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KHADI FOR NATION

DGP directed to form SIT to probe

Oppn moves Prez for CBI probe ● Viscera samples to be sent to CFL, Delhi, for detailed examination: CM

GUWAHATI, Sept 24 : Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said he has asked the state's director general of police to form a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe into the untimely death of cultural icon Zubeen Garg in Singapore last week.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of Assam Police is currently probing the case of Garg's death after more than 60 FIRs have been lodged across the state against organisers of the Northeast India Festival, where the singer had gone to perform.

"In regard to the untimely death of our beloved Zubeen Garg, we will not spare anyone. Today, I had a meeting with the @DGPAssamPolice and the



ADGP, CID along with senior officers including Chief Secretary, Assam, Sarma said in a post on X. "I have instructed the DGP to con-

stitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) with the best officers of Assam Police," he added.

The CM also said that the viscera samples will be sent to the Central Forensic Laboratory (CFL), Delhi, for a detailed examination.

"The SIT will have full freedom to investigate the case with complete professional integrity," he added.

A second postmortem of Garg's body was conducted on Tuesday morning at the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) following demands from a large section of the public.

Meanwhile, leader of the Opposition in Assam Assembly Debabrata Saikia on Wednesday wrote to President Droupadi (**CONTD. ON PAGE-2**)

Govt bans Mahanta from holding any event in state

GUWAHATI, Sept 24: The Assam government on Wednesday banned Syamkanu Mahanta, the chief organiser of North East Festival which singer Zubeen Garg had gone to attend in Singapore before his death, from holding any function or event in the state, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Garg died in Singapore on September 19 while swimming in the sea. He had gone to the Southeast Asian nation to attend the 4th edition of the North East Festival, organised by Mahanta and his company.

"The state government has decided to prohibit Shri Syamkanu Mahanta and any organisation associated with him from holding any functions or festivals within the Assam," Sarma said in a post on X.

Further, the state government will not provide any financial grant, advertisement or sponsorship to any event with which he is associated, either directly or indirectly, he added.

"The state government will also request



the Centre not to extend any financial assistance or sponsorship to him in any manner," the CM said.

The North East Festival is being sponsored by several central government ministries and also gets support from almost all the northeastern state governments.

Garg's body was consigned to flames with full state honours amid chanting of Vedic hymns as thousands of fans sang his songs to bid farewell to the icon in the sylvan surroundings of Kamarkuchi on the outskirts of Guwahati on Tuesday. (**PTI**)

India, US trade talks on at different levels: Official

NEW DELHI, Sept 24: India, US talks are happening at different levels covering both trade and non-trade issues, an official said.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is in the US for trade talks. He is accompanied by senior officials of the ministry, including special secretary and India's chief negotiator Rajesh Agrawal.

"Talks are happening at different levels," the official said, adding the minister led team is expected to return from the US later this week.

Goyal has held discussions with his US counterpart.

This visit comes in the backdrop of recently concluded day-long discussions in New Delhi between US Chief Negotiator Brendan Lynch and Agrawal on the proposed bilateral trade agreement.

On September 16, the commerce ministry stated that the day-long discussions with the visiting US team on a bilateral trade deal were positive, and both sides agreed to push for an early and mutually beneficial (**CONTD. ON PAGE-2**)

Nine more arrested in Jorhat for NH 715 blockade; total climbs to 14



JORHAT, Sept 24: Police have arrested nine more persons in connection with the blockade of NH 715 at the Ajanta bypass area on Sunday and Monday, raising the total number of arrests to 14.

The blockade, carried out by individuals claiming to be fans of late singer Zubeen Garg, was staged to demand that the mortal remains of

the iconic musician be brought to Jorhat before the last rites at Sonapur.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Priyanku Bora (25) of Bohotia Gaon, Jorhat; Bitupon Dutta (30) of Baligaon, Jorhat; Pranjal Deka (28) of Rajotia, Jorhat; Gorisankar Gogoi (38) of Gormur Purana Kaibarta Gaon, Jorhat; Manjit Baruah (26) of Deka-

Protest in Guwahati seeking action against news channel owner in Assam icon's death



GUWAHATI, Sept 24: Hundreds of fans of singer Zubeen Garg on Wednesday protested in front of a private TV channel, whose owner had gone to Singapore to attend the Northeast India Festival, and demanded his immediate arrest.

The protest took place when Sanjive Narain, the Chairman and MD of Prag News, was addressing a press meet at his office to clarify his role in the entire incident leading to the death of Garg last week.

Garg died on September 19 while swimming in the sea in Singapore, where he had gone to attend the Northeast India Festival. The popular singer was cremated on the outskirts of Guwahati with full state honours on Tuesday.

An FIR was already filed at Bongaigaon Police

Station against Narain for his alleged role in the episode. It has been forwarded to the CID headquarters for further investigation.

Narain claimed that he was not present on the private yacht, in which the singer had gone with some Assamese NRIs to an island in Singapore, and he had taken Garg to a hospital from the harbour.

"I had no idea about the yacht tour. I was having lunch when I received a phone call from Shyamkanu Mahanta that Zubeen had met with an accident. I rushed to the harbour and immediately took him to the hospital," he added.

Mahanta was the chief organiser of the festival, which was cancelled following the tragedy.

The news channel owner also claimed that other people present in the yacht were not allowed to leave except Garg's manager Siddharth Sharma by the police for their probe.

Narain also blamed the administration in Guwahati for not allowing him to visit the mortal remains of Garg before it was cremated, citing possible "security issues as people were emotional and agitated".

While he was holding the press meet at his office in Ulubari in the state capital, scores of fans of Garg gathered outside and protested.

"He is an accused in a criminal case. How can he address a press meet?" (**CONTD. ON PAGE-2**)

India 'mostly with us,' says Ukrainian President Zelenskyy

WASHINGTON, Sept 24: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said India is "mostly with us" and expressed hope that New Delhi will change its attitude to the Russian energy sector with US President Donald Trump's intervention.

Zelenskyy was answering a question during an interview with Fox News about China and India contributing to Russia's war against Ukraine.

The US has often blamed India and China for purchasing Russian, which President Trump has claimed funds Moscow's war against Ukraine.

"I think India mostly with us. Yes, we have these questions with energy, but I think that President Trump can manage it

with Europeans, make more close and strong relations with India," Zelenskyy said.

"And I think, we have to do everything not to withdraw Indians and they will change their attitude to the Russian energy sector," the Ukrainian president said.

He was answering a specific question by a Fox News interviewer: "China, India, they're all contributing here; European nations, the President said, need to get off oil, but need to do it with the US. Do you think that that is going to happen?"

"I'm sure with China, it's more difficult because it's not for today. It's not in the interest to not support Russia," Zelenskyy said. He also said, "I (**CONTD. ON PAGE-2**)

Stop issuing PRCs to non-indigenous people: NSF

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, Sept 24: The inner line regulation commission (ILRC) of the Naga Students' Federation on Wednesday urged village councils and gaon burhas (village heads) of Nagaland not to issue permanent resident certificates (PRCs) to non-indigenous people residing in their jurisdiction.

In a statement, the ILRC said issuance of PRCs to non-indigenous persons is not permissible and stands in direct contravention of the spirit of the inner line pass (ILP) system.

Expressing concern that some village councils and gaon buras are issuing PRCs to non-indigenous persons, the commission said it has documentary evidence that certain vil-

lage authorities were issuing PRCs to non-indigenous individuals.

The commission, however, stated that the issuance of temporary resident certificates (TRCs) to them may be acceptable for administrative convenience.

It urged those individuals or village authorities indulging in such issuance of PRCs to immediately desist from doing so.

Also, citing media reports that certain individuals have been harassing non-locals under the guise of conducting ILP checks, the ILRC reiterated that no individual or group is authorised to undertake such checks unless duly empowered by the competent authority. Meanwhile, the (**CONTD. ON PAGE-2**)

Magisterial probe ordered against Assam varsity for 'disrespecting' Zubeen Garg



TEZPUR, Sept 24: A magisterial probe has been ordered against Tezpur University authority by Assam's Sonitpur district administration for allegedly disrespecting cultural icon Zubeen Garg following his death last week, an official said on Wednesday.

The central university's Public Relations Officer Samaresh Barman has resigned from the post, alleging the autocratic style of functioning of Vice chancellor Shambhu Nath Singh, leading to downgrading of the institute's overall ranking.

The university had witnessed heated scenes and an exchange of words between the VC and students on Monday evening, leading to a situation where the VC had to nearly flee from the spot.

"It has come to light that a number of allegations were raised by the students of Tezpur University that due respect was not given by the University Authorities towards the death of Zubeen Garg. This has amounted to a show of disrespect towards the legendary singer of

Assam," Sonitpur District Magistrate Ananda Kumar Das said in an order.

He noted that the university authorities have not organised any formal Shradhdhanjali programme to honour the life and work of Garg, and this has hurt the sentiments of the students.

"It has also come to light that the Vice Chancellor has used derogatory comments to the students who have themselves organised a Shradhdhanjali programme, and this has amounted to insult towards all involved," Das said.

The order, issued on Tuesday evening, mentioned that due to all the provocative action by the university authorities, particularly the VC, all the students had met him to demand an apology and to take actions to remedy the wrongs done to them.

"...but the Vice Chancellor, instead of engaging in dialogues with the students, left the University without any intimation. This led to a volatile situation... the students were (**CONTD. ON PAGE-2**)

China evacuates over one million ahead of landfall

Super typhoon Ragasa causes rampage in Taiwan

BEIJING, Sept 24: Super typhoon Ragasa left 14 people dead and 18 injured in Taiwan, while China's southern Guangdong province, a key global manufacturing hub, evacuated over a million residents in preparation for the powerful storm's landfall expected later on Wednesday.

Described as the most powerful storm to hit the Chinese coast this year, Ragasa, the 18th typhoon of the season, is forecast to make landfall along the coastline of Guangdong province, official media here reported.

It could become the most powerful storm to strike China so far this year, the state-run CGTN TV

said.

In Taiwan, typhoon Ragasa left 14 dead and 18 injured, local authorities said.

According to the island's emergency operation centre, about 100 people remain trapped in various parts of the region and are awaiting rescue.

As Ragasa moved closer to making landfall, its impact was already being felt in the Pearl River Delta region, according to the National Meteorological Centre.

Wind speeds of 212 km per hour were recorded in Zhuhai city.

The typhoon's outer circulation continues to lash Taiwan's eastern, northern and southern coastal



areas, triggering heavy rainfall. On Tuesday afternoon, a dam at a barrier lake in Hualien County overflowed, causing flooding in nearby areas. China's State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters on Tuesday elevated the typhoon

emergency response to Level III for Guangdong and Hainan provinces.

Over 1.04 million people have been relocated across Guangdong, the CGTN report said on Tuesday, citing the provincial emergency management department.

Local authorities are reinforcing infrastructure and preparing for flooding risks, including possible stormwater backflow.

In anticipation of severe weather, multiple transportation and infrastructure closures have been implemented. The airport in Shenzhen, a key high-tech hub, and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge have (**CONTD. ON PAGE-2**)

Stock markets decline for 4th day on profit taking in bank, auto shares

MUMBAI, Sept 24: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty fell for the fourth consecutive day on Wednesday due to profit-taking in banking, auto, and capital goods shares, as well as foreign fund outflows, amid concerns over US H-1B visa fees that continue to dent investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 386.47 points or 0.47 per cent to end at 81,715.63. During the day, it tanked 494.26 points or 0.60 per cent to 81,607.84.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 112.60 points or 0.45 per cent to 25,056.90.

Among Sensex firms, Tata Motors, Bharat Electronics, UltraTech Cement, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services and Axis Bank were the major laggards.

However, Power Grid, Hindustan Unilever, NTPC and HCL Tech were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,551.19 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

"Profit-booking has been observed in Indian markets post-GST reforms, as investors recalibrate



valuations and Q2 earnings expectations. IT stocks underperformed due to H-1B fee hikes, while US trade rhetoric amid ongoing trade negotiations and weak global cues are prompting cautious investor sentiment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

India's relatively high valuations, coupled with moderation in earnings growth, continue to lead FIIs to trim their positions, Nair added. "Domestic equities ended lower on Wednesday, as weak

global cues, FII outflows, and fresh concerns over US visa policy changes pressured sentiment. The rupee's weakness and firm crude oil prices added to the cautious mood," Gaurav Garg, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

The BSE midcap gauge dropped 0.85 per cent and smallcap index declined 0.50 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, realty dropped the most by 2.47 per cent, followed by utilities (1.19 per cent), capital goods (1.09 per cent), services (1.07 per cent), power

(1.06 per cent), auto (1.06 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.87 per cent).

FMCG emerged as the only gainer. In four days, the BSE benchmark tumbled 1,298.33 points or 1.56 per cent, and the Nifty declined 366.7 points or 1.44 per cent.

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

Equity markets in Europe were trading lower. US markets ended in negative territory on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.44 per cent to USD 67.93 a barrel.

Meanwhile, the rupee recovered from early lows to settle almost flat at 88.72 against the US dollar. The local unit slumped to 88.80 in early trade but recovered later to hit a day's high of 88.67 against the US dollar.

On Tuesday, the Sensex ended lower by 57.87 points or 0.07 per cent at 82,102.10. The Nifty dipped 32.85 points or 0.13 per cent to 25,169.50. (PTI)

MakeMyTrip partners with Zomato to deliver food on trains across 130+ stations

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 24: India's leading online travel company, MakeMyTrip, has tied up with Zomato, the food ordering and delivery platform, to provide train passengers the option of having meals delivered directly to their seats.

Passengers booking tickets on the MakeMyTrip app can now order food from over 40,000 restaurant partners listed on Zomato, available at more than 130 stations across the country.

In FY 2024-25, more than 90,000 passengers used Indian Railways' e-catering services every day, reflecting a 66% year-on-year growth.

Through its new 'Food on Train' marketplace, MakeMyTrip aims to tap this rising demand by offering breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks, supported by its 'Live Train Status' tool that prompts passengers to place orders at the right time.

Raj Rishi Singh, chief business officer (Flights, GCC, Corporate Travel) & chief marketing officer at MakeMyTrip, said the initiative builds on the company's growth in

the train booking space and enhances the passenger experience by giving more choice and convenience.

Rahul Gupta, VP - product at Zomato, said the tie-up makes train journeys easier by offering passengers to order meals from their favourite restaurants directly through the MakeMyTrip platform.

As part of a Diwali special offer, passengers booking train tickets via MakeMyTrip will receive a complimentary coupon redeemable on food orders through Zomato.

Zomato, since becoming an authorised IRCTC partner, has already served over 4.6 million orders across 130+ stations.

With this collaboration, passengers can pre-book meals up to seven days before their journey using PNR details, ensuring a wide range of cuisine options delivered to their seats. MakeMyTrip continues to expand its tech-driven features for train travel, from route extension suggestions and seat availability forecasts to on-train food delivery, live PNR updates, and real-time train tracking, aimed at making every stage of the journey seamless.

OPPO India revives 'Pay 0, Worry 0, Win ₹10 Lakh' festive sale

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 24: OPPO India has announced the return of its flagship festive sale, 'Pay 0, Worry 0, Win ₹10 Lakh', running from September 19 to October 31, 2025, across retail stores, OPPO's e-store, Flipkart, and Amazon.

The campaign offers customers a host of benefits, including zero down payment, interest-free EMIs, cashback offers, exchange schemes, and a chance to win OPPO devices along with cash prizes of ₹10 lakh and ₹1 lakh.

Goldie Patnaik, Head - PR and Communications, OPPO India, said the brand is committed to making the festive season "special and celebratory" for its customers, adding that the campaign is designed to offer "added value with attractive deals, discounts, and rewards." He highlighted the durability, AI camera systems, and high-performance specifications of OPPO devices as central to their appeal.

As part of the campaign, OPPO has rolled out offers on its latest launches, including the F31 Series and Reno14 Series.

The F31 Series, built with 360° Armour Body and IP66/IP68/IP69 protection, features Snapdragon 7 Gen 3 and MediaTek Dimensity 7300 processors, up to 7,000mAh batteries, 80W SUPERVOOC™ fast charging, and 72 months of guaranteed smooth performance.

The Reno14 Series is positioned as an AI-first travel camera phone with a 50MP HyperTone system, 3.5x telephoto lens, 4K HDR video recording, advanced AI editing tools, and long-lasting batteries. The festive sale also includes offers on the OPPO A Series, featuring IP65-IP69 protection, 6,000mAh batteries, and AI-powered cameras, starting at ₹8,999.

Meanwhile, the Flipkart Big Billion Days (September 22 - October 2) brings exclusive deals on the OPPO K Series, OPPO Pad SE, and OPPO Enco Buds3 Pro. The K13 Turbo Series, designed for esports-level gaming with a built-in cooling fan, is one of the highlights of this lineup.

As part of its My OPPO Exclusive Diwali Raffle, customers purchasing OPPO smartphones can win prizes ranging from OPPO Find X8, Reno14, and F31 Pro to cash prizes, extended warranties, and reward points.

Philips Home Appliances launches 'Sone Pe Suhaga' Festive Campaign

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 24: Philips Home Appliances has announced its pan-India festive campaign, Sone Pe Suhaga, giving customers the chance to win gold worth ₹9,999 every hour while celebrating the season with trusted innovations for the home.

Running from September 22 to October 22, 2025, the campaign is designed to bring added sparkle to the festive period. Consumers purchasing any Philips product above ₹1,000 at offline stores or on the Philips Home Appliances website can register via the campaign QR code and enter the contest. Winners will be announced every hour across social media and radio, with daily updates also published in national newspapers.

Highlighting the campaign, Pooja Baid, chief marketing officer, Versuni India, said, "Festivals in India are about joy, togetherness, and meaningful moments. Gold has always been a cherished part of these celebrations; a symbol of prosperity and good fortune. With our Sone Pe Suhaga campaign, we are combining the excitement of winning gold with the assurance of Philips' trusted innovations."

Philips Home Appliances' festive portfolio includes its Airfryer, Mixer Grinders, Coffee Machines, Garment Steamers, Air Purifiers, and more, aimed at making everyday life easier and celebrations more memorable.

Corporates turn to Durga Puja for high-impact consumer engagement, blends culture with commerce

KOLKATA, Sept 24: Durga Puja has evolved into one of India's most powerful consumer moments, prompting corporates across categories to treat West Bengal's grand carnival as both a cultural celebration and a high-impact marketing platform.

From staples, tea and personal care to fashion, footwear, lighting and even technology, brands are blending tradition with innovation to win visibility and forge long-term consumer bonds.

With festive footfalls running into millions and discretionary spending peaking, companies are rolling out on-ground activations, themed campaigns and product launches, using the Puja season not merely for immediate sales but to deepen emotional connect with consumers in Bengal and beyond, experts said. This season, personal care brand 'Joy' by RSH Global has emerged as a frontrunner in building festive excitement.

"Festive activities are central to brand-building as they allow us to engage when consumer sentiment is at its peak," Poulomi Roy, CMO, Joy Personal Care told PTI.

Adding glamour and regional pride to the festive calendar, Myntra Jabong India Pvt Ltd (MJPL) has launched Souragya, a premium ethnic wear label co-created with cricketer icon Sourav Ganguly ahead of Durga Puja. The brand seeks to bring West Bengal-inspired designs and silhouettes to a national audience, Roy added.



"Sourav's vision of authentic Bengal-inspired fashion has been the cornerstone of this collaboration," a Myntra spokesperson said, noting that the launch marks Ganguly's foray into the fashion world.

If fashion and personal care are appealing to lifestyle aspirations, Emami Agrotech has chosen devotion as its creative lever to launch its atta (wheat flour) brand as it forays into staples ahead of festival. Its striking Atta Durga initiative, designed to mark the entry of Emami Healthy and Tasty into India's branded staples market, features an idol of Maa Durga sculpted from its fresh chakki atta.

"We wanted to create a symbol that represents nourishment, purity and tradition — the very qualities our atta stands for," said Vibhash Agarwal, director, Emami Group. Tata Tea for its brand Tata Tea

city and 30,000+ sq. ft. in districts. Speaking to PTI, Mukesh Mishra, joint president of sales and marketing, said the festival "offers a chance to be part of traditions and celebrations," with staples like rice, atta, besan and edible oils woven into 'bhog' and rituals.

Legacy brand Eveready Industries India Ltd is spotlighting its century-old role in households. "Festivals embody light, power and shared experiences—the very needs our portfolio fulfills," said CEO Anirban Banerjee, adding that the company's batteries, flashlights and lighting solutions aim to keep celebrations "shining bright."

Bata India, meanwhile, is blending nostalgia with consumer incentives this puja with new branding and styles. "Our new collection features actors Neel Bhattacharya and Darshana Banik. Puja mane 'hata' (walking), 'aar hata mane Bata!' West Bengal has always been close to our hearts," said Badri Beriwal, chief strategy and business development officer. The company has extended its price promise campaign, passing on GST benefits directly with seven per cent savings on footwear under ₹1,000 soon after the GST cut was announced and before official implementation on September 22.

Industry watchers say Durga Puja's mix of massive crowds, cultural symbolism and heightened spending makes it one of the most important events in the marketing calendar. (PTI)

Daimler India inaugurates new dealership 'PPS Trucking' in Jammu

CHENNAI, Sept 24: Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV), the subsidiary of German truck manufacturer Daimler Truck AG which retails BharatBenz range of trucks in the country, has inaugurated its new dealership "PPS Trucking" in Jammu thereby strengthening its footprint in the country.

The dealership spread across 22,000 sq ft, is located at Kartholi Village, Birpur, Jammu on the National Highway 44 connecting Delhi-Jammu-Srinagar. The facility would ensure sales, service and spares support in some of the areas including Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Udhampur, Rajouri, Reasi, Ramban and Kishtwar, a company statement said here on Wednesday.

Daimler India Commercial Vehicles, President and

Chief Business Officer, Rajiv Chaturvedi said, "The inauguration of our new dealership in Jammu underlines BharatBenz's commitment to expand its footprint in India's high-growth regions."

"Jammu and Kashmir is strategically important, with its booming infrastructure projects, strong transport demand, and the critical role it plays for fleets. Together, with our trusted partner PPS Trucking, we will ensure that customers in the region benefit from world-class sales and after-sales support," he said.

The facility can serve over 2,700 vehicles annually. It is a state-of-the-art workshop equipped with special tools, diagnostic systems and a wheel alignment machine. It employs about 35 technicians, the statement added. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

DGP directed to

Murmu demanding a CBI probe into the death of cultural icon . Other opposition parties like Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) and Rajgor Dal (RD) have also demanded a CBI probe into Garg's death, while a person has filed a public interest litigation at Gauhati High Court seeking a court-monitored probe.

In the letter, Saikia appealed for a CBI probe led by a high court judge to aid the Assam CID investigate the sudden demise of Garg.

"I am writing to express my serious concerns about the suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of Assam's cultural icon Zubeen Garg in Singapore on September 19, and to emphasise the urgent need for additional investigative support due to jurisdictional constraints and substantial evidence suggesting a conspiracy," he added. Along with millions of people in Assam, Saikia, too, demanded justice for Garg, who had proclaimed that he had no religion-caste and he was just a human.

"While the Assam government has initiated a CID probe and formed a Special Investigation Team, the death having occurred in Singapore presents unprecedented challenges that state police cannot adequately address," he added. Preliminary pre-departure evidence suggests coercion in Garg's demise.

Before his departure, the singer had confided to close associates that he was not volunteering to travel but was doing so under significant pressure, Saikia alleged.

"He (Garg) was specifically instructed to travel to Singapore with limited companion, breaking his usual travel pattern. This ensured minimal witness presence during the fatal incident, reduced protective oversight from his usual support team, strategic isolation from potential safety advocates, and limited accountability for the organisers," he added. Saikia also pointed out that the chief organiser of Northeast India Festival, Shyamkanu Mahanta, has made contradictory statements that suggest either deliberate deception or criminal negligence.

Garg's death represents not merely a tragic loss but the potential systematic elimination of a fearless voice, the senior Congress leader said.

"The combination of evidence necessitates the highest level of investigative support under judicial guidance. I humbly request the immediate appointment of a Gauhati High Court Judge to direct CBI assistance to the Assam CID, guaranteeing that justice prevails irrespective of jurisdictional boundaries, and that the complete truth behind the demise of this revolutionary voice is revealed," he added.

Garg died on September 19 while swimming in the sea in Singapore, where he had gone to attend the Northeast India Festival. The popular singer was cremated on the outskirts of Guwahati with full state honours on Tuesday. AJP and RD have stated in separate press communiques that they want a CBI probe into the incident to find the actual cause of Garg's death.

"Garg died on foreign soil. The CID of a state government has limited scope to probe such a case. The only agency which can go to a foreign soil is the CBI. We demand the Assam government to hand over the case to the CBI," AJP president Lurinjyoti Gogoi said in a press conference. (PTI)

Protest in Guwahati

Why has the police not detained or interrogated him even once? We will not accept any leniency in this case. It's about Zubeen da," one of the agitators said.

Another protestor, who identified himself as a member of the Zubeen Garg Fan Club, demanded immediate arrest of Narain before "he tampers" with the evidence.

"Why is the police not acting against him yet? He is one of the key people present during the entire duration of Zubeen's death. Is there anything else that we are not seeing?" he asked.

It is to be noted that the press meet was initially scheduled to take place at Gauhati Press Club, but it was rescheduled at the eleventh hour, and Narain said police did not give him permission for the presser.

Earlier in the day, the Assam government banned Shyamkanu Mahanta from holding any function or event in the state. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the state government will also not provide any financial grant, advertisement or sponsorship to any event with which Mahanta is associated, either directly or indirectly. "The state government will also request the Centre not to extend any financial assistance or sponsorship to him in any manner," the CM said.

More than 60 police complaints have been lodged across the state against Mahanta and others for their alleged role in the untimely demise of Garg, whose cause of death has been stated as 'drowning' in the death certificate from Singapore General Hospital. Mahanta is the younger brother of former DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, who is presently the Chief Information Commissioner of the Assam State Information Commission. Another elder brother of his is Nani Gopal Mahanta, who was the Education Advisor to the CM before becoming the Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University. (PTI)

India, US trade

conclusion of the agreement. The visit of the high-ranking US trade officials came for the first time after the imposition of a 25 per cent tariff and an additional 25 per cent penalty on Indian goods entering the American market for buying Russian crude oil. In February this year, leaders of the two countries directed officials to negotiate a proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA).

It was planned to conclude the first tranche of the pact by the fall (October-November) of 2025. So far, five rounds of negotiations have been held. The pact is aimed at more than doubling the bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030 from the current USD 191 billion.

Goyal visited Washington earlier in May for the trade talks. He held deliberations with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick in Washington. The US remained India's largest trading partner for the fourth consecutive year in 2024-25, with bilateral trade valued at USD 131.84 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports).

The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in the country's total merchandise trade. (PTI)

India 'mostly with us

think Iran will never be on our side, because we'll never be on the side of the United States."

Zelensky, in his address at the UN Security Council, said: "China is here - a powerful nation on which Russia now depends completely." "If China truly wanted this war to stop, it could compel Moscow to end the invasion. Without China, Putin's Russia is nothing. Yet too often, China stays silent and distant, instead of active for peace," Zelensky said.

India has been maintaining that its energy procurement is driven by national interest and market dynamics. India turned to purchasing Russian oil sold at a discount after Western countries imposed sanctions on Moscow and shunned its supplies over its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. (PTI)

Stop issuing PRCs

commission acknowledged and appreciated the initiative of the state government for introducing the landowner-tenant registration App as a supporting mechanism for effective ILP enforcement.

The statement said this development is in line with the concerns and recommendations earlier conveyed by the ILRC to the chief secretary through a formal representation on the need for a mandatory landlord-tenant registration system. The commission directed all the federating units of NSF to ensure that house owners within their districts/jurisdictions who are renting out premises to non-local tenants mandatorily make use of the government's landowner-tenant registration App available at <https://police.government.gov.in>, and duly register their tenants

Magisterial probe ordered

agitated by the actions of the University Officials," it added. In light of the above and seriousness of the issue, it has been decided to institute a magisterial enquiry to look into all the allegations, Das said.

Additional District Magistrate Kamal Baruah will conduct the probe and submit the report within 10 days, he added. Tezpur University on Tuesday announced putting up a statue of Garg on the campus and also mullied conferring an honorary doctorate (posthumously) on him, the authorities said in a statement.

Earlier during the day, PRO Barman sent his resignation letter to the VC with immediate effect.

"The decision arises from my conscience and conviction that the Public Relations Office should serve the interests of the University, its students, and its founding ethos, rather than promoting an individual," the resignation letter said. For some time now, the PRO office has been functioning in a way that has been compromising these values, Barman said. "After careful consideration, I have decided that I can no longer be part of this system that stifles our voices," he added.

On Wednesday evening, a meeting took place between teachers, students and non-teaching staff regarding the ongoing scenario and the role of VC in recent times.

An official said all of them have unanimously demanded immediate removal of the VC from the historic Tezpur University and appoint a "better person" who will be able to uplift the varsity.

Garg died on September 19 while swimming in the sea in Singapore, where he had gone to attend the Northeast India Festival. The popular singer was cremated on the outskirts of Guwahati with full state honours on Tuesday. (PTI)

Super typhoon Ragasa

been closed since Monday. By Tuesday evening, all buses, taxis, and subway services were suspended, and highway access was restricted. Guangzhou cancelled all flights till Wednesday evening, while Zhuhai cancelled 21 flights on Tuesday. Shenzhen's shops and other businesses have been taping their windows, tying down rubbish cans and other outdoor objects to secure them. Authorities have also trimmed more than 18,000 trees to minimise hazards, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. (PTI)

Key accused held over 100 cars sold fraudulently in several states

Ledo police bust inter-state vehicle syndicate

HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, Sept 24: A dangerous interstate vehicle syndicate has been exposed in Ledo under 83rd Margherita Legislative Assembly constituency in Tinsukia district where unsuspecting vehicle owners were lured into fraudulent deals, only to see their vehicles sold off in other states without consent.

Acting on multiple complaints, Ledo police outpost in-charge Jyotish and his team under Margherita Co-district have arrested one accused identified as Dipak Jha, a non-Assamese youth, alleged to be a key member of the syndicate.

According to police, the modus operandi involved targeting owners of four-wheelers, particularly Bolero pickup vehicles, with promises of paying bank EMIs or monthly rentals as syndicate members would sign agreements, offer advance payments, and keep up with installments for a few months to gain trust and thereafter, the vehicles would be diverted and sold through fraudulent transfers in other states.



The racket came to light after more than 30 complaints were lodged against the accused. During a late-night operation on

Tuesday night Ledo police apprehended Dipak Jha in Tinsukia and recovered details of several illegally transferred vehicles.

Victims, mostly young vehicle owners, rushed to the Ledo police outpost on 24th September morning in hopes of recovering their vehicles.

Police sources revealed that over 100 vehicles have already been collected and sold by the syndicate across state borders.

Apart from Dipak Jha, a woman is also suspected to be involved and has reportedly been absconding with several vehicles for a long time as investigators suspect that an influential network of car dealers is backing the entire operation, making it a highly organised racket.

"This is a new, daring tactic by vehicle syndicates. We are probing deeper into the network, and more arrests will follow," a police officer said.

The bust has sent shockwaves among vehicle owners, who now fear falling into similar traps and Margherita Co-District authorities have urged the public to remain cautious while renting or leasing vehicles and to verify agreements thoroughly before handing over ownership documents or keys.

Zubeen Garg remembered with floral homage



HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Sept 24: A solemn floral tribute was offered to Assam's sweetheart, iconic singer and legendary artist, Zubeen Garg, at the DC Office, Kokrajhar, as normal office functioning resumed on Wednesday after the polling day of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Elections 2025.

Rajya Sabha MP Kanad Purkayastha, joined District Commissioner, Kokrajhar, Masanda Magdalin Pertin along with officers and staff of the district administration, in paying heartfelt homage to the enduring legacy of Zubeen Garg. A minute of silence was observed to honour his memory and, in accordance with his wishes, his timeless song "Mayabini Raatir Bukut" was played, resounding like an anthem in tribute to the great artist. MP Kanad Purkayastha expressed that the loss feels deeply personal for people everywhere. "It is not just the Assamese who grieve him; he sang in over 40 languages, touching lives across communities and cultures," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, DC Masanda Magdalin Pertin termed the demise as a "monumental loss for everyone," describing Zubeen Garg as an once-in-a-lifetime talent and a legendary icon. She remarked that his immense contribution to the music industry, and the cultural fabric of Assam, is something extraordinary. "His presence and contribution in the music scene extended far beyond Assam, making a mark at the national and international level", she said.

Central Income Tax Department raids Dhubri MPJ Jewellers

HT Correspondent
DHUBRI, Sept 24: The Central Income Tax Department is conducting a massive raid on MPJ Jewellers in Dhubri, raising questions about the business practices of its owner, Nupur Saha, which began on Wednesday morning, is centered at a flat in Dhubri's Rangali Residency, where a showroom of MPJ Jewellers is located.

An extended team of Central Income Tax Department officials has sealed off the premises and is interrogating several employees of the jewellery store. The raid follows a period of intense scrutiny on Nupur Saha, who is facing allegations of large-scale financial irregularities.

According to sources, Saha is accused of embezzling crores of rupees from contracts related to the Assam government's Social Welfare Department and the Jal Jeevan Mission and the ill-gotten wealth was then used to open two showrooms of MPJ Jewellers, one in Dhubri and another in Barpeta. It is alleged that funds intended for the Scheduled Tribes were misappropriated.

This "white business of black money" is believed to be the focus of the current investigation. Nupur Saha opened the Dhubri showroom a few years ago in a flat he purchased in 2018 in Rangali Residency under the name of one of her firms. The raid has sent shockwaves through the local business community in Dhubri.

National level workshop on research methodology concludes in BU

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Sept 24: A week-long national-level workshop on research methodology in social sciences was successfully concluded on Wednesday at Bodoland University in Kokrajhar which was sponsored by ICSSR-NERC, Shillong.

The event was organised by the Department of Commerce, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar to explore research methodology in social sciences.

The workshop brought together distinguished academicians, researchers, and young scholars from different parts of the country to strengthen research capacity in the field of social sciences, with a special focus on North East India. 55 PhD scholars from the Social Science Stream attended the workshop. The workshop was formally inaugurated by Prof BL Ahuja, Vice-Chancellor of Bodoland University, on 16th September 2025. In his inaugural speech, Prof Ahuja highlighted the importance of applying scientific procedures in research and having thorough knowledge of research methodology. He also emphasised the significance of research in addressing various issues and encouraged research scholars to contribute to society through their work.

Prof A Ibemcha Chanu, the convener of the workshop as well as Dean, Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies, Bodoland University, highlighted the objectives of conducting the workshop.



Over the course of five days, participants engaged in intensive sessions covering fundamentals of research, problem formulation, research design, use of Artificial Intelligence in research, qualitative and quantitative methods, data collection, sampling, literature review, academic writing, publication strategies, data analysis using SPSS and Excel, ethical considerations, and report writing. The program also included interactive group activities, a hands-on field survey, and participant presentations.

Renowned experts in the field of social sciences, including Prof Joydeep Baruah of KKHSO University, Guwahati, Dr Sanmoy Mallick of North Bengal University, Darjeeling, Dr Sunilind Ahoijam of North Eastern Hill University, Prof Subir Sen of Tripura University, Prof Joy Das

of Nagaland University and Prof Amalesh Bhowal of Assam University Diphu Campus, Prof Sanghamitra Choudhury, Prof Pralip Narzary, Dr Arabinda Debnath, Dr Konita Basumatary and Prof A Ibemcha Chanu of Bodoland University, contributed their expertise, enriching the learning experience.

The workshop provided an invaluable platform for capacity building, networking, and knowledge exchange, empowering young scholars with the skills necessary for quality research and academic excellence.

The organising committee extends sincere gratitude to all resource persons, participants, and supporting institutions for making this workshop a resounding success. The organising Committee also deeply condole the sudden demise of legendary singer Zubeen Garg.

DSU KA condemns sexual assault on minor



HT Correspondent
KHERONI, Sept 24: The Dimasa Students Union (DSU), Karbi Anglong District Committee, has expressed deep anguish and strongly condemned the molestation and sexual assault of a 12 year old Dimasa school girl in Howraghat of Karbi Anglong District.

According to the DSU, the accused has been identified as Khorgesor Bora of Bokolia Adarsha village under Diphu Sub Division, who is currently residing in Howraghat. He was serving as a government school headmaster at Jilangso LP School. The incident came to light when the victim became pregnant and disclosed the abuse to her parents. It was further revealed that the assault had been ongoing for several months.

The student body demanded immediate and decisive action from

the administration and law enforcement agencies under child and women protection laws, and called for the immediate termination of the accused from his service. The DSU stressed that authorities must leave no stone unturned to ensure swift arrest and justice for the perpetrator, noting that condemnation alone is not enough without visible administrative commitment to protecting children.

Reaffirming its commitment to student safety, the DSU urged the public to remain vigilant and cooperate with authorities in combating such crimes. "This is a collective responsibility, and the administration must lead by example to uphold the safety and dignity of every individual," DSU Karbi Anglong president Shivraj Hasnu said in the release.

International tourists explores Assam on Brahmaputra cruise

27 senior travelers from UK, USA, and New Zealand experience Sikh traditions and local hospitality during a 17-day river journey aboard MV Mahabaahu



HT Correspondent
DHUBRI, Sept 24: A group of 27 senior citizens from England, New Zealand, and the USA are currently on a 17-day "Assam Tour on Cruise," reached Dhubri on Tuesday, sailing the Brahmaputra River aboard the MV Mahabaahu, where they were warmly welcomed and felicitated at the historic Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib Gurudwara in Dhubri.

However, the visit to the gurudwara offered an even deeper cultural connection. Cristopher Caldicott, 68, from London, expressed his profound appreciation for the experience. Caldicott, along

with his fellow travelers, had the unique chance to tie a turban and wear a kada, a steel or iron bracelet that is one of the Five Ks, or articles of faith, worn by initiated Sikhs.

He shared that praying in front of the Guru Darbar allowed him to "feel the essence of Sikhism." The gesture of allowing the entire group to tie turbans and participate in the traditions of the gurudwara highlights the Sikh faith's spirit of hospitality and openness to all. It provided a powerful, firsthand experience of a culture rich with history, faith, and a deep sense of community.

The visit became a truly unique

cultural exchange as all 27 foreigners had the opportunity to tie a turban. Liz Woodwalker, 83, from Devon, England, described her experience on the cruise as "wonderful," highlighting her delight in trying a meal from the langar (community kitchen) in the presence of Daljit Singh Sethi, President of the Sikh Pratinidhi Board Eastern Zone. Caldicott described the experience as a truly memorable highlight of the tour.

Departing from Guwahati, the cruise is designed to offer an immersive experience of Assam's rich culture and natural beauty. The comprehensive itinerary includes visits to five national parks and several heritage sites. The tour for the group is managed by Nick Van Guisen, 70, from Oxford, in collaboration with Sanjoy Basu of Far Horizon Tours Pvt Ltd and Adventure Resorts and Cruises Pvt Ltd in India.

The MV Mahabaahu is set to continue its voyage, with its next destination being the renowned Manas National Park. The cruise will then sail back through Guwahati, taking the Tezpur route before concluding its journey at Nimati Ghat in Jorhat, as confirmed by Sanjoy Basu.

New Art Players pay tribute to Zubeen Garg

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 24: On September 23 evening, the members of one of the leading socio-cultural organisations, New Art Players, paid their heartfelt tribute to Zubeen Garg — the heartbeat of every generation of Assam, a popular playback singer, music director, lyricist, composer, actor, and a multi-talented personality — who tragically passed away in an accident in Singapore on September 19.

At the memorial programme organised at the premises of New Art Players, members lit lamps in front of the portrait of the artist and offered floral tributes. With tearful eyes, all present collectively rendered the song "Mayabini Raatir Bukut" and observed a minute of silence, praying for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

During the programme, New Art Players president Ajay Dutta, Vice-president Mallika Barua, eminent music director Anupam Choudhury, and Rita Bhuyana recalled their memories and highlighted the remarkable contributions of Zubeen Garg.

On the occasion, members Pradip Goswami, Stuti Chakravarty, Sunayana Goswami, Chamima Khatun, Tanmoy Das, Anupama Sharma, and Melody Patgiri each performed songs of Zubeen Garg, while Jayanta Sharma recited a poem as a mark of tribute to the artist.

The programme was anchored by Nayan Prasad, and General Secretary Rathindra Narayan Bhat-tacharya offered the vote of thanks.

NFR promotes waste management and its recycling drive



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 24: As part of the ongoing "Swachhata Hi Seva" campaign of 2025, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) organised a series of activities across its divisions to promote awareness on cleanliness, recycling and sustainable practices. The activities were carried out at railway stations, offices, railway hospitals, workshops and railway colonies with enthusiastic participation from railway officials.

A "Waste-to-Art" exhibition and sale was successfully held at Guwahati Railway Station, showcasing innovative products made from recycled and upcycled materials. The exhibition reflected the principles of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (RRR), with special emphasis on creative upcycling of plastic waste. Various items crafted from discarded plastic and other reusable materials were displayed.

This approach demonstrated how waste can be transformed into useful and aesthetic products that add value to day-to-day life. The initiative not only highlighted innovative waste management practices but also encouraged public participation in adopting eco-friendly lifestyles.

In addition, a "Sale of Recycled Product" activity was conducted at the Maligaon Colony Compost Plant of NFR. On this occasion, compost manure produced from biodegradable waste at the plant was offered for sale to the residents. The activity aimed at spreading awareness about the benefits of composting and showcasing the importance of household organic wastes conversion into valuable manure for gardening and agriculture.

NFR has been actively observing the "Swachhata Hi Seva" campaign with a variety of events such as cleanliness drives, awareness campaigns and distribution of eco-friendly items and promotion of recycling practices. These efforts underline NFR's commitment towards creating a cleaner and greener environment, while encouraging collective responsibility among employees and the public.

Ni-kshay mitra food basket distributed for TB patients

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Sept 24: The Dima Hasao District Health Society under the aegis of Seva Saptah and Ni-Kshay Mitra initiative of the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP), Assam, organised a programme at the Cultural Institute Hall, Haflong on Wednesday. Chief Guest of the programme North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council CEM Debolal Gorlosa, local Member of Parliament Amarsing Tisso, Chairman of NCHAC Mohet Hojai along with other Executive Members, MACs and dignitaries, were present. Distribution of food baskets to beneficiaries were done to the extending support to TB patients. Dima Hasao district presently has 103 Ni-Kshay Mitras extending nutrition support to TB patients. Ni-Kshay Mitra is a scheme through which support is extended to the community and People with TB (PwTB) to

ensure, psychosocial care, nutritional support treatment adherence, stigma reduction, and early detection. The programme included - Nikshay Mitra Distribution Event, Voluntary Blood Donation Drive, Emphasising community participation in health initiatives. Specialist Screening Camp for women and children, focusing on health and nutrition of women, adolescent girls, and children.

CEM Debolal Gorlosa in his speech encouraged all present that prevention is better than cure and therefore every person should take good care of health.

Appreciating commendable efforts of the medical team EM Samuel Changsan in his speech urged several organisations to come forward and adopt TB patients as Nikshay Mitras. The programme saw certificates handed over to the Ni-kshay Mitras, TB champions who overcame the disease through dedicated efforts.

Dibrugarh AASU demands Bogibeel bridge to rename after Zubeen Garg

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, Sept 24: The Dibrugarh district of All Assam Students' Union (AASU) on Wednesday demanded the government to rename Bogibeel Bridge after legendary musician Zubeen Garg. "We demand Bogibeel bridge to be renamed as Zubeen Garg bridge because he was a bridge between the people of north and South bank. Zubeen Garg was a bridge between both the cultures of north and south bank," said Rupjyoti Borthakur, Dibrugarh district president AASU.

Over 500 organizations and institutions gather at Nehrubali field to honor the late music icon, plans underway to install statue near Kolong River

Heartthrob's fans pay glowing tribute

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Sept 24: In a heartfelt and grand tribute, more than five hundred organisations and educational institutions from across greater Nagaon gathered at the historic Nehrubali field to honor the late legendary musical icon Zubeen Garg. The event, titled "Tribute to the Legend: Zubeen Garg," was a moving celebration of the singer's life, legacy, and unmatched contribution to Assam's music and cultural landscape.

Organised by local MLA Rupak Sarma in collaboration with the Nagaon district administration, the event witnessed the participation of numerous prominent bodies including the Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha, Asom Jatiyatadabi Yuba Chitra Parishad (AJYCP), All Assam Students' Union (AASU), and a host of cultural and educational institutions. The entire gathering came together in a rare display of unity and admiration for the iconic artist, who left an indelible mark on the hearts of millions.



As a symbolic gesture of love and remembrance, students and members of various organisations laid floral tributes at a large portrait of Zubeen Garg. As dusk fell, the field glowed with hundreds of earthen lamps, carefully arranged to form the name "Zubeen Garg," illuminating the deep connection the people of Assam share with their beloved "state's heart-throb."

Adding to the emotional depth of the event, the ashes of Zubeen Garg were ceremoniously brought to Nehrubali field under the special supervision of MLA Rupak Sarma. The ashes were received with reverence by the public, marking a deeply symbolic moment in the tribute.

In a fitting continuation of the homage, plans were also announced to erect a statue of the

musical legend near the banks of the river Kolong, a river often described as the lifeline of Nagaon and now forever connected with Zubeen's memory.

The tribute not only reflected the immense popularity and cultural influence of Zubeen Garg but also showcased the people's collective grief and pride — a true testament to a life that transcended music and touched the soul of Assam.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The science of today is the technology of tomorrow
- Edward Teller

Global inequalities

Since 1995, the world is wealthier, healthier and better educated. Yet, progress in certain areas remains limited, and stark global inequalities endure. Hence, in spite of the many improvements, disenchantment with institutions is widespread and persistent. Governments, unions and businesses face declining levels of trust, indicating a fraying social contract. Many people increasingly feel that their effort is not being rewarded and that society is unfair. It is the summary assessment of the flagship new International Labour Organization (ILO) report published ahead of the Second World Summit for Social Development in November and marking 30 years since the landmark 1995 Copenhagen Summit on Social Development. The report titled "The State of Social Justice: A Work in Progress 2025" mentions of the three key areas that have stalled the progress inequality, fragile trust in institutions, and slow progress. While enumerating the key achievement since 1995, which included halving the rate of child labour among 5- to 14-year-olds (from 20 to 10 per cent), reducing extreme poverty from 39 to 10 per cent, raising primary school completion rates by 10 percentage points, and achieving, for the first time, social protection coverage for over half of the world's population, the report highlighted stark and persistent deficits.

A total of 71 per cent of a person's earnings are still determined by circumstances of birth such as country and sex; informality has fallen by only two percentage points in two decades and still affects 58 per cent of workers; the gender labour force participation gap has narrowed by just three percentage points since 2005 and remains at 24 per cent; and at current rates, it will take a century to close the global gender pay gap. The report said that 1 in 4 persons still lacks access to clean water; 8000 million live on under US\$3 a day; and 138 million children aged 5-17 in child labour, with almost 50 per cent engaged in hazardous labour. As for inequality at global level is concerned, the report pointed out the level of stark inequality. It said that top 1 per cent still control 20 per cent of income and 38 per cent of wealth. Earnings ratio between men and women was at 78 per cent in 2025, and at the current rate, wage gap will take 50-100 years to close.

Progress on guaranteeing basic human rights for all has been mixed. On the one hand, the prevalence of child labour and the rate of fatal occupational injuries have both fallen steeply since 1995. On the other, the compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining rights score has not improved since 2015 and forced labour remains at close to 3.5 per cent of the population.

Durga Puja: A celebration beyond rituals

Durga Puja is more than a religious festival; it is a civilisational expression that has transformed itself across time to become one of the strongest cultural markers of the Indian subcontinent. What began as a seasonal invocation to the goddess of power and protection has gradually turned into a social, cultural, and even political phenomenon that binds millions of people together in a collective rhythm of devotion, art, music, literature, and community spirit. The worship of Goddess Durga, the slayer of the buffalo demon Mahishasura, represents the triumph of good over evil, light over darkness, and justice over tyranny, but it is the lived experience of the festival that lends it a unique place in society. To understand Durga Puja is not only to engage with its rituals but also to examine its larger implications for cultural identity, social transformation, economic activity, and collective consciousness.

The origin of Durga Puja lies deep in ancient Indian traditions where the worship of female divinity symbolised fertility, power, and protection. The figure of Durga, however, crystallised in the classical texts such as the Devi Mahatmya, where she emerged as the embodiment of Shakti, born out of the collective energy of the gods to vanquish Mahishasura. The mythology underscores the importance of female energy as the ultimate saviour of the world, overturning patriarchal structures of power by placing a goddess at the centre of cosmic balance. Over centuries, the worship of Durga spread across regions, adapting itself to local customs and practices, but it is in Bengal that the festival assumed its most elaborate and iconic form. By the sixteenth century, Durga Puja was already a community affair among zamindars, and during the colonial period, it evolved into the Barowari Puja, organised by local neighbourhoods, making it a truly people's festival.

The transformation of Durga Puja from a household or aristocratic ritual into a collective, democratic celebration is one of its most remarkable features. The Barowari or Sarbojanin Puja model that emerged in Bengal not only opened the festival to all sections of society but also created a new public culture of participation. This transformation is significant because it reflects the broader shift in Indian society where festivals became spaces of social negotiation and identity formation. By moving from private courtyards to public pandals, Durga Puja blurred the lines between sacred and secular, offering an inclusive platform where devotion coexists with art, commerce, and entertainment. It is in this blend of ritual piety and cultural expression that Durga Puja acquires its unique charm, one that transcends its religious significance and becomes a shared cultural heritage.

The grandeur of Durga Puja lies in its ability to blend multiple layers of meaning and practice. On one hand, the rituals such as Bodhon, Kumari Puja, Sandhi Puja, and immersion preserve the sanctity of tradition, while on the other, the creativity of pandal design, idol-making, and thematic presentations reflect contemporary social and political realities. Each year, artists and organisers push the boundaries of imagination, turning pandals into canvases of social commentary—whether it be about environmental conservation, women's empowerment, or global issues like climate change. Thus, Durga Puja becomes not just a religious event but also a medium of dialogue, where tradition converses with modernity, and mythology engages with present-day challenges.

Economically, Durga Puja has grown into one of the most

significant cultural industries of the region. From idol makers in Kumartuli to craftsmen, decorators, light designers, musicians, food vendors, and garment traders, the festival sustains a vast network of livelihoods. Studies have shown that Durga Puja generates economic activities worth billions, creating a festive economy that boosts tourism, hospitality, retail, and entertainment. For many small artisans and traders, the months leading to Puja are the busiest and most profitable period of the year. The infusion of creativity into pandal-making also offers a platform for rural and urban artists to showcase their talent, sometimes earning international recognition. In this sense, Durga Puja is both an economic engine and a cultural marketplace, proving that festivals are not only about devotion but also about livelihood and innovation.

Socially, Durga Puja serves as a space of community bonding and collective identity. The very essence of Sarbojanin Puja lies in its inclusiveness, where people from different walks of life contribute to organising, funding, and celebrating the event. The neighbourhood pandals become microcosms of democratic participation, where decisions are made collectively, and responsibilities are shared. The evening gatherings, cultural performances, and shared meals create a sense of belonging that transcends caste, class, or religion. Even in an increasingly fragmented world, Durga Puja stands as a reminder of the importance of community spirit, solidarity, and shared joy. For the diaspora, the festival carries even deeper emotional resonance, as it reconnects them with their roots and allows them to recreate a piece of home in foreign lands.

Durga Puja has also carried political undertones throughout history. During the colonial period, the festival became a platform for nationalist expression, where the image of Durga as the mother goddess was equated with the motherland itself. The invocation of "Bharat Mata" during freedom struggles drew heavily from the symbolism of Durga. Even today, the festival is often interwoven with political narratives, as parties and leaders use pandals and cultural programmes as spaces for outreach and visibility. While this politicisation has its critics, it also highlights the immense socio-political significance of the festival in shaping public opinion and mobilising collective identity.

Another dimension of Durga Puja is its artistic innovation. The making of the idol, traditionally done with clay from the Ganga, is an art form that combines craftsmanship with deep symbolism. The face of Durga, often serene yet powerful, reflects the dual nature of divinity as both nurturing and destructive. In recent decades, experimentation with materials, themes, and forms has expanded the creative landscape of idol-making. From eco-friendly idols to avant-garde designs, artists have used the medium to push aesthetic boundaries, often sparking debates on the balance between tradition and innovation. Similarly, pandal architecture has become a field of architectural wonder, drawing inspirations from temples, palaces, historical monuments, or entirely abstract ideas. In doing so, the festival has emerged as one of the largest open-air art exhibitions in the world.

Durga Puja also raises important questions about sustainability and the environment. The immersion of idols in rivers and water bodies has long been a matter of ecological concern due to the use of non-biodegradable materials and synthetic paints. In response, many organisers have adopted

eco-friendly practices, using natural clay, organic colours, and artificial immersion tanks to reduce pollution. These shifts not only preserve the ecological balance but also highlight how traditions can adapt to contemporary challenges without losing their spiritual essence. In this way, Durga Puja becomes an example of how culture can evolve responsibly, embracing sustainability while retaining its symbolic depth. The festival is equally a celebration of literature, music, and performance. From the compositions of Rabindranath Tagore to the rhythms of traditional dhak, Durga Puja has inspired generations of artists. The beats of the dhakis, the recitation of chants, the staging of plays, and the cultural soirees all contribute to the festive atmosphere. It is during Puja that communities come alive with creativity,

producing poetry, theatre, songs, and dance performances that reflect the vitality of collective expression. This creative flowering is one of the festival's most enduring contributions, ensuring that it remains not just a ritual but a living cultural phenomenon.

Yet beyond all these dimensions—mythological, economic, social, artistic, and ecological—the heart of Durga Puja lies in its emotional impact. For millions, it is the most anticipated time of the year, a season of renewal, joy, and hope. The homecoming of the goddess, symbolising the return of a daughter to her maternal home, resonates deeply in a culture where familial bonds are cherished. The immersion, though filled with sadness, carries the promise of return, reminding people of the cyclical nature of life, death, and rebirth. It is this emotional rhythm, of anticipation, celebration, and farewell, that makes Durga Puja not just an event but a lived experience etched into memory.

Durga Puja is, therefore, not merely a religious observance but a dynamic institution that captures the essence of Indian society in its many layers. It is a reminder of the power of collective faith, the resilience of cultural traditions, the adaptability of art and commerce, and the enduring relevance of mythology in shaping human consciousness. At a time when societies face increasing polarisation, Durga Puja stands as a celebration that dissolves boundaries and creates shared spaces of joy. Its significance lies not only in the story of the goddess vanquishing evil but also in the way it allows people to confront and transcend their everyday struggles through collective celebration.

The festival's global recognition in recent years, including its inscription on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, affirms its universal value as a cultural expression. It highlights that Durga Puja, while rooted in Bengal and Eastern India, belongs to the world as a model of living heritage. Its rituals, art, and community spirit continue to inspire, reminding humanity that festivals are not only about worship but also about affirming life itself.

Durga Puja is ultimately a dialogue between the divine and the human, between tradition and change, between art and devotion. It is where mythology meets modernity, where ritual meets creativity, and where individual faith merges into collective celebration. To witness Durga Puja is to experience not just a festival but a civilisation at its most vibrant, resilient, and inclusive. It is a celebration beyond rituals, a tapestry woven from devotion, art, community, and memory, ensuring that the goddess and her spirit remain alive in the collective heartbeat of society.

Modi's vision for a Viksit Bharat by 2047

By: Dipak Kurmi

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's healthcare policy has evolved from a mere welfare initiative to a strategic pillar of economic development. This transformation aligns with the vision of a "Viksit Bharat"—a developed India—by 2047. By treating health as an investment rather than an expense, these initiatives have demonstrated that good governance in healthcare is also sound economic policy. They reduce disease burden, protect household savings, and unleash human capital—the true engine of sustainable growth.

Early Foundations: Gujarat's Healthcare Model

Modi's commitment to healthcare began during his tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat. Recognizing the importance of timely interventions and accessible services, he introduced the 108 Emergency Ambulance Service, which brought rapid medical attention to rural and urban communities. Simultaneously, the POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition) program addressed micronutrient deficiencies among tribal and rural children, laying a foundation for better learning outcomes. These initiatives underscored a crucial principle: investing in prevention pays dividends in productivity and prosperity.

National Reforms: Ayushman Bharat and POSHAN Abhiyaan

Upon assuming national leadership, Modi extended these lessons to programs with unprecedented reach. Launched in 2018, Ayushman Bharat has become the world's largest publicly funded health insurance scheme, covering over 55 crore economically vulnerable citizens. By shielding families from catastrophic medical bills, it has helped millions avoid sliding back into poverty after illness. The scheme also channels patients toward empanelled hospitals, encouraging quality upgrades and fostering a competitive ecosystem in secondary and tertiary care.

In the same year, the POSHAN Abhiyaan was inaugurated to tackle malnutrition among pregnant women, lactating mothers,

and young children. Through supplementary nutrition, growth monitoring, and behavioral change campaigns, the initiative aims to build healthier mothers and stronger babies. Better nutrition in early life directly enhances cognitive development and future earning capacity—a return on investment measurable in decades of higher productivity.

Pharmaceutical Accessibility: Jan Aushadhi Kendras

Pharmaceutical affordability received a significant boost through the Jan Aushadhi Kendras. With over 16,900 outlets supplying quality generics at steep discounts, households can divert money once spent on costly branded medicines toward food, schooling, or small business investment. This initiative has not only made healthcare

Empowering Women and Digital Health Integration

Women-centered initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao have improved gender ratios and promoted girls' education. Digital health tools and Ayushman Arogya Mandirs are bringing screening, teleconsultation, and electronic health records to even the smallest communities. Together, these measures create an ecosystem where citizens are healthier, families retain disposable income, and the workforce becomes more reliable and skilled.

Medical Education Reforms: Scaling Up Capacity

A significant achievement in healthcare under Modi's leadership is the reform in medical education. It took over 60 years to build 387 medical colleges. In just 10 years, the number has grown to 780. Today, India produces over 1,18,000 doctors every year, the most in the world. This expansion has not only increased the number of healthcare professionals but also improved the accessibility of medical education across the country.

Economic Impact and Future Outlook

The transformation in India's health sector since 2014 shows how a government can harness public policy to achieve both equity and economic dynamism. By recasting healthcare as a pillar of productivity, Modi has shifted the narrative from charity to investment. Households once trapped in a cycle of illness and debt are retaining income, educating children, and contributing to formal markets. Entrepreneurs find new customers in villages where medical security once seemed unimaginable. And millions of women, strengthened by better health and sanitation, are claiming their place in the workforce and public life.

As India advances toward 2047, the dividends of these reforms will multiply—in higher life expectancy, rising incomes, and a citizenry capable of shaping its destiny. Inclusive, preventive healthcare is no longer a peripheral concern; it is the backbone of national strength and a decisive instrument for economic transformation. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

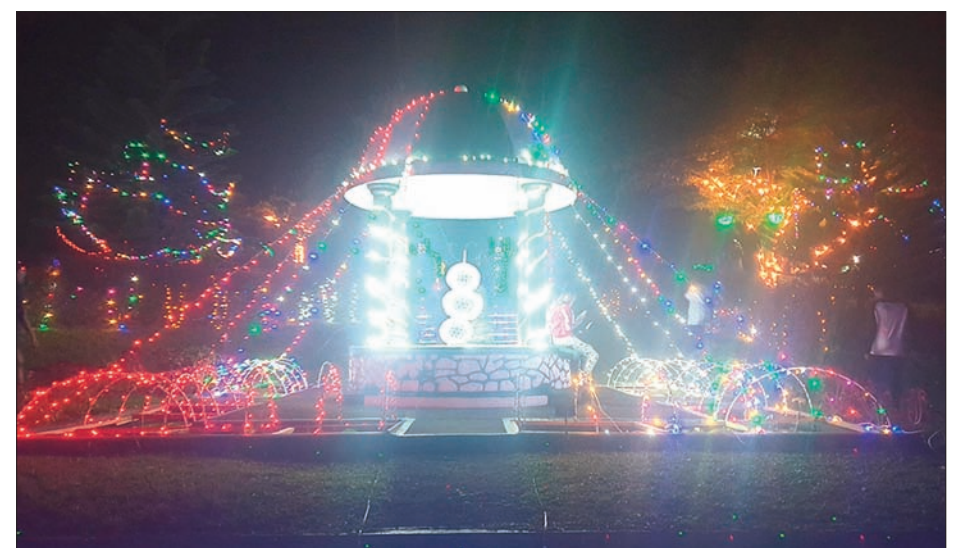
The Nine Nights of Light

By: Satvabrat Borah

Festivals are not just about rituals, decorations, or cultural nostalgia. They are living metaphors, offering us insights into how to live with wisdom and joy. They carry a powerful message: the victory of clarity over confusion, resilience over weakness, light over darkness. In the vibrant mosaic of Indian festivals, Navratri and its culmination, Vijaydashami, stand as a profound testament to this inner journey. The very word 'navratri' means night, a universal symbol of ignorance, forgetfulness, and the unknown. Navratri, the nine nights, can thus be seen as nine sacred opportunities, a structured path to consciously remove the layers of darkness that so often cloud our perception and diminish our lives. These nights are not merely to be counted on the calendar; they are steps in an intimate pilgrimage from confusion to clarity, from scarcity to abundance, from fear to courage, culminating in the triumphant day of Vijaydashami, the victory of the tenth day.

The journey of Navratri is traditionally divided into three distinct phases, each dedicated to a different aspect of the divine feminine, each representing a fundamental pillar of a fulfilled human existence. The first phase is devoted to learning, symbolised by Goddess Saraswati. In an age where we are perpetually flooded with information, where data points and opinions clamour for our attention, the invocation of Saraswati is a call for something far deeper: wisdom. This initial stage of the inner journey is about cultivating insight and genuine curiosity. It is about quieting the noise of the external world to listen to the subtle voice of understanding within. The darkness we confront here is the darkness of ignorance, not merely a lack of facts, but a lack of perspective. It is the confusion that arises when we cannot distinguish the essential from the trivial, the lasting from the transient. To honour Saraswati is to engage in practices that sharpen the intellect and purify the mind. It is the darkness of prejudice, of unquestioned assumptions, and of a closed mind that is dispelled in this phase. By dedicating ourselves to learning, whether through study, contemplation, or mindful observation, we ignite the first lamp of awareness. This is the foundational light without which all subsequent progress is built on shaky ground. It is the clarity that comes from seeing things as they are, not as we fear or wish them to be.

Having established the light of knowledge, the journey progresses to its second phase, which is devoted to wealth, represented by Goddess Lakshmi. It is a common misperception to limit the concept of wealth to material possessions and financial capital. The Lakshmi principle invites us to expand this understanding dramatically. True wealth, in its most profound sense, encompasses health, peace of mind, harmony in relationships, a sense of purpose, and a deep, abiding gratitude for the miracle of life itself. The darkness addressed in this phase is the darkness of scarcity consciousness. This is the gnawing feeling of lack, the anxiety that we are not enough or do not have enough, which leads to envy, greed, and an inability to appreciate the abundance that already surrounds us. This



scarcity mindset is a profound form of inner poverty that can persist even amidst great material riches. Invoking Lakshmi is an act of cultivating an inner prosperity. It is about recognising the wealth of a healthy body, the treasure of a quiet mind, the richness of loving connections, and the fortune of waking up to a new day. Practices during this phase involve generosity, sharing, creating beauty and order in one's environment, and consciously counting one's blessings. When we remove the darkness of scarcity, we begin to perceive the universe as abundant and supportive. We move from a mentality of hoarding to one of sharing, from anxiety to contentment. This inner wealth is the sustenance that fuels the next stage of the journey.

The third and final phase of Navratri is devoted to power, symbolised by Goddess Parvati in her form as Shakti. This is not power over others, but the power within oneself. It is the power of resilience, of will, of the indomitable spirit to face challenges, overcome negativity, and rise every time life pushes us down. The darkness confronted here is the most visceral of all: the darkness of fear, inertia, and internal weakness. It is the voice of self-doubt that holds us back, the lethargy that prevents us from taking action, and the negative tendencies that sabotage our own well-being. Parvati represents tapasya, the fire of discipline and transformation. This phase is about inner strength, the courage to confront our own shadows like our anger, our insecurities, our limitations and to transform them into sources of strength. It is about building the fortitude to stand up for what is right, to persevere in the face of adversity, and to channel our energies constructively. This is the power that protects the wisdom of Saraswati and the wealth of Lakshmi. Without this inner strength, knowledge remains theoretical and wealth remains vulnerable. The goddess in this form is the warrior, and her battle is against the demons of inertia and negativity within our own consciousness.

The culmination of this nine-night inner odyssey is Vijaydashami, the day of victory. This victory is not an external event but an internal achievement. It is the triumph of the higher self over the lower self. It is the victory of the light of knowledge over the darkness of ignorance, the victory of a

consciousness of abundance over a consciousness of lack, and the victory of inner power over inner weakness. The story of Lord Rama defeating Ravana on this day is the perfect allegory for this internal conquest. Ravana, with his ten heads, represents the ten senses (five of perception and five of action) that, when uncontrolled and driven by ego, lead to our downfall. Vijaydashami marks the moment when the individual, having diligently worked through the phases of learning, cultivating wealth, and building power, gains mastery over these senses. The ego is subdued, and the true Self, represented by Rama, is enthroned.

Therefore, the true celebration of Navratri and Vijaydashami lies not only in external festivities but in the conscious participation in this inner process. It is a time for introspection and renewal. It is an invitation to ask ourselves: What are the areas of my life clouded by ignorance? Where do I feel a sense of lack? Where am I feeling weak or disempowered? The festival provides a template for addressing these questions methodically. Each night becomes an opportunity to consciously shed a layer of darkness, to light a new lamp within. The dances, the prayers, the fasting, and the gatherings are all outer expressions of this profound inner alchemy. They are collective rituals that support the individual's journey toward wholeness.

In a world that often feels increasingly chaotic and confusing, the timeless wisdom embedded in Navratri offers a path to stability and joy. It reminds us that the most important battles are fought within the landscape of our own minds and hearts. The darkness without is but a reflection of the darkness within. By undertaking the journey of these nine nights, we actively participate in the cosmic process of evolution, moving from tamas (inertia) to rajas (activity) and ultimately to sattva (clarity and harmony). We emerge on the tenth day not just as spectators of a ritual, but as victors in our own right, carrying the light of wisdom, the wealth of gratitude, and the power of resilience into our daily lives. This is the enduring message of Navratri: that the divine light we so eagerly seek in temples and festivals is, and has always been, waiting to be discovered and kindled within the sanctum of our own being.

Who was Zubeen Garg for Assam and the Assamese community?

By: Deborshi Gautam

Zubeen Garg is the name of a movement. Zubeen Garg is the name of an identity. Zubeen Garg is the name of a community. Zubeen Garg is the guardian of Assamese culture. Zubeen Garg provided leadership to the Assamese people from the front at different times and in different situations. In fact, according to the news published in national media, Zubeen Garg is presented merely as an Assamese singer and an ordinary playback singer in Hindi films. But was Zubeen Garg really just a singer as presented in the national media? In today's write-up, I will try to let you know who Zubeen Garg really was.

In the 1990s, Zubeen Garg entered the Assamese music world. As a percussionist, Zubeen Garg began his journey in music. In the 1990s, he started his musical journey as an instrumentalist for the popular musicians of that time in Assam. Although Zubeen Garg began his journey as an instrumentalist, he had also been trained in vocal music from childhood alongside instruments. Because his father's job was frequently transferred, Zubeen Garg and his family could not live in one place for long. From Tura in Meghalaya to Tamulpur, Karimganj, Bijnor, Jorhat, Guwahati, and many other places, shifting at short intervals gave Zubeen Garg enough exposure. At a very young age, he was able to absorb the diversity of Assam. Very soon after starting as an instrumentalist, Zubeen Garg decided to introduce himself as a vocalist. While studying at B. Baruah College in Guwahati, he was judged as the best singer in the youth festival conducted under Gauhati University. Perhaps Zubeen Garg could already sense what his future journey of life was going to be. Without completing his graduation, Zubeen Garg decided to devote himself fully to music.

In 1992, Zubeen Garg released an album named Anamika. That was a very tough time for Assamese music. Because of the lack of innovation, the Assamese people were on the verge of losing interest in Assamese music. At that time, a thin boy with long hair emerged into the Assamese music world. Alongside Anamika, another album named Anuradha was released from the

same studio at the same time. Since Zubeen was completely new, Anuradha was given more importance than Anamika. It was the season of Durga Puja. Everyone assumed that since Anuradha was being promoted heavily, it would sell much more than Anamika. But before Dashami day arrived, an extraordinary piece of news shocked everyone. Music lovers from across Assam had already bought every single cassette of Anamika before Dashami. That day, Assam gained a new voice. Once Zubeen Garg established himself as a singer, there was no looking back.

Zubeen Garg did not sing only in Assamese. He lent his voice to over 40,000 songs in nearly 40 Indian languages. In terms of numbers, by the age of just 52, no other singer in the world had sung in as many languages or recorded as many songs. This could be a world record for Zubeen Garg, though it has not been officially recognized. After gaining fame in Assam, he went to Mumbai. There, he sang several Hindi songs, among which the most notable was Ya Ali, for which he won a national award. Even after achieving success as a playback singer in Bollywood, he did not forget his roots. After some years, Zubeen Garg returned permanently to Assam and reconnected with Assamese music. He always used to say: "Rather than struggling and working in Mumbai, I will live like a king in Assam and work for Assam." This statement alone proves that he was a proud Assamese. Not only in words but through actions too, Zubeen Garg proved his love and dignity for the Assamese people. Until his last breath, he continued to work for Assam.

In reality, Zubeen Garg was not just a singer. He was at once a singer, composer, music director, lyricist, arranger, film actor, film director, film producer, poet, instrumentalist, social worker, nature lover, animal lover—an extraordinary person adorned with all these attributes. Just as he infused new life into the nearly dying Assamese music industry, he also revived the stagnant Assamese film industry with the movie Mission China. His journey gave a fresh dimension to Assamese cinema.

During Rongali Bihu in Assam, the most demanded



singer for stage shows was Zubeen Garg. But in some Hindi media reports, it was said that Zubeen Garg's total wealth was several crores of rupees. In reality, if one asks how much wealth he had, the answer would be that calling it several crores is completely false. Except for a few immovable properties, he did not have much money deposited in banks. This is because Zubeen Garg was a humanitarian artist. Just as people go to politicians seeking financial help for their troubles, people in equal or greater numbers went to Zubeen Garg. And there was no instance where anyone who went to him or his home seeking help was turned away. Almost all the money he earned from people was spent back for the people. From helping with the treatment of incurable diseases to solving personal family problems, Zubeen Garg never refused to help. Even if he didn't have enough money, he would borrow

from others to help. He never considered himself separate from common people. Sitting at a roadside stall drinking tea or talking to ordinary people he met during his travels—such gestures defined him as a man of the soil.

For anything that could harm society or the Assamese community, Zubeen Garg always spoke out fearlessly. At any time, in any situation, he raised his voice for the Assamese people. He was considered a public voice of the Assamese community. Throughout his life, instead of being attracted to any political party or ideology, Zubeen Garg preferred to be the voice of the people. For people of every ethnicity, religion, and caste in Assam, he was their beloved artist. He once said: "I have no caste, I have no religion, I am free, I am Kanchanjunga." He publicly declared: "My caste is Assamese, and my religion is humanity."

Zubeen Garg always tried to bind the Assamese people to-

gether with a garland of unity. For this, millions of people of Assam gave him a permanent place in their hearts. Everyone knew that one call from him could bring change to all of Assam. The people of Assam became accustomed to forgiving his mistakes as those of their own child, brother, or friend and celebrating his every success as their own joy. That is why he was called the heartbeat of the Assamese youth.

When the news spread through the media that Zubeen Garg had fallen ill, people across cities and villages, across castes, religions, and communities, prayed together for his recovery. Many even came forward saying that if needed, they were ready to donate their organs to save him. For many people in Assam, Zubeen Garg was a living God. Many even considered him their deity.

When such a person left this world, the news spread through the skies and winds of Assam, leaving the entire state stunned. No one could believe that Zubeen Garg was no longer physically with us. For the people of Assam, it was unimaginable that Zubeen Garg could ever be sick or hospitalized. They always imagined him as a lively, energetic person, and even today they continue to think of him that way. Thus, the idea that Zubeen Garg could die was unacceptable to anyone in Assam.

When the news of his passing came, silence fell across Assam. Out of deep respect and devotion, a wave of mourning swept through towns, cities, and villages. Shops closed down, vehicles stopped moving spontaneously.

On 19th September 2025, when news broke that Zubeen Garg had passed away abroad, the Assam government immediately took steps to make all necessary arrangements. The Chief Minister personally oversaw preparations. Since he died in Singapore, there was a delay in bringing his body home. On 21st September 2025, his mortal remains were brought from Delhi to Guwahati in a special flight.

From the moment the news spread, countless admirers gathered outside his residence, waiting day and night to see their beloved artist one last time. When his fans learned that his body had reached Guwahati air-

port, crowds gathered there as well. From the airport to his home, it usually takes 40 minutes, but the ambulance carrying his body took nearly 7 hours because of the massive crowds paying their respects along the way. The sea of people lining the roads to see and honor their beloved artist was unprecedented in Assam's history. Policemen on duty were seen wiping tears while performing their duties. The ambulance driver himself was in tears while driving.

There was hardly a person in Assam who did not shed tears for him. Perhaps such a phenomenon has never been seen elsewhere in the world. No one had words to express their condolences. After his family paid tribute, his body was taken to Sarusajai Stadium for public homage. The sea of people outside the stadium was an extraordinary sight. Everyone was chanting in unison: "Joi Zubeen Da, Aamar Zubeen Da, Amar Zubeen Da!"

To allow millions to pay their last respects, the Assam government kept his mortal remains at Sarusajai Stadium for over 48 hours. After his passing, nature itself seemed to mourn. A monkey he once nursed back to health was seen touching his photo with grief. In another place, a dog was seen bowing before his photo. In yet another, a bull lay down emotionally before his picture. At the stadium, rain fell only over the area where his body lay in state, while no other part of the state received rain—showing how even nature and animals loved him. Zubeen Garg was thus established as an unparalleled emperor of Assam. He lives in the hearts of every Assamese. It is hard for people to accept that this emperor will never again address them from the stage. People kept saying in unison: "Our Zubeen Da cannot die. He is resting. He will rise again. He will sing again."

The massive outpouring of grief—from the airport to the stadium to the cremation ground—was something never before seen in the country. The streets were filled only with people, traffic was halted. The number of people who came out spontaneously to bid him farewell was the highest in India and Asia, and the fourth largest in the world. From children to the elderly, everyone came out of their homes to see

him one last time.

Zubeen Garg never liked to see people in distress. During floods, he personally came forward, urging everyone to help the victims. He organized charity football matches, even playing himself, and donated the proceeds for flood relief. After his death, reports emerged in social and mainstream media of several people in Assam committing suicide out of grief. Some even suffered fatal heart attacks upon hearing the news. His passing proved how much people can love an artist, even to the extent of sacrificing their own lives.

The Assam government declared four days of state mourning. On the fifth day, since his cremation was performed with full state honors, the entire Kamrup Metropolitan district was given a holiday. Though other districts were not officially closed, people across the state voluntarily shut shops, markets, and institutions to mourn. Normal life came to a complete standstill.

At Sonapur's Komarkuchi near Guwahati, the government allotted about 10 bighas of land for his cremation with full state honors. A memorial and mausoleum will be built there. Many Assamese entrepreneurs announced they would construct statues of him on their land if permitted. Educators expressed willingness to name universities, schools, and even drinking water facilities after him. Various organizations and individuals have already decided to build busts of Zubeen Garg across many districts of Assam.

The man who used to say "I don't please anyone" and was ready to face any challenge has, in his final journey, been shown by the people who he really was for Assam and the Assamese community. Though he has left physically, Zubeen Garg's creations and personality will live on forever among the Assamese. For Assam and the Assamese people, Zubeen Garg will remain immortal for eternity.

He may be the richest man in the world—not in terms of money, but because of the love he earned. The affection, honor, and respect he gained will never fade. Wealth and property may end, but love never does. Zubeen Garg will remain alive forever in the hearts of the Assamese.

Zubeen Garg: Assam's heart, voice to the world Why Zubeen can't be replaced

By: Bedanga Chutia

In Assam, Zubeen Garg isn't just a singer—he's a cultural institution. His music has always been the binding thread of Assamese identity, cutting across class, language, and region. His departure leaves a void where no other contemporary artist carries the same universal resonance. For Assamese youth, Zubeen is more than an artist—he's a voice of rebellion, love, and protest. His absence can create disillusionment and a sense of cultural orphanhood. Bihu, Rongali functions, college fests—these events feel incomplete without Zubeen's songs. His absence dampens the cultural vibrancy of Assam's public life. Whether on citizenship issues, floods, or youth employment. His departure silences a moral voice that people trusted more than politicians.

The Assamese music industry is heavily dependent on Zubeen's reach. Without him, there's a dip in production, economic activity for musicians, and reduced national visibility for Assamese songs. For many Assamese, Zubeen is like family—his voice is a daily companion. His absence feels like a personal loss, triggering a collective melancholy. Zubeen's voice in Assam is what Freddie Mercury was to Britain or Bob Dylan to America. His timbre carries both raw emotion and technical brilliance, making him universally relatable. Unlike many regional singers who remain niche, Zubeen's voice adapts to rock, folk, classical, and even Bollywood playback seamlessly. He built bridges across genres that once stood apart, uniting rural rhythms and modern arrangements in ways that spoke both to the grandmother in a village and the college student in Delhi.

Zubeen has sung in over 30 languages—from Assamese and Hindi to Bengali, Nepali, and even English. Few global performers manage such breadth. Compare this with Shakira, who built her career in Spanish and English, or Celine Dion, who mastered French and English. Zubeen's range is far wider. His ability to slip from a Bihu folk tune into a Hindi romantic song and then shift effortlessly into a Nepali melody illustrates a linguistic agility rarely seen in global music.

He has recorded more than 30,000 songs—a staggering number by any global benchmark. Even prolific icons like Madonna or Elton John don't match his sheer volume of musical output. In terms of scale and endurance, Zubeen is closer to Ravi Shankar or A.R. Rahman, artists who embodied both quantity and depth. What sets him apart is not only

the numbers but the intimacy he managed to maintain within such abundance.

Zubeen is not only a singer but also the symbol of Assamese pride. Much like FelaKuti represented Nigeria or Victor Jara symbolized Chile, Zubeen embodies the socio-political identity of Assam. His music isn't entertainment alone—it is cultural assertion. When Zubeen sings of the Brahmaputra, it's not merely a river but a lifeline. His art captures the everyday resilience of farmers, the anxieties of youth facing unemployment, and the collective memory of migration and resistance.

During the CAA protests and multiple floods in Assam, Zubeen became a people's spokesperson. Standing on makeshift stages, he sang not just to entertain but to resist. His actions parallel Bono of U2, who used global fame to advocate for Africa, or Bob Marley, who turned reggae into a vehicle for Jamaican resistance. Zubeen's activism was raw, emotional, and deeply human. His departure would silence not just a musician but a conscience trusted by ordinary people.

Zubeen's concerts in Assam, the Northeast, and abroad attract crowds that treat him like a messiah. His raw, unpolished, sometimes unpredictable stage persona resembles Jim Morrison's charisma, blending music with rebellion. He is not the flawless performer who follows a script—he is the artist who breaks it, who argues with the crowd, who weeps mid-song, and who makes every listener feel part of the performance.

Beyond music, Zubeen is a composer, director, and actor, influencing Assamese cinema and shaping its identity. His ventures into film mirrored Lady Gaga's journey beyond pop—expanding into cinema, fashion, and cultural discourse. For Assam, Zubeen provided not just melodies but also stories and visuals that carried its essence to screens.

Unlike many global icons, Zubeen chose to stay rooted in Assam, which gave him unmatched authenticity but limited his global visibility. Had he marketed himself internationally, he might have stood alongside A.R. Rahman or Shakira as a crossover star. Yet his choice was deliberate. To him, home was not a stepping stone but the stage itself.

Assamese people see Zubeen not as a distant star but as their own. This intimacy is rarely replicated at the global scale—similar to Edith Piaf in France. Zubeen's listeners speak of him not in celebrity terms but in familial ones—brother, son, companion. This closeness

explains why his absence feels like bereavement, not mere silence.

World-class singers can be compared in voice, fame, or output, but Zubeen is irreplaceable because he is simultaneously:

- a voice of love through his romantic songs,
- a voice of protest in his political stands,
- a voice of home in his Assamese roots.

This layered identity makes him not just Assam's heart but a global standard of what it means for music to embody a people's soul.

Appeal
Zubeen Garg is not just a singer; he is a cultural ecosystem in himself. His songs, activism, and voice are woven into the identity of Assam and India. But like every cultural icon, his legacy is fragile unless consciously protected. The Government of Assam must formally recognize him as a State Cultural Ambassador, ensuring his music, writings, and activism are archived, digitized, and preserved for future generations.

The Government of India should initiate steps to give him a national honour—Padma award, National Artist status, or a dedicated cultural preservation project. Institutions, universities, and academies should establish archives, scholarships, and cultural programs in his name to nurture young talent under his inspiration. Beyond awards, what Zubeen truly deserves is an institutional framework of protection. If Assam loses him without preserving his legacy, it would be more than the loss of an artist—it would be the erasure of a people's heartbeat. Protecting Zubeen's heritage is about safeguarding the cultural pride of an entire region and projecting it to the world. *(The writer is an author and commentator on global affairs.)*



By: Satvrat Borah

Assam without Zubeen Garg is a thought that strikes at the very heart of what it means to be Assamese, a notion so absurd and heart-breaking that it feels like imagining the Brahmaputra without its relentless flow or the jhumur beats without their earthy rhythm. Zubeen Garg is not merely a musician or a performer he is the pulsating soul of Assam, a cultural colossus whose voice has woven itself into the fabric of everyday life from the misty hills of Karbi Anglong to the bustling streets of Guwahati.

Born on April 18, 1972, Zubeen grew up in a family immersed in the arts, his father a theatre artist and his mother a classical singer who instilled in him an early love for melody. By his teenage years he was already a force strumming the guitar and crooning folk tunes at local gatherings but it was his transition to Bollywood and beyond that catapulted him into legend status. Yet for all his national acclaim it is in Assam where his absence would leave the deepest void, a state that thrives on his songs like a plant in sunlight.

Picture a Bihu festival stripped of Zubeen's electrifying performances, the kind where he leaps onto the stage in a crisp gamucha sweat glistening under the floodlights as thousands sway to O Mur Apunar Desh. Without him the air would hang heavy with an unnatural silence, the dhols would thud hollowly and the young lovers exchanging shy glances under the bamboo groves would find their romance muted bereft of those lyrics that capture the tender ache of first love in the Assamese tongue.

Zubeen's music is the soundtrack to Assam's joys and sorrows, his voice a bridge between the rustic simplicity of rural life and the complexities of urban dreams. He has sung over a thousand songs in Assamese Hindi Bodo Karbi and more each one a testament to his linguistic

dexterity and emotional depth. Take for instance his iconic O Jonak for the film Mission China, a track that blends haunting folk elements with modern orchestration evoking the ethereal beauty of Assam's tea gardens at dawn.

Without Zubeen who would infuse such raw passion into these melodies? The state's youth, many of whom grew up humming his tunes on school buses or during long rainy afternoons, would feel adrift a generation unmoored from its musical heritage. Zubeen's influence extends far beyond the concert stage; he is a one man cultural revivalist who has single handedly elevated Assamese folk genres like Bihu and Goalpariya to global audiences.

In an era when homogenization threatens regional identities Zubeen's insistence on singing in local dialects has preserved dialects on the brink of fading. He has collaborated with tribal artists from the Mising and Bodo communities infusing their rhythms into mainstream tracks ensuring that the diverse tapestry of Assam's 126 ethnic groups finds representation in popular culture. Imagine a world where the vibrant Husori songs of Majuli without his gravely timbre lose their festive spark or where the poignant Bhupen Hazarika tributes he delivers with such gravitas become mere echoes.

Zubeen's activism too is woven into this indispensability; his outspoken stance on issues like the NRC protests and environmental degradation in Kaziranga has made him a voice for the voiceless. He has rallied crowds not just with music but with calls for justice turning concerts into movements. Assam without Zubeen would be an Assam silenced not just musically but morally a state adrift without its conscience bearer.

Delve deeper into his discography and the impossibility sharpens songs like Mon Majhi and Kothanodi stand as pillars of Assamese cinema their soundtracks inseparable from Zubeen's baritone which conveys the quiet resilience of a people battered by floods and floods yet unbroken. He is the artist who can shift from the jubilant energy of Bihu numbers that make feet stomp involuntarily to the melancholic strains of lost homelands in tracks like Axomiya.

His live performances are legendary chaotic joyous spectacles where he banters in pure Axomiya drawing roars of laughter and tears in equal measure. Fans recount tales of him pausing mid-song to chat with a child in the front row or improvising lyrics about the evening's downpour turning potential disaster into communal delight. Without these moments Assam's social fabric would fray the shared experiences that bind strangers into a family

dissolved into polite applause for lesser talents.

Economically too Zubeen's absence would ripple outward his tours and album releases pump life into local economies from roadside food stalls teeming with fans to merchandise vendors hawking Zubeen scarves. He has mentored countless young artists through his music academy in Namoni providing scholarships and platforms that have launched careers. Picture the void in Guwahati's music scene where his annual Rongali Bihu concerts draw lakhs, his voice booming across the city like a heartbeat.

The state's pride swells with every national award he clinches yet its humility shines in how he remains Zubeen Bhaiya the approachable uncle who remembers every fan's name. Culturally Assam is a land of stories sung not spoken and Zubeen is its chief storyteller. His foray into acting in films like Kothanodi and Aai Rangaar Budo reveals a performer who embodies the states folklore bringing mythical creatures and village lore to vivid life through song and screen.

Without him Assamese cinema would lose its musical soul reduced to dialogue heavy dramas lacking the emotional punctuation of his compositions. He has composed for over 50 films blending traditional instruments like the dotara and pepa with electronic beats creating a sound that is unmistakably Assamese yet universally appealing. In a globalized world where K pop and hip hop dominate Zubeen's fusion keeps Assam's identity alive inviting outsiders to its rhythms while empowering locals to claim them unapologetically.

The youth of Assam often grapple with migration dreams pulling them to Mumbai or Delhi but Zubeen's songs act as homing beacons, reminders of the red soil and green paddy fields waiting back home. Tracks like Biya Namote celebrate weddings with such infectious glee that they become anthems for every bride and groom from Dibrugarh to Dhemajri. His philanthropy from flood relief concerts to supporting cancer patients underscores his role as a paternal figure, his voice a balm for collective wounds.

To contemplate Assam sans Zubeen is to envision a festival without firecrackers, a river without fish, a sky without stars. He is the thread that stitches past to present the bard who ensures that Assam's melodies endure. In coffee houses and college fests his covers keep spirits high in political rallies, his anthems fuel fervor and in quiet moments of grief his ballads offer solace. Zubeen Garg is not replaceable, he is irreplaceable, a living legend whose every note is a love letter to his homeland.

NATO can help Ukraine win back lost territories, says Trump

Trump is a game changer by himself: Zelensky

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 24: President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he believed Ukraine could win back all territory lost to Russia, a dramatic shift from the US leader's repeated calls for Kyiv to make concessions to end the war.

Trump posted on social media soon after meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly gathering of world leaders.

"I think Ukraine, with the support of the European Union, is in a position to fight and WIN all of Ukraine back in its original form," Trump wrote. "With time, patience, and the financial support of Europe and, in particular, NATO, the original borders from where this War started, is very much an option."

The strengthened support from Trump,

if it sticks, is a huge win for Zelensky, who has urged the American president to keep up the pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin to end his brutal war. It was a departure from Trump's previous suggestions that Ukraine would never be able to reclaim all the territory that Russia has occupied since seizing the Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

That had disheartened Zelensky, Europeans and Ukrainians and called into question the US commitment to UN principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. But now, Trump's view of the battlefield coincides more with Ukraine's, Zelensky said.

"Trump is a game changer by himself," Zelensky told reporters after their meeting.

Trump needles Russia about war in Ukraine

Trump, going back to his 2024 campaign, insisted he would quickly end the war, but his peace efforts appear to have



stalled following a diplomatic blitz last month, when he held a summit with Putin and a White House meeting with Zelensky and European allies.

be "the easiest" because he has had a good relationship with Putin. Trump said he is open to imposing more sanctions on Russia and urged Europe to join in.

"Russia has been fighting aimlessly for three and a half years a war that should have taken a Real Military Power less than a week to win," Trump wrote on social media. "This is not distinguishing Russia. In fact, it is very much making them look like a paper tiger."

In his speech to the General Assembly, Trump said the war in Ukraine was making Russia "look bad" because it was "supposed to be a quick little skirmish."

"It shows you what leadership is, what bad leadership can do to a country," he said. "The only question now is how many lives will be needlessly lost on both sides."

Before meeting with Zelensky, Trump said the "biggest progress" toward ending the conflict "is that the Russian economy is terrible right now." Zelensky said he agreed with Trump's call for European na-

tions to further halt imports of Russian oil and natural gas.

"We have great respect for the fight that Ukraine is putting up," Trump told Zelensky, who replied that he had "good news" from the battlefield.

How Trump's stance has shifted on Ukraine

Before his Alaska summit with Putin last month, Trump repeated that any resolution to the war would require "some land swapping."

In talks with Zelensky and Europeans just afterward, Trump said Putin reiterated that he wants the Donetsk and Luhansk regions that make up the Donbas, according to European officials. Days later, Zelensky and prominent European leaders came to the White House.

Following those meetings, Trump announced he was arranging for direct talks between Putin and Zelensky. But Putin hasn't shown any interest in meeting with Zelensky and Moscow has only intensi-

fied its bombardment of Ukraine.

European leaders as well as American lawmakers, including some Republican allies of Trump, have urged the president to dial up stronger sanctions on Russia.

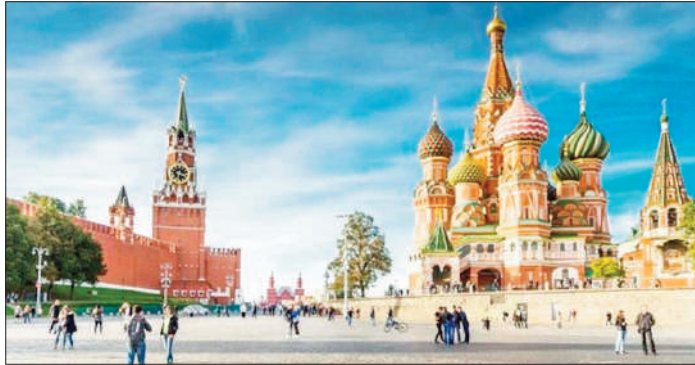
"In the event that Russia is not ready to make a deal to end the war, then the United States is fully prepared to impose a very strong round of powerful tariffs, which would stop the bloodshed, I believe, very quickly," Trump told the General Assembly.

However, he repeated his calls for Europe to "step it up" and stop buying Russian oil, the engine feeding Putin's war machine.

Push for sanctions and cutting off Russian oil

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said before a meeting with Trump that Europe would be imposing more sanctions and tariffs on Russia and that the bloc would be further reducing its imports of Russian energy. (PTI)

Kremlin rejects Trump's remarks about Ukraine retaking lost territories from Russia



MOSCOW, Sept 24: Russia on Wednesday rejected US President Donald Trump's statement about Ukraine retaking lost territories with the help of the EU, saying it is an "integral part of European security".

President Trump said Tuesday that Ukraine can win back all territory lost to Russia, a dramatic shift from the US leader's call on Kyiv to make concessions.

Trump offered his position in a social media posting soon after meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on the side-

lines of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Kremlin cannot agree with all of Trump's statements regarding the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict, the Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in an interview with RosBusinessConsulting (RBC) radio.

He attributed the US president's change in tone to his meeting with Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York. "Trump heard Zelensky's

version of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and this information apparently influenced his assessment", Peskov noted and underlined that the Kremlin cannot agree with everything the American president said.

"Putin and Russia are in BIG economic trouble, and this is the time for Ukraine to act," Trump said on Truth Social.

"After seeing the Economic trouble (the war) is causing Russia, I think Ukraine, with the support of the European Union, is in a position to fight and WIN all of Ukraine back in its original form," Trump said.

"You cannot deal with European security at the expense of Russia's security. Moreover, no matter what anyone says, even now Russia is an integral part of European security," the Kremlin spokesman said, responding to Trump's comment.

On the Kremlin's late reaction, Peskov said it was late at night in Moscow yesterday and would have been strange to comment. (PTI)

Global South must cut dependence on single markets, build fair economic order: Jaishankar

NEW YORK, Sept 24: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has urged Global South countries to reduce dependence on any single supplier or market by building resilient supply chains, alongside promoting fair economic practices, and boosting South-South trade and technology collaborations.

Addressing a high-level meeting of Like-Minded Global South Countries on the sidelines of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly here on Tuesday, Jaishankar said, "We meet in increasingly uncertain times, when the state of the world is a cause for mounting concern for member states."

The Global South, he said, in particular, is confronted with a set of challenges, from pandemic shocks and wars in Ukraine and Gaza to extreme climate events, volatile trade, uncertainty in investment flows and interest rates, and the "catastrophic" slowing down of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda.

"In the face of such proliferation of concerns and multiplicity of risks, it is natural that the Global South would turn to multilateralism for solutions," Jaishankar said.

However, "unfortunately", he noted, "there too we are presented with a very disappointing prospect", with the "very concept of multilateralism under attack" and international organisations being rendered ineffective or "starved of resources".

"The building blocks of the contemporary order are starting to come apart. And the cost of delaying much-needed reforms is today starkly visible," Jaishankar said.

He said the Global South must present a united front in demanding a level playing field in the international system.

For the economic security of the Global South, developing nations must build "resilient, reliable and shorter supply chains that reduce dependence on any single supplier or any single market", Jaishankar said.

He asserted that the developing countries must "democratise" production through fair and transparent economic practices, ensure a stable environment for balanced and sustainable economic interactions, including more South-South trade and investment, and push for an urgent resolution of conflicts that are impacting food, fertiliser, and energy security. (PTI)

PM Karki meets Nepal President, ordinance related to new voters registration issued

KATHMANDU, Sept 24: President Ramchandra Paudel on Wednesday issued an ordinance related to an amendment to the voter registration act paving the way for names of new voters to be registered ahead of the March 2026 general election.

The development comes after Prime Minister Sushila Karki met President Paudel to discuss matters relating to the timely conduct of the general elections.

The President has issued the ordinance on Wednesday in accordance with section (1) of Article 114 of the Constitution of Nepal based on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, according to a source at the President's Office.

The amendment to the Voter Registration Act, 2073 Bikram Samvat will pave the way to register the names of new voters for the upcoming election scheduled to be held on March 5, 2026.

Karki's meeting with President Paudel at the President House, Sheela Niwas, came a day after the prime minister discussed preparations for the general election with the Election Commission (EC) officials here.

Karki, 73, became prime minister on September 12, ending days of political uncertainty after the ouster of Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli following violent protests by youth-led Gen Z group against his government over cor-

ruption and a ban on social media.

President Paudel dissolved the House of Representatives at Karki's recommendation and announced March 5 as the date for conducting fresh elections.

"During the meeting with Paudel, Karki discussed the current political and security situation, the upcoming House of Representatives election on March 5, 2026 and the security situation prevailing in the country," a source close to the President's Office said.

"The Election Commission will formulate an action plan to collect the names of new voters at the earliest," said Suman Ghimire, Information Officer at the EC.

The ordinance will provide an opportunity to the younger generation to participate in the electoral process, he pointed out.

"As the election date is fixed for March 5, 2026, we will try to give voting rights to those who complete 18 years of age by March 4," he said. The EC will collect the names of those who are 16 years of age so that it can obtain the list of voters who complete 18 years on March 4 next year, he pointed out.

At present, Nepal has 1.81,68,000 eligible voters for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

This number will certainly go up by the time of the voting as the EC is planning to collect the names of the new voters, Ghimire added. (PTI)

Jaffar Express attacked in Pakistan's Balochistan

ISLAMABAD, Sept 24: At least a dozen-odd people, including women and children, were injured in a bombing attack on Jaffar Express in the Balochistan province of Pakistan. The Quetta-bound Jaffar Express was targeted in the Spizend area of Mastung on Tuesday, latest in a series of attacks that have targeted this train since March this year.

According to railway officials, six bogies of the train coming from Peshawar derailed after the blast and one overturned, injuring several of the passengers in that carriage in the evening, reported Dawn. It was the second blast in the

same area within 10 hours.

Earlier in the morning, an explosion had occurred near the main track linking Balochistan to the rest of the country, just as the Peshawar-bound Jaffar Express was preparing to leave Quetta Railway Station.

The train was briefly halted but allowed to continue after security clearance, as the track was not damaged.

However, in the evening, an explosive device planted on the track detonated when the Quetta-bound train was passing through the Spizend area, police officials said.

"Six bogies of the Jaffar Express derailed after the blast and one of them overturned," a senior Pakistan Railways official told Dawn, adding that five passengers sustained injuries. Security forces and police rushed to the site soon after the blast and shifted the injured to a nearby health facility.

The railway officials confirmed 270 passengers were on board at the time of the blast. They said the damaged part of the track would be repaired after security clearance on Wednesday, during which train service would remain suspended. (PTI)

Man arrested in UK over alleged cyberattack

LONDON, Sept 24: A man in his 40s was arrested in southern England over an alleged cyberattack that disrupted several European airports in recent days, including at London Heathrow, law enforcement officials said Wednesday.

The UK's National Crime Agency said the suspect was held in West Sussex on Tuesday on suspicion of offenses involving the misuse of computers and was released on conditional bail.

"Although this arrest is a positive step, the investigation into this incident is in its early stages and remains ongoing," said Paul Foster, head of the NCA's national cybercrime unit. "Cybercrime is a persistent global threat that continues to cause significant disruption to the UK." Starting late Friday and lasting through the weekend, airports in Berlin, Brussels and London were hit by disruptions to electronic systems that snarled up check-in and sent airline staffers trying options like handwriting boarding passes or using backup laptops. Many other European airports were unaffected. The cyberattack affected the software of Collins Aerospace, whose systems help passengers check in, print boarding passes and bag tags, and dispatch their luggage. The US-based company on Saturday cited a "cyber-related disruption" to its software at "select" airports in Europe. (PTI)

Saudi Arabia's grand mufti dies in its liberalised nation

DUBAI, Sept 24: Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh, Saudi Arabia's grand mufti who served the kingdom's top religious figure over a quarter century that saw the ultraconservative Muslim nation socially liberalise has died.

The grand mufti, who was in his 80s, died on Tuesday.

Sheikh Abdulaziz's role as grand mufti put him as one of the top Islamic clerics in the world of Sunni Muslims.

Saudi Arabia, home to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, hosts the annual Hajj pilgrimage required of all able-bodied Muslims once in their lives, making the pronouncements of the grand mufti that much more closely followed.

While closely aligned to Al Saud ruling family, which has allowed women to drive, opened movie theatres and further socially liberalised in recent years, Sheikh Abdulaziz denounced extremists like those in the Islamic State group and al-Qaida.

He also made pronouncements during his time as grand mufti viewed as sectarian and more following Saudi Arabia's Wahhabism, a strictly austere form of



Islam that for decades saw the kingdom segregate the sexes, restrict music and follow other puritanical pursuits.

tions to the service of Islam and Muslims," the Saudi Royal Court said in a statement.

Sheikh Abdulaziz, who became blind as a young man, became grand mufti in 1999, installed by Saudi King Fahd.

At the time, the kingdom remained segregated and its people closely policed by the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. Those views could be seen in the grand mufti's earlier reported comments, such as condemning mobile phone cameras in 2004 for possibly being "exploited to photograph and spread vice in the community".

Other remarks focused on Christianity. He joined other Islamic leaders in denouncing then-Pope Benedict XVI's 2006 speech quoting a Byzantine emperor as saying some of the Prophet Muhammad's teachings were "evil and inhuman".

In 2012, responding to a question about Christian churches in Kuwait, Sheikh Abdulaziz reportedly said it was "necessary to destroy all the churches of the region". Those around him later sought to walk the remarks back after they drew outrage from Christian leaders. (PTI)

PARKING CONTRACT IN TINSUKIA DIVISION

E-Auction invited for Parking contract at Dhemaji Railway Station in Tinsukia Division. Auction Catalogue No.: TSK-Parking-43. Description: Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three Wheelers and Four Wheelers; Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee. Days: 1096; Auction Start Date & Time : At 11:00 hrs. on 14-10-2025.

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Lot end date & time
AA/1	PARKING-TSK-DMC-MX-48-25-2 (Parking-Mixed)	At 11:30 hrs. on 14-10-2025

Initial Cooling off period is 30 minutes. Successive lots closing interval 10 minutes. Lot wise closing time can be viewed in e-Auction module of IREPS. Note: Prospective bidder are requested to visit e-Auction leasing module on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in for more details.

Divisional Commercial Manager(I/C), Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

E-AUCTION FOR ADVERTISING ASSETS OVER LUMDING DIVISION

E-Auction for advertising assets over Lumding Division. Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee. Trips/Days: 1096.

Auction Catalogue No. ADVT-LMG-42-25

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Description
AA/1	ADVT-LMG-KYQ-OH-356-25-1 (Advertising-Out of Home)	Proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at Kamakhya Railway Station (Circulating area)
AA/2	ADVT-LMG-HJI-OH-363-25-1 (Advertising-Out of Home)	Proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at Hojai Railway Station Circulating area
AB/1	ADVT-LMG-HJI-OSN-354-25-1 (Advertising-On Station Premise (Non-Digital))	Proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement right at Station premise of Hojai Railway Station.
AB/2	ADVT-LMG-DMV-OSN-352-25-1 (Advertising-On Station Premise (Non-Digital))	Proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement right at Dimapur Railway Station premise.
AB/3	ADVT-LMG-LKA-OSN-351-25-1 (Advertising-On Station Premise (Non-Digital))	Proposal for calling e-Auction for Lanka Railway Station in Station premise for a period of three (03) years under RDN (Non-digital) policy.
AB/4	ADVT-LMG-KYQ-OSN-357-25-1 (Advertising-On Station Premise (Non-Digital))	Proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at Kamakhya Railway Station premise. (inside)

Auction Start Date & Time: 10.00 hrs. of 06-10-2025. Auction Close Date & Time: 11.20 hrs. of 06-10-2025. Prospective bidders are requested to visit E-Auction Leasing Module on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Railway Manager (C), Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

NOTICE

(on High Court Cases related to engagement of CTET qualified candidates)

No.704442/1428505

In compliance of the Hon'ble Gauhati High Court's Order dated 19.07.2021 passed in WA No.69/2021, Order dated 12.02.2021 passed in I.A.(Civil)/258/2021 and Order dated 19.05.2025 passed in WP(C)/6331/2022, this office had published Notice dated 19/07/2022 and Notification dated 16/07/2025 seeking Online Application from those aspiring candidates, who are CTET qualified, fulfilling all other eligibility criteria, for filling up the posts of Assistant Teacher (Contractual) for Lower Primary School and Assistant Teacher (Contractual-Social Science and Maths & Science) for Upper Primary School, who were writ petitioners before the Hon'ble Gauhati High Court challenging the Advertisement issued vide No. SSA/TT/Engagement of AT/328/2020/2609, dated 24/09/2020, by SSA.

This office had received online applications in response to the above Notice/Notification dated 19/07/2022 and 16/07/2025. Apart from that, this office had also received Offline Applications from aspiring candidates who were stated to be writ petitioners before the Hon'ble Gauhati High Court challenging the Advertisement No. SSA/TT/Engagement of AT/328/2020/2609, dated 24/09/2020 and in terms of the interim Order dated 08/10/2020 passed by the Hon'ble Gauhati High Court in WP(C)/4156/2020, WP(C)/4174/2020, Order dated 09/10/2020 passed in WP(C)/4227/2020, WP(C)/4139/2020, and Order dated 12/10/2020 passed in WP(C)/4237/2020, WP(C)/4269/2020, WP(C)/4258/2020, WP(C)/4256/2020, WP(C)/4282/2020, and also challenging the Notice dated 19/07/2022 vide No. SSA/TT/Legal Matter/214/2022/1243 issued by SSA and in terms of the interim Order dated 14/09/2022 passed in WP(C)/5954/2022.

After preliminary scrutiny of the Online Applications and Offline Applications received by this office, applications of some candidates have been rejected on the basis of not being a writ petitioner in a case challenging the Advertisement No. SSA/TT/Engagement of AT/328/2020/2609 dated 24/09/2020 issued by SSA. The number of applicants shortlisted for verification of documents after such scrutiny is 341. Moreover, by Order dated 07/08/2023 passed in WP(C)/5954/2022, the Division Bench of the Hon'ble Gauhati High Court directed to consider the application of 1 more candidate, if otherwise qualified, who had submitted application in terms of the interim Order dated 14/09/2022 passed in WP(C)/5954/2022. Accordingly, the total number of candidates shortlisted for appearing before the verification committee is 342. **The List of these shortlisted candidates can be viewed in the official website of Samagra Shiksha, Axom i.e. <https://ssa.assam.gov.in>. The date and venue for verification of documents will be notified through separate Public Notice.**

If any applicant, whose name is not appearing in the list of Shortlisted candidates (after submission of online application/Offline application) for verification of documents, **wants to claim his/her name to be there in the list of Shortlisted candidates** for verification of documents, then he/she may submit his/her grievance/claim in writing along with supporting documents in the reception counter of State Mission Office of the Samagra Shiksha, Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19 in all working days from **25.09.2025 to 09.10.2025** between 10 AM to 5 PM. After submission of the written grievance, the applicant concerned should take a receipt of the grievance letter for his/her record. **No claim will be entertained after 5.00 PM of 09.10.2025.**

Sd/-Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

DIPR /DF/HLT/110/25-Sep-25

Mein urges citizens to collectively strive towards building a stronger nation Deputy CM Chowna Mein interacts with traders in GST awareness drive at Naharlagun

HT Correspondent
NAHARLAGUN, Sept 24: Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Chowna Mein on Wednesday engaged with the state's business community during a GST awareness campaign organised by the Arunachal Chamber of Commerce & Industries (ACC&I) in Naharlagun.

The programme formed part of the ongoing GST Bhachat Utsav, a 100-day nationwide campaign aimed at ensuring that consumers reap the benefits of simplified GST 2.0 reforms.

Addressing traders and entrepreneurs, Mein emphasised their crucial role in the effective implementation of GST.

He described the reform, introduced under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as a landmark step that transformed India's indirect tax system, simplified compliance processes and strengthened the country's economic foundations.

The Deputy Chief Minister highlighted the remarkable progress recorded in Arunachal Pradesh since the introduction of



GST. He informed that the state's GST collections had grown nearly seven-fold—from ₹227 crore in 2017-18 to about ₹1,900 crore in 2023-24.

He underlined that these enhanced revenues had enabled the state government to invest in critical infrastructure such as roads, expand healthcare facilities, strengthen education, and fund welfare programmes.

Mein also recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had lauded the active participation of local traders and entrepreneurs in successfully implementing GST.

He urged the business commu-

nity to ensure that the multiple benefits of the reform percolate down to the common citizen, thereby strengthening trust in the system.

Placing the campaign within the framework of the ongoing 'Seva Pakhwada', which runs until October 2, Mein explained that various flagship programmes such as Poshan Abhiyan, GST Bhachat Utsav, and Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam were being taken to grassroots communities.

He asserted that these efforts were not limited to tax collection but were part of a broader strategy to empower local industries, reduce import dependency, and

promote Swadeshi products under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

"With the support of all NDA legislators, we aim to take the message of #NextGenGST and Swadeshi to every household in Arunachal Pradesh," he declared, calling upon every section of society to participate in strengthening the national economy.

Expressing gratitude to the Prime Minister for ushering in GST reforms that created new opportunities for small businesses, Mein urged citizens to collectively strive towards building a stronger nation.

He concluded by reaffirming the state's resolve to contribute to the goal of a Viksit Bharat by 2047, stating, "Together, let us strengthen India's economy, culture, and society."

The campaign witnessed significant participation, with Minister Dasanglu Pul, MLAs Techi Kaso, Toko Tatung, Zingnu Namchoom, Rotom Tebin and Puiunyo Apum joining the event, along with ACC&I President Tarh Nachung and senior BJP functionaries.

Police clarify Naharlagun incident during PM's programme, assure no security breach



HT Correspondent
ITANAGAR, Sept 24: The Arunachal Pradesh Police has issued a detailed clarification regarding an incident that occurred during the Prime Minister's programme on September 22, 2025, assuring the public that there was no security breach and that the situation was swiftly contained.

According to the police statement, the matter was treated with utmost seriousness, with Home Minister Mama Natung convening an emergency meeting of senior police authorities on September 23 to review the entire episode. Home Advisor Mutchu Mithi also attended the meeting, during which the police department was directed to conduct an impartial and detailed inquiry at the earliest.

Outlining the sequence of events, the police reported that at around 12:06 pm, a youth suddenly jumped from the general public enclosure and ran towards the media platform through the central aisle.

When intercepted by police personnel, he pushed a lady inspector and climbed onto the media platform, where he displayed a piece of cloth bearing the slogan "Stop Hunger Strike, Give Ladakh Their Rights."

Security staff immediately overpowered him and whisked him away. He was restrained before he could reach the Protective 'D' security zone.

CCTV examination later identified the youth as 18-year-old Higo Obi, a first-year BA History student of Dera Natung College.

He hails from Tachipu village in Kra Dadi district and

currently resides in Nikum Colony, Doimukh. The police revealed that he had entered the enclosure through Gate No. 6 DFMD at 7:00 am after undergoing frisking and routine checks.

The piece of cloth he displayed had been concealed inside his undergarments to evade detection.

During interrogation, Obi disclosed that he was an admirer of Ladakh activist Sonam Wangchuk and had intended to highlight the latter's hunger strike demanding Sixth Schedule status for Leh and Ladakh.

He insisted that his act was self-motivated and that he had no organisational backing or local links in Arunachal Pradesh.

Police analysis of his mobile phone, bank accounts and call records found no evidence of funding or connections to any disruptive groups.

A case under relevant sections of law has been registered against him for causing disruption of public order, trespassing into a prohibited area, deterring a public servant from duty by assaulting an officer, and resisting lawful police intervention.

His mobile phone has been seized for further analysis, while a senior IPS officer has been tasked with conducting an independent inquiry.

The police strongly emphasised that full-proof security arrangements had been put in place across the venue, including the helipad, Raj Bhawan and the entire route. At no stage, they clarified, was the Prime Minister or the protective 'D' security cordon under threat.

The police reiterated that there was no breach of the "D" box, the green room, restricted zones, proximity ring, motorcade or any other layer of VVIP security.

Authorities described the incident as an attempted disruption by an unruly individual during the Prime Minister's speech, which was swiftly contained by security personnel within seconds.

They stressed that the issue raised by the youth bore no relevance to local concerns in Arunachal Pradesh and confirmed that his actions were the result of personal conviction rather than any larger conspiracy.

"All through the incident, the situation remained fully under control and no serious disruption was caused," the police statement concluded, underlining that VVIP security had never been compromised at any point.

24-hr bandh over 11 teachers not joining duty passes off peacefully in Arunachal's West Kameng

ITANAGAR, Sept 24: Normal life was thrown out of gear in Arunachal Pradesh's West Kameng district due to a 24-hour bandh enforced by a students' body in protest against 11 teachers not joining their place of posting, which, it said, has "affected academic environment", an official said on Wednesday.

The bandh, enforced by the All West Kameng District Students' Union (AWKDSU), began at 5 am on Tuesday and ended at 5 am on Wednesday.

Bomdila police station officer-in-charge Sub Inspector H B Tator said the bandh passed off peacefully without any untoward incident.

On Tuesday, shops and business establishments remained closed across the district and government offices registered thin attendance. Vehicles -- both public and private -- remained off the roads in view of the bandh.

Students appearing for half-yearly examinations were exempted from the purview of the

bandh. The bandh was enforced in protest against 11 teachers not joining duty after being transferred to West Kameng on July 20 this year. Of the total 12 transferred teachers, only one joined his place of posting, AWKDSU president Khambo Sakrinsow claimed.

He said the organisation deferred the bandh on September 17 following assurances from the four MLAs from the district that they would resolve the matter with the state government.

Sakrinsow expressed concern over the failure of the MLAs and the Education Department to fulfill their commitment and said that the teachers' not joining duty has hampered the learning environment for students.

Maintaining that the students' body would not relent until all the teachers join their places of posting, he warned of resorting to a 48-hour bandh soon.

On July 20 this year, the Education Department ordered the transfer and posting of 203

teachers. However, many teachers were unwilling to leave their current places of posting, with some of them resorting to producing medical certificates and citing joint posting of spouses and children's education as an excuse.

In a parallel development, the Education Department, in partial modification of its order, has retained 45 teachers (outside the purview of the medical board).

The teachers have been retained on various grounds such as child education, joint posting of spouses, on the verge of retirement, multiple transfers within six months, among others.

The teachers whose representations have not been accepted shall stand released with immediate effect, Education Commissioner Amjad Tak said in the order.

He directed the deputy directors of school education (DDSEs) in the districts to submit compliance reports, along with copies of release orders, within a week. (PTT)

Body of woman found in locked house

ITANAGAR, Sept 24: The body of a woman was found from a house near Power House in Chimpu I area on the outskirts of Itanagar, a police officer said on Wednesday.

Itanagar Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Kengo Dirchi said on Tuesday evening that the police control room received information regarding the body of a woman found at around 6.20 pm.

A police team reached the spot and found that the body of a woman had been buried beneath the kitchen of the house belonging to one Kamal Pradhan (80), who has been missing for the last one week, the officer said.

The house remained locked during this period, and a foul smell emanating from the house was reported by locals, who then informed the landlord and subsequently the police.

The SDPO said an executive magistrate visited the spot and the scene of the crime was videographed, and the area was secured. (PTT)

AFFIDAVIT

I, ABDUL AZIZ S/O Kukil Ali R/O village-chukabahi P.O, Daipam, PS- Dalgao, Dist-Darrang. (Assam) declare that I am a permanent resident of above mentioned address and citizen of India by birth. That my father's actual and correct name is Kukil Ali. That my father's name has been recorded in my passport vide passport No.-NO813706 file No GU10687988269615 as kafiluddin. That kukil Ali and kafiluddin in the same and one person who is my father.

Sd/-
ABDUL AZIZ

MULTIDISCIPLINARY SPORT COMPLEX AT LUMDING
E-Tender Notice No.: LMG/Engg/70 of 2025 Dated: 18-09-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Brief Description of Item:** Multidisciplinary sport complex at Lumding for Basketball, Volley Ball, Lawn Tennis, Badminton etc. & development of Railway Stadium for Cricket & Football at Lumding under jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/IV. **Tender Value:** ₹6,87,01,894.10/- **Earnest Money:** ₹4,93,500/- **Date & Time of closing of tender:** At 15:00 hrs. on 13-10-2025 & opening at 15:00 hrs. on 14-10-2025. The complete information of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 13-10-2025 in website www.ireps.gov.in

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ASSOCIATE SIGNALING WORK
E-Tender No. SNT-23-LMG-2025-26; Dated: 19-09-2025. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work. **Name of work & its Location:** Associate Signaling work in connection with CTR (P) 60Kg at stations in Panikhait (PH)- Lumding (LMG) under the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN/II/Lumding. **Tender Value:** ₹15,85,153.51/- **Bid Security:** ₹31,700.00/- **E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 13-10-2025 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 13-10-2025.** For details visit: www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (W), Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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ENGINEERING WORK
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. TSK/Engg/51 of 2025; dated: 19-09-2025. E-tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work. **Item No.1: Brief Description of item:** Dibrugarh Town - New Tinsukia Jn. (SL) - CTR(P) - 15,000 Tkm & TSR(P) - 8,000 Tkm. **Tender Value:** ₹7,00,48,818/- **Earnest Money:** ₹5,00,300/- **Item No.2: Brief Description of item:** At Tinsukia Division:- P-Way Ancillary work in connection with the maintenance of Track in the section Dhamalgaon-Tangani-New Sisiboragan, Chainage 16/200- 44/200 including Y link of South Bank under jurisdiction of SSE/P.Way/IC/Dibrugarh. **Tender Value:** ₹2,72,43,638/- **Earnest Money:** ₹2,86,200/- **Item No.3: Brief Description of item:** At Tinsukia Division:- P-Way Ancillary work in connection with the maintenance of Track in the section Chalkhoa-Dhamalgaon (KM/0-17/2), Moranhat-Dhamalgaon (KM/0-25/0) including Moranhat Yard (km519-52/3) and Dibrugarh-Dibrugarh North Chalk (km 0/0-0/5) under Jurisdiction of SSE/P.Way/IC/Dibrugarh. **Tender Value:** ₹2,91,70,565/- **Earnest Money:** ₹2,95,900/- **Item No.4: Brief Description of item:** Tinsukia Division - Ancillary work in connection with Through Ballast Recoupmnt including deepscreening from Km 329.00 to Km 406.3 between Furkating Jn.-Simaluguri Jn. section. Total=77.3 Km. **Tender Value:** ₹3,55,65,200/- **Earnest Money:** ₹3,27,800/- **E-tenders will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 14-10-2025 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 14-10-2025.** The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 14-10-2025 in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

DRM (W)/Tinsukia
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DNGCI marks NSS Day 2025 with induction, orientation and career counselling programme
HT Correspondent
ITANAGAR, Sept 24: The NSS Units of Dera Natung Government College Itanagar (DNGCI) on Wednesday celebrated NSS Day 2025 with a comprehensive programme that combined induction, orientation and career counselling sessions for newly enrolled volunteers of the 2025-26 academic session.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from first-time entrants who pledged to dedicate themselves to the ideals of the National Service Scheme.

Delivering the keynote career counselling session, DNGCI Principal Dr MQ Khan highlighted the growing relevance of NSS volunteers in today's society.

He noted that the NSS and NCC units of DNGCI have consistently contributed manpower to state government initiatives and civil society programmes. Pointing to emerging opportunities in NGOs, corporate sectors, and even international organisations such as the United Nations, Dr Khan emphasised that active involvement in NSS builds discipline, leadership and service-oriented skills that can shape promising careers.

In his address, Dr Khan also underscored the importance of maintaining mental and physical health, reminding students that no career can thrive without balance in both spheres.

He warned against the ill-effects of social media addiction, encouraging students instead to use digital platforms as a "digital library of knowledge."

Stressing that time is the most precious non-renewable resource, he urged the youngsters to pursue discipline, discover their strengths, and begin career preparation early.

Whether aspiring for UPSC, APPSC or other competitive examinations, Dr Khan advised the students to focus on academic performance, invest extra effort in preparation, and select their circle of friends wisely. His address concluded with an interactive question-answer session, in which students engaged with practical queries on career paths.

The induction session on NSS was conducted by Programme Officer Dr Kipa Roni, who acquainted the new volunteers with the history, objectives, structure and activities of the scheme.

He explained the motto "Not Me, But You" and briefed students about regular service activities, annual camps, and Bath Village under Itanagar Circle, which has been adopted by DNGCI's NSS units.

Gender justice and ban on polygamy APWWS organises legal awareness programme in Tuting



HT Correspondent

TUTING, Sept 24: The Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society (APWWS), Tuting Branch, organised a one-day legal awareness programme at Solung Ground, Tuting, on September 23, with the aim of raising awareness among women of the sub-division. The event drew wide participation from local women, community leaders, government officials, self-help groups and representatives of various institutions, reflecting the growing commitment to women's empowerment in one of the remotest corners of the state.

Advocate Kani Nada Maling, President of the APWWS Central Executive Committee, attended as chief guest and commended the Tuting Branch for its consistent service to women and children despite the challenges of geographical isolation and limited connectivity.

Established in 2019, the Tuting unit has steadily grown into a beacon of grassroots empowerment.

President Maling recalled the branch's recent awareness campaigns across far-flung villages, which educated villagers on issues such as domestic violence, drug abuse and skill development.

In her address, President Maling stressed the urgent need for changing societal mindsets to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

"Without gender equality, true empowerment cannot be achieved," she said, pointing out that patriarchal attitudes still deny women in remote areas a role in decision-making processes.

She urged both leaders and women to work together, noting that while the administration must ensure inclusion, women must also empower themselves to question, voice concerns and step into leadership roles.

"Strong grassroots women leadership is the foundation of gender justice," she asserted. "Women should not act as puppets. Too often, women are made to sacrifice their voices. For real change, we must step out of our comfort zones and support one

another." Speaking on legal rights, she drew attention to the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and highlighted how many cases of domestic violence are linked to polygamy.

Reiterating APWWS's long-standing demand for a law banning polygamy, she said, "Polygamy is a root cause of gender injustice in many cases. Legal reform is necessary. The law is the most effective instrument to safeguard women's rights."

On the subject of healthcare, Maling emphasised that access to health services is both a basic human right and a constitutional guarantee.

Sharing her experience of road blockades along her journey to Tuting, she expressed concern over the impact of poor connectivity on maternal health.

"The first thought that came to my mind was—how do pregnant women manage to travel in such conditions?" she said, recounting an encounter with a villager who revealed that two women had recently delivered their babies while en route to the hospital in Yingkiang.

"This raises serious concerns for maternal and child health," she observed.

Calling the programme a success, Maling praised the large turnout and active community participation. She also underscored the importance of marriage registration and, on behalf of ADC Tuting, distributed registration forms to several couples present.

She concluded her address by urging greater departmental convergence with women's participation at the centre of planning and execution, while extending gratitude to stakeholders for their support.

The event was graced by ADC Tuting Pandov Pertin as guest of honour and Col Mandip Shaw, Commanding Officer of the 5th Dogra Regiment, as Special Invitee.

The programme featured expert presentations from resource persons.

DIPRO Yingkiang Yalikh Jerang delivered an orientation on girl child education and women's empowerment, supported by a PowerPoint presentation.

AWARDING GENERAL MINOR UNITS AT VARIOUS STATIONS
Awarding Eight (8) nos. General Minor Units (GMU) at various stations over Lumding Division for a period of 05 years has been invited by this divisional in IREPS E-Tendering System. **Name of Work:** Allotment of catering stalls (GMU) at several A&B categories of stations over Lumding Division for a period of Five years only. Last date & time for submission of Tender at 11:00 hrs. and date & time for opening of Tender at 12:00 hrs. on 13-10-2025. Details of General Minor Units are as under.

Sl No.	Station	Stall No.	Platform	Category	NIT No.	Annual Reserve Price	Tendering System	Earnest Money
1	Agartala	AGTLTS-1	PF-1	Unreserved	C-LMG-13-2025	346896	Two packet	36100
2		AGTLTS-2	PF-1	Women	C-LMG-14-2025	346896	Two packet	36100
3	Diphu	DPUTS-1	PF-1	Unreserved	C-LMG-15-2025	346896	Two packet	36100
4		DPUTS-4	PF-2	Women	C-LMG-16-2025	346896	Two packet	36100
5	Hojai	HJITS-5	PF-2	Women	C-LMG-17-2025	351714	Two packet	36600
6	Silchar	SCLTS-1	PF-2	Unreserved	C-LMG-18-2025	404712	Two packet	42100
7	Lumding	LMGFS-1	PF-1	Women	C-LMG-19-2025	351714	Two packet	36600
8	Diphu	DPUMS-1	PF-2	Women	C-LMG-20-2025	332442	Single packet	34600

For more details of Tender Notice and Document visit www.ireps.gov.in.
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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অসম লোকসেৱা আয়োগ
ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022.
No.79PSC/DR-6/2/2024-2025

NOTIFICATION

In pursuance to APSC's notification no. 93PSC/CON/Exam-32/2024-2025, Dated Guwahati the 19th Sept/2025, the Assam Public Service Commission will hold the Interview/Viva-Voce for the post of Assistant Architect under Public Works (Building & NH) Department (Adv. No. 02/2025, dated 18/01/2025) at its office in Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22. The detailed programme for the Interview/Viva-Voce is given below:

Sl. No.	Name of the Post & Department	Date of Interview/ Viva - Voce	Reporting Time
1	Assistant Architect under Public Works (Building & NH) Department	14 th October, 2025	9:00 AM

Kindly note that the candidates appearing the interview/viva-voce must bring the following testimonials in ORIGINAL along with self-attested photocopies in chronological order, thereof for verification/scrutiny on the day of the interview:

- i. H.S.L.C/ILS Admit/Marksheet/Pass Certificate for age proof.
- ii. H.S.L.C Marksheet and Pass Certificate.
- iii. H.S.S.L.C Marksheet and Pass Certificate.
- iv. Degree Marksheet (All Semesters) and Pass Certificate.
- v. CGPA Conversion Formula of the respective universities.
- vi. Updated Registration from Council of Architecture, India.
- vii. Permanent Residential Certificate/Employment Exchange Registration.
- viii. State Government Employees of Assam must submit No Objection Certificate from their respective employer or Permanent Residential Certificate/Employment Exchange Registration as domicile proof.
- ix. Caste/PwBD certificate/BPL Card reflecting the name of candidate (if applicable).
- x. Declaration Form A ("May be downloaded from APSC's website").
- xi. Any other documents relevant as per the advt.

No intimation letter to the eligible candidates shall be sent separately by post. The intimation letters shall be uploaded on 08-10-2025 in the APSC's website (www.apsc.in). The candidates shall have to download their own intimation letter from the aforesaid website.

Sd/-
Secretary,
Assam Public Service Commission
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22
DIPR /D/HLT/182/25-Sep-25

It's his view, let him say: Shaheen Afridi plays down SKY comments on Indo-Pak rivalry

DUBAI, Sept 24: Pakistan pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi steered clear of giving a direct response to Suryakumar Yadav's view that Indo-Pak games should not be considered a rivalry anymore due to India's dominance and insisted that his team's focus is on winning the Asia Cup.

Addressing the pre-match press conference ahead of their must-win last Super 4 game against Bangladesh here on Thursday, Afridi side-stepped queries on Suryakumar's assertion. "That's his view, let him say. When we meet (in the likely Asia Cup final on Sunday), we will see kya hai, kya nahi. Tab dekh lenge. We are here to win the Asia Cup and we will give our best effort for that," Afridi said.

Suryakumar had stated that for a rivalry to be considered genuine, the gulf in results cannot be 12-3, which is where the India-Pakistan T20I head-to-head currently stands.

The two teams have played each other twice in the ongoing tournament and India have emerged comprehensive victors both times.

But the tensions between the two sides are running high after the Indian team refused to perform traditional handshakes before and after the games to show solidarity with victims of the Pahalgalam terror attack in which Pakistan-backed terrorists were involved. The matches have been marred by Pakistani players' aggressive gestures towards



fans as well as rival players and Afridi was asked if the aggression had been planned by the likes of Haris Rauf and Sahibzada Farhan. While Rauf seemingly mocked Indian fans, Farhan's provocative gun-firing celebration also caused a stir during their Super 4 game on Sunday.

"There is no specific plan to be aggressive, we have always been aggressive, from the time we started playing. This is how cricket is played and the team morale is kept high," he said.

Asked if the team is even discussing the possible Indo-Pak match-up in the final, he said, "We are not in the final yet,

when we reach, we will think about it."

When quizzed about "what's been going on" between the two teams, Afridi first responded with a cheeky, "Kya chal raha hai?" On being specifically asked about Rauf and Farhan, Afridi once again steered clear of the issue.

"Our job is to play cricket, people can think what they want. We are here to win Asia Cup. We are trying our best to fulfil Pakistan's hopes," he said.

On to cricketing matters and the heavy weather that Pakistan made of a chase of 133 against Sri Lanka last night in Abu Dhabi, Afridi said the nature of the format is such that it is difficult for all players to click at once.

"Credit to Hussain (Talat) and (Mohammad) Nawaz for handling pressure. T20 is like this only, everyone doesn't perform at the same time," he shrugged.

On his own form both with the bat and ball and whether the team's fast bowlers have underperformed so far, Afridi said, "My job is to fulfil the role assigned to me whether it is batting or bowling. Doesn't matter if I am injured or unwell. My job is to keep team morale high and perform well."

"It's not that we are not winning, we have won against bigger teams. I don't think our fast bowlers are struggling. T20 format is such that batsmen find it easier to hit on good wickets. "But we should have more variation in our bowling and we are striving for that."

Against Bangladesh on Thursday, Afridi said the plan is to go on the offence from the word go.

"Bangladesh is a good team and has played good cricket of late. We have to punch first against them, we have to play good cricket," he said. (PTI)

Abhishek, Chakravarthy, Pandya retain their top ranks in T20 rankings

DUBAI, Sept 24: The Indian trio of all-rounder Hardik Pandya, mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy and aggressive opener Abhishek Sharma retained their respective top positions in the ICC T20 rankings, released on Wednesday.

Chakravarthy, who became the top-ranked bowler last week, has consolidated his place with a 14 rating points gain taking him to 747 points.

Following an 11-place jump last week, Pakistan's Abrar Ahmed has made another massive leap, this time by 12 spots.

After a temporary dip in form, which saw him lose four ranking positions last week, Bangladesh's seasoned T20I pacer Mustafizur Rahman is back in top 10 courtesy a six-place jump. The left-arm pacer has grabbed six wickets at an average of eight in his last two outings in the tournament.

Pandya who continues to lead the all-rounder's list has also made bowling gains, moving up six places up to 60.

Among the batters, opener Abhishek made rating points gains while retaining his place

as the No.1 ranked T20I batter. He hit a quick-fire 38 against Oman during India's final group stage clash, before smashing a match-winning 74 to chase down Pakistan's total of 171 on Sunday.

Tilak Varma, who helped finish the chase against Pakistan with an electric 30 not out off 19, moved up a rung to No.3.

Skipper Suryakumar Yadav too gained a place to move within touching distance of the top five.

Sahibzada Farhan, who smashed a 58 off 45 to get Pakistan going in the same game, jumped 31 spots to reach 24th place.

Hussain Talat who guided Pakistan to a win against Sri Lanka with a composed innings, jumped an astronomical 1474 spots to become the joint 234th placed in the men's T20I batter rankings.

Another massive gainer was Saif Hassan, whose 61 had helped Bangladesh get to a winning start in Super Fours at Asia Cup. The batter gained 133 places to reach the 81st ranking in the batting charts. (PTI)

Indian shooters look to continue good show in ISSF Junior World Cup

NEW DELHI, Sept 24: Olympian shotgun shooter Raiza Dhillon and Asian junior trap champion Sabeera Haris will lead a 69-member strong Indian contingent in the ISSF Junior World Cup, beginning here Thursday, with the aim of topping the charts on home soil. The second and final Junior World Cup of the year, being held at the scenic Karni Singh Ranges in Tughlakabad, will see shooters in the U-21 age category across rifle, pistol and shotgun match their skills against more than 200 shooters from 18 countries, vying for 51 medals across 15 Olympic and two non-Olympic disciplines. Raiza, the youngest Indian shooter at the 2024 Paris Olympics in 2024, has emerged as one of the top skeet exponents and she would be looking to clinch the top individual position after striking the team gold in the 2021 Junior World Championships in Lima.

The event will kick off on Thursday with men's and women's 50m rifle prone — both non-Olympic disciplines — with India fielding five

shooters each in both the sections.

In men's 50m rifle prone section, Rohit Kanyan, Kushagra Singh Rajawat, Nitin Waghmare and Deependra Shekhawat, who recently returned from the Asian Championships in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, will test their skills against some upcoming shooters from Europe and Individual Neutral Athletes (AIN) from Russia and Belarus.

In the women's 50m prone too, the likes of Aadhya Agarwal, Anshika, Nimrat Brar, Anushka Thokur and Saniya Sudesh will face challenge from some shooters from Europe and AIN athletes.

Incidentally, the response in the two non-Olympic events has been quite lukewarm, which can be gauged from the starting lineups in the two 50m rifle prone events. A total of 11 entries are there in the men's event, of which five are Indians, while in the women's event too there are just 11 competitors, of which five are Indians, as per the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) list. (PTI)

Selection criteria for 2026 Asiad: Ministry bans additional support staff even if govt. not billed

NEW DELHI, Sept 24: Athletes with "real chance of winning medals" will be the only ones considered for inclusion, stated the Sports Ministry as it unveiled a stringent selection criteria for the 2026 Asian Games, which focusses on continental rankings and bars additional coaches and support staff even at no cost to government.

The five-page document uploaded on the ministry's website on Wednesday makes it clear that only those among the top-six in individual and top-eight in team sports at the Asian level would be eligible for nomination from the national federations.

The Asian Games will be held in Nagoya, Japan from September 19 to October 4 next year.

"The aim is to ensure that the athletes who have real chance of winning medal are only considered for participation in multidisciplinary sports events," stated the ministry, tightening the process that has been criticised for being haphazard and lacking in clarity in the past.

"If it comes to notice of the Ministry and the Sports Authority of India (SAI) that the aim is just for participation and not aiming for excellence (medal winning), names of such sportspersons and teams will not be approved after giving proper justification," it stated. "Only those sportspersons, coaches and support staff will be part of the contingent, whose names have been cleared at cost to the government and no additional sportspersons, coach and support staff will be included even at no cost to government," it added, addressing an often contentious issue that arises when athletes demand their personal coaches and support staff at personal cost.

The selection criteria would also cover the Commonwealth Games (July-August, 2026), Para Asian Games, Asian Indoor games, Asian Beach Games, Youth Olympics, Asian Youth Games, and the Commonwealth Youth Games. Performances of the past 12 months will form the basis of selection.

However, the new policy excludes the Olympics and other such international competitions where athlete or team participation is determined by qualification standards set by the respective international federations.

"The NSF (National Sports Federation) will be eligible to nominate an athlete if the athlete has matched or bettered the 6th-place performance from the last Asian Games at a competition recognised by the international sports federation for that sport, held within the 12 months preceding the upcoming Asian Games," it stated.

For events that were not contested at the last Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, the criteria would be a top-six finish at the Senior Asian Championships of that discipline event "within 12 months preceding the upcoming Asian Games".

The ministry, however, warned that if it comes to light that an Asian Championship is being held at "irregular intervals" and the "competition standard is low", it would deem it as an attempt to "circumvent rules". (PTI)

Ashwin set to join BBL side Sydney Thunder

SYDNEY, Sept 24: Seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin is set to join Sydney Thunder for the upcoming Big Bash League season, becoming the first high-profile Indian cricketer to feature in the competition.

The 39-year-old, who recently retired from international cricket as well as the Indian Premier League, "is understood to have committed to the Thunder." Fox Sports reported. The franchise is expected to make an official announcement later this week. Ashwin has also entered the ILT20 auction, and following its conclusion on January 4, he is expected to join the Thunder for the latter part of the season, which runs from December 14 to January 18. Cricket Australia CEO Todd Greenberg had personally reached out to Ashwin earlier this month to explore the possibility of his BBL participation. The move comes after Ashwin announced his retirement from the IPL last month, making him a free agent in franchise cricket and opening the door to overseas T20 leagues. The BCCI bars active Indian players from taking part in foreign leagues while still involved with the national side or the IPL. (PTI)

India gear up for Nepal challenge in SAFF U17 C'ship semi-final

COLOMBO, Sept 24: India's unbeaten run in the group stage will be put to test when the Blue Colts take on Nepal in the semi-final of the SAFF U17 Championship at the Racecourse International Stadium, here Thursday.

India have looked the most dominant side so far, topping Group B with nine points from as many available, following their wins over Maldives (6-0), Bhutan (1-0) and arch-rivals Pakistan (3-2).

The victory against Pakistan especially pleased head coach Bibiano Fernandes, who praised the way his wards soaked up pressure in a high-stakes clash. "Defeating Pakistan was a good result for us, and I am pleased with the way the team handled the pressure in such an important game," Fernandes said to the-aiff.com. "The players showed character and discipline, and that performance gives us confidence going into the semi-finals."

Nepal on the other hand have won one (2-0 against hosts Sri Lanka) and lost the other (0-4 against Bangladesh), to finish second in Group A. Fernandes remained wary of the potential threat that Nepal possess. (PTI)

Wolvaardt confident of South Africa reaching maiden ODI WC final

BENGALURU, Sept 24: Taking lessons from the past, South Africa enter this month's women's ODI World Cup with renewed confidence that they can stand toe-to-toe with the top teams and finally break through to their maiden final, says skipper Laura Wolvaardt.

The Proteas have been one of the most consistent sides in recent ICC tournaments, reaching the semi-finals in the last two editions of the ODI World Cup and finishing runners-up in consecutive T20 World Cups.

"We've had good preparation for this tournament and learned a lot of lessons from past ICC events. In the last few ODI World Cups, we made the semi-finals," Wolvaardt wrote in her column for ICC.

"I remember being part of that first semi-final loss in 2017 — it really hurt the group, but it helped us see that we could compete with the best sides in the world and qualifying for a final one day is more a question of "when" and not "if" it would ever happen.

"The belief is very strong in our side going into this tournament. We'd like to keep that momentum going, and we'll have to play very good cricket in tough conditions," she added.

South Africa's firepower lies in their explosive top order, spearheaded by Wolvaardt and Tazmin Brits, while Marizanne Kapp continues to be the heartbeat of the all-rounder department.

Complementing Kapp are the experienced Sune Luus and Chloe Tryon, alongside the youngsters Nadine de Klerk and Nondumiso Shangase. This blend of experience and youth

gives the squad enviable balance and multiple match-winning options.

"I strongly believe that we have a very good squad of 15 players. We bat very deep, with a lot of all-rounders giving us different bowling options, which is exciting for me as captain.

"Our middle order has really fired recently with players like Chloé Tryon, Annerie Dercksen, and Nadine de Klerk finishing games strongly. Marizanne



Kapp is one of the best players South Africa has ever had — she always performs in the big moments.

"Nonkululeko Mlaba has also been phenomenal, and I think she will be crucial in subcontinent conditions. I can't wait to see her bowl in India especially."

Wolvaardt acknowledged the stiff challenge ahead, with India and Sri Lanka's conditions expected to test every team.

"In these conditions, the local sides are always dangerous. We've seen how tough opponents like Australia and England remain, and India's strength at home speaks for itself. Teams such as Australia, India, and New Zealand prepare meticulously — there's simply no easy game at this level," she added.

South Africa will open their campaign against England on October 3 in Guwahati. (PTI)

Ryder Cup money for the American players is about good charity and bad optics

FARMINGDALE (USA), Sept 24: The Americans have become an easy target for Europe at this Ryder Cup, and it has nothing to do with how they have been outplayed over the last 30 years.

It's about how much they're getting paid.

Never mind that no American player has indicated plans to stuff their pockets already full from a PGA Tour schedule that offers \$20 million purses at 10 tournaments, the \$25 million prize fund at The Players Championship and official money of \$40 million at the Tour Championship.

Or that the PGA of America has been "paying" Ryder Cup players since 1999 — from the millions of dollars of revenue they generate — by providing \$200,000 for them to direct to a charity of their choosing. The change this year was \$300,000 for a charity and a \$200,000 stipend to use however the players want. That's the definition of compensation, even when it becomes charity.

U.S. captain Keegan Bradley took credit for that.

"The PGA of America came to me, they wanted to bring the Ryder Cup into the present day. The charity dollars hadn't changed since 1999 and they asked me to sort of shepherd their way into making it into 2025," he said. Bradley said he was donating all of it, and his



players have said they are doing the same without providing details. Charity can be personal when the heart is in the right place. "I've never been one to announce what we do," Scottie Scheffler said Tuesday. "I don't like to give charitable dollars for some kind of recognition. We have something planned for the money that we'll be receiving. I think it's a really cool thing that the PGA of America has empowered us to do."

Scheffler has made nearly \$57 million in official money the last two years. He's not exactly driven by a whopping \$200,000 stipend.

This was always about principle. David Duval was among the first to raise the notion in 1999 about

and an official vodka, an official beer and an official bourbon. It's a long list.

Not to be overlooked is the "Ryder Cup Live Ultimate Watch Party Kit" that goes for \$1,081 and provides such items as 100 cocktail napkins, coasters, commemorative cups and flag toothpicks. Also in the kit are a pair of "Quiet, Please" paddles. Party on.

The uncomfortable talk about major golf and minor compensation did not start this year, or even two years ago in Rome when Patrick Cantlay was the subject of an unfounded report that he didn't wear a hat to protest not being paid. There is speculation.

There are accusations. But no one has confirmed any player on the U.S. team who asked to be paid, or even asked for an increase in charity. Several U.S. players began to question what percentage of the revenue went to prize funds after the USGA signed a television deal worth close to \$1 billion with Fox Sports. The U.S. Open purse increased by \$1 million. But it's still money. Golf is loaded with it at the moment. It's always a bad look.

Europe really doesn't need an edge — it has won 10 of the last 14 times dating to 1995 — but it looks for any it can find. And the Europeans didn't have to look too far for this one. (AP)