 and Phase-2 of 2.4 GW solar cell facility will come up by July 2026, it said. Jupiter is the third company to set up a solar manufacturing base in the state, which is now challenging established leaders like Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu in the arena. Since the N. Chandrababu Naidu government came to power last year, the state has witnessed a surge in investments in the renewable energy sector. (PTI)

Sensex rises 455 pts to end at over week's high on early monsoon, easing trade worries

MUMBAI, May 26: Benchmark Sensex on Monday advanced by 455 points to close at over a week's high due to buying in auto and IT shares following positive macro factors and easing trade worries as US President Donald Trump delayed 50 per cent EU tariffs to July 9.

Rising for the second session, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 455.37 points or 0.56 per cent to settle at 82,176.45. During the day, it surged 771.16 points or 0.94 per cent to 82,492.24.

The NSE Nifty climbed 148 points or 0.60 per cent to settle at 25,001.15, a level not seen since May 16.

The early arrival of monsoon and the Reserve Bank announcing a record ₹ 2.69 lakh crore dividend to the government for FY25 also added to the optimistic trend in the markets, experts said.

Among Sensex stocks, leading tractor and auto manufacturer Mahindra & Mahindra rose the most by 2.17 per cent. HCL Tech, Tata Motors, Nestle, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, Larsen & Toubro, and Tech Mahindra were the major gainers.

In contrast, Eternal, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, Tata Steel and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the laggards. Eternal dropped the most by 4.51 per cent.

India has become the fourth largest economy in the world, overtaking Japan, NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam has said.

The Reserve Bank on Friday announced a record ₹ 2.69 lakh crore dividend to the government for FY25, 27.4 per cent higher than 2023-24, helping the exchequer to tide over challenges posed by US tariffs and increased spending on defence due to the conflict with Pakistan.

"The US decision to consider extending the deadline for imposing aggressive tariffs on EU, coupled with a decline in the dollar index, contributed to a rebound in the domestic equity markets. These developments suggest that trade negotiations are progressing constructively, which could help moderate market volatility."

"Additionally, the early onset of the southwest monsoon and a decline in domestic bond yields have encouraged investors to maintain their focus on riskier assets," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

"Although the market pared most of its early gains, benchmark indices closed above their key psychological levels on steady all-round buying support due to optimism in European indices and mixed Asian cues," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.56 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.48 per cent. Among sectoral indices, auto jumped 1.04 per cent, BSE Focused IT (1.04 per cent), FMCG (0.93 per cent), industrials (0.98 per cent), IT (0.95 per cent), capital goods (0.91 per cent), tech (0.88 per cent) and oil & gas (0.67 per cent).

Services emerged as the only laggard.

As many as 2,301 stocks advanced while 1,772 declined and 194 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index settled in the positive territory, while Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower.

Markets in Europe were trading higher in mid-session deals. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

India, Maldives explore ways

in November 2023. Within hours of his oath, he had demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel from his country. Subsequently, the Indian military personnel were replaced by civilians.

There was a thaw in the relations as Muizzu vowed to boost the bilateral ties with India during his visit to Delhi in October. (PTI)

CM Himanta meets Defence

airport will begin this year and the crucial Rupsi airport will also be expanded. Naidu also informed Sarma that Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Silchar Airports will soon be connected to more Indian cities through new flight connections. "Had an excellent meeting with Hon'ble Minister for Civil Aviation Shri @RamMNK Ji. We spoke at length on expanding air connectivity and infrastructure in the North East", he posted on X.

"Some key takeaways: work for Silchar's greenfield airport is likely to begin this year, Hon'ble Minister has assured me that the crucial Rupsi airport will be expanded as well, Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Silchar will soon be accessible to more Indian cities with new flight connections. We will try to get several more first-time fliers airborne as we aim to revisit UDAN in the region, by making it more effective, vibrant and sustainable", Sarma said. (PTI)

CM Sarma asks entrepreneurs

modify and also tweak it, if required, to suit the needs of a specific industry. Sarma pointed out that 11 five star hotels will come up in the state with the Assam Cabinet clearing the proposals and a state-of-the-art terminal will be opened at Guwahati's Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport. He said three satellite townships, including the Jagiroad Integrated Satellite Township, will come up near the Tata Greenfield OSAT facility. (PTI)

Assam govt hands financial

to offer condolences and a token of support from the people of Assam." Patowary said he handed a condolence letter from the chief minister along with a cheque of Rs 5 lakh to the two families. Cabinet ministers of Assam are visiting the bereaved families across the country since Friday to hand over the financial aid. (PTI)

Cong appoints Gaurav as Assam

I look forward to working with my seniors and colleagues. In the days to come I will seek the blessings of the people of Assam. I am confident that together we can create a better future for our state. Jai Ai Axom ! Jai Hind!" he added.

The statement by Venugopal said the party appreciates the contributions of the outgoing PCC president Borah.

"Roselina Turkey is being relieved of her current responsibilities as AICC Secretary," it said. With Gogoi's appointment as the new Assam Congress chief, the party has made it clear that the next assembly election will be fought under his leadership, and he is likely to be its chief ministerial face in the state.

"Congress President has also approved the proposal for the appointment of Chairpersons of Campaign Committee, Coordination Committee, Manifesto Committee, Publicity Committee and Election Management Committee of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, with immediate effect," Venugopal said.

While outgoing president Borah has been appointed chairperson of the Campaign Committee, Debabrata Saikia will head the Coordination Committee, Lok Sabha MP Pradyut Bordoloi will chair the Manifesto Committee and Rakibul Hussain, Lok Sabha MP, will be the chairperson of the Publicity Committee. (PTI)

Nagaland university researchers

and minimizing bee losses, which led to more profitability in this profession," he said. "We are still working to improve the beekeeping rearing techniques and to promote Scientific beekeeping with honey bees and stingless bees for better honey production and pollination of crops. The focus is also to raise awareness among the people for the conservation of other wild honey bees and pollinators," he said.

Stingless bees are reported from North East India, Eastern India and Southern Indian States, with recent additions from North, Central and Western Indian states. Unlike all the states where stingless bee rearing is still in nascent stages in North Eastern and Southern states, the stingless bees are reared in the traditional manner in homestead aparies.

However, in the last 7-10 years, the scientific domestication of these bees involving the development of scientific hives and mass multiplication of stingless bee colonies using queen cells is achieved in Nagaland and is extended to other states like Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. (PTI)

Day after PM lauds caste

desperately wants to succeed him when Modi@75 happens think about the caste census? Just listen to Mr Ajay Singh Bisht. And recall his earlier rants against reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and OBCs," Ramesh said.

In the video shared by Ramesh, the Uttar Pradesh chief minister is heard hitting out at the opposition, alleging that it is making an attempt to divide people on caste lines. While there was no immediate reaction from the BJP, party chief JP Nadda had said after Sunday's NDA meeting that a caste census was always part of the ruling alliance's imagination, noting the Bihar government headed by JD(U) leader and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was the first to do it.

The resolution has made it clear that the NDA does not believe in caste politics but acknowledges the need for a caste census to bring into the mainstream of development the deprived, exploited, Dalits and others left behind, he said, adding that it was the need of the society.

The Centre last month announced that caste enumeration will be part of the next population census, with the inclusion of caste details for the first time since independence.

Opposition parties, including the Congress, had been demanding a nationwide caste census, making it a major election issue. Some states like Bihar, Telangana and Karnataka have conducted such surveys. (PTI)

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER::KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT::DIPHU (DEVELOPMENT BRANCH)

No. KA/DEV-710/MPLADS(FC)/NDA/2025/1

Dated Diphu 26th May, 2025

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Interested Candidates willing to serve as Computer Operator are invited for walk-in Interview for engagement on purely temporary basis for data entry works under MPLADS Facilitation Centre O/o the District Commissioner, Karbi Anglong for an initial period of 1 (One) year as indicated below.

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iii) Self driven with good communication skills
- 5) Age : Not below 21 years and not more than 35 years as on 31st March, 2025
- 6) The duly fill-up application form with all relevant documents (Photocopies should reach/ submit to the O/o the District Commissioner, Karbi Anglong, Diphu in Development Branch on or before 31/05/2025 till 3:00 PM.
- 7) The decision of the District Commissioner, Karbi Anglong as to the eligibility or otherwise the candidates shall be final if on verification it is found that a candidate does not fulfill any of the criteria his/her candidature will be cancelled.
- 8) Willing candidate shall attend Walk-In Interview with Photo Identity Proof and all Educational & Experience Certificate (if any) along with other testimonials etc
- 9) Interview/ Test for selection will be held on 02/06/2025 at 11:00 AM in the Conference Hall, O/o the District Commissioner, Karbi Anglong, Diphu.
- 10) No TA/DA will be provided for appearing the Interview/Skill Test.

Sd/-

District Commissioner,
Karbi Anglong, Diphu

Dated Diphu, 26th May, 2025

Memo No. KA/DEV-710/MPLADS(FC)/NDA/2025/1 (A)

LOST

The following STDR in favour of Baliram Kalita has been lost in Diphu Market 1) 74150100187872) 74151400146743) 74151400144934)74151400145065) 74151400145171f found contact : 8638621739

AFFIDAVIT

I, Dhanpal Sahu son of Sriram Sahu and Tuntun Devi resident of Jengkha, West Karbi Anglong through Notary would like to mention that in my Voter ID my name wrongly recorded as Dhanipal Sahu and in my Aadhaar Card also wrongly recorded as Mohipal Sahu. My correct name is Dhanpal Sahu.

Inspected ongoing construction work under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Union Minister of State for Coal and Mines conducts review of PM flagship schemes in Biswanath

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, May 26: Union Minister of State for Coal and Mines, Satish Chandra Dubey, conducted a comprehensive review meeting with senior officials of Biswanath district today at the conference hall of the newly inaugurated circuit house. The meeting focused on evaluating the implementation and progress of the Prime Minister's flagship welfare schemes being carried out across approximately 15 departments in the district.

During the review, the minister assessed how effectively the schemes are benefiting local residents and directed officials to accelerate their implementation to ensure timely and efficient delivery of services.

Following the meeting, Minister



ter Dubey undertook a series of field inspections to examine ground-level execution of several

key initiatives. Among the sites visited were the Janani Farmers Producers Company (FPC) under

the National Rural Livelihood Mission in Kochgaon, Bargang High School under the PM SHRI scheme, and several other educational and infrastructural projects.

The minister also visited the residence of Dul Borah in Biswanath, where he inspected ongoing construction work under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

The review meeting was attended by Sonitpur Lok Sabha MP Ranjit Dutta, Biswanath MLA Pramod Borthakur, Gohpur MLA Utpal Bora, Behali MLA Diganta Ghatowal, Biswanath Deputy Commissioner Munindra Nath Ngatey, Superintendent of Police Subashish Baruah, CDC Behali Dhruvajyoti Das, CDC Gohpur Lukumani Bora, and several Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADCs).

Drug peddler arrested in Jagiroad

HT Correspondent

JAGIROAD, May 26: In a continued crackdown on drug trafficking, the Jagiroad police today arrested another drug peddler, identified as Ismail Ali, from Kuyadal village.

According to the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Jagiroad Police Station, a police team, acting on a tip-off, conducted a search operation at the residence of the late Ali Hussain in Kuyadal village. During the search, the team recovered 9 grams of illegal drugs concealed in a black polythene bag placed inside a rice bag.

It is noteworthy that in a recent incident, vigilant locals from Nakhola Gaon, under the jurisdiction of Jagiroad PS, apprehended two drug peddlers and handed them over to the police.

The police have launched a thorough investigation into the matter.

Nagaon Nagarik Sabha protests, demands release of Photojournalist Nabajyoti Laskar

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, May 26: In a strong show of support for press freedom, over a hundred members of the Nagaon Nagarik Sabha staged a protest on Monday in front of the Nagaon District Commissioner's Office, demanding the immediate release of photojournalist Nabajyoti Laskar.

The Sabha also submitted a memorandum addressed to the Chief Minister, routed through the District Commissioner, urging intervention in the case.

According to reports, the incident dates back to May 18, when a Tiranga Yatra was held in Kamrup town in the presence of Barhampur MLA Jitu Goswami. During the procession, some participants allegedly raised "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans, which were recorded by Nabajyoti

Laskar, a video journalist affiliated with a Guwahati-based satellite TV news channel. Laskar later shared the footage on his Facebook page and a local news portal, expecting authorities to act on the matter.

However, rather than initiating an inquiry into the alleged anti-national slogans, a group of ruling party workers reportedly assaulted Laskar, forcibly took him to the Kamrup Police Station, and allegedly filed a false case against him. Reports suggest that MLA Jitu Goswami filed a complaint against Laskar without a preliminary investigation. The journalist was held in police custody for two days and subsequently remanded to judicial custody.

Reacting strongly, Birinchi Borah, Secretary of the Nagaon Nagarik Sabha, condemned the

MLA's actions and called the incident "deeply shocking" for the people of both Kamrup and Nagaon. He emphasized the urgent need to protect the freedom of the press, describing it as the fourth pillar of democracy.

The protest saw participation from numerous civil society members and concerned citizens, including Rupam Borah, Sabir Ahmed, Asik Rabbani, Arif Ali Ahmed, Habibur Rahman, Binod Hazarika, and Bikas Borah, among others. All expressed solidarity with Laskar and called for justice and accountability.

The Nagaon Nagarik Sabha reiterated its demand for Laskar's unconditional release and warned that failure to uphold journalistic freedom would set a dangerous precedent for democracy in the state.

Guardian Minister Krishnaendu Paul reviews developmental projects in Nagaon

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, May 26: Krishnaendu Paul, the Guardian Minister of Nagaon district and Minister of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary, Fisheries, and allied departments, conducted a comprehensive review of ongoing developmental initiatives in the district during his visit to Nagaon on Monday.

The minister chaired a high-level review meeting at the District Commissioner's Office, where he was briefed by District Commissioner Narendran Kumar Shah on the progress of various flagship schemes, including the implementation of Arunodaya 3.0.

Minister Paul urged Block Development Officers (BDOs) to resolve implementation bottlenecks in coordination with local MLAs, emphasizing the importance of efficient execution to ensure public benefit.

The review spanned key departments including: Panchayat and

Rural Development (P&RD), fisheries, Public Works Department (PWD – Roads) and Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services.

Minister Paul held in-depth discussions with senior officials from each department, assessing project statuses, challenges, and progress timelines.

Prominent legislators including MLAs Rupak Sarma, Sashi Kanta Das, Nurul Huda, and Jitu Goswami were present during the meeting, alongside District Development Commissioner Devayani Choudhury, Deputy Commissioners from Raha and Kaliabor subdivisions, Additional and Assistant Deputy Commissioners, BDOs, and senior departmental officials.

According to an official press note, the visit underscored the state government's commitment to accelerating infrastructure and welfare development in the Nagaon district through regular oversight and coordination.

HP Solar Pumps inaugurated in Tamulpur to boost sustainable farming

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, May 26: In a significant push towards sustainable agriculture, Assam Cabinet Minister Keshab Mahanta and Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Chief Executive Member Pramod Boro jointly inaugurated two High-Pressure DC Solar Pumps at Baltipar under the Nagrijuli Development Block in Tamulpur district on Monday.

The solar pumps have been installed under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Uththan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) scheme. The initiative is being implemented by the Assam Energy Development Agency (AEDA) in collaboration with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India.

This project aims to provide sustainable and eco-friendly energy solutions to farmers, significantly reducing their dependence on conventional electricity and diesel, while simultaneously enhancing agricultural productivity.

The inaugural event was also attended by Tamulpur MLA Jolen Daimary, Special Chief Secretary Syedain Abbasi, Tamulpur Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Chakravarty, and other dignitaries and officials. Speaking at the occasion, CEM Pramod Boro highlighted the long-term benefits of the initiative:

"These solar pumps will help reduce dependence on conventional electricity and diesel, promoting both energy efficiency and agricultural productivity. This is a crucial step towards ensuring sustainable energy access for our farmers, especially in rural areas." The installation of solar pumps under PM-KUSUM is part of a broader state and national strategy to empower farmers with green technology, improve irrigation infrastructure, and promote climate-resilient agriculture.

Public consultation held on proposed Tharakunchi Hydel Project in West Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, May 26: In a significant move for the development of West Karbi Anglong, a public interaction meeting was convened yesterday at Tharakunchi under the Amri MAC Constituency to deliberate on the proposed hydel project by Greenko Pvt Ltd, in collaboration with Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL).

The meeting saw participation from several key stakeholders, including the Chief Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang; Howraghat MLA Darsing Ronghang; local MAC and Executive Member Dominic Upping Maslai; KAAC Deputy Speaker Avijit Kro; other Executive Members, MACs, Board Chairpersons, project managers, APDCL officials, Gaon Burhas, Sarkari Gaon Burhas, and local residents.

Speaking at the gathering, Tuliram Ronghang stressed the importance of the hydel project in propelling the region's development. "We understand the significance of this hydel project for West Karbi Anglong's growth. At the same time, we prioritize the well-being and concerns of our citizens," he stated.

The event offered a platform for meaningful dialogue, enabling villagers to express their concerns and seek clarifications about the proposed project.

Greenko Group — a Hyderabad-based leader in renewable energy and decarbonization — is leading the initiative. With proven expertise in wind, solar, and hydropower, the company aims to significantly improve the power supply in the region through this project.

The hydel initiative is projected to create over 300 permanent jobs for local unemployed youth and employ approximately 2,500 skilled and unskilled work-



ers during the construction phase. A survey is scheduled to begin shortly, with the entire project expected to be completed within five years, including a one-year survey period.

The public engagement marks a step toward inclusive and sustainable development, with authorities assuring that local feedback will be carefully considered throughout the project's lifecycle.

Rally held in Dibrugarh to honour Pahalgam attack victims and celebrate Operation Sindoor



HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, May 26: Sachetan Mahila Mancha, Dibrugarh, on Monday organized a patriotic rally through the heart of Dibrugarh town to pay tribute to the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack and express

solidarity with the Indian armed forces for their recent success in Operation Sindoor.

The rally commenced from the Dibrugarh Old High School playground, passed through major streets of the town, and concluded

at the original starting point. It was marked by enthusiastic participation from local citizens and dignitaries. Present at the event were State Power Minister and Dibrugarh MLA Prasanta Phukan, Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation (DMC) Mayor Saikat Patra, Chairman of Assam Tourism Development Corporation Rituparna Baruah, senior doctor of Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH) Sreemanta Madhav Baruah, and other prominent figures.

A representative of Sachetan Mahila Mancha stated, "We are proud of our armed forces. In Operation Sindoor, they have once again demonstrated their capability and strength. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to them for this historic success."

AAJU Nagaon district holds expanded executive meeting at Dhing College

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, May 26: The All Assam Journalists' Union (AAJU), Nagaon District Unit, held an expanded executive meeting at Dhing College on Sunday. The event took place in two sessions — one dedicated to recognizing academic excellence and the other to organizational and professional matters.

The first session celebrated academic achievers and distinguished individuals from the region. Students who performed exceptionally well in the HSLC Examination 2025 and the HS Final Examination 2025 were felicitated with certificates, mementos, and trophies.

Special recognition was given to Pratyakshi Pritam, who secured the highest marks in Assamese in

the HSLC examination within the Dhing area.

AAJU State President Pankaj Kumar Nath addressed the gathering, emphasizing the value of applying one's knowledge and talents for societal benefit. "High marks alone do not define a successful life. It is the positive contributions we make to society that truly matter," he said, encouraging students to grow both personally and socially.

The session also featured addresses by Dr. Biman Hazarika, Principal of Dhing College, and Mamata Nayak, the first woman journalist from the greater Dhim area. Both speakers reflected on the area's rich legacy in journalism and encouraged the youth to uphold journalistic values.

The session was chaired by

Rajib Kr Neog, acting President of the AAJU Nagaon District Unit, while Sofikur Rahman, the unit's Secretary, anchored the event. The second session focused on internal discussions and pressing issues concerning journalists.

The meeting strongly condemned the attack on Laskar and demanded his immediate release from jail, calling for strict action against those responsible. A resolution was passed in support of Laskar and his family, expressing full solidarity with them during this time.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by AAJU member Saidul Islam, who acknowledged the support of Dhim College authorities and others who contributed to the successful conduct of the event.

9-year-old Binita Chetry from Karbi Anglong makes history on Britain's Got Talent

HT Bureau

DIPHU, May 26: Binita Chetry, a 9-year-old dance prodigy from Amrajani in Bokajan, Karbi Anglong, Assam, has made history by becoming the first contestant from Northeast India to reach the finals of the prestigious reality show Britain's Got Talent (BGT).

Daughter of Amar Chetry, Binita captured the hearts of millions with her electrifying semi-final performance, which featured a dynamic fusion of dance and martial arts-inspired movements. Her powerful routine, marked by precision, emotion, and fearless energy, earned a standing ovation from the judges and secured the public vote, propelling her into the grand finale scheduled for May 31.

The judges were awestruck by her unique performance. Bruno Tonioli likened her to a "tiger with the strength of a python," while Alesha Dixon said she was "lost for words," amazed by Binita's originality and stage presence.

Congratulatory messages poured in from across the region. Chief Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Tuliram Ronghang, took to Facebook to express his pride and support, writing:

"Huge congratulations to 9-year-old Binita Chetry from Bokajan, Karbi Ang-



long, for making history as the first Northeast Indian to reach the Britain's Got Talent 2025 finals! Her incredible dance performance secured the public vote. I also extend my best wishes to her for the grand finale on May 31st!" Binita's remarkable journey has not

only brought joy and pride to her hometown and the Northeast but has also inspired countless young talents across the country. As the countdown to the finale begins, the entire region rallies behind her, hoping to see her emerge victorious on the global stage.

CISF launches record Sports Recruitment Drive

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, May 26: In a major initiative to boost athletic talent within its ranks, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has launched its largest-ever Sports Recruitment Drive for 2025, aiming to recruit 403 Head Constables (General Duty) under the sports quota.

The recruitment will include 204 male and 199 female candidates across 29 internationally recognized sports disciplines, reflecting a commitment to gender parity and nurturing Olympic-level talent.

This landmark drive seeks to: Discover and nurture new sporting talent, promote equality in sports participation, build future champions for international events, enhance the sporting profile of CISF and Contribute to India's broader sporting excellence.

Eligible and accomplished sportspersons are encouraged to apply. The last date for submission of online applications is June 6, 2025, according to official CISF sources.

PUBLIC NOTICE

No.SSA-15015/73/2024/L/1084368/2024

In pursuant to the public notice published vide No. SSA-15015/73/2024-ESTABLISHMENT-Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) I/1075869/2025 dated 20.05.2025, it is for information to all concerned candidates that the interview for the post of Electronic Data Processor under Samagra Shiksha Axom scheduled to be held on 29.05.2025 is postponed due to unavoidable circumstances. The next date for the interview will be informed later on.

Sd/-Officer on Special Duty
Samagra Shiksha Axom
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

DIPR /DF/HLT/289/27-May-25

No. FA/TR/Tender/2025-26/692

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed Tenders are invited on behalf of Field Director, Manas Tiger Reserve for the year 2025-26 affixing Rs. 8.25 Court fee stamp from the eligible bidders for the following works under Manas Tiger Reserve. The date of receipt of Tender is fixed on till 27.05.2025 up to 3:00 P.M. & the Tender will be opened on 27.05.2025 at 3:30 p.m. in the O/o the Field Director, Manas Tiger Reserve. In the event of any unusual occurrence due to strike, bandh, holiday etc. the same will be received and opened on the next working day at same place and same time.

Sl. No	Name of Activity	Estimated value (in Rs)	EMD (in Rs)	Location	Last date & time of bid submission	Date & time of bid opening
1	Renovation of Boundary Wall and Iron Gate under MTR.	4,72,500.00	9450.00 for Gen & 4725.00 for SC/ST/OBC	Head Quarter Beat	27.05.2025 at 3:00 P.M (IST)	27.05.2025 at 3:30 P.M (IST)
2	Construction of Septic Tank & underground pipe line under MTR.	2,50,000.00	5000.00 for Gen & 2500.00 for SC/ST/OBC	Head Quarter Beat		

Detailed NIT may be seen in the O/o the Field Director, Manas Tiger Reserve during office hours.

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/504

Sd/-Field Director, Manas Tiger Reserve

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Time and memory are true artists; they remould reality nearer to the heart's desire - John Dewey

Political crisis in B'desh

The political crisis in Bangladesh has reached its flashpoint in the last 48 hours with two opposing groups getting ready for a major confrontation on the issue of holding elections in the country. One side is led by the newly floated party of the students - National Citizens Party (NCP) backed by the chief adviser Dr. Muhammad Yunus and the other group is the main opposition party Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) supported by the Army Chief Waker Uz Zaman. The Jamaat el Islami is a divided house but most of them have distanced from their one time ally BNP and now supporting Dr. Yunus. On Thursday in the wake of the BNP demand that the chief adviser has to drop a few of his key advisers allied to the NCP, Dr. Yunus felt isolated as he was already under fire for the lapses in administration during a meeting early this week with the Army Chief. Reports said that he decided to submit his resignation as the chief adviser and indicated that to his close NCP advisers. They immediately intervened and persuaded him not to take any precipitate step at this crucial time of the country's politics. Nahid Islam, NCP general secretary and a close aide of Dr. Yunus said after talking to him on Thursday evening that the chief adviser was weighing resignation. According to him, the chief adviser expressed concerns about whether he would be able to continue working under the current circumstances under which he was being pressurized from opposing directions.

Lately, political tensions have been rising, fuelled by protests from various parties and increasingly toxic rhetoric on social media and at political gatherings. The BNP has long been pressing for the election by December. Also, on Thursday, BNP demanded a smaller advisory council, with immediate removal of Mahfuj, Asif and National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman. Leaders of the NCP demonstrated on Wednesday, saying they would not take part in any polls under the current Election Commission. Accusing the EC of bias and terming it a 'party office' of the BNP, they demanded its reconstitution. The tensions between the BNP and the NCP have been escalating since the founding of the NCP by the student leaders in February this year. Dr. Yunus is under the influence of the NCP and he was forced to take the decision on the banning of Awami League and denying the Party participation in the coming elections.

This decision was not acceptable to both the BNP and the Army Chief. BNP favours the view that the Awami League in a truncated form can be allowed to take part in elections, since any election with the earlier ruling party being kept out, will create doubts about the legitimacy of the polls to the foreign nations. BNP now finds that on such a major issue, the party's views were sidelined, and the NCP's young leaders precipitated the decision through their pressure on the Chief Adviser. BNP leaders also believe that the NCP will delay the holding of elections as they are demanding that the current election commission cannot be trusted by them for holding fair polls. This means that they are not ready for any road map for holding elections even early next year.

Beijing's unseen battle: Destabilizing India's Northeast via Myanmar

In the dense jungles and rugged hills of India's northeastern states, a complex and shadowy conflict has been simmering for decades, one that extends beyond the traditional battlefield and into the realms of unconventional warfare. At the heart of this struggle lies an assertive China, which, through a combination of strategic maneuvering, proxy support, and economic influence, has been accused of waging a non-conventional war against India, leveraging Myanmar as a conduit for its geopolitical ambitions. This multifaceted campaign, particularly pronounced in states like Nagaland and Manipur, involves the arming and funding of insurgent groups, the facilitation of cross-border smuggling, and the exacerbation of social decay through drug trafficking. These actions, often veiled under the guise of regional influence, form part of what analysts describe as China's "Three Warfares" strategy such as public opinion warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare aimed at destabilizing India's Northeast while advancing Beijing's broader strategic objectives.

The India-Myanmar border, stretching 1,643 kilometers across Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram, is a porous frontier where ethnic and cultural ties transcend national boundaries. Communities like the Nagas, Kukis, and Chins share historical and kinship connections across this divide, a legacy of colonial-era border demarcations that ignored tribal realities. This permeability, while fostering cross-border community interactions, has also made the region vulnerable to exploitation. Myanmar, with its own history of political instability and ethnic conflicts, has become a staging ground for activities that undermine India's security. Since the 1960s, China has capitalized on this vulnerability, exploiting the region's complex socio-political landscape to challenge India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

China's involvement in India's Northeast is not a new phenomenon. During the 1960s and 1970s, Beijing provided direct support to insurgent groups in Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram, training and arming rebels who sought autonomy or secession from India. The National Socialist Council of

Nagaland (NSCN), particularly its Isak-Muiyah faction (NSCN-IM), and other groups like the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and the People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) reportedly received Chinese assistance during this period. While overt support diminished in the 1980s as China shifted its focus to economic modernization, recent reports suggest a resurgence of covert involvement, particularly through Myanmar-based proxies. Indian officials have pointed to groups like the Arakan Army and the United Wa State Army, both operating in Myanmar, as Beijing's intermediaries, supplying weapons and providing safe havens to Indian insurgent groups along the border.

The NSCN-IM, which advocates for a "Greater Nagalim" encompassing parts of India and Myanmar, and the Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA), active in Manipur and Myanmar's Chin State, are among the groups allegedly receiving Chinese support. According to Indian security sources, these organizations engage in smuggling narcotics, weapons, and wildlife products across the India-Myanmar border, activities fueled by Chinese funding. The NSCN-IM, for instance, is said to collect "sovereignty taxes" from poppy farmers and drug traffickers, facilitating the flow of narcotics from Myanmar's Golden Triangle into India. This influx of drugs has had a devastating impact on northeastern societies, with states like Nagaland grappling with widespread addiction and social decay. The proliferation of drugs serves a dual purpose for China's strategy: it weakens the social fabric of India's Northeast while generating revenue for insurgent groups, enabling them to sustain their operations against the Indian state.

China's "Three Warfares" strategy is particularly evident in this context. By pumping drugs into India, Beijing contributes to the creation of a disaffected, addicted youth population, fostering despondency and undermining societal resilience. Simultaneously, the arming and funding of insurgent groups ensure a constant threat of violence, keeping India's security forces stretched and di-

verting resources from development efforts. The third prong, legal warfare, manifests in China's diplomatic posturing and refusal to acknowledge India's claims over disputed territories like Arunachal Pradesh, which it refers to as "South Tibet." This creates a narrative that challenges India's sovereignty, further complicating New Delhi's efforts to stabilize the region.

Myanmar's ongoing civil war, intensified by the 2021 military coup, has provided China with fertile ground to expand its influence. The Myanmar junta, struggling to maintain control against ethnic armed organizations and pro-democracy resistance, has grown increasingly reliant on Chinese support. Beijing has supplied the junta with advanced weaponry, including FTC-2000G

DEGREE OF THOUGHT
By: Satyabrata Borah

fighter jets, drones, and surveillance technology, strengthening its military capabilities. However, China's strategy is not limited to supporting the junta. It also engages with ethnic armed groups like the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and the Arakan Army, part of the Three Brotherhood Alliance, to ensure its economic and strategic interests are protected regardless of the conflict's outcome. This dual engagement allows China to maintain leverage over all parties, ensuring that Myanmar remains a pliable neighbor while indirectly fueling instability along India's border.

The smuggling networks operating across the India-Myanmar border are a critical component of this unconventional war. Narcotics, sophisticated weapons, and wildlife products are trafficked with impunity, often with the tacit approval or active involvement of Myanmar-based groups supported by China. Indian officials have reported a surge in drug trafficking since the Myanmar coup, with the porous border facilitating the movement of methamphetamine and opium into India's Northeast. These activities not only fund insurgent operations but also destabilize local communities, exacerbating ethnic tensions and undermining governance. The ZRA, for instance, is known to facilitate betelnut smuggling, a seemingly innocuous trade that

generates significant revenue and serves as a cover for more illicit activities.

China's economic investments in Myanmar, particularly through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), further complicate the regional dynamics. Projects like the Kyaukphyu deep-sea port and the Myitsone dam are strategically located near India's borders, enhancing China's access to the Indian Ocean and posing a direct challenge to India's Act East Policy. The Kyaukphyu port, just 65 nautical miles from India's Sittwe port in Rakhine State, underscores Beijing's ambition to dominate maritime routes in the Bay of Bengal. Meanwhile, the Myitsone dam, located on the Irrawaddy River, raises concerns about water security for India's Northeast, particularly in Assam, where the Brahmaputra River is a lifeline. There are fears that China could manipulate water flows as a geopolitical tool, a tactic it has employed elsewhere along the Mekong River.

India's response to this unconventional war has been multifaceted but faces significant challenges. The Indian government has pursued ceasefire agreements with groups like the NSCN-IM and the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), though negotiations have often stalled over demands for greater autonomy or territorial concessions. Security operations, including joint efforts with Myanmar's military, have targeted insurgent bases, but the porous border and Myanmar's instability limit their effectiveness. The decision to fence the India-Myanmar border, with a ₹30,000 crore (US\$3.5 billion) allocation, aims to curb cross-border crime, but it has sparked protests among tribal communities who fear losing access to land and resources. The termination of the Free Movement Regime (FMR) in February 2024, which allowed visa-free travel up to 16 kilometers across the border, has further strained relations with local communities, who view it as a disruption of their cultural and economic ties.

China's exploitation of these local grievances is a key aspect of its strategy. By supporting insurgent groups and fueling discontent, Beijing amplifies the sense of alienation among northeastern communities, many of whom al-

ready feel neglected by New Delhi. The influx of cheap Chinese goods through Myanmar's markets, often smuggled across the border, undercuts local economies, further straining India's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This economic warfare, combined with the social and security challenges posed by insurgency and drug trafficking, creates a vicious cycle that undermines India's efforts to integrate and develop the Northeast.

To counter China's unconventional war, India must adopt a multi-pronged approach. Strengthening border security through fencing and the proposed Indo-Myanmar Border Force (IMBF) is a start, but it must be complemented by diplomatic engagement with Myanmar's junta and opposition forces to disrupt China's proxy networks. Investing in the Northeast's infrastructure, such as the Kaldan Multimodal Transit Transport Project and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, can enhance connectivity and economic development, reducing the region's vulnerability to external manipulation. Additionally, addressing local grievances through inclusive governance and development programs is critical to winning the trust of tribal communities and countering China's psychological warfare.

The stakes in this unconventional war are high. India's Northeast is not only a strategic buffer against China but also a gateway to Southeast Asia, central to New Delhi's Act East Policy. Allowing China to destabilize the region through proxies and smuggling networks risks undermining India's broader geopolitical ambitions. As Beijing continues to leverage Myanmar's instability to its advantage, India must remain vigilant, balancing security measures with efforts to foster regional stability and development. The conflict in the Northeast may lack the visibility of the Sino-Indian border clashes in Ladakh or Arunachal Pradesh, but its implications are no less profound. In this shadow war, the battle for hearts, minds, and borders will determine the future of India's Northeast and its place in the regional power dynamic.

Skilling the Indian workforce : Progress so far

(... continued from last edition)

By: Diganta Barooah

Leveraging Technology and Innovation :

• **Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH-www.skillindiadigital.gov.in) :**

As part of SANKALP, the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) has been developed with an aim to unify skills, education, employment and entrepreneurship in India offering skill courses, job opportunities and entrepreneurial support. It aims to enhance digital access, integrate the skilling ecosystem, and leverage data for decision-making. SIDH fosters the adoption of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in India, providing a foundational ecosystem for skill development and resource management. It prepares the workforce for industry 4.0 with courses in Big Data, AI and more, aligning with G-20 DPI (Digital Public Infrastructure) visions. The SIDH platform has achieved milestone of over 1 Crore registrations and 12 lakh mobile app downloads. It offers more than 7,200 skill courses and has registered over 2,000 employers, 49,000 industry partners, and 15,000 training partners. Furthermore, 45 schemes from 23 ministries and 26 States have already covered on SIDH.

• **National Apprenticeship Portal (www.apprenticeshipindia.gov.in) :**

The portal serves as the key platform for managing apprenticeship training under NAPS (National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme). It is responsible for end-to-end management of apprenticeship training ; include payment of stipend through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), facilitating the registration and engagement of apprentices and employers. The portal has over 2.25 lakh establishments and approximately 15 lakh youth with e-KYC enabled registrations, making it easier for industries to connect with potential apprentices.

• **Bharat Skills :**

Launched in October, 2019, Bharat Skills platform (<https://bharatskills.gov.in>) is a Central Digital Repository for skills which provides curriculum, course material, videos, question banks and mock tests for students and trainers of ITIs or NSTIs (National Skill Training Institutes) in English and 12 regional languages. The portal helps trainees and trainers to have easy access to books, practice papers, learning videos which enable them to learn their topics easily, outside the classroom set-up. The platform has 66.87 lakh unique users and more than 3.71 Crore visits by October, 2024. Bharat Skills platform bagged 'Silver' award under National Award for e-governance for Excellence for promoting Citizen-centric delivery from Department of Administrative Reforms and Personal Grievances, Ministry of Personnel,

Public Grievances and Pensions, Govt. of India.

• **Strengthening Industry Collaboration :**

• Under PMKVY, Skill training has been aligned to the requirements of new-age and futuristic job roles such as AI-Data Engineer, Telecom Technician- IoT (Internet of Things) Devices/Systems, Drone Manufacturing and Assembly Technician, Additive Manufacturing (3D Printing), Kisan Drone Operator, Application Developer - Web and Mobile, etc. In 2024, 4.57 lakh candidates have been enrolled in around 100 new-age/futuristic job roles, of which around 2.78 lakh candidates have completed training.

• DGT has collaborated with many key IT industry leaders like IBM, Microsoft, Cisco, etc. for enabling trainees to become Industry Ready. As per IR (Industrial Relations) 4.0, till October, 2024, about 23.8 lakh trainees trained under the initiative.

• **Flexi-MoU Scheme :**

It allows industries to train candidates as per their skill set requirements and provides trainees with an industry environment aligned with the market demand and latest technology. Under the scheme, Agniveers of Armed forces are also enrolled for certification under CTS (Craftsmen Training Scheme) during their tenure with the armed forces. A total of 9286 candidates have passed out and 12,112 candidates were undergoing training (excluding the Agniveers). A total 83,708 Agniveers have been enrolled till October, 2024 under Flexi MoU.

• **Entrepreneurship Awareness Programs (EAP) supported by Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) :**

NIESBUD is implementing a project in collaboration with Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) aimed at raising entrepreneurship awareness for 1 lakh youths at pan India level under its CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiative. Till October, 2024, 95,500 candidates have been trained, making them better able to undertake their entrepreneurship ventures.

• **Model Skill Loan Scheme :**

MSDE launched the revised Model Skill Loan Scheme on 25th July, 2024 with the objective of providing easy access to advanced level skill course, which potentially pose a significant financial barrier for many deserving students and candidates to gain futuristic and in-demand industry skills. Under the new Model Skill Loan Scheme, the maximum eligible loan amount has been increased from ₹ 1.5 lakh to ₹ 7.5 lakh. Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and Non-Banking Finance Company - Micro Finance Institutions (NBFC-MFIs) and Small Finance Banks have been included as eligible lending institutions, as these institutions have better reach and deeper market penetrations. Non-NSQF (National Skills Qualification Framework) aligned courses provided by training

entities onboarded on Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) have also been made eligible for skill loans. A meeting with stakeholders including IBA, NBFCs/NBFC-MFIs/Small Finance Banks (SFBs) was held on 26th September, 2024 under Chairmanship of Secretary - MSDE to create awareness and successful implementation of the scheme.

• **Indian Institutes of Skill (IISs) :**

The Government of India approved setting up of Indian Institute of Skills (IISs) at three locations in the country namely, Mumbai, Kanpur and Ahmedabad. IISs are conceptualized as the state-of-the-art skill centres that are uniquely placed to bring in best in class infrastructure and facilities to meet the aspirations of students, who enter the skill learning domain instead of the traditionally preferred pathway of higher education. The Tata Education and Development Trust was selected as 'private partner' to set up and operate two IISs at Mumbai and Ahmedabad under PPP (Public Private Partnership) model. For IIS Kanpur, a tripartite MoU has been signed between Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Directorate General of Training (DGT) and Indian Institute of Technology -Kanpur for its operationalisation. In the first phase of IIS at Mumbai and Ahmedabad, training in 6 specialised courses have been started with a strength of 83 candidates at IIS Mumbai and 96 candidates at IIS Ahmedabad. First batch completed their coursework in October, 2024. IIS Mumbai was inaugurated on 9th October, 2024.

• **Effectiveness of the Skill India Mission :**

• According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CIME), the unemployment rate reached about 34% among the people aged 20-24 in the first quarter of 2019 which summed up to 37.9% of the urban lot.

• In 2017, only 5.5 million jobs were created with around 8 million job seekers entering the job market each year.

• According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2018, the unemployment rate among the urban population aged 15-29 years was 23.7%.

• According to a recent survey, 48% of employers reported difficulties in filling the vacancies due to the shortage of necessary skills.

• The CIME report has found that the more educated people are, the more likely they remain unemployed and the PLFS report of 2018 showed that 33% of those formally trained aged 15-29 years were unemployed.

• The government had expected the PMKVY trainees to set up their own enterprises. But, only 24% of the trainees started a business and of them, only 10,000 applied for loans under MUDRA.

Skill India Mission - Recent Developments

On July 1, 2024, Coca-Cola India, in partnership with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), launched the Superpower Retailer Program, empowering over 14,000 retailers, including women, in Odisha in just seven months. Launched on October 15, 2023, the program provides industry-specific skills such as customer and financial management through a mix of classroom training and online certification, promoting accessibility and adaptability in the retail sector.

On August 7, 2024, Canon India inaugurated two Skill Development Centres in Kapashera, Delhi, and Andheri East, Mumbai, aimed at training Below Poverty Line (BPL) youth aged 18 to 25. This initiative seeks to achieve a 70% job placement rate in high-demand sectors, positively impacting over 2,500 individuals over the next five years.

On February 20, 2024, Union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated Odisha's first Skill India Centre (SIC) in Sambalpur. With a focus on trades like Media & Entertainment, Leather, Tourism & Hospitality, and IT-ITeS, the centre aims to upgrade the skills of over 1200 students, aligning with PM Modi's vision. Equipped with modern facilities and infrastructure, it offers a blend of classroom and work-based learning, ensuring industry-relevant skills. NSDC oversees program implementation, ensuring quality standards. This initiative aims to foster rural development, local entrepreneurship, and socio-economic growth.

On October 15, 2023, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) partnered with Coca-Cola India to launch the Superpower Retailer Program, aimed at empowering retailers in Odisha and Uttar Pradesh over three years, providing 14 hours of industry-specific training to 1.40 crore retailers nationwide through the Skill India Digital Portal.

On September 17, 2023, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched the ₹ 13,000 crore (US\$ 1.56 billion) 'PM Vishwakarma Scheme,' a Central Sector Scheme aimed at providing end-to-end support to artisans and craftspeople engaged in 18 trades. The scheme offers benefits such as recognition through certificates and ID cards, skill upgrade with stipends, toolkit incentives, credit support, incentives for digital transactions, marketing support, and integration into the formal MSME ecosystem, ultimately aiming to enhance their work quality, accessibility, and sustainable livelihoods while preserving traditional skills for future generations.

On September 13, 2023, Skill India Digital (SID) was launched, offering an innovative digital platform focused on Skills and Jobs, built on the robust framework of India Stack Global for top-notch security and scalability. The platform features advanced AI/ML tech-

nology for skill set discovery and recommendation, a digital job exchange connecting job seekers with opportunities, and digitally verifiable credentials for authentic skill certifications. SID promotes convergence by integrating various government initiatives and economic indicators, enhancing access to skilling, credit, and markets. It introduces a Digital Skill Card for lifelong learning, supports flexible online/blended skilling with AR/VR/XR technologies, multimedia learning, online assessments, and provides digital discovery of courses and centres through an interactive map interface for convenient access to learning resources.

In April 2021, the government conducted a regional workshop in Gangtok, Sikkim, including all Northeast states—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura—to empower State Skill Development Missions (SSDMs) and District Skill Committees (DSCs) and successfully implement the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

In February 2021, the Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) launched SAKSHAM (Shramik Shakti Manch), a work portal for mapping skills of 'Shramiks' (labour) vis-à-vis the demand from MSMEs for better alignment and placement of 10 lakh blue-collared positions.

In January 2021, the Union Cabinet approved a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between India and Japan on the basic framework for a partnership for proper operation of the system involving 'Specified Skilled Worker' (SSW).

This MoU will provide an institutional framework for both countries to encourage movement of skilled workforce from India to Japan, who have the requisite abilities (including proficiency in the Japanese language) to work in 14 distinct sectors in Japan.

With India being termed as 'a youth country', its people can be its greatest strength. The country should not only train and develop its young workforce for the domestic economy, but also for the world; this can be achieved by mapping skills and developing corresponding training programmes, adopting best practices, embracing foreign campuses, and achieving industry-ready skills.

In addition, the government's collaboration with global industries and individual participants will pave the way to effectively implement numerous initiatives and therefore, ensure availability of professional workforce and further increase employment; this could help India become the global skill capital. (The author is the Assistant Development Officer, Transformation and Development Department, Government of Assam. He can be reached at 7002699011 or digantaraju@gmail.com and digantabarooah@yahoo.com)

Banu Mushtaq: First Kannada author to win International Booker Prize



By: Dipak Kurmi

In 2025, Indian literature reached a historic milestone when Banu Mushtaq, a writer, lawyer, and women's rights activist, scripted history as the first Kannada author to win the prestigious International Booker Prize. Her short story anthology *Heart Lamp*—a poignant tapestry of the lives of Muslim women in southern India—shone a global spotlight on a regional language and a writer long celebrated among discerning readers in India but only now receiving her due international acclaim.

Heart Lamp, a collection of 12 stories written over more than three decades from 1990 to 2023, was originally penned in Kannada and later translated into English by Deepa Bhashti. The book was celebrated not only as the first Kannada work but also the first short story collection to win the International Booker Prize. With its narratives exploring survival, resilience, and womanhood under patriarchal and religious constraints, it stands as a literary testament to lives often pushed to the periphery. Both Mushtaq and Bhashti were jointly honoured with the £50,000 prize, marking a dual milestone for Indian regional literature and translation.

At its heart, *Heart Lamp* is not simply a book; it is a mirror held up to a society where women—especially Muslim women—negotiate identity, faith, silence, and autonomy. The Booker Prize jury, led by acclaimed author Max Porter, praised the anthology as “astounding portraits of survival and resilience.” He emphasized how the stories resonated deeply with every juror, calling the book “a joy” to revisit, especially for the varied insights it offered upon every reading. “This was the book the judges really loved, right from our first reading. We are thrilled to share this timely and exciting winner with readers around the world,” Porter noted in his official remarks.

The Booker Prize Foundation described *Heart Lamp* as “an intimate and compassionate rendering of women's interior lives,” capturing everyday tensions in patriarchal communities of southern India. The stories do not shout; they whisper, linger, and echo—illuminating moments often overshadowed in the grand narrative of Indian fiction.

Mushtaq's literary achievement has reverberated beyond the world of books. The Chief Minister of Karnataka, Siddaramaiah, publicly congratulated her, calling it a proud moment for Kannada literature. “Banu Mushtaq has raised the flag of Kannada's greatness on the international stage and brought honor to all of us,” he posted on his official social media handle. He also commended Deepa Bhashti for her masterful English translation, saying, “I wish that she continues to write with strength and spirit... spreading the essence of Kannada across the world.”

Mushtaq's path to literary acclaim is as compelling as her fiction. Born and raised in a modest Muslim neighborhood in a small town in Karnataka, she studied the Quran in Urdu, like most girls around her. But her father—a government servant—envisioned a broader horizon for her. He enrolled her at the age of eight in a convent school where Kannada, the state's official language, was the medium of instruction. What began as an alien tongue soon became the expressive canvas of her art.

She began writing during her school years and chose college over the traditional path of early marriage. At 26, she entered a love marriage, only to find herself engulfed by patriarchal expectations. Struggling through postpartum depression, domestic restrictions, and mental anguish, her desire to write became both an escape and an act of rebellion. Her first short story was published amid one of the most emotionally turbulent phases of her life.

In interviews over the years, Mushtaq has candidly described how her early married life, filled with suffocating domesticity, nearly pushed her to self-immolation. In a heartbreaking moment of despair, she once doused herself in white petrol, intending to end her life, only to be stopped in time by her husband. “He hugged me and took away the matchbox, placing our baby at my feet, saying, ‘Don't abandon us,’” she recalled in an interview with *The Week* magazine.

Yet it was through this suffering that Mushtaq found her voice, and in turn, gave voice to countless women like her. Her stories refuse the reduction of Muslim women to metaphors or background props. Instead, she portrays them as fully realized human beings—resilient, assertive, contradictory, and real. In a *Indian Express* review, *Heart Lamp* was praised for its refusal to reduce its female characters into tropes. “Mushtaq refuses both silence and spectacle. Her characters push back in ways that matter—to themselves.”

Her political and literary awakening found further impetus during her time as a journalist at a local tabloid. She was also closely associated with the Bandaya movement, a powerful socio-literary campaign in Karnataka that used literature as a weapon against caste and gender oppression. After a decade in journalism, she transitioned into law, taking up the profession to support her family. But writing remained her true vocation.

Mushtaq's activism extended beyond the page. In 2000, her support for Muslim women's right to pray in mosques triggered a storm. She received death threats, a fatwa was issued against her, and she narrowly escaped a knife attack by an enraged man—stopped only by her husband's intervention. Yet she remained unfazed, continuing to write with fearless clarity and integrity. “I have consistently challenged chauvinistic religious interpretations,” she told *The Hindu*. “Even though society has changed, the core issues remain the same.”

Her body of work includes six short story collections, a novel, a poetry collection, and essays that delve into intersectional themes of gender, faith, and marginalisation. She has received numerous honors, including the Karnataka Sahitya Academy Award and the Daana Chintamani Atimabbe Award—two of the highest literary recognitions in the state. In 2024, a translated English compilation of her early short stories titled *Haseena and Other Stories*—drawn from works published between 1990 and 2012—won the PEN Translation Prize.

Translator Deepa Bhashti, who shares the International Booker honour with Mushtaq, has played an indispensable role in bringing the stories of *Heart Lamp* to a global audience. A writer and translator based in Kodagu, Karnataka, Bhashti's translation work includes a novel by Jnanpith awardee Kota Shivarama Karanth and short stories by pioneering writer Kodagira Gouramma. In her acceptance speech, Bhashti expressed hope that the Booker win would lead to more translations from and into Kannada and other South Asian languages, which often remain invisible in the global literary marketplace.

Mushtaq, in her acceptance remarks, echoed this sentiment: “This book was born from the belief that no story is ever small; that in the tapestry of human experience, every thread holds the weight of the whole.” She added with poignant simplicity, “In a world that often tries to divide us, literature remains one of the last sacred spaces where we can live inside each other's minds, if only for a few pages.”

The Indian publishing world also reacted with admiration and reflection. Manasi Subramaniam, Editor-in-Chief of Penguin India, called the win “a powerful reminder that literature in India's many languages demands our full attention.” Comparing Mushtaq's win with Geetanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand*—which won the prize in 2022—Subramaniam noted that these victories signify a broader movement towards embracing India's diverse linguistic heritage.

In an era when global literary recognition often tilts toward dominant languages, Banu Mushtaq's win is revolutionary. It signifies not just a personal triumph but a broader cultural shift—an affirmation that stories from the margins, in languages spoken by millions yet overlooked internationally, have immense power.

Through *Heart Lamp*, Mushtaq has illuminated not just the contours of Muslim women's lives but the universal struggle to find meaning, dignity, and agency in a world of constraints. Hers is a quiet power, forged in hardship but glowing with clarity, empathy, and fire. Literature, she reminds us, does not always roar. Sometimes, it simply lights a lamp—and that is enough to change the world. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

Will AI replace teachers?

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The twenty-first century has witnessed one of the most rapid technological evolutions in human history. Among the most groundbreaking of these advancements is the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), a domain once confined to science fiction but now deeply embedded in our daily lives. AI has transformed industries ranging from healthcare to finance, agriculture to transportation. Naturally, the realm of education has not been immune to this wave. As AI-powered tools and systems increasingly become part of classrooms and curricula, a pressing and often provocative question emerges: Will AI replace teachers?

To engage with this question, it is essential to understand the extent of AI's current influence in education and its potential trajectory. AI applications in education are manifold: adaptive learning platforms that adjust to a student's pace and level, virtual tutors available 24/7, automated grading systems that provide instant feedback, and predictive analytics that help institutions identify at-risk students. These innovations enhance efficiency, accessibility, and personalization in education—an achievement long sought after in traditional classroom settings. Moreover, during unprecedented disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, AI-driven technologies played a crucial role in sustaining educational continuity, offering remote learning solutions when physical classrooms became inaccessible.

Yet, while these technological tools demonstrate remarkable capabilities, the question of replacement is far more complex than mere functional substitution. Teaching is not simply the transmission of information or evaluation of answers. It is, fundamentally, a human endeavor—rooted in empathy, emotional intelligence, motivation, and moral guidance. A teacher's role encompasses mentoring, inspiring, disciplining, and understanding the emotional and psychological dynamics of each learner. These are areas where even the most sophisticated AI models continue to fall short.

One of the core limitations of AI lies in its inability to possess genuine emotional understanding. While AI can simulate empathy through programmed responses, it lacks consciousness, emotions, and the deep context awareness required to respond to the unique needs of students. Teachers often detect subtle changes in a student's behavior or mood—clues that signal a struggle at home, anxiety, or waning confidence. Such perceptiveness cannot be replicated by an algorithm, no matter how advanced. A student struggling with grief, for instance, may not benefit from a perfectly tailored lesson plan but from the kind words, patience, and encouragement of a compassionate teacher.

Further, the essence of education extends beyond academics. Schools and colleges are social ecosystems where students learn not only subjects but also life skills: cooperation, conflict resolution, leadership, empathy, and ethics. These are inculcated not through automated modules but through lived experiences, guided reflections, and real human interactions. Teachers often serve as role models, confidants, and guides who shape the values and character of their students. Such influence is deeply personal and cannot be coded into an AI system.

Another vital factor to consider is the role of cultural and contextual understanding in education. Teachers draw upon their lived experiences, cultural awareness, and social backgrounds to make lessons relevant and relatable.

One of the core limitations of AI lies in its inability to possess genuine emotional understanding. While AI can simulate empathy through programmed responses, it lacks consciousness, emotions, and the deep context awareness required to respond to the unique needs of students. Teachers often detect subtle changes in a student's behavior or mood—clues that signal a struggle at home, anxiety, or waning confidence. Such perceptiveness cannot be replicated by an algorithm, no matter how advanced

They connect literature to local traditions, interpret history through contemporary lenses, and relate mathematical problems to real-life situations familiar to their students. AI, in its current form, is trained on large datasets that may lack cultural nuance or local relevance, often leading to generic or even inappropriate content. In diverse societies like India, where cultural context plays a critical role in teaching and learning, this becomes a significant limitation.

There is also the issue of trust. Students, especially young learners, develop a sense of trust and security with teachers—a bond that is nurtured over time and becomes foundational to the learning process. AI interfaces, despite their efficiency, remain transactional. They cannot build the relational capital that human teachers do. Trust is not just about reliability; it is about care, mutual respect, and a shared journey of growth—qualities intrinsic to the teacher-student relationship.

Moreover, while AI can enhance education, it also poses certain ethical risks if left unchecked. The collection and analysis of student data by AI systems raise privacy concerns. There is the risk of algorithmic bias, where decisions made by AI could reinforce social inequalities or exclude marginalized groups. Without human oversight, such systems could inadvertently perpetuate injustice rather than support inclusive education. Teachers play a crucial role in ensuring fairness and equity in classrooms, roles that cannot be outsourced to machines.

Importantly, replacing teachers with AI would also have significant socio-economic consequences. In countries like India, where education employs millions of teachers, such a shift could threaten livelihoods, deepen unemployment, and disrupt community structures. Teachers are not just employees; they are central figures in rural and urban communities alike, often doubling as social workers, counselors, and even local leaders. Their displacement would not only affect the quality of education but also undermine the social fabric of many regions.

Nonetheless, this is not to suggest that AI has no place in education. On the contrary, AI holds tremendous potential to support and empower teachers. For instance, AI can take over routine and administrative tasks such as attendance, grading, or lesson planning, thereby freeing up teachers to focus on what truly matters—engaging with students. AI can offer real-time insights into learning gaps and suggest personalized interventions, enabling more effective teaching strategies. In this sense, AI becomes a tool in the

teacher's toolkit, not a substitute.

The future of education, therefore, lies not in an AI-versus-teacher dichotomy but in a collaborative model. A blended approach, where AI handles tasks it excels at—like data processing, scalability, and content customization—while teachers focus on mentorship, emotional support, and contextual instruction, offers a promising path forward. Just as calculators did not replace mathematicians and diagnostic tools did not replace doctors, AI will not replace teachers but will redefine their roles in meaningful ways.

This evolution requires a paradigm shift in teacher training and policy formulation. Teachers must be equipped with digital literacy and AI awareness so that they can integrate these tools effectively into their pedagogy. Institutions should foster a culture where technology complements rather than competes with human faculties. Moreover, curriculum design must balance technological proficiency with humanistic values, ensuring that students grow not just as knowledgeable individuals but as compassionate, ethical citizens.

The central goal of education has always been the holistic development of the individual. It is not merely about test scores or degrees, but about nurturing critical thinking, curiosity, resilience, and integrity. These are attributes best cultivated through human relationships and life experiences, which no algorithm can fully replicate.

It is also worth reflecting on the emotional legacy that teachers leave behind. Most people remember a teacher who changed their lives, who believed in them when no one else did, who pushed them to aim higher or comforted them in moments of self-doubt. These memories are not made by machines. They are the result of human connection—of one soul touching another. In a world increasingly dominated by screens and codes, such connections are more valuable than ever.

In conclusion, while AI will undeniably reshape the educational landscape, it will not—and should not—replace teachers. The future belongs to those who can harness the power of technology while preserving the irreplaceable qualities of human interaction. Teachers will continue to be the heart of education, not despite AI, but alongside it. Rather than fearing obsolescence, educators and institutions must embrace this transformative moment as an opportunity to reimagine learning—where technology enhances human potential, and teachers guide the journey not just with knowledge, but with wisdom, empathy, and purpose. (The author can be reached at himangshur1989@gmail.com or 8486400157, 9864539966)

Storm of controversies over 'Hera Pheri 3', Paresh Rawal's decision creates uproar!

By: Sanjay Saxena

Bollywood's most beloved and talked-about comedy franchise 'Hera Pheri' is currently in the headlines due to its third installment. However, this time the reason is not the film's shooting or promotion, but a major controversy surrounding it. While fans were eagerly waiting for this much-anticipated film, the entire project of 'Hera Pheri 3' has now become entangled in controversies. Anger among several big names associated with the film, legal notices, emotional setbacks, and reactions pouring in on social media have turned it into one of Bollywood's most complicated projects. The biggest shock came when the soul of this franchise, actor Paresh Rawal, distanced himself from the film. Paresh Rawal portrayed the role of Babu Bhaiya in the 'Hera Pheri' series, a character immensely loved by audiences. But now, reports suggest that he has withdrawn from 'Hera Pheri 3', leaving the film's producers in a state of confusion.

It is being said that Paresh Rawal returned the signing amount of ₹11 lakh that he received from Akshay Kumar's production company, along with 15 percent annual interest. On one hand, this move highlights his professional integrity, but on the other, it has shaken the film's team. The producers expressed their displeasure over his sudden decision and even sent him a legal notice demanding compensation for a ₹25 crore loss. According to the producers, shooting preparations were complete, sets were built, and the crew had been booked all based on Paresh Rawal's involvement. His withdrawal at such a stage has caused significant financial damage. Paresh Rawal, on the other hand, stated that there were certain issues with the script and direction that he did not agree with, prompting him to step away from the project.

After the news of Paresh Rawal's exit broke, another emotional reaction came from Akshay Kumar, another pillar of the franchise. Director Priyadarshan revealed in an interview that Akshay had tears in his eyes when he learned Paresh would no longer be a part of the film. Akshay reportedly asked Priyadarshan, “Priyan, why is Paresh doing this to us?” This news spread quickly in the film industry and received mixed reactions from the public. Some supported Paresh Rawal's decision, while many considered it a significant loss for the future of the film.

Another big name involved in this controversy is Kartik Aaryan. Earlier reports claimed that Kartik Aaryan would replace Akshay Kumar in the role of Raju in 'Hera Pheri 3'. However, it was later clarified that Kartik was being brought in as a new character. Paresh Rawal also confirmed that Kartik was not replacing Raju, but was being cast in an entirely different role. However, when the script was altered and the storyline changed, Kartik was also dropped from the project. Even Kartik's involvement had caused fan debates, as most people wanted Akshay Kumar to return as Raju. Hashtags like #NoAkshayNoHeraPheri started trending on social media, creating massive pressure on the producers.

Another controversial issue linked to this film is its director. Farhad Samji was appointed as the director of the movie. He previously directed films like 'Bachchan Paandey' and 'Housefull 4'. However, audiences and social media users have not appreciated his work and expressed their anger using hashtags like #RemoveFarhadFromHP3. Fans believe that a classic film like 'Hera Pheri' should not be compromised and that its direction should be entrusted to an experienced filmmaker capable of preserving its original comedic essence. Farhad Samji responded to the criticism by saying that he is being unfairly targeted and asked audiences to give him a chance to prove that he can do justice to the film.

These controversies surrounding 'Hera Pheri 3' have turned the film into a battleground of emotions and legal battles. On one side, the producers had high hopes for the movie, but now they are facing repeated obstacles. The audience had hoped to see the trio of Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, and Paresh Rawal once again, but due to issues related to director selection, script changes, and disagreements among the cast, the project keeps getting delayed. The producers hope to resolve the legal dispute with Paresh Rawal so that the film's shooting can resume. But the emotional and professional rift caused by this controversy will not be easy to bridge.

The big question now is whether audiences will once again get to see the comic timing of Raju, Shyam, and Babu Bhaiya. Will the filmmakers be able to overcome these major changes and legal disputes to deliver a successful film? Will audiences be able to experience the same magic that was present in 'Hera Pheri' and 'Phir Hera Pheri'? These questions remain unanswered. But one thing is certain: 'Hera Pheri 3' is no longer just a film; it has become an emotional attachment, and fans are closely watching every detail.

Today, when every update about a film trends on social media, the controversies around 'Hera Pheri 3' have once again proven how significant this film is to its audience. Fans are not just seeking entertainment, they want to relive their old memories. Whether it's Babu Bhaiya's famous dialogue “Utha le re deva,” or Raju's clever tricks, these characters have carved a place in people's hearts through their dialogues, a place bigger than any controversy. It will now be interesting to see whether this film is made with its original star cast or takes a new turn. But one thing is certain: 'Hera Pheri 3' has become more than just a movie; it has turned into a deep emotional issue that everyone is serious about. (The author is a senior journalist, he can be reached at skslka28@gmail.com or 9454105568, 8299050585)

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT FISHERY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER,
KARBI ANGLONG, DIPHU

No.AFH-79/SOPD/Tender Notice/2025-26/

Dated : Diphu the 22nd May' 2025.**SHORT TENDER NOTICE**

Sealed tender affixing Karin Anglong Autonomous Council revenue fee stamp worth Rs.10.00 are invited by the undersigned for the following works under Diphu, Bokajan, Howraghat Sub-Division of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong District. Tenders will be received in the office of the undersigned and in the office of the Sub-Divisional Fishery Development Officer, Hamren up to 2.00 PM of 04th June 2025 and will be opened in the same date and time.

The name of works/project in details are given below:-

Group C (Works)

Sl. No.	Project Name	Estimated Amount
1.	Excavation of Boloram Fishery at Rongnagar, Bakalia	4.00
2.	Excavation of Fishery at Rongmili, matipung, Diphu	4.00
3.	Excavation of new Fishery at Tikokiangso, Chandra Engti Arong, Kongjuk- athoi	1.50
4.	Excavation of Lekthepi Enghet Adong Fishery at Chowdhola	2.00
5.	Excavation of Fishery at Pharkong Abi, Bakalia	4.00
6.	Excavation of Fishery at Ruirelangso, Bakalia	2.00
7.	Excavation of Community Fishery Project at Nihag Teron Arong, Singhasaon	2.00
8.	Excavation of Community Fishery Project at Sarsing Engti Arong, Singhasaon	2.00
9.	Excavation of Joysing Fishery Project at Rongnagar	1.50
10.	Excavation of Sunflower Fishery at Hatipura, Bakalia	2.00
11.	Excavation of Deuri Fishery Project at Howraghat	2.00
12.	Excavation of Langtuk Fishery project near Langkangbob, Disobai	2.00
13.	Excavation of Protap Fishery at Howraghat	2.00
14.	Excavation of Fishery at No.1 Nam Bakalia Rajapathar, Bakalia	2.00
15.	Excavation of Fishery at Atigaon, Bakalia	2.00
16.	Excavation of Fishery at Meteka jengharTevang, Nomad	2.00
17.	Excavation of Men Bey Fishery at Phuloni	2.00
18.	Excavation of Padma Teronpi Fishery Project, Rajapathar Tini All Bakalia	2.00
19.	Renovation of Existing Community Fishery at Amreng Village, West Karbi Anglong	2.00
20.	Excavation of Bipul Pator Fishery, Rajapathar Bakalia	2.00
21.	Excavation of Fishery at Ruirelangso SongsarTerang Arong, Bakalia	2.40
22.	Excavation of Fishery at Balijan No.1, Bakalia	2.00
23.	Excavation of Fishery at Monsing Lekthe Arong, Bakalia	2.00
24.	Renovation of Kungri Phangchopi Fishery at MonsingLekthe Arong, Bakalia	1.50
25.	Renovation of Sariong Teron Fishery at Monsing Lekthe Arong, Bakalia	2.00
26.	Renovation of Rumoni Engtipi Fishery at Monsinglekthe Arong, Bakalia	1.50
27.	Renovation of Dorsing Lekthe Fishery at Monsing Lekthe Arong, Bakalia	1.50
28.	Renovation of Sarhon Bey Fishery at Monsing Lekthe Aron& Bakalia	1.50
29.	Renovation of Sarhon Bey Fishery at MonsingLekthe Arong, Bakalia	1.50
30.	Renovation of Shila Terangpi Fische at Monsin: Lekthe Aron Bakalia	1.50
31.	Renovation of Maising Lekthe Fishery at MonsingLekthe Arong, Bakalia	1.50
32.	Renovation of Rensing Engleng Fishery at Monsing Lekthe Aron Bakalia	1.50
33.	Renovation of Dhonison Lekthe Fishery at Monsing Lekthe Arong, Bakalia	1.50
34.	Renovation of Sot Lekthe Fishery at Monsing Lekthe Arong, Bakalia	1.50
35.	Renovation of Phudang Phangchopi Fishery under Kania Bey Arong, Teteliguri, Bakalia	1.50
36.	Renovation of Tenzing Terang Fishery under Kania Bey Arong, Teteliguri, Bakalia	1.50
37.	Excavation of Fishery at Sodar Engti Arong, Taralangso, Diphu	2.00
38.	Excavation of Community Fishery at Chndra Tisso village, Socheng Dhenta	1.60
39.	Excavation of New Pond at Kekang Adong under Duar Bagori constituency	2.00
40.	Excavation of New Pond at Disama 2 No. Timung Arong Taralangso.	2.00
41.	Excavation of Presiklangso Fishery at Harlongjuve, Ronghang Arong, West Karbi Anglong	2.00
42.	Excavation of Fishery Project at kigiongkiri RongpharArong, Diphu	2.00
43.	Excavation of Manai Kropi Fishery at Chapong Centre	1.50
44.	Excavation of Fishery at Malongso, Diphu	2.00
45.	Excavation of Fishery at Longbong Bey Arong Samelangso	2.00
46.	Excavation of Fishery at Upper Chapong near Samson Phangcho Residence, Phuloni	2.00
47.	Excavation of Fishery at Chapong Bong-Kejok Abi Near the Chapong Playground, Phuloni	2.00
48.	Excavation of King Ronghang Fishery at Hamren, West Karbi Anglong	2.00
49.	Excavation of Fishery at &tram Hanse Land Basa Bey Arong, phonglokpet, Bakalia	1.50
50.	Excavation of Fishery at the Residence of Sikari Hanse, Rajapathar, Bakalia	2.00
51.	Excavation of Community Fishery at Dikrenglango, Kania Ronghang Arong (PS.No.112 LW)	2.00
52.	Excavation of Fishery Project at Haldiati Bakalia	2.00
53.	Excavation of Fishery at Ser Anglong Volongkom Aji, Bakalia	2.00
54.	Excavation of Malin Fishery at Six Mile Lonki Ronhang Arong, Diphu	1.50
55.	Excavation of Fishery at Borthal Rongtukong under Rongkhang MAC Constituency, West Karbi Anglong.	2.00
56.	Excavation of Fishery at Teke Rongpi Arong, Mahamaya	3.00
57.	Excavation of Fishery at Phumen Engti near Timungpi Land, Diphu	2.00
58.	Excavation of Community Fishery at Timung Kethe Arong Bokajan	2.00
59.	Excavation of Janasing Enghi Fishery at KongjukAthoi Enghi Arong, Bakalia	2.00
60.	Excavation of Fishery Project at Rongnagar Baliram Engti Arong, Bakalia	2.00
61.	Excavation of Ritlang Fishery near Rongwaisong Village, Diphu	2.00
62.	Excavation of Fishery at Tharvelangso, Chinthong West Karbi Anglong	3.00
63.	Excavation of Fishery at Ranjit Enghi land Rongkuru under Bithung MAC Constituency, West Karbi Anglong	2.00
64.	Excavation of Babu Fishery at Ramlokjan, Terenglangso	2.00
65.	Excavation of Community Fishery Project at Upper Hidipi under Borjan MAC	2.00

	Constituency	
66.	Excavation of Fishery at On Bey Arong, Diphu	2.00
67.	Excavation of new Fishery at Rupsing Bey Gaon Teteligurl, Bakalia	1.50
68.	Excavation of Rudult Fishery at Hidilangve, Bakalia	2.00
69.	Excavation of Si-im Fishery Project at Rongkimi, Diphu	1.50
70.	Excavation of New Fishery at Longki Teron Gaon, KongjukAthoi	1.50
71.	Excavation of Mithilesh Fishery at Chauhan Bases, Bakalia	1.50
72.	Excavation of D.S Fishery at Gita Ashram Rongpirbi, Diphu	2.00
73.	Excavation of Fishery at Rongchiri near Don Bosco, Hamren	1.50
74.	Excavation of Jensing Fishery at Teteliguri	1.50
75.	Excavation of Malesh Gaon Fishery at Bakalia	2.10
76.	Excavation of Fishery Project at Mokhim Enghi Arong, Menmeji, West Karbi Anglong	4.00
77.	Excavation of Fishery project at Rongkimi, Menmeji, West Karbi Anglong	4.00
78.	Excavation of Fishery Project at Phankri Arong, Dongkamukam, West Karbi Anglong	4.00
79.	Excavation of Fishery Project at Sarsenot, Dongkamukam, West Karbi Anglong.	4.00
80.	Excavation of Fishery under Korkanthi MAC constituency Karbi Anglong	2.00
81.	Excavation of Community Fishery at Borkok, Duar Amla W.K.A.	2.00
82.	Excavation of Fishery Project at DorsingTisso Village, Diphu	2.40
83.	Excavation of Fishery at Komar Gaon Bomeoria, Deopani	2.00
84.	Excavation of Fishery at Upper Mohengdijua, Dhansiri	2.00
85.	Excavation of Rojika Fishery at Lumding Road, Diphu	2.00
86.	Excavation of Mileng Fishery at Rongtheang, Diphu	2.00
87.	Excavation of Noren Fishery at Bahani Adarsha, Bakalia	2.49
88.	Excavation of Fishery at Dikrenglanso under Amreng MAC constituency	2.40
89.	Excavation of Volongkom Aji Fishery Project near Assamese Bhakhik Association	8.00
90.	Excavation of Fishery Project at Amreng, West Karbi Anglong	2.00
91.	Excavation of Fishery Project at Bahari Adong, Sarihajan	2.00
92.	Excavation of Community Fishery at Mohiram Rongpi Arong Phuloni	1.50
93.	Excavation of Community Fishery at Dokhora Hidi Nilip	1.50
94.	Renovation of 4 Nos. fisheries under Rongkhang MAC constituency	2.00
95.	Excavation of Community Fishery at Bimol Tisso Arong Socheng Dhenta	1.50
96.	Excavation of Monika Fishery at Genesis Max foundation, Karagaon, Khatkhathi	2.00
97.	Excavation of Chingkoike Fishery at Taralangso block No.1 village No.2 Dilaji, Mouja Jamunapar	2.00
98.	Construction of Half Boundary Wall with MS Grill and Plantation at the Front side of Harsing Lake, Diphu	35.00
99.	Construction of New boundary wall with Barbed Wire Fencing and pathway at Harsing Lake, Diphu	45.00
100.	Construction of Boulder Retaining Wall with culvert at Harsing Lake, Diphu	40.00
101.	Construction of VIP Lounge Attached to Fish Farmer Training Hall at Bakalia	17.00
102.	Dismantling Old Tiles and Installation of new Tiles (Gallery Steps), Retaining Wall etc. at Langkungyang Abi, Taralangso	25.00
103.	Plantation and Beautification of Langkung Phang Abi at Taralangso	8.00
104.	Dismantling Old Warehouse and Construction of New Warehouse at SBI lake, Lumding Road, Diphu	15.00
105.	Landscaping at Behani Adarsha Fish Farm, Baklia	8.00
106.	Renovation and beautification of Pond at Shiv Mandir, Nam BakaliaTiniali	5.00
107.	Construction of MS Gat, Septic Tank at Aquacentric Park, Diphu	3.00
108.	Construction of Courtyard, Boulder Retaining Wall, MS Grill Boundary Wall at Fishery Office Diphu	7.00
109.	Installation of New Aquarium unit at Aquacentric Park Diphu	10.00
110.	Construction of Waterfall with koi tank at Aquacentric Park, Diphu	15.00
111.	Repairing/Renovation of department Quarter at Harsing Lake, Diphu	5.00
112.	Repairing/Renovation of department Quarter at SBI Tank, Lumding Road Diphu	5.00
113.	Repairing/Renovation of department Quarter at Hamren, West Karbi Anglong	5.00
114.	Construction of New RCC Ring well at Harsing Lake, Diphu	2.40
115.	Wall painting at departmental fishery farm, Hamren West Karbi Anglong	5.00
	TOTAL-	459.79

(Rupees Four Crore Fifty Nine Lakhs Seventy Nine Thousand) only

The terms and conditions for submission of tenders are as follows:-

1. The tenderer must furnish up to date Income Tax, GST, PAN card, professional tax, Caste Certificate and trading license without which no tender will be considered.
2. Tenderer must furnish earnest money (1% for SCSTOBC. 2% for others) shown against the item of work in the form of call deposit duly pledged to the undersigned without which no tender shall be considered.
3. The tenderer should quote the rate of works as per estimated value/ Scheduled rate.
4. The successful tenderer shall have to come to agreement in PWD F-2 form within 7(Seven) days from the date of issued work order and allotted work shall have to start within 10(Ten) days failing in which the works shall be cancelled.
5. The work must be executed under the supervisor of the officer duly authorized by the undersigned.
6. Any partnership Firm/ Shamik Bahini submit tender must furnish certificate copy of their registration and power of attorney to execute the deed of agreement and to receive payment.
7. The tender need to be submitted in the sealed envelope duly super scribed as tender for the work and name has to be mentioned against each work.
8. The plan and estimates of the work may be seen in the office of the undersigned during office hours on request.
9. The earnest money will be released only after satisfactory completion of specified works.
10. The undersigned is not bound to accept the tender and reserve the right to reject any or all tender without assigning any reason what so ever.
11. If the last date of submission/opening of Tender declares as holiday, the last date of submission/opening will be the next working day and time will be remain the same.

Sd/-

District Fishery Development Officer,
Karbi Anglong, Diphu

No.AFH-79/SOPD/Tender Notice/2025-26/

Dated : Diphu the 22nd May' 2025.

Investments are set to create thousands of employment opportunities, enhance healthcare and education

Arunachal attracts investment proposals worth ₹ 6,357 cr at NE summit

ITANAGAR, May 26: Arunachal Pradesh has attracted investment proposals worth ₹ 6,357 crore through the signing of 16 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) during the Rising Northeast Investors Summit, held in New Delhi from May 23 to 24, an official statement said here.

The agreements include key sectors such as agri-biofuel, afforestation, healthcare, education, information technology, tourism, and renewable energy.

The MoUs were signed between the state Planning & Investment secretary, and representatives from various companies, the statement said.

Among the major projects is a ₹ 2,324 crore investment proposal by Agri-Biofuel Global Ltd to convert agricultural waste into aviation and maritime fuel, while Developer Group India Pvt Ltd committed ₹ 1,760 crore for afforestation and carbon credit monetisation, along with additional investments for bamboo plantations.

Inlamobi Pvt Ltd has proposed ₹ 1,000 crore to set up a European Blue Valley Fragrances & Flavours Ayush clus-



ter, while Medhavi Group will invest ₹ 178 crore to establish a skill, innovation and tribal entrepreneurship university at Ziro, expected to generate over 430 direct jobs.

Farm Native Group will invest ₹ 150 crore in a 250-bed super

specialty hospital, projected to create over 1,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Other agreements include proposals for setting up data centres, tourism infrastructure, and spiritual and heritage tourism, the statement said.

These investments are set to create thousands of employment opportunities, enhance healthcare and education, and promote sustainable growth in the state, it said.

Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, who also oversees the Planning & Investment portfolio, witnessed the MoU signings.

Mein welcomed the investors and described the event as a transformational milestone for Arunachal Pradesh, highlighting the state's growing appeal as an investment destination and its commitment to inclusive and sustainable development.

The deputy chief minister also commended the Planning and Investment department for fostering an investor-friendly environment and driving these strategic partnerships.

Industry giants Mukesh Ambani, Gautam Adani, and Anil Agarwal collectively announced investments exceeding ₹ 1.55 lakh crore for the North Eastern region during the summit's inaugural day, marking a historic commitment to the region's growth. (PTI)

Southwest Monsoon sets in over Arunachal Pradesh

Authorities urge public vigilance

HT Bureau

NAMSAI, May 26: The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has officially declared the onset of the Southwest Monsoon over Arunachal Pradesh as of May 26, marking the beginning of the rainy season in the northeastern state.

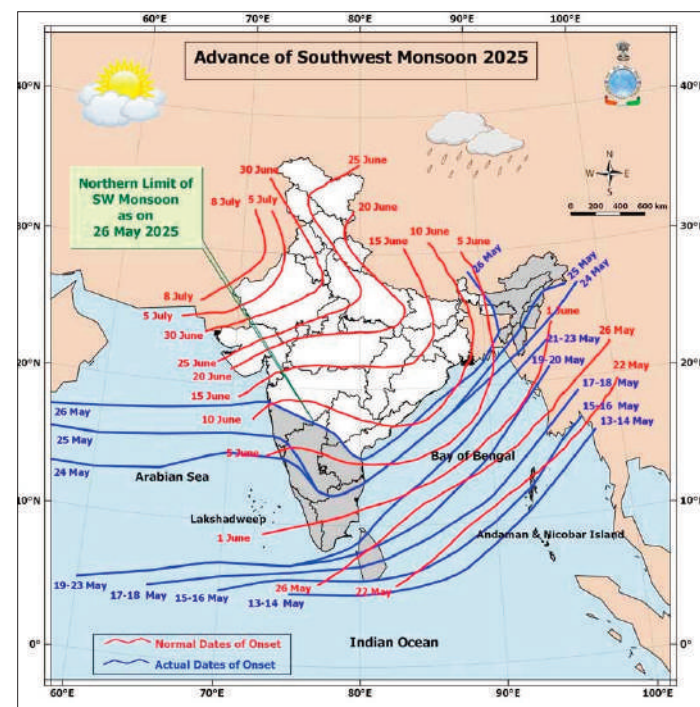
According to the IMD bulletin, the Northern Limit of Monsoon (NLM) now extends through key locations including Mumbai, Pune, Sholapur, Kalaburagi, Mahabubnagar, Kavali, Agartala, Goalpara, and 28.5°N/89°E — confirming the monsoon's advancement over Arunachal Pradesh.

In light of this development, Secretary of Disaster Management, Dani Salu, has appealed to citizens across the state to remain alert, particularly in vulnerable areas prone to flash floods, landslides, and river overflows.

"Like every year, we must prepare ourselves to face potential disasters that accompany the monsoon such as floods, landslides, and heavy rainfall," said Secretary Salu during a media interaction.

He emphasized that the monsoon typically continues until early October, making preparedness essential. The state government has already conducted multiple coordination meetings and put response mechanisms in place under the leadership of the Chief Secretary.

Preparedness Measures in Place
Departments Alerted: All departments, including Food & Civil Supplies and Health & Family Welfare, were alerted months in advance to stock essential food grains and medicines for at least



four months.

Rescue Teams Deployed: NDRF teams have been stationed at two key locations, while SDRF teams are deployed across five districts.

Community Readiness: Over 2,000 Apada Mitras and 4,000 trained volunteers are on standby as part of the disaster response network.

Information Dissemination: A dedicated WhatsApp group has been created, including media houses, to ensure real-time information flow and rapid alerts.

Secretary Salu strongly advised the public to avoid traveling near overflowing rivers or water bodies during heavy rains, refrain from

night travel during the monsoon season, especially in hilly areas prone to landslides and rockfalls, report hazards immediately to local authorities and follow all official advisories and safety guidelines issued by the administration. "The first responders are always the people and neighbors present at the site. Everyone's alertness and cooperation are crucial to minimizing loss of life and property," he added.

Salu concluded by urging citizens, local leaders, and communities to stay informed, cooperate with government agencies, and prioritize safety throughout the monsoon season.

Minister Balo Raja kicks off 2nd Byabang Heri Futsal Championship among doctors in Itanagar



HT Bureau

NAMSAI, May 26: Urban Affairs Minister Balo Raja inaugurated the 2nd Byabang Heri Futsal Championship on Sunday afternoon at Jullang village, bringing together doctors from various hospitals and medical colleges across the state capital for a spirited sporting event.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Minister Raja underscored the importance of maintaining good health and physical fitness. "Everyone aspires to live a long and healthy life, and that is only possible through regular exercise and a disciplined diet," he said. Commending the medical professionals for taking time to prioritize their own health, he added, "It is heartening to see doctors—who dedicate themselves to the well-being of their pa-

tients—actively engaging in sports to maintain their own wellness."

The minister also extended his congratulations to Heema Hospital on completing 18 years of dedicated service in the healthcare sector. He praised CMD Dr. Byabang Rana for his leadership and contribution to improving the health landscape of Arunachal Pradesh. Minister Raja conveyed his best wishes for the hospital's upcoming Foundation Day celebrations on May 28 and expressed hope for the successful completion of the futsal and inter-hospital championships.

PWD Engineer Phurpa Wangial, who graced the event as Guest of Honour, also interacted with the medical community. He praised the dedication of healthcare workers and high-

lighted the symbolic significance of doctors—often referred to as "next to god"—engaging in activities that promote their own health. "Exercise is for everyone, regardless of profession, and it should be a daily routine," he stated.

The event witnessed the presence of several notable attendees, including Dr. Byabang Rana (CMD, Heema Hospital), Dr. Byanag Heema, Director of Geology & Mining Tassar Tallar, and members of the Doctors' Association, alongside medical professionals from various hospitals across the Capital Complex.

The championship not only celebrates physical fitness but also strengthens camaraderie among the medical fraternity, emphasizing the message that health begins with the caregiver.

Church of God organises Blood Drive to promote life-saving culture in Arunachal Pradesh

HT Bureau

NAMSAI, May 26: In a bid to foster a life-saving culture and strengthen community health, the World Mission Society Church of God organized the 1,676th edition of its global initiative, the 'Worldwide Blood Drive to Give Life Through the Love of the Passover', at the Tomo Riba Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (TRIHS) in Naharlagun.

This humanitarian drive, aimed at addressing the increasing demand for blood in India and beyond, brought together 40 volunteers from various walks of life—including professionals, college students, and homemakers. A total of 10,350 ml of blood was collected from 23 eligible donors, many of whom were first-time contributors.

Held from 10 AM to 1 PM, the event was conducted in partnership with TRIHS, which provided medical equipment, trained personnel, and refreshments for the participants.

An official from the Church of God stated,

"Inspired by the love and sacrifice exemplified through the New Covenant Passover, our members believe in sharing life through blood donation. This reflects the biblical teaching to 'love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Dr T Paleng, a senior official at TRIHS, expressed appreciation for the initiative:

"Organized blood donation camps are still relatively uncommon in this region. Events like these are crucial for saving lives



and building a culture of voluntary donation."

Several first-time donors expressed a renewed sense of purpose and fulfillment. One participant shared,

"I was initially hesitant, but now I feel mentally and physically energized after donating. It's truly a rewarding experience."

Over the past decade, the Church of God has conducted 103 blood drives across India, collecting 5,886 units of blood from over 32,000 participants, contributing to the saving of thousands of lives. Globally, the church has held blood donation events 1,676 times across 64 countries, with participation from more than 123,000 donors since 2005.

Beyond blood donation, the church actively engages in disaster relief, environmental cleanups, and welfare support for frontline workers, earning recognition such as: The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (UK), and presidential awards in the U.S., South Korea, and other countries.

Founded in South Korea in 1964, the World Mission Society Church of God has grown to over 7,800 locations in 175 countries, including India. With a global membership exceeding 3.92 million, the church upholds the biblical teachings of God the Father and God the Mother, promoting a philosophy of unity and humanitarian service under the belief that "all people are one family."

5-Day 14th State-Level Chess Championship 2025 concludes successfully in Itanagar

HT Bureau

NAMSAI, May 26: The 14th Arunachal Pradesh State-Level Open FIDE Chess Championship 2025 concluded on Sunday after five days of intense and strategic gameplay, featuring 108 participants from across the state. Organized by the All Arunachal Pradesh Chess Association (AAPCA), the championship was held from May 20 to 25 and showcased exhilarating matches among some of the state's best chess talents.

In a press statement, AAPCA Secretary Tachi Kache stated that the tournament witnessed high-level competition and enthusiastic participation, reflecting the growing popularity of chess in Arunachal Pradesh.

The closing ceremony was graced by Jamru Ruja, President of the Arunachal Pradesh Nyishi Youth Association (ANYA), as the Chief Guest, and Dobin Lendo, Founder President of AAPCA, as the Special Invitee.

During his address, Jamru Ruja expressed concern over the deteriorating condition of the Siddhartha Hall, which hosted the event. Inaugurated by then-

President R. Venkataraman in 1988, the hall remains the only community indoor venue in the state capital. Ruja urged the state government to demolish the current structure and construct a modern multipurpose indoor stadium to cater to sports, cultural, and community events.

The championship was earlier inaugurated by Home Minister, PHE & WS, ISB Mama Natung, with Director of Sports Tadar Apa present as the Special Invitee. During the inaugural ceremony, Minister Natung assured support to the chess association, promising assistance in securing land and funding for a dedicated indoor stadium and office space for AAPCA.

Winners of the Championship: 1st Place: Tabu Dupit (8/9) – Upper Subansiri district, 2nd Place: Dupit Tadam (7.5/9) – Upper Subansiri district, 3rd Place: Tapir Mize (7.5/9) – Upper Siang district and 4th Place: Tamar Nilling (7/9) – Upper Subansiri district

The championship concluded with a prize distribution ceremony and vote of thanks from the organizers, marking yet another milestone in promoting competitive chess in Arunachal Pradesh.

Event served as a powerful tribute to the heroic sacrifice of Hangpan Dada, whose valor continues to inspire the nation

9th Death Anniversary of Martyr Hangpan Dada observed in Borduria, Arunachal Pradesh

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, May 26: The 9th death anniversary of Martyr Havildar Hangpan Dada, recipient of the Ashok Chakra (Posthumous), was observed with deep reverence and patriotic fervour at his memorial in Borduria village, Tirap district, Arunachal Pradesh.

The solemn occasion was graced by Lt Gen Abhijit S Pendharkar, General Officer Commanding, Spear Corps, alongside several dignitaries including MLA Wangling Lowangdong, Adviser to the Minister for Environment & Forests, Government of Arunachal Pradesh; Deputy

Commissioner of Tirap, Techu Aran; Superintendent of Police, Singtiatla Singpho; Brig. Sarabjeet Singh, Commander, 25 Sector, Assam Rifles; Col. Ankit Harjai, Commanding Officer, 44 Assam Rifles; Commandant Lamkhokam Lhoujem of 36 Bn CRPF; Veer Nari Chasen Lowang Dada, family members of the martyr, senior public leader Wangman Lowangchaka, Gaon Buras, ex-servicemen, and local citizens.

The event served as a powerful tribute to the heroic sacrifice of Hangpan Dada, whose valor continues to inspire the nation. The pres-

ence of ex-servicemen, veterans, and members of the local community added depth to the commemorations, reflecting the collective respect and admiration for the fallen hero.

Lt Gen Pendharkar interacted with the martyr's family, reaffirming the Army's and the nation's steadfast support. He also addressed ex-servicemen from Tirap and Longding districts, acknowledging their continued dedication and assuring them of the armed forces' commitment to their welfare.

In his address, MLA Wangling Lowangdong lauded the State Government's decision

to rename the Chief Minister's Trophy to the Hangpan Dada Memorial Trophy (Football & Volleyball), which has been upheld for the past eight years. He further appealed for key institutions, such as a Sainik School or other prominent establishments in Itanagar, to be named in Martyr Hangpan Dada's honour to immortalize his legacy.

The programme concluded with a poignant short story presentation chronicling the life, bravery, and sacrifice of Martyr Hangpan Dada, leaving a lasting impression on all those in attendance.



Jaishankar clears air about US role 'Op Sindoor halted only after DGMO talks at Pak's request'

NEW DELHI, May 26: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday told a parliamentary panel that Pakistan was informed by the DGMO about Indian strikes on terror camps in their territory only after they were executed, sources said.

He also said he never spoke to Pakistan and cleared the air about alleged US "interference", saying the decision to halt the military operation was taken bilaterally after a request from the Pakistan side.

Addressing members of the Consultative Committee on External Affairs here, the minister said the cessation of Operation Sindoor was done only after Pakistan DGMO asked for the halting of hostilities and there was no question of US mediation between the two, the sources said.

The Congress and Rahul Gandhi have been targeting Jaishankar, alleging that he had informed Pakistan beforehand about the Indian strikes at terror camps.

Referring to the criticism by the Congress, Jaishankar told the MPs that it was unfortunate that some leaders were doing politics over his statement by "misquoting" him.

He also categorically rejected any claims that he spoke to the Pakistani side.

The sources said the minister told the MPs in the meeting that only the DGMOs of the countries spoke to each other and no other Indian official spoke with the Pakistani side.

The minister also told the MPs that Pakistan had sought the help of the United States in halting the operations by India and the US side was told clearly that Pakistan should speak directly to India.

He said the US was urging India to speak with Pakistan and it was told that terror and talks would not go together, he said.

Responding to several queries posed by MPs during the meeting about the halting



of Operation Sindoor and the US "interference", the External Affairs Minister told the MPs at the meeting that the DGMO had informed his Pakistani counterpart that if they would fire, India would fire back.

He said the targeted strikes at terror camps in Pakistan also hit the morale of Pakistani forces.

Jaishankar told the meeting that the Government of India's stand was clear that Operation Sindoor was only a temporary halt.

The sources said the minister sought the cooperation of all MPs in "exposing" Pakistan across the world. He said that is why the government has sent multi-party delegations to various countries to put across India's united message against terrorism to the world.

The minister also urged the MPs not to get carried away by Pakistan propaganda or believe in rumours spread by the neighbouring country.

He said while several countries had backed India on its role in striking terror camps, very few countries like China, Azerbaijan and Türkiye sided with Pakistan.

The MPs said Pakistan should be called out for spreading terrorism and its role in narcotics menace in both Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, to which the minister said it would also be taken up.

Some MPs raised the issue of massive loss of lives due to

Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in Punjab for several years. They said that sending drugs and narcotics to border states should also be considered "an act of war", just as terrorist acts, the sources said.

They also called for more incentives to border states, especially to those districts that were badly affected by Pakistan's actions.

Jaishankar shared pictures of chairing the Consultative Committee Meeting of MEA on X.

"Discussed Operation Sindoor and India's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Underlined the importance of sending a strong and united message in that regard," the minister also said.

While foreign secretary Vikram Misri gave a presentation on Operation Sindoor to the MPs at the meeting, Jaishankar responded to queries later.

Ministers of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh and Pabitra Margherita were also present during the meeting. The sources said the Congress members asked the government why India was "hyphenated" with Pakistan by the US and also raised the issue of IMF aid to Pakistan and India's abstention at the meet.

They said the Congress also raised concerns over Pakistan's growing relationship with China. (PTI)

10 Bangladeshis held in Bengal's Nadia

DHANTALA (NADIA), May 26: Ten Bangladeshis, including six women, were apprehended along with newborns from Kulgachhi village in West Bengal's Nadia district on Monday, a senior police officer said.

According to Somnath Jha, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Border), the arrests were made by Dhantala police under Ranaghat Police District during a routine surveillance operation in the border area.

The group was intercepted while attempting to return to

Bangladesh illegally.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the Bangladeshi nationals had illegally entered Indian territory nearly a year ago with the help of an Indian tout and had been residing in Gujarat since then.

They had recently returned to Dhantala with the intention of going back to their home country, Jha said.

A case has been registered against them under the relevant sections of the Foreigners Act and other applicable laws. All the accused were pro-

duced before the Ranaghat court on Monday.

Efforts are on to trace and apprehend the Indian tout and his associates involved in facilitating the illegal cross-border movement, the officer added.

This was not the first such incident in the area.

On May 9, Dhantala police had apprehended another group of 16 Bangladeshi nationals along with seven newborns while they were attempting to return to their country. (PTI)

SC collegium recommends elevation of two HC chief justices



NEW DELHI, May 26: The Supreme Court collegium on Monday recommended the appointments of Karnataka High Court Chief Justice N V Anjaria, Gauhati High Court Chief Justice Vijay Bishnoi, and Bombay High Court judge Justice A S Chandurkar as judges of the top court.

The five-member collegium headed by Chief Justice B R Gavai decided to recommend the names as against the three existing vacancies of judges in the top court following the superannuation of ex-CJI Sanjiv Khanna, and Justices Abhay S Oka and Hrishikesh Roy.

"The Supreme Court collegium in its meeting held on May 26, 2025 has recommended elevation of the following chief justices/judge of the high courts, as judges in the Supreme Court - Justice N V Anjaria, Justice Vijay Bishnoi and Justice A S Chandurkar," said a resolution uploaded on the apex court website.

Besides these three judges, the collegium has also recommended elevation of five high court judges as chief justices of the high courts of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Gauhati, Patna and Jharkhand.

The collegium recommended that Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva, who is presently a judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court, be appointed as the chief justice of that high court.

It said Delhi High Court judge Justice Vibhu Bakhru be appointed as chief justice of the Karnataka High Court.

The collegium recommended that Patna High Court judge Justice Ashutosh Kumar be appointed as the chief justice of the Gauhati High Court. It recommended that Patna High Court

judge Justice Vipul Manubhai Pancholi be elevated as the chief justice of that high court.

The collegium further recommended that Himachal Pradesh High Court judge Justice Tarlok Singh Chauhan be appointed as the chief justice of the Jharkhand High Court.

It said vacancy in the Jharkhand High Court is likely to arise consequent upon transfer of the incumbent chief justice.

Supreme Court judge Justice Bela M Trivedi is also set to superannuate on June 9, and May 16 was her last working day at the apex court.

The top court, which has a sanctioned strength of 34, is currently working with 31 judges.

Justice Anjaria took oath as the Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court on February 25, 2024. He was elevated as additional judge, Gujarat High Court, on November 21, 2011 and confirmed as permanent judge on September 6, 2013.

Born on March 23, 1965 at Ahmedabad, Justice Anjaria obtained a Masters degree in law in 1989 from University School of Law, Ahmedabad.

He started law practice in the Gujarat High Court from August 1988 and conducted matters involving constitutional issues and all categories of civil cases, labour and service.

Justice Bishnoi took oath as the Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court on February 5, 2024.

He was appointed additional judge of the Rajasthan High Court on January 8, 2013, and took oath as a permanent judge of the high court on January 7, 2015.

Born on March 26, 1964 in Jodhpur, Justice Bishnoi was enrolled as an advocate on July 8, 1989. He practised law at the Rajasthan High Court and the Central Administrative Tribunal at Jodhpur.

Born on April 7, 1965, Justice Chandurkar joined the Bar on July 21, 1988, after obtaining a law degree.

Justice Chandurkar shifted to Nagpur in 1992 and practised in various courts. He was elevated as an additional judge of the Bombay High Court on June 21, 2013. (PTI)

GOVT. OF ASSAM

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF TOURISM:: KARBI ANGLONG:: DIPHU

No. by. Dir/Dpu/Tender/69/2025-26/68

Date: 26/05/2025

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Separate sealed tender affixing non-refundable KAAC receipt of Rs.10/- (Rupees Ten) only. Eventually to be drawn in APWD F-2 Form, are invited by the undersigned up to 2.00 p.m. on 16th June, 2025 from the registered Contractors/firms for various works under the Annual Action Plan (SOPD) for the year 2025-26. The tender papers shall be received and will be opened at the same date & hours in presence of intending tenderers or their authorised agent may remain present at the time of opening of tender. If the last tender date falls on any unscheduled holiday the tender will be received and will be opened on the next working day at the same place and same hours.

Details of tender papers/ works items and other terms & condition may be obtained from 27th of May 2025 on payment of Rs. 100/- (Rupees one hundred) only from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sl No.	Name of Works (Group-A)	Tender Amount	Time of Completion
1	2	3	4
01	Const. of Roof Shed at Diphu Tourist Lodge, Diphu, Karbi Anglong.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
02	Minor repairing at Tika Tourist Lodge, West Karbi Anglong.	10,00,000.00	60 Days
03	Renovation and new construction of Hemphu Mukrang Open Stage at KPH, Taralangs.	13,80,000.00	60 Days
04	Minor electrical works at Silonijan Tourist Lodge, Karbi Anglong.	2,00,000.00	30 Days
05	Const. of public utility (Toilet) at Umrukhati, Chinthong, West Karbi Anglong.	10,00,000.00	60 Days
06	Repairing of Mass dining at Tokolangso Waterfall, Balipathar, Karbi Anglong.	7,00,000.00	45 Days
07	Electrical works at roadside Amenity Centre, Taralangs, Karbi Anglong.	5,00,000.00	30 Days
08	Minor repairing of Mass dining shed and sitting arrangement at Langherang Picnic Spot, Tarabasa.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
09	Minor repairing of Octogonal Shed at Oklongku picnic spot, Tarabasa.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
10	Const. of Public Utility (Toilet) at Koka picnic spot, West Karbi Anglong.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
11	Repairing of Pilgrims place at Ok-Kereng -Dighalpani, Karbi Anglong.	5,00,000.00	60 Days
12	Const. of approach road to Tourist Lodge at Shikdamakha, Amri.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
13	Const. of trekking road to Tirantha waterfalls, Amri.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
14	Beautification of Angjok Langsun, Puthijuri (Picnic Spot)	6,00,000.00	45 Days
15	Const. of Mass dining set at Sok-Phe-eh Anglong, Dolamara Lokhimon Ashram.	12,00,000.00	60 Days
16	Beautification of Jamuna Sarpo Park, Bakalia.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
17	Const. of Chank link fencing (Bongkrok) at Langvoku Picnic Spot.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
18	Renovation of Bhupen Hazarika open stage, Parokhowa.	20,00,000.00	60 Days
19	Const. of Approach road to Derring Langso Waterfalls.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
20	Minor Repairing of Hemtum at Dikrutpi Picnic Spot.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
21	Jungle cutting & clearing at Klopalar Picnic spot.	6,20,000.00	45 Days
22	White washing & painting at Dikrutpi picnic spot.	10,00,000.00	45 Days
23	Const. of Toilet at Pilgrims place, Dengaon, Karbi Anglong.	5,00,000.00	45 Days
24	Beautification and repairing of Diphu Pilgrim site, Shiv Bari, Diphu, Karbi Anglong.	10,00,000.00	60 Days

Terms & Conditions

1. The rate should be quoted in percentage basis above/below/as per Delhi scheduled rate of CPWD 2021.
2. The tenderers should submit Earnest money 1 %for ST/SC, 2 % for General to be deposited in the form of call Deposit/ Bank draft in favour of **Deputy Director of Tourism, Diphu, Karbi Anglong.**
3. The tenderers must accompany with up-to-date Contractor Registration Certificate/ Professional Tax Clearance/Sales Tax Clearance Certificate/ Up to date GST 3B file with Registration Certificate/KAAC Trading Licence, Photo copy of Bank Passbook etc.
4. Caste certificate for ST/SC tenderers.
5. No materials will be supplied by the Department.
6. All successful tenders must sign a deed of agreement in APWD F-2 form.
7. Payment will be made subject to availability of fund.
8. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-

Dy. Director of Tourism,
Diphu, Karbi Anglong

Date:26/05/2025

Memo No. Dy. Dir/Dpu/Tender/69/2025-26/68 (A)

‘Illegally transported’ timber worth ₹ 3.1 cr seized in Manipur

IMPHAL, May 26: The Assam Rifles on Monday said the paramilitary force and the Manipur Police have seized “illegally transported” timber worth ₹ 3.10 crore in Tengnoupal district.

Sixty-one vehicles, carrying 610 tonnes of timber, were confiscated during the operation on May 23.

“Assam Rifles, along with @manipur_police, on May 23 2025, seized approximately 610 tonne of illegally transported timber worth ₹ 3.10 crore. All 61 vehicles have been confiscated and legal proceedings have been initiated under the Motor Vehicles Act, 2019 and the Manipur Forest Rules, 2021,” the paramilitary force said on X.

The seized timber and vehicles have been handed over to the Tengnoupal Police Station for further investigation, it said.

The probe is underway to determine the origin and destination of the timber consignments, an official said, adding that the police are trying to find out whether the logs were smuggled from neighbouring Myanmar or not.

Manipur shares a 398-km-long border with Myanmar, and of which, only 10 km is fenced. The trafficking of drugs, arms and other items is often reported through the international boundary. (PTI)



Ahead of Guv’s return to Manipur, protest rally stopped, tear gas shells fired in Imphal West

Governor Bhalla is scheduled to arrive at Imphal from Delhi today

IMPHAL, May 26: Ahead of Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla’s return to Manipur, security forces on Monday prevented students and women from taking out a rally in Imphal West district over the removal of the state’s name from a government bus with journalists on board, and fired tear gas shells to disperse them, police said.

The protesters assembled in Kwaekithel area on Tiddim Road and planned to march towards the Raj Bhavan, covering a distance of three kms, but they were stopped from advancing from there, a senior officer said.

However, students and women’s groups formed a human chain, covering a stretch of six kilometres from Imphal airport to Keisampat, around 200 metres away from the Raj Bhavan, he said.

The demonstrators held placards with the messages - ‘Manipur’s identity is non-negotiable’ and ‘Governor must apologise to the people of Manipur’ - written on them.

A large number of central forces, including Assam Rifles and Rapid Action Force personnel, were deployed along the Tiddim Road from Imphal airport to the Raj Bhavan.



Governor Bhalla is scheduled to arrive at Imphal from Delhi on Monday.

Security has also been beefed up at several points, including Moirangkhom in Imphal West district and Konung Mamang in Imphal East district.

Human chain protests were also held in Ningthoukhong and Moirang areas in Bish-

nupur district.

These protests were a continuation of the state-wide agitation launched by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI).

Meitei group COCOMI had observed a 48-hour strike across Manipur last week to protest the removal of the state’s name from

a government bus with journalists on board, which was heading to the Shirui Lily festival in Ukhrul district on May 20. The incident occurred in the Gwalitabi area.

They demanded an apology from the governor and the resignation of three top officers.

A seven-member delegation of COCOMI, led by its convenor Khuraijam Athouba, on Monday left for Delhi to attend a meeting with officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs on Tuesday.

Athouba, before he departed from Imphal, told reporters, “We had delayed pursuit of our objectives with the Centre due to Operation Sindoor. However, with the successful conclusion of the operation on the western front of the country, we are seeking the Centre’s measures in dealing with narco-terrorists on the eastern front of the country.”

“At a critical time, the Gwalitabi incident happened in which the state’s historical and cultural legacy was humiliated. We will raise the issues related to the Gwalitabi incident and other agenda concerning the Manipur crisis,” he added. (PTI)

Tourist couple from Indore reported missing in M’laysia’s Sohra: Police

SHILLONG, May 26: A 29-year-old man and his wife, who have been touring Meghalaya, have gone missing in East Khasi Hills district, police said on Monday.

Raja Raghuvarshi and his wife Sonam, both from Indore, hired a two-wheeler and visited the scenic Sohra area before their disappearance, a senior officer said.

“Their brother Govind reported that the couple had gone missing and their mobile phones were found switched off since Sunday night,” the officer said.

The police have launched search and rescue efforts, he said.

According to the police officer, the couple was last seen in the Sohra area, and their hired two-wheeler was found 15 km away from Sohra town.

The police are trying to trace the missing couple and determine the circumstances surrounding their disappearance, he added. (PTI)

Tourists leaving Sikkim on May 29 must leave by 6 am in view of PM’s visit: Govt

GANGTOK, May 26: The Sikkim government on Monday asked tourists who are leaving the state on May 29 to leave by 6 am to ensure smooth vehicular traffic in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit. PM Modi will visit the state on that day to participate in a function marking the 50th anniversary of Sikkim’s statehood.

“As we are aware, that the State of Sikkim has completed a remarkable milestone of 50 glorious years of Statehood on 16th May 2025. On this auspicious occasion, Hon’ble Prime Minister of India will be gracing the occasion in the State with his presence on 29th of May 2025,” said the advisory issued by the Tourism & Civil Aviation Department.

“In view of this and to ensure smooth vehicular movement and tight security arrangements, all the visitors/tourists leaving Gangtok on 29.05.2025 are kindly requested to leave by 6.00 am,” it said. (PTI)

Tripura’s Gomati DM declined to meet me at his residence, claims Tripura Motha chief



AGARTALA, May 26: Tripura Motha supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma claimed that Tripura’s Gomati District Magistrate (DM) Tarit Kanti Chakma has refused to meet him at his official residence, triggering a political uproar in the state.

CPI(M) MLA and leader of opposition in the Tripura Assembly, Jitendra Chaudhury, on Monday condemned the DM for his behaviour, while Tripura Motha legislator Ranjit Debbarma demanded the removal of Chakma for “dereliction of duties”.

The regional party’s supremo said he, along with Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council’s chief executive member Pura Chandra Jamatia, went to the DM’s residence in Udaipur to meet him on Sunday, but the district magistrate “refused” to discuss with them there.

“I have been sending text messages to his mobile phone for the past one month to discuss some important issues in the Gomati

district. I had also made several calls, but the DM did not pick up. I arrived at his official residence to meet and discuss the important issues, but he declined to meet me,” Debbarma told the reporters. The Tripura Motha leader also said, “It appears that the DM became VIP. He is a public representative and shall be available to the people for 24 hours. Chief Minister Manik Saha also met me in his official residence, but he did not.”

Chaudhury, the CPI(M) legislator, strongly reacted to the behaviour of the Gomati DM.

“DM, Gomati’s behaviour with two public representatives is not at all acceptable and is condemnable. Dereliction of duties as a public servant and sheer arrogance,” he said in a Facebook post.

In a statement on Monday, TMP MLA (Ranjit Debbarma) sought the chief minister’s intervention to remove the DM immediately for “unexpected behaviour” and “dereliction of duties”. (PTI)

Minister Along acknowledges role of non-Nagas in shaping Nagaland

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, May 26: Nagaland higher education minister Temjen Inma Along said the non-Nagas living in Nagaland are equal contributors in shaping Nagaland like the Nagas.

Addressing the felicitation programme of Bengali students who excelled in the HSLC and HSSLC exams this year at St. Mary Hr. Sec. School Dimapur auditorium on Sunday evening as the chief guest, Along acknowledged that the non-Nagas always played an important role in taking Nagaland forward.

The event was organised by the Dimapur Bengali Students Union.

He called on all communities, including non-Nagas, to join hands in building a strong and inclusive Nagaland.

“Our culture is rooted in unity in diversity. This unity is stronger because of our diversity,” he said.

On the inner line permit (ILP) implementation in Dimapur, the minister stressed that the issue should be discussed in the right manner, reiterating the state government’s willingness to resolve it through discussion with all communities concerned.

“We are ready to sit down and talk to resolve the issue,” Along added, asserting that the ILP is not an issue that cannot be addressed.

He also said those non-Nagas who settled in Nagaland before 1979 need not worry, as they will not require ILP.

Along added that the issue of concern is illegal Bangladeshi immigration into Nagaland, which is affecting the demography of the state.



Congratulating the students who excelled in the examinations, Along said, “You have made your parents, your community, and Nagaland proud.”

He encouraged the students to embrace challenges and remain resilient in the face of adversity.

On the occasion, Along announced that the student from the Bengali community who topped the HSSLC exam 2025 in the science stream will be honoured with a special certificate by the state higher education department.

Nagaland BJP president Benjamin Yeipthomi attended the programme as the guest of honour.

Bangladeshi, Indian touts arrested

SHILLONG, May 26: A Bangladeshi national along with two Indian touts were arrested at Sohra in East Khasi Hills district on Saturday.

Based on source information, Sohra police station mobile patrol set up a checkpoint in the evening and at about 4 pm, tried to stop a silver coloured Maruti A Star vehicle, police said. The vehicle however jumped the naka and was pursued and apprehended near Seven Sisters Falls Viewpoint, district police chief Vivek Syiem said in a statement.

The driver and occupants of the vehicle were brought to Sohra police station where it was ascertained that one of the occupants was a Bangladeshi national named Robiul Islam (32), a resident of Tengra Khali, Paderhat, Pirojpur, Bangladesh, the police also said. He is working as an electrician in Bangalore and wanted to go to Bangladesh. It appears he has been using the route regularly, he informed while adding the two touts who ferried him were also apprehended namely Sujit Hajong (32) and Ravi Singh (38), both from Ichamati. They had facilitated his movement, the police added.

Interrogation is on to ascertain more information. A case under The Foreigners Act is being taken up, the police further said. (NNN)

Meanwhile, more protesters

Protestors attempt to storm Raj Bhawan demanding apology from Manipur Guv



IMPHAL, May 26: A massive protest erupted in Imphal on Sunday as hundreds of people attempted to march to the Raj Bhavan, demanding a public apology from the Governor and the resignation of top officials over what they called an insult to Manipur’s identity.

The confrontation turned tense as security forces used tear gas and mock bombs to disperse the crowd, injuring at least eight protesters, including several women.

The demonstration was spearheaded by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), which had earlier launched a state-wide mass agitation campaign.

The Sunday’s protest followed the end of a 48-hour general strike across Manipur, called in response to a May 20 incident that sparked widespread outrage. In that incident, a Manipur State Transport (MST) bus ferrying journalists to Ukhrul for the 5th Shirui Lily Festival was reportedly stopped and ordered to remove the word “Manipur” from its signage, an act that protesters say symbolized a direct attack on the state’s identity.

From early morning today, security forces, including personnel from the Rapid Action Force, were stationed at key locations leading to the Raj Bhavan.

Protesters gathered in large numbers at Khwairamband Ina Market and began marching along BT Road toward the Governor’s residence. They were stopped near the Kangla Western Gate, just 150 meters from their destination.

The confrontation quickly escalated as security forces blocked their advance and resorted to crowd-control measures. Protesters clashed with personnel, who responded with several rounds of mock bombs and tear gas shells. Eight people sustained minor injuries and were rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment.

Meanwhile, more protesters

from Imphal East and Keishampat joined the agitation, shouting slogans such as “Governor must apologise,” “Indian Army down down,” and “Stop divide and rule policy.” These groups were also blocked by security personnel at Palace Compound and Keishampat junction.

Protesters accused the Governor of ignoring public sentiment and dishonouring Manipur’s historical and cultural legacy. “The Governor continues to disregard the sentiments of the people by his silence. He and his administration have completely humiliated the state’s historical and cultural legacy while administering it. The inquiry commission set up by the government to probe the incident is inadequate and does not mention any penal action against those involved,” one protester said.

Speaking to the media from the committee office, COCOMI convenor Kh. Athouba condemned the security forces’ response. He said the protesters were peaceful and non-violent, and that many were elderly women and mothers who should never have been subjected to such harsh crowd control.

Athouba confirmed that CO-

COMI would continue its agitation until its demands are met. He said the group wants a formal apology from the Governor for what they perceive as an insult to the people of Manipur. They are also calling for the resignation or transfer of the Chief Secretary, the Director General of Police, and the Security Advisor.

He added that the use of force

against peaceful demonstrators must stop.

As night fell on Imphal, the city remained tense but under control, with security forces still deployed in sensitive areas. The protest marks yet another flashpoint in the long-standing crisis that has gripped Manipur since May 2023, and signals that public anger is far from over.

Sikkim vet-turned-entrepreneur weaves rural empowerment

Significant portion of the workforce comprises women artisans



GANGTOK, May 26: A Sikkim-based apparel brand, which gained national recognition after being featured in the latest 122nd edition of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Mann Ki Baat, is helping the state’s rural people earn livelihood through sustainable entrepreneurship.

The person behind the initiative is veterinary doctor Chewang Norbu Bhutia, who founded Crafted Fibres, an apparel brand that blends traditional handloom techniques with contemporary design.

Launched in July 2024 under Fibersgenix Private Limited, the brand produces items such as shawls, stoles, gloves and socks, all crafted using modern aesthetics and indigenous craftsmanship.

According to Bhutia, about 30-40 per cent of the raw materials come from Sikkim itself, including wool from angora rabbits and sheep.

Other fibres such as hemp, banana silk and merino wool are sourced from outside, with Assam being a major supplier.

The production process avoids synthetic dyes, opting instead for natural, eco-friendly alternatives, he added. Bhutia’s journey began long before the brand’s launch.

Since 2016-17, he has been working in South Sikkim, distributing livestock and training farmers in wool extraction, carding, spinning, and natural dyeing.

A significant portion of the workforce comprises women artisans, trained through self-help groups and producer collectives.

With support from NABARD, a cooperative society for weavers was established. Today, Crafted Fibres supports 15-20 weavers who earn between ₹ 15,000 and ₹ 30,000 monthly, with payments ensured even when inventory remains unsold, Bhutia added.

With the project now acknowledged at the national level, Bhutia is looking to expand to urban and overseas markets while staying grounded in community welfare and cultural preservation.

Chief Minister PS Tamang took to Facebook to congratulate Bhutia on being featured in Mann Ki Baat. He said Bhutia’s inspiring journey is a proud moment for us all.

“This national recognition not only honours Dr. Bhutia’s dedication but also celebrates Sikkim’s cultural heritage and entrepreneurial spirit,” he said. (PTI)

Innovation NE Week gets underway at Kohima

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, May 26: The Innovation NE Week got underway at National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) in Kohima on Monday, aiming to offer employment opportunities primarily to the people of the region, including Nagaland.

Organised by the Union ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY) and NIELIT, in collaboration with department of information technology & communication and StartUp Nagaland, participants from all the northeastern states are attending the three-day event.

Addressing the inaugural programme virtually, S Krishnan, secretary, MeitY, said the three-day event assumes great significance and will play a crucial role in advancing digital literacy and technical education in the northeast.

He observed that Nagaland is progressing well, with 25 start-ups so far, and has a large number of people who are comfortable in English, which provides a great advantage in the economic setup.

He emphasised that MeitY is focused on empowering and bringing new technology to the northeast, informing that out of 55 NIELIT centres in India, 20 are

located in the northeast with Kohima NIELIT centre being one of the most active centres.

Krishnan said the MeitY has directly supported the northeastern states in a number of information technology-related ventures to provide employment primarily to the people from the region. He added that establishment of new semi-conductor facility near Guwahati is one among them.

Krishnan further said the mission of NIELIT is to train people from the region so that they get employed and absorbed in the market.

Speaking on the capacity-building initiatives for the northeastern states implemented by NIELIT, he said close to 1.79 lakh youth have been trained and benefited from it.

He exuded confidence that the Innovation NE Week will open new ventures for the people.

In his address, vice chancellor and director general of NIELIT Madan Mohan Tripathi said NIELIT, under the MeitY, has played a crucial role in advancing digital literacy and technical education.

He added that NIELIT offers education from skilling to PhD research and also serves as a national accreditation body for IT and electronics training.

'HAI JAWANI TOH ISHQ HONA HAI' FEATURING VARUN DHAWAN TO HIT BIG SCREEN ON APRIL 10, 2026

NEW DELHI, May 26: Varun Dhawan-starrer "Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai" is set to release in theatres on April 10, 2026.

Directed by David Dhawan, the film also stars Mrunal Thakur and Pooja Hegde.

Varun shared the news on his social media on Friday.

"Double the trouble, triple the fun! Jab... 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai' hits cinemas on 10th April 2026," read the caption.

The film also reunites Varun with his father David. The duo previously collaborated on "Main Tera Hero" in 2014.

Varun will also be seen in "Border 2" and "Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari". (PTI)



ABHISHEK BANERJEE-STARRER 'STOLEN' TO STREAM ON PRIME VIDEO FROM JUNE 4



NEW DELHI, May 26: Prime Video film "Stolen" starring Abhishek Banerjee will release on June 4, the streamer announced on Monday.

Directed by Karan Tejpal, who made his directorial debut with the film, the project is produced by Gaurav Dhingra.

The film had its world premiere at the 80th Venice Film Festival in 2023.

Prime Video shared the poster of the film featuring Banerjee on its Instagram handle. It was re-shared by the actor.

"A missing child and a thrilling race against time. #StolenOnPrime, June 4," read the caption.

"Stolen" follows the intense journey of two urbane brothers who witness a baby being kidnapped from an impoverished mother at a railway station in rural India.

The film also features Shubham, Mia Maelzer, Harish Khanna and Sahidur Rahaman. Filmmakers Anurag Kashyap, Kiran Rao, Nikkhil Advani and Vikramaditya Motwane are the executive producers. (PTI)

David Tennant wanted Pedro Pascal's role in Marvel's 'The Fantastic Four'

LOS ANGELES, May 26: Former "Doctor Who" actor David Tennant says he wanted to play the role of Reed Richards in the upcoming Marvel film "The Fantastic Four: First Steps".

Tennant attended MCM Comic Con, where one of the fans asked the actor to name a superhero he would like to portray.

The actor said he had his eye on Reed Richards, which eventually went to Pedro Pascal.

"In terms of super-heroes, I did slightly have my eye on Reed Richards and unfortunately, it looks like they've gone in a different direction," the actor said.

"Although if it has to be someone, I'm very happy for it to be Pedro Pascal, frankly," he added.

"The Fantastic Four: First Steps" is directed by Matt Shakman and is slated to release in theatres on July 25. It stars Vanessa Kirby, Joseph Quinn and Julia Garner. (PTI)



Scarlett Johansson is open to direct a Marvel film

LOS ANGELES, May 26: Hollywood star Scarlett Johansson says she would like to direct a Marvel film.

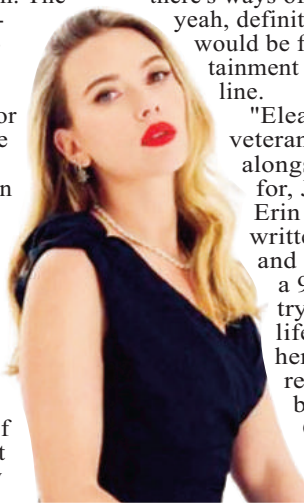
Johansson recently made her directorial debut with "Eleanor the Great", which had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival on May 20. It was screened under Un Certain Regard section. The 40-year-old actor has featured in the Marvel Cinematic Universe films as Natasha Romanoff/Black Widow. Although the actor has no plans to reprise the character, when asked if she would like to direct an action film especially for the MCU, she said it "would be fun".

"I think the movies that I like that are big action movies also have the human connectivity piece. Even producing 'Black Widow' and being a part of the production of that, and the development of the story, and the story

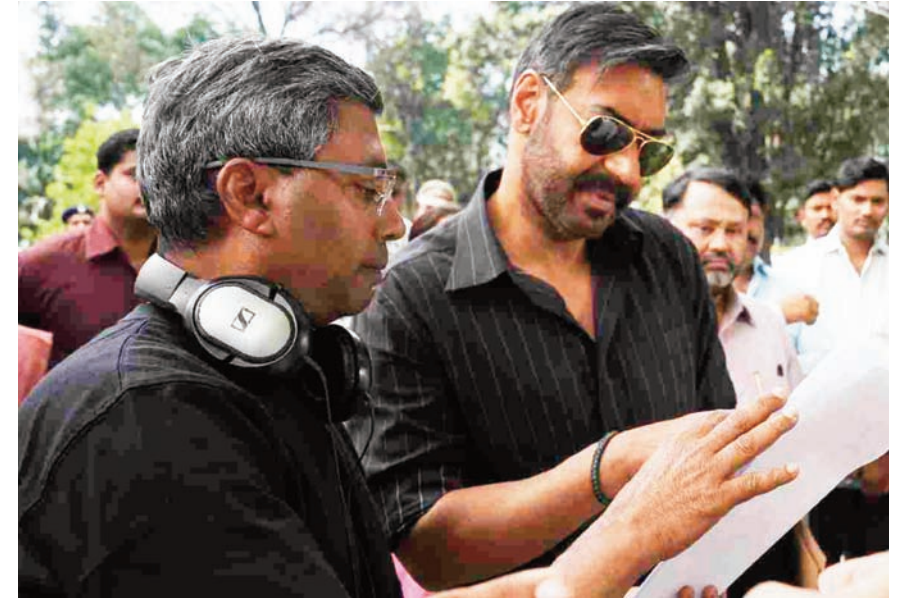
between Natasha and Yelena... (there is), I think, a way of doing it.

"A way of maintaining the integrity of the idea of human connection, family, disappointment, all of the things that were themes in (Eleanor the Great), and doing it in a giant way in a giant universe, there's ways of doing that... So, yeah, definitely, it could be, it would be fun," she told entertainment news outlet Deadline.

"Eleanor the Great" stars veteran actor June Squibb alongside Chivette Ejiofor, Jessica Hecht, and Erin Kellyman. It is written by Tory Kamen and follows the story of a 94-year-old woman trying to rebuild her life after the death of her best friend. As a result, she moves back to New York City after living in Florida for decades. (PTI)



INSPIRED BY FILMS OF '70S AND '80S FOR 'RAID' FRANCHISE, SAYS DIRECTOR RAJ KUMAR GUPTA



MUMBAI, May 26: Filmmaker Raj Kumar Gupta says he weaved in elements of the many Hindi cinema classics from the 1970s and 1980s to the "Raid" franchise, headlined by Ajay Devgn.

Inspired by films of '70s and '80s for "Raid" franchise, says director Raj Kumar Gupta.

The franchise follows the story of an honest officer Amay Patnaik, who goes after powerful people and conducts income-tax raids to track white-collar crimes.

The director, known for films like "Aamir", "No One Killed Jessica", has huge posters of iconic films "Deewar" and "Sholay" in his office in suburban Mumbai but the inspirations behind the "Raid" movies were far more varied.

"There were a lot of films in the '70s and '80s, where upright characters were fighting people who were corrupt or who were going against the law. There are a lot of films that inspired us. I will not want to name any particular film.

"So, this upright officer was intended to be like that of the '70s and '80s movies," Gupta told PTI in an interview.

The inspiration for the characters and story also comes from real life, he added.

"You see a lot of upright officers working in government departments and what they have to go through when they are doing their job," he said.

The first "Raid" movie, which was released in 2018, became a blockbuster upon its release. Set in 1981 Lucknow, the film was based on a real-life case and followed Patnaik as he led a high-stakes raid on corrupt politician Rameshwar Singh.

Gupta recently came out with the second part, titled "Raid 2". The movie, which released in theatres on May 1, has minted over ₹160 crore at the box office.

In the movie, Devgn's character returns for his 75th raid, this time targeting Dada Manohar Bhai, a revered politician in Bhoj, Rajasthan.

Despite facing suspension during the operation, Patnaik, with support from his wife Malini and his team, uncovers hidden black money.

The director said he is "elated" with the response to the sequel.

"I'm happy that the film is doing

so really well. For us, as story-tellers, it has been a challenge post pandemic where people have not been coming to theatres. If a film comes along, and people come and watch it in those numbers, then it's really heartening, not only for me as a filmmaker but as an industry as well," Gupta said.

"I'm happy that people are watching the film in totality for its story, cast and everything, besides it has a 'Raid' legacy to it as well," he said.

He is also grateful to veteran screenwriter Salim Khan, who liked the first movie and suggested him a scene involving Devgn's character throwing money on a mob to distract them from attacking him and his team.

The filmmaker said he was able to incorporate the sequence in the sequel.

"Salim sahab is a legend. I met him in 2021 and he said he liked the film. He made an observation about the ending of 'Raid' one, and I had kept that in my mind. I never thought that I'd be able to use it, but as luck would have it, there was a scene where we could incorporate it in 'Raid'."

"During the research of 'Raid 2', we came across a thing that in the 80s, 90s, the threat that the income tax people had while they were going on a raid was mob fury of strongmen, of politicians or powerful people whom they used to raid. Mostly, they used to get attacked by these people during the 80s or 90s," Gupta said.

"Raid 2" ends with a hint at a third installment as Rameshwar Singh proposes an alliance with Dada Bhai inside the jail.

Asked about the plans for a third part, Gupta said he won't make it until he has a compelling story.

"When it happens, one would know about it. Nothing can be pre-planned right now. I want to live in the moment and let 'Raid 2' get out of my system. This world is so interesting... Part one and part two has a natural progression into part three. But the right story has to come along for that to happen."

"Raid 2" is backed by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, and Kumar Mangat Pathak and Abhishek Pathak under their banners T-Series and Panorama Studios, respectively. (PTI)

First ever Kashmiri-Kannada feature film 'Harmukh' unveiled in J&K

SRINAGAR, May 26: "Harmukh", the first-ever feature film made in both Kashmiri and Kannada languages, had its official launch here on Monday.

At the event, the film's trailer and songs were launched. The film is produced by and features Ayash Arif in the lead role.

The title of the film is inspired from a mountain located in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, between the Sindh river to the south and Kishanganga river to the north and is considered sacred in Hinduism.

Veteran filmmaker and actor T S Nagabharana, who has won 16 national and state awards, is also part of the cast.

Arif described the film as "a dream, a bridge, and a bond" between Kashmir and Karnataka. At its core, there is a message of friendship beyond borders.

The movie depicts the emotional journey of two families from different cultures and how they grow to love and understand each other.

"At its heart, the film is a tribute to unity, empathy, and the power of human connection," he said.

The story, written by acclaimed filmmaker Ashok Kashyap, beautifully weaves together the spirit of Kashmir and the warmth of Karnataka, Arif said.

The music and songs of "Harmukh" are composed by legendary Kashmiri singer Wahid Jeelani.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, who was the chief guest at the launch ceremony, emphasised the importance of sharing Kashmir's true essence with the world.

"There is a tremendous need to portray the hospitality, warmth, and humanity of Kashmir to the global audience," he said, adding "Harmukh" appears to do exactly that —

"beautifully capturing the cultural richness and compassionate spirit that define our land."

Wani said such cinematic ef-

forts go beyond storytelling and act as cultural ambassadors, offering the world a glimpse into the real Kashmir -- not through conflict, but through connection, creativity, and care.

He also hoped that "Harmukh" serve as a catalyst for the region's tourism sector, which remains a vital pillar of the local economy.

"This endeavour will certainly prove blissful for our tourism industry and contribute to a more positive, inclusive narrative about our Valley," he said.

At the launch, the audience was treated to a captivating performance by renowned folk artist Fayaz Shilvati. (PTI)



India banks on track stars for strong medal show in Asian Championships



GUMI (SOUTH KOREA), May 26: The redoubtable Neeraj Chopra will be missing in action but the 59-strong Indian contingent would nonetheless aim for a double-digit medal haul, riding primarily on strong performances by its track athletes when the 26th Asian Athletics Championship gets underway here on Tuesday.

Chopra has yet again decided to skip the biennial event to focus on

the Diamond League series leaving Pakistan's Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem as the top draw in the men's javelin throw competition.

The Indian challenge in this event would be anchored by the relatively inexperienced Sachin Yadav and Yashvir Singh.

The men's 20km race walk will be the first medal event of the championships on Tuesday. Servin Sebastian, 25, and Amit, 21, will be

the Indian representatives and have posted competitive times in the build up to the event.

Sebastian ran a personal best of 1:21:23 to win gold at the Uttarakhanda National Games in February. He continued his good run at the Indian Open Race Walking Competition in April by winning gold (1:21:47).

Amit has a personal and season best of 1:21:52 posted in April in

Chandigarh. Both of them are banking on "conductive" conditions to ensure a strong performance. "The local weather conditions in the morning are conducive for distance events. I should be able to improve my personal best on Tuesday," Sebastian said of his preparation in a press release issued by Athletics Federation of India (AFI). After the race walking event in the morning session, focus during the day will

shift to track and field events. The women's javelin throw is the second medal event and for India, Asian Games champion Annu Rani would be a strong hope. The 32-year-old has a season's best of 58.82m recorded in March in Mumbai, which is nowhere close to her best. Her personal best and national record of 63.82m was set in 2022 and she finished fourth at the previous edition of the continental meet in Bangkok in 2023.

The day will also see Indian quarter-milers go through the preliminary round grind to advance to the semifinals scheduled later during the day. Rupal Chaudhary, Vithya Ramraj (both women), Jay Kumar and Vishal TK (both men) will be in action in their respective 400m heats.

The quarter-milers are also expected to do well in the 4x400 relays to be held later in the championship but have already been struck by controversy after a woman member of the team was dropped owing to a suspected dope violation.

At the fag-end of day one, onus will be on India's star distance runner and Asian Games medallist Gulveer Singh to enhance medal tally. The 26-year-old will compete in men's 10,000m.

Singh has a personal and season's best time of 27:00.22 seconds posted earlier in March on the USA circuit. Sawan Barwal will be the second Indian runner in fray in the 25-lap race. (PTI)

Alonso officially takes over as Real Madrid's coach and vows to follow in the footsteps of Ancelotti



MADRID, May 26: Xabi Alonso officially took over Real Madrid's coaching job on Monday, vowing to follow in the footsteps of Carlo Ancelotti and saying he has "a good feeling" about the team's future under his command.

Madrid announced the hiring of Alonso on Sunday, a day after the club paid tribute to Ancelotti at the team's final Spanish league match of the season at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. Ancelotti is taking over the Brazil job after four mostly successful seasons in his second stint with the club.

"I'm here to take over from Carlo Ancelotti, who was my coach and is a great person," Alonso said. "He is a coach who left his mark on me and had a great influence. Without his guidance, I probably wouldn't be here. I'll pick up his legacy with pride and honor of now being in the position that Carlo was before, and I hope to live up to the expectations and lead this club to achieve all of its objectives."

Alonso said it felt good returning home to Madrid, where he won six titles as a player from 2009-2014.

"Without a doubt this is a very special day for me," Alonso said. "I'm very happy to be at a place where I feel is my home. I may have been a few years away, but the link with Real Madrid and Madrid fans has always existed."

The ceremony to introduce Alonso began with the showing of a video with some of Alonso's highlights as a player for Madrid, Spain and other clubs where he played as a midfielder. There were also highlights of his stints as a coach at Madrid's youth squads,

Real Sociedad's "B" team and with Bayer Leverkusen, which he left after this season.

The 43-year-old Alonso, who arrives on a contract until June 2028, watched the video alongside his wife and other invitees.

"Today is a very special day for all of us, it's the start of a new phase," Madrid president Florentino Pérez said. "Because we have a new coach who already is one of the best in the world and who represents the values of Real Madrid because he knows exactly what this shield and this shirt means."

Alonso is returning to Real Madrid to take over a club that failed to meet expectations this season. It won the UEFA Super Cup title but mostly struggled after that, failing to lift another trophy and losing all four "clásico" matches against rival Barcelona, which clinched a league and cup double.

"We have a great team, with fantastic players," Alonso said. "I'm convinced that I can achieve important things, worthy of Real Madrid. I want to inspire the fans, make them proud of the team that they see on the field. I have a good feeling that we can start something great."

Alonso helped Madrid win the Spanish league in 2012 and the 2014 Champions League before leaving to help Bayern Munich win three Bundesliga titles.

As a coach, Alonso led Leverkusen to an unprecedented German league and cup double last year in his first full season after taking over the team when it was in the Bundesliga's relegation zone the season before. (AP)

Satwik-Chirag team leads Indian challenge at Singapore Open; Prannoy, Lakshya, Sindhu also in fray

SINGAPORE, May 26: The celebrated pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will make a much-anticipated return to elite competition after shaking off fitness concerns when the duo leads a star-studded Indian challenge at the Singapore Open Super 750 tournament starting here on Tuesday.

The former world number one duo last played at the All England Championships in March but withdrew in the second round due to Chirag's back injury. They also pulled out of the Sudirman Cup because of Satwik's health issues.

Now fully fit, the Indian team, which reached the semifinals of Malaysia Open and India Open earlier this year, will open against Malaysia's Choong Hon Jian and Muhammad Haikal.

By reaching the finals of last week's Malaysia Masters, Kidambi Srikanth managed to lift himself and the overall gloom that had set over Indian badminton in the past few months.

He broke the pattern of India's singles players largely failing to make a deep run in the tournaments week after week for the past few months. Though he won't be

competing this week, he will serve as an inspiration for his compatriots as they fight it out at the USD 1,000,000 event.

HS Prannoy, a 2023 World Championships bronze-medallist who witnessed the rampaging run of Srikanth at Kuala Lumpur, will look to produce a similarly gritty show when he begins his campaign against Denmark's Rasmus Gemke. Prannoy is on a comeback trail after battling chikungunya last year.

The 32-year-old, who has been bogged down by fitness issues and the after-effects of the illness,

showed promise against Japan's Kenta Nishimoto last week but fell to Yushi Tanaka in the second round.

Lakshya Sen will look to silence doubts about his fitness when he faces Lin Chun-Yi in the opening round.

The 23-year-old from Almora, a 2021 World Championships bronze-medallist, has struggled to find form since reaching the Paris Olympics semifinal.

Sen's four first-round exits this season are concerning for a player seen as a future leader of Indian badminton after Srikanth and Pran-

noy.

Similarly, Priyanshu Rajawat, 23, has tested the patience of Indian fans with six first-round exits.

Known for his immaculate hand-eye coordination and attacking style, Rajawat now faces pressure to deliver but he can take a cue from academy mate Srikanth, who also trains in Hyderabad.

Kiran George, 25, has also failed to live up to expectations. After reaching the India Open quarterfinal earlier this year, he has not capitalised on his chances. He opens against China's Weng Hong Yang. (PTI)

Ancelotti arrives in Brazil to take over as head coach of the national team

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 26: Carlo Ancelotti wore a Brazil national team cap when he arrived in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday on the eve of his formal introduction as head coach. He is the first foreigner to coach the five-time World Cup winners full-time in a century. The 65-year-old Italian, who arrived in Brazil just before 9 p.m. local time with several family members and his coaching staff, will also announce his squad Monday for two South American World Cup qualifying matches next month against Ecuador and Paraguay.

Ancelotti arrived hours after Samir Xaud was elected for a four-year term as president of the Brazilian soccer confederation. Sunday's election marked the end of a tumultuous process, mired in legal procedures that removed Ednaldo Rodrigues as CBF president. It was Rodrigues who hired Ancelotti from Real Madrid.

There was no organized reception for Ancelotti; only one fan wearing a Brazil shirt saw Ancelotti leave Rio's international airport after his arrival on a private jet. He will find more local warmth at the hotel where he's set to give his first news conference as Brazil coach on Monday.

Some fans who were casually wearing Brazil's shirt at the airport said they're optimistic about the team's chances under the new coach. Before Ancelotti, Brazil caretaker coaches Ramon Menezes and Fernando Diniz failed to bring good results and performances, and Dorival Júnior was fired in March after a 4-1 defeat at Argentina.

Ancelotti, whose contract with Brazil runs through the next World Cup, is expected to meet the CBF leadership before facing the domestic media.

"We can't trust Neymar, we can't trust the CBF, but Ancelotti

does bring us hope," said Flávio Mileny, a fan from the city of Belem visiting Rio and wearing Brazil's blue shirt. "Even if he doesn't bring the World Cup next year, hopefully he will stay on to win the next. He has won it all, it is a great beat that Brazil is making now." Eliane Salieri, who was wearing a Brazil national team jacket, said it was time for a foreigner to come in as head coach.

"I would have preferred Jorge Jesus, who coached Flamengo and won many titles here," Salieri said in a reference to the Portuguese manager who was recently fired from Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal. "But this guy Ancelotti is great, he was won everything. Everyone will respect him."

Xaud didn't face any challenges in his bid for the CBF president's job, despite the fact he has never run a soccer body in his career. He comes from the Amazon state of Roraima, bordering Venezuela, with only 10 clubs under its helm — none of them in top divisions. Xaud's father has run the local soccer federation for four decades, and he was expected to take over next year. Though he had support from local state federations, which are key in the election, the vast majority of Brazil's top-flight clubs refused to send representatives to the confederation's headquarters to give support to the new president.

Xaud told journalists that Ancelotti "will have full autonomy" and "will be shielded from any possible external situation," in a reference to the confederation's legal woes and internal fighting.

Rodrigues, who was elected in 2022 and had been re-elected for a second term, was removed from the position by a Rio judge's decision due to alleged irregularities in the election process a year earlier. (AP)

Shelton joins Musetti and Sabalenka in French Open second round, tournament honors Nadal

PARIS, May 26: Ben Shelton beat Lorenzo Sonego for the second straight time at a Grand Slam this year, winning 6-4, 4-6, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 under floodlights to reach the second round of the French Open.

The 13th-seeded American celebrated by eagerly waving his racket to the fans.

"I thought the crowd was great, it was my first time here on Court Philippe-Chatrier and it definitely won't be one that I forget," Shelton said at shortly after midnight, adding that he didn't expect to sleep until "three or four" in the morning.

Shelton's girlfriend, Trinity Rodman — who plays for the U.S. women's soccer team and is the daughter of former NBA star Dennis Rodman — and Shelton's

father, Bryan Shelton, who is also his coach, applauded from the stands.

Shelton beat Sonego in the quarterfinals of the Australian Open. Sonego was going well this time, but Shelton broke to lead 2-1 in the fourth set and turned the match around.

Shelton took a medical timeout at the end of that set for treatment on his left ankle. He clinched victory with a sliced backhand that a full-stretch Sonego patted into the net. Earlier Sunday, Lorenzo Musetti and Aryna Sabalenka eased into the second round without dropping a set.

The eighth-seeded Musetti won 7-5, 6-2, 6-0 against qualifier Yannick Hanfmann of Germany, after the top-ranked Sabalenka earlier beat Kamilla Rakhimova

6-1, 6-0.

Jasmine Paolini, last year's runner-up at Roland-Garros and Wimbledon, had a tougher first-round match. The fourth-seeded Italian dropped serve five times in a 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 win against Yuan Yue on Court Suzanne-Lenglen.

Musetti has reached at least the semifinals in the past three Masters tournaments at Rome, Madrid and Monte Carlo, where he lost in the final to four-time Grand Slam champion Carlos Alcaraz.

The 23-year-old Musetti reached the semifinals on grass at Wimbledon last year, but has not reached the quarterfinals at any other major.

Still, he believes he can win the French Open. "I feel ready to try to go for the trophy," Musetti said. "I think clay probably is the

surface which I feel the most comfortable."

After winning his match, Musetti got a huge ovation from the crowd on Court Philippe-Chatrier. Was it because Musetti won Italy's first Olympic tennis medal in 100 years with the men's singles bronze at the Paris Games last year? Or perhaps because, as a 19-year-old, Musetti was once up by two sets against Novak Djokovic in the fourth round before losing a five-set thriller in 2021. Unlikely.

For in all honesty much of the Chatrier crowd — dressed in clay-colored jerseys and packing the stands that were half-empty an hour earlier — were in such an enthusiastic mood because they were waiting for someone else to turn up.

Rafael Nadal.

The recently retired Nadal, who won 14 of his 22 major titles on the same court, was given a special trophy during an emotional ceremony where his old rivals — Djokovic, Roger Federer and Andy Murray — all turned up to bid the suit-wearing Nadal farewell.

Earlier, Sabalenka hit five aces and saved the two break points she faced against the unseeded Rakhimova.

Sabalenka is a three-time major champion and reached the semifinals at Roland-Garros two years ago. Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen of China joined her in the second round by beating 2021 French Open runner-up Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-4, 6-3. (AP)

India have great chance of qualifying for the World Cup through the Pro League, says Hardik Singh

NEW DELHI, May 26: India will fight for every point in the European leg of the FIH Pro League to fulfil their twin goals of clinching the title and also securing qualification for next year's World Cup, said men's hockey team vice-captain Hardik Singh.

The Indian men's team currently sits third on the points table with 15 points, trailing leaders England and second-placed Belgium, both on 16 points.

The decisive European leg of the Pro League gets underway on June 7, with the tournament winners earning an automatic berth at the 2026 World Cup.

"We have spoken about this within the squad and believe that if we stick to the plan, accumulate enough points, and push for wins — even securing points from draws and subsequent shootouts —



we stand a great chance of qualifying for the World Cup through the Pro League," Hardik said in a Hockey India release.

Currently, Australia, placed No.6 in the ongoing Pro League, have qualified for the World Cup as winners of the previous edition of the Pro League, while Belgium

and the Netherlands qualify as hosts. Germany, currently placed fifth, still have six matches left and can potentially pose a threat to India's qualification plans.

"Belgium and the Netherlands qualify automatically as co-hosts of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup in 2026. That leaves Eng-

land, who are on top, along with Germany and Spain, as the key competitors vying for qualification."

India will begin their European leg with back-to-back matches against the Netherlands on June 7 and 9, followed by a double-header against Argentina on June 11 and 12 at the Wagner Stadium in Amstelveen.

The team will then travel to Antwerp to face Australia on June 14 and 15, before concluding their campaign against hosts Belgium on June 21 and 22.

"Our matches against Argentina will also be crucial. This is a good challenge for us to have, and qualifying early would give us more time to prepare for the World Cup," Hardik added.

The Indian team has been training for the European tour at the centralised training camp in SAI,

Bengaluru over the past three weeks.

"The sessions have been nothing short of rigorous," laughed Hardik, highlighting the hard yards the team has put in, particularly in terms of fitness and conditioning.

"We have really been put through the grind by the coach and Alan (Scientific Advisor). Our strength and conditioning have been on point, mainly because we want to be at our peak for back-to-back matches."

"We practically have no rest days between games, and even when we do, we'll be travelling from the Netherlands to Belgium," he explained.

Adding further significance to the tour is the fact that the Pro League matches will be played at the same venues that will host the World Cup in 2026. (PTI)



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