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## Nepal's next parliamentary election will be held on March 5: President's Office

**KATHMANDU, Sept 13:** Nepal President Ramchandra Paudel on Saturday called on all sides to cooperate in conducting fresh elections to the House of Representatives that are to be held on March 5, following a week of violent protests that led to the resignation of K P Sharma Oli and Sushila Karki taking over as the country's first woman prime minister.

The president in a statement urged all to utilise the "hard earned opportunity for conducting the election on time by safeguarding the interests of the people and maintaining self-discipline".

"A peaceful way out was possible for the country only after passing through a very crucial, tough and dangerous situation,"

he said. Paudel said that the constitution and parliamentary system are saved and the federal democratic republic is intact.

"The people have got an opportunity to move forward in the path of a progressive democracy through holding elections to the House of Representatives within six months," President Paudel said in the statement.

On Friday, President Paudel dissolved the House of Representatives on the recommendation of the newly-appointed prime minister and said the next parliamentary election would be held on March 5.

Former Chief Justice Karki, 73, was sworn-in as the country's

first woman prime minister, ending days of political uncertainty after the abrupt resignation of Oli this week following widespread anti-government protests against a ban on social media and alleged corruption.

Oli quit on Tuesday shortly after hundreds of agitators entered his office demanding his resignation for the death of at least 19 people in police action during Monday's protests.

The prime minister will form a small Cabinet on Sunday, two days after her swearing-in ceremony, as offices are closed on Saturday. Karki will hold some two dozen ministries, including Home, Foreign Affairs and Defence.

Sources at the President's Office said that the prime minister will form a council of ministers with the inclusion of a small number of ministers on Sunday, when she will assume office.

As the Prime Minister's Office in Singhdurbar Secretariat was set on fire during the two-day agitation, the newly-constructed building for the Home Ministry within the Singhdurbar complex is being prepared for the Prime Minister's Office, according to government sources.

Removing the ashes and cleaning are being done in the surrounding areas of the building to shift the Prime Minister's Office there. (PTI)

## Bhupen Da united people through melodies: PM

**Commemorative coin and biography of Bard of the Brahmaputra unveiled; CM pays tribute to music maestro**

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 13:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday attended the birth centenary celebrations of Bharat Ratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika, one of Assam's most revered cultural icons, at the Veterinary College Playground in Khanapara, Guwahati.

The event was also graced by Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, along with Union Minister of Railways, Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav, and several other dignitaries, an official statement said.

The year-long centenary celebrations honouring the "Bard of the Brahmaputra" were marked by solemn tributes, cultural performances, and the launch of initiatives



that pay homage to Dr Hazarika's life and legacy.

In his address, Prime Minister Modi spoke about the immense contributions of Dr Hazarika to the nation's music, cinema, literature, and social consciousness.

He lauded the maestro's ability to transcend barriers of class and

geography, uniting people through melodies that spoke of compassion, resilience, and hope.

In a landmark gesture, the Prime Minister unveiled a commemorative coin issued by the Reserve Bank of India in memory of Dr Hazarika and released a biography of the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**People will never forget respect shown by PM Modi: Himanta**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 13:** Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his presence at Bhupen Hazarika's birth anniversary celebrations here, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said it healed the wound the people had felt at the "failure" of the then PM to pay respects to the musical maestro on his demise.

"When Bhupen da died (in 2011), the people of Assam wanted a representative of government of India to come and pay respects. We wanted the prime minister to come and lay a garland when he was being cremated," Sarma said, speaking at a programme as part of Hazarika's birth centenary celebrations.

"But, our dream did not come true," he said, in an apparent reference to the then Congress-led central government and prime minister Manmohan Singh, who was also a Rajya Sabha member from Assam.

"Today, Modi ji has come to be part of Bhupen da's birth centenary celebrations... The way he has shown respect for Bhupen da, the people of Assam will never forget it," Sarma (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## PM vows to turn Manipur into 'symbol of peace'

**Modi meets violence-affected people of Manipur in relief camps ● Base of devp projects worth ₹ 8,500 cr laid**

**IMPHAL/CHURACHANDPUR, Sept 13:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday vowed to transform Manipur into a "symbol of peace and prosperity" as he urged all groups to shun violence, assuring the people that the Centre stood firmly with them in rebuilding lives torn apart by the ethnic conflict.

Modi, who landed amidst heavy rain in Manipur's capital Imphal on his maiden visit to the state after ethnic clashes erupted in May 2023 between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities, described the state as the "ratna" adorning the crown of "mother India" and lauded the role of the "valiant sons" of Manipur in the success of Operation Sindoor.

Termining any violence in Manipur "unfortunate", Modi struck a note of healing, reassurance, and confidence as he listened to the concerns of the families of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at the historic Kangla Fort complex in Imphal and Peace Ground in Churachandpur.

The ethnic clashes two years ago have left over 260 people dead and more than 60,000 displaced, many of whom are still living in relief camps.

During his visit, the prime minister also inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for development projects worth ₹ 8,500 crore.

Stressing that the only way forward was to build a "bridge of trust" between the Hills, home to the Kuki community, and the Valley, dominated by the Meiteis, Modi, in his public meeting in Kuki-dominated Churachandpur district, said a "new dawn of hope and trust" was rising in the state.

"India is moving forward with a singular goal, the goal of Vikshit Bharat and achieving this goal requires

the development of Manipur," he said.

"I met the affected people at a relief camp. After meeting them, I can say with confidence that a new dawn of hope and trust is rising in Manipur," he said.

Hailing Manipur as the land of hope and aspiration, Modi said: "Unfortunately, violence had cast its shadow on this beautiful region".

"For development to take root anywhere, peace is essential. In the last 11 years, many conflicts and disputes in the Northeast have been resolved. People have chosen the path of peace and given priority to development," he said.

He said the Centre's sustained engagement with all sides, through dialogue and development, would bring back normalcy.

"I appeal to all organisations that moving on the path of peace will help realise your dreams. Secure the future of your children. And I promise you today that I am with you. The Centre is with you, with the people of Manipur," he said.

The PM, who has faced sharp opposition criticism for not travelling to Manipur despite the prolonged unrest in which over 260 people have been killed and thousands were rendered homeless, underlined that the Centre's efforts were already yielding results.

"Manipur is the 'Mami ratna' adorning the crown of 'Mother India'. Any form of violence here is condemnable. It is not only unfortunate but also a grave injustice to our ancestors and future generations.

Together, we must take Manipur forward on the path of peace and development," Modi told a packed gathering at the historic Kangla Fort in Imphal, dominated by Meiteis. "I appeal to all (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Assam gears up for statewide development initiatives

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Sept 13:** Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, addressed all districts of the state via video conferencing ahead of a series of government programmes scheduled from September 17 to 25, 2025.

The weeklong initiative will commence on September 17 with the ceremonial launch of the Voluntary Blood Donation Drive. Other major activities include the upgrade of Orunodoi 2.0 to Orunodoi 3.0, a Mega Health Camp for Children, a Plantation Drive, and the felicitation of 1,000 young writers, Ni-kshay Mitra Assistance for TB patients, and the distribution of land pattas to religious institutions.

During the interaction, the Chief Minister reviewed the preparedness for each programme and urged all district administrations to work in close coordination with relevant departments. He emphasized that people's participation is key to the success of these initiatives and called for dedicated efforts to ensure that the benefits reach the grassroots level.

The Karbi Anglong district administration has confirmed its readiness for the upcoming programmes. Necessary arrangements have been (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## PM inaugurates projects worth over ₹9,000 crore in Mizoram

**Aizawl connected to India's railway network, marking a historic milestone in connectivity, inclusion and development**

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 13:** Mizoram on Saturday celebrated a landmark day as Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid foundation stones for development projects worth over ₹9,000 crore, while the state officially entered India's railway map, a move expected to transform its economy and connectivity.

Addressing the gathering from Aizawl airport via video conferencing, the Prime Minister acknowledged Mizoram's historic contributions to the freedom struggle and nation-building.

"Today is a historic moment, especially for the people of Mizoram, with Aizawl being connected to the Indian railway network despite challenging terrain," he said. He added that the new rail link would "transform the state's economy and revolutionise the lives and livelihoods of its people by improving access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities."

He also highlighted the state's strategic importance in India's "Act East Policy," stating that the Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project would "enhance connectivity with Southeast Asia, boosting trade and tourism."

Prime Minister Modi flagged off three new express trains – the Sairang-Delhi Rajdhani Express, the Sairang-Guwahati Express, and

the Sairang-Kolkata Express – offering "direct, safe, efficient, and cost-effective rail connectivity between Mizoram and major cities across the country, expanding opportunities in trade, education, healthcare, and tourism."

The Prime Minister laid foundation stones for key road projects, including the 45 km Aizawl Bypass Road under the PM-DevINE scheme, the Thenzawl-Salsuk Road and Khankawn-Rongura Road under the North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS), and the Chhimtui River Bridge.

He said these initiatives are "expected to reduce congestion in Aizawl, enhance connectivity to southern districts, and support horticulture, ginger processing, and cross-border commerce under the Kaladan Multimodal Transit framework."

Other initiatives included the foundation stone for a Khelo India Multipurpose Indoor Hall at Tuikhang and a 30 TMTPA LPG Bottling Plant at Mualkhang, as well as the inauguration of new educational facilities, including a Residential School at Kawthrah and an Eklavya Model Residential School at Tlangnuam.

Chief minister Lalduhoma, addressing the gathering in Aizawl, described the day as historic for the state. "Today is a historic day for our state. It marks a (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Karbi Anglong to launch 'Susrusha Setu' mega health camps for children

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Sept 13:** The Karbi Anglong district administration, in collaboration with the Government of Assam and the National Health Mission, is set to launch the "Susrusha Setu" Mega Health Camps across all Legislative Assembly Constituencies (LACs) from September 18, 2025.

Announced by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the health initiative is focused on the well-being of children below 18 years of age. The camps will offer free screening for over 50 diseases, including heart, neurological, genetic, liver, kidney, eye, and ear conditions.

Specialist doctors will conduct medical check-ups, and necessary investigations and medicines will be provided free of cost. Additionally, wellness activities will be organised to raise awareness about preventive healthcare.

In the next phase, children diagnosed with specific health concerns will receive appropriate treatment and follow-up care. Referral services to tertiary and super speciality hospitals will also be available for advanced cases.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to call 104 for health-related assistance and 108 for ambulance services during the programme. The Karbi Anglong administration has urged all parents and guardians to take full advantage of this initiative to ensure their children's health and well-being.

This effort forms a crucial part of the state government's broader commitment to building a healthier and stronger Assam.

## From road labourer to four-time CM, Lapang's life remains an inspiration in Meghalaya

**SHILLONG, Sept 13:** From breaking stones as a road labourer in rural Ri Bhoi to occupying the chief minister's chair four times, Dr. Donwa Dethwelson Lapang's life was a saga of resilience and determination that continues to inspire generations in Meghalaya. Fondly called Maheh, Lapang's journey epitomised the rise of a grassroots leader.

Born in 1934 to Donwas War and Elsibon Lapang at Nongpoh, he grew up in humble circumstances, helping his mother run a tea stall at Lew Mawlong and Umsning while supplementing the family income as a daily wage worker on road projects.

Despite hardships, Lapang pursued education with grit, completing his matriculation from Government High School, Shillong, and later graduating through evening classes at St. Anthony's College.

Alongside, he worked as a teacher, a typist in the Assam Secretariat, and even rose to become a sub-inspector of schools before stepping into politics. His political career began in 1972 when he was elected from Nongpoh in the first Assembly of the newly created Meghalaya.

He went on to represent the constituency for decades, winning multiple elections and carving out a niche as a patient negotiator and accessible leader.

One of his landmark contributions

was the creation of Ri Bhoi district in 1992, a long-cherished aspiration of the people of the region.

His role in strengthening the Congress organisation in the hill state also earned him prominence in state and national politics.

Lapang served as chief minister on four occasions between 1992 and 2009, often called upon to steer Meghalaya through periods of political flux. His terms in office were marked by efforts to strengthen rural connectivity, promote education and balance diverse interests in the coalition-driven politics of the state.

Known for his gentle humour, humility and simplicity, Lapang never forgot his roots. Even in power, he remained accessible to common citizens, often hosting them at his Nongpoh residence.

In later years, he parted ways with the Congress and joined the National People's Party, serving as advisor to the state government before stepping down. Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma described Lapang as "a true leader of the people whose commitment to public service spanned decades." "Deeply saddened by the passing of Former Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Dr. DD Lapang, Maheh Lapang was a true leader of the people whose commitment to public service spanned decades," Sangma stated. (PTI)

## Declaration adopted after three days of intense technical sessions

## New Delhi Declaration adopted to preserve, digitise, disseminate 'vast treasure' of manuscripts

**NEW DELHI, Sept 13:** Asserting that manuscripts are "a guiding light for the future", a major conference of scholars, researchers and other experts on Saturday adopted the New Delhi Declaration to bolster efforts to preserve, digitise and disseminate their knowledge as well as to bring back the original works.

The declaration, adopted at the closing of the three-day 'Gyan Bharatam' global conference hosted at the Vigyan Bhawan here, resolved to "acquire and repatriate original manuscripts or secure their digital copies from abroad, ensuring access for research and national pride".



The New Delhi Declaration read out by a senior official of the Ministry of Culture in the presence of a large gathering of scholars, researchers and other

experts, underlined that manuscripts are "living memory of a nation, and foundation of its civilisational identity". India has one of the richest

collections of ancient manuscripts in the world, with nearly 10 million texts that hold the country's traditional knowledge and cultural heritage.

"We resolve to preserve, digitise and disseminate this vast treasure. We firmly believe manuscripts are not merely relics of the past, but a guiding light for the future," it said.

The Declaration was adopted after three days of intense technical sessions categorised as per the eight working groups constituted earlier under the Gyan Bharatam Mission.

"We, the manuscript custodians... (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



PM interaction with Internally Displaced Persons at Churachandpur, in Manipur on Saturday. -PIB

# Iron ore mining expected to resume in current financial year: Goa CM

**PANAJI, Sept 13:** Almost 13 years after iron ore mining operations in Goa came to a standstill due to a legal order amid environmental concerns, the activity is expected to resume in the current financial year, with dispatch starting in January 2026.

Mining operations were halted after the Supreme Court disallowed the restart of any related activity in Goa through an order passed in October 2012.

"Goa is entering a new chapter with the resumption of iron ore mining. The first 12 leases have already been auctioned under a reformed regime," Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said while addressing the Indian Maritime Week 2025 roadshow on Friday night.

This roadshow was organised jointly by the Mormugao Port Authority (MPA) and the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships.

"The government expects the operation to begin this financial year with the dispatch starting as early as January 2026," the chief minister said, adding that the resumption of the activity will bring jobs and opportunities for thousands of Goan families.

The activity will also revive cargo from Mormugao Port, leading to growth in logistics and related industries.

Allaying concerns regarding potential harm to the ecology, Sawant said mining will be carried out through strict environmental safeguards, real-time monitoring, and by adopting modern methods.

"For our port, this will mean revival of bulk cargo volume with efficiency and sustainability," he said, referring to Goa's traditional maritime economy. "Today, we are moving forward with a clear vision to make Goa a model maritime state," he said, adding that local industry will benefit from the resumption of container services at the Mormugao Port.

Highlighting the importance of the resump-



tion of container service, the chief minister said this move is crucial for pharmaceutical exports as Goa supplies medicines to over 150 countries.

He appealed to industries to shift to Mormugao instead of relying on a distant port like JNPA (Maharashtra).

The shifting will reduce costs, cut carbon emissions, and create new services like customs, container freight stations, and logistic hubs in Goa itself, Sawant reasoned.

He said the cruise tourism sector has positioned Goa as a premier destination and is the fastest-growing segment in Goa's economy.

In the last season, we welcomed 12 international and 32 domestic cruise boats with 34,000 visitors," he added.

"For the next tourist season, the government is preparing for larger vessels and new route connectivity to Mumbai, Kochi, and Lakshad-

weep. The work on the international and domestic cruise terminal is 83 per cent completed," Sawant said.

He stated that cruise tourism supports hospitality, transport, handicrafts, and local culture. "It multiplies the benefit across the state, creating opportunities," he added.

In January 2020, the Supreme Court allowed mining firms to transport validly mined iron ore from mines in Goa if they had paid royalty to government authorities.

The apex court modified its earlier order and permitted transportation of already mined iron ore lying unused at various sites in the state.

The top court in February 2018 had quashed the second renewal of iron ore mining leases given to as many as 88 companies in Goa in 2015 and directed the Centre and the Goa government to grant fresh environmental clearances to them. (PTI)

## Birla Corporation faces court injunction on Articles of Association resolution

**KOLKATA, Sept 13:** Birla Corporation Ltd said a Kolkata court has passed an ex parte order, restraining the company from putting to vote a resolution on adopting a new set of Articles of Association at its upcoming 105th annual general meeting.

The AGM is scheduled to be held on September 15.

The September 11 order was in response to a suit filed by five shareholders, the company informed stock exchanges on Friday.

Kolkata-headquartered Birla Corporation, in a regulatory filing, said the injunction restrains the company from conducting any poll, including remote e-voting, or publishing results in respect of item no. 5 under "special business" related to the new Articles of Association.

A company's Articles of Association are a set of documents that define its purpose and state the regulations that will govern it.

Birla Corporation claimed that there has been no violation on its part, stating that the proposed Articles are fully compliant with prevailing laws.

"In spite of this, five shareholders have obtained an ex parte order against the proposal. The company has already preferred an appeal before the Learned District Judge at Alipore and is taking all appropriate steps in accordance with law," it said in the filing. (PTI)

## Over 6 crore income tax returns filed so far: I-T dept

**NEW DELHI, Sept 13:** More than six crore income tax returns for Assessment Year 2025-26 have been filed so far, the Income Tax department said on Saturday.

The last date to file ITRs without penalty is September 15.

"Thank you taxpayers & tax professionals for helping us reach the milestone of 6 crore Income Tax Returns (ITRs) as of now and still counting," the I-T department said in a post on X.

To assist taxpayers for ITR filing, tax payment and other related services, our helpdesk is functioning on a 24x7 basis, and the department is providing support through calls, live chats, WebEx sessions & Twitter/X, it added.

It also asked taxpayers who haven't filed ITR for AY 2025-26 to file at the earliest to avoid a last-minute rush.

The Income Tax department in May announced an extension of the due date for filing ITRs for Assessment Year (AY) 2025-26 (for income earned in financial year 2024-25) by individuals, HUFs and entities who do not have to get their accounts audited from July 31 to September 15.

The extension was on account of "structural and content revisions" in the income tax return (ITR) forms, which was notified in late April and early May. The changes made in the ITR form for AY 2025-26 also need modifications to be made in ITR filing utilities and the back-end system. (PTI)

## DRI officers seize narcotics worth ₹ 26 cr in Kolkata, arrest 10



**NEW DELHI, Sept 13:** The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Kolkata, has cracked down on a drug trafficking racket, which led to seizure of narcotics worth ₹ 26 crore and arrest of 10 persons including the mastermind, the finance ministry said on Saturday.

On September 12, the officers of DRI, Kolkata Zonal Unit, conducted searches simultaneously at three different locations -- one in NSCBI Airport, and two residential premises in Bijoygarh locality of Jadavpur.

In the residential location, belonging to the mastermind, Hydroponic Weed, Cannabis and Cocaine of substantial quantity was found. In the second residential location, which was rented and operated by the mastermind, huge quantity of Cannabis was found in a 'packed and ready-to-distribute' manner.

Simultaneously, in a different operation conducted at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International (NSCBI) Airport in Dum Dum, 4 carriers (including three women) belonging to the said syndicate, arriving from Bangkok were intercepted. From their possession as well, substantial quantity of narcotic substances was recovered.

Collectively, 32,466 kgs of Cannabis (Ganja), 22,027 kgs of Hydroponic weed, 345 grams of Cocaine, along with cash have been seized. 10 individuals (all Indian nationals) including the mastermind, carriers coming from abroad, retail distributors and middlemen have been arrested and produced before the courts for judicial remand, the statement said.

The narcotics are worth around ₹ 26 crore in the illicit market. (PTI)

## Adani Power to invest USD 3 bn in Bihar

**NEW DELHI, Sept 13:** Adani Power on Saturday said it will set up a 2,400 MW ultra super-critical power plant in Bihar at an investment of USD 3 billion (around Rs 24,482 crore).

The Adani group company, in a statement, said that it has signed a 25-year Power Supply Agreement (PSA) with Bihar State Power Generation Company Ltd. (BSPGCL) to supply power from the project that will come up at Pirpainti in Bhagalpur district of the state.

The PSA is further to the Letter of Award issued by BSPGCL to Adani Power, on behalf of North Bihar Power Distribution Company Ltd (NBPDCL) and South Bihar Power Distribution Company Ltd (SBPDCL) in August.

Adani Power won the project by offering the lowest supply rate at Rs 6.075 per kWh.

The company said it plans to invest approximately USD 3 billion to build the new plant (800 MW X 3) and its supporting infrastructure under the Design, Build, Finance, Own, and Operate (DBFOO) model. The company aims to commission the plant in 60 months.

The coal linkage for the power plant has been allocated under the SHAKTI Policy of Government of India.

The project will generate direct and indirect employment for 10,000-12,000 people during the construction phase and 3,000 once in operation. (PTI)

## UP optimistic about doubling exports to USD 50 bn by 2030: Minister



**NEW DELHI, Sept 13:** The UP government hopes to double the state's exports to USD 50 billion by 2030 despite the prevailing global uncertainties.

The UP Cabinet recently approved the Uttar Pradesh Export Promotion Policy 2025-30 that will play a significant role in driving this ambition while contributing significantly to the growth in state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

The policy entails several out-of-box initiatives like incentives for service sector exports & startups, ODOP (One District, One Product) goods for export, trade fa-

ilitation centres, marketing and freight support among others that will help bring about a remarkable transformation in the State economy and create employment for the youth, UP Minister of Industrial Development and Export Promotion Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi' said.

The minister said that the policy has been expanded to include onboarding assistance, export performance-based incentives, and support for post office export centres and export credit insurance, besides grants for expenses on ECGC coverage and performance-linked incentives that will not only

incentivise new exporters and startups but also help the state double its exports by 2030.

The policy places a special focus on the following sectors, namely electronics, handicrafts, engineering goods, textiles, carpets, agriculture, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, leather goods, sports products, glass and ceramics, wood products, and the service sector, including education, medical, travel, logistics, tourism, and IT/ITES.

Uttar Pradesh is the first state in India to offer incentives specifically for service sector exporters, he added.

Under the Service Sector Marketing Development Assistance Scheme, exporters from 12 identified champion sectors will receive financial aid of up to ₹ 2 lakh for participation in international fairs, up to ₹ 1 lakh towards expenses for air travel for International Fairs and up to ₹ 50,000 for stalls and ₹ 25,000 for air travel for participation in domestic fairs of international calibre.

The policy has also allocated funds to establish Merchandised Trade Facilitation Centers (MTFCs) in export-heavy districts, with a budget of ₹ 7.5 crore. Additionally, a Services Trade Facilitation Center will be set up in Gautam Budh Nagar at a cost of ₹ 2.5 crore. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Bhupen Da united people

legendary artist translated into 21 Indian languages, ensuring that his inspiring journey reaches people across the country.

In his address, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma paid heartfelt tributes to the cultural stalwart on behalf of the people of Assam.

He expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Modi for his presence at the celebrations, saying that it added grandeur and made the event more memorable for the people of the state.

He also thanked the Prime Minister for his touching article published on September 8, marking Dr Hazarika's birth anniversary.

Sarma described Dr Bhupen Hazarika as one of the greatest Assamese personalities born after Srimanta Sankardeva.

He highlighted the towering influence of the maestro on Assam's socio-political and cultural landscape, stating that through music, poetry, films, and his deep sense of social responsibility, Dr Hazarika gave direction to society and championed the cause of equality and compassion.

"Dr. Hazarika rose above barriers of wealth and status, dreaming of a world built on love and justice. His songs reached millions, touching hearts and inspiring generations across borders," the chief minister noted.

Elaborating on Dr Hazarika's creative journey, the chief minister said that the maestro drew inspiration from the humanist teachings of Srimanta Sankardeva and Madhavdeva, while also being influenced by the pioneering contributions of Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla and Bishnu Prasad Rabha.

His songs did not merely entertain but voiced the struggles, dreams, and aspirations of the common people.

By weaving Assamese folk traditions into his compositions, he endowed them with depth, authenticity, and a powerful sense of belonging. His music, according to the chief minister, reflected a deep and genuine love for the nation.

The chief minister also acknowledged Dr Hazarika's unparalleled contribution to Indian cinema, which earned him the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award.

His tenure as Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi saw significant efforts to secure national recognition for Assam's Sattriya dance form, a landmark achievement in preserving and promoting the state's cultural heritage.

Sarma expressed special gratitude to Prime Minister Modi for conferring the Bharat Ratna award on Dr Hazarika in 2019, for naming the iconic Dhola-Sadiya Bridge after him, and for commemorating his birth centenary with the release of a special ₹ 100 coin.

The chief minister further observed that the past five years have marked a renewed cultural awakening in Assam, alongside rapid developmental progress.

He cited the recognition of Assamese as a classical language, the UNESCO World Heritage recognition for Charaideo Maidams, global showcases of Bihu and Jhumoir dance forms, the 400th birth anniversary celebrations of Lachit Barphukan, and now the centenary celebrations of Dr Bhupen Hazarika in the presence of the Prime Minister as moments of pride for the state.

Adding grandeur to the occasion, thousands of artists across age groups performed 13 of Dr Hazarika's timeless songs and a lyrical poem in chorus, celebrating his musical genius and the enduring impact of his artistry.

The event's proceedings began with a welcome address by cultural affairs minister Bimal Bora.

Dr Hazarika's brother, Samar Hazarika, also spoke emotionally about the maestro's legacy.

Among other dignitaries present were Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal; chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh Pema Khandu; MP Bijuli Kalita Medhi; Dr Hazarika's son Tej Hazarika; and his sister Kavita Barua.

Several ministers, legislators, parliamentarians, and prominent personalities from various fields also participated in the event.

The birth centenary celebrations of Dr Bhupen Hazarika stand as a testament to his enduring legacy in shaping Assam's cultural, artistic, and social fabric.

The event, enriched by the Prime Minister's presence and the state's deep respect for its beloved son, reflected Assam's unwavering commitment to honouring its icons while inspiring future generations.

## People will never forget

said. The chief minister also recounted how Hazarika's songs and other creations advocated social equality and a deep sense of nationalism.

Sarma also thanked the BJP-led central government for its respect for the 'Bard of Brahmaputra', by bestowing the Bharat Ratna, naming the Dhola-Sadiya bridge after him and releasing a ₹ 100 coin in his memory. (PTI)

## PM vows to turn

organisations to move forward on the path of peace and fulfil your dreams. Secure the future of your children. And I promise you today, I am with you. The Government of India is with you, with the people of Manipur," he said in Churachandpur.

Modi travelled to Churachandpur from Imphal by road as his helicopter could not take off due to inclement weather. Along the way, a large number of people lined up to greet him with placards.

"The love I received on the way to Churachandpur, I will never forget in my life," Modi said.

Before addressing the public meeting, he interacted with displaced families at a relief camp and laid the foundation stones for a slew of projects worth more than ₹ 7,300 crore.

"For Manipur's development, for the resettlement of displaced families, and for the establishment of peace, the Centre will continue to support the Manipur government in every possible way," he said.

Modi also made a special mention of Manipur's women, calling them "the driving force of the state's development and self-reliance."

At Kangla Fort, Modi reminded the gathering of Manipur's civilisational heritage and its role in the freedom movement, saying Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had described Manipur as the gateway to India's independence.

"This soil witnessed the INA unfurling the tricolour for the first time and has given many martyrs to the nation. Our government is moving forward inspired by their sacrifice," he said.

Asserting that India was poised to become the world's third-largest economy, Modi said the government was determined to ensure that the fruits of development reach every corner of the country, including the remotest parts of the Northeast.

Modi said, "The name Manipur itself has 'mani', and this is the gem that will shine for the entire Northeast in the times to come. The Centre has been consistently striving to take Manipur forward on the path of development. As part of this effort, I am here today among all of you."

Concluding his address, Modi said, "I would appeal to all organisations to move forward on the path of peace and fulfil their dreams. Secure the future of your children." (PTI)

## PM inaugurates projects

new chapter in our journey towards progress... The railway projects are not just infrastructure; they are investments in our children's future, in the dignity of our citizens and in the economic resilience of our state. The impact of these projects will be far-reaching, bridging dreams and reality between Mizoram and Bharat," he said. He described the 51.38 km-long railway line as "a technical marvel and stood as a testament to engineering excellence."

He further added, "This railway line is more than a feat of engineering, it is a symbol of inclusion, national integration and of the shared aspirations of our people. It brings Mizoram closure to the rest of India and India closure to the heart of Mizoram. The 51.38 km stretch includes some of the most difficult terrains in the country." The chief minister praised the Prime Minister's presence, calling it "a powerful symbol of his unwavering commitment to the development of the North East and inclusive, connected India."

"We are grateful for the inauguration of several other key projects that touched the hearts of our communities... We are proud to have worked closely with the Central government to bring this development to life... We place on record our sincere appreciation not only for the projects but also for the way you and your colleagues have consistently lent a listening ear to our concerns," Lalduhoma said.

He added, "Your willingness to understand our hearts has not gone unnoticed. It has strengthened our trust in cooperative federalism. Mizoram values this partnership built on empathy, responsiveness and mutual respect, and we look forward to nurturing it further in the years ahead."

The Chief Minister said that the Prime Minister's guiding principles of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Viswas" would result in "a stronger and more connected Mizoram."

He also paid tribute to workers who lost their lives when an under-construction railway bridge collapsed in the state in August 2023.

"They did not just build bridges and tunnels. They laid down their lives in the service of a vision larger than themselves. We offer deepest condolences to their families," he said.

The Prime Minister reiterated the government's focus on improving connectivity, quality of life, and opportunities in the North East.

He highlighted the growing start-up ecosystem and the development of modern sports infrastructure through the Khelo India scheme, expressing confidence in the transformative potential of these projects and the government's commitment to further integrating the region with the national mainstream.

The event was attended by Governor of Mizoram General (Dr) (Retd) Vijay Kumar Singh, Chief Minister Lalduhoma, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Mizoram Minister Vanlalhlana, and Members of Parliament K Vanlalvena and Richard Vanlalhmangaiha, among other dignitaries. (With Inputs from PTI)

## Assam gears up for

made, and concerned departments are working together to ensure the smooth execution of the government's initiatives in the district.

## New Delhi Declaration

script experts... all other people who care for the manuscript heritage of Bharat, assembled here in the international conference on "Reclaiming India's Knowledge Legacy through Manuscript Heritage", after thorough deliberations and deep realisations resolve to declare that Bharat is the land of world's richest and the most diverse manuscript heritage, embodying the wisdom of thousands of years across philosophy, science, literature, arts, spirituality and many other subjects," it reads.

These manuscripts, inscribed on palm leaves, birch barks, cloths, handmade papers and other such material, represent the "living memory of a nation and the foundation of its civilisational identity".

"In the spirit of Viksit Bharat 2047, we resolve to join the movement of 'Gyan Bharatam', to preserve, digitise and disseminate this vast treasure, making it accessible to the citizens and scholars alike, across the world," the declaration reads. The government has launched the Gyan Bharatam Mission as a major initiative under the Ministry of Culture. It aims to survey, document, conserve, digitise and make accessible more than one crore manuscripts located at academic institutions, museums, libraries and private collections across India.

"Gyan Bharatam Mission is set to become a proclamation of India's culture, literature and consciousness," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his address at the conference on Friday.

He had also said that many countries around the world house India's ancient manuscripts and the country will strive to "unify this shared heritage of humanity" under the Gyan Bharatam Mission. (PTI)

# Gauhati University Scholars strengthen cultural ties

## GU research scholars take part in Tamil classical workshop in Chennai under 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' Initiative



**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Sept 13:** In a proud moment for Assam, a team of 28 research scholars from Gauhati University's Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies participated in a week-long Tamil Classical Workshop at the Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT) in Chennai. The workshop, held from September 10 to 16, marked a significant academic and cultural exchange under the banner of the Government of India's 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' initiative.

This is the first time scholars from

Assam have been invited to attend the prestigious workshop, with the support of the Government of Tamil Nadu. The programme was inaugurated by Professor R Chandrasekaran, Director of CICT, who welcomed the participants and spoke about the institute's continued efforts to preserve and promote Tamil, India's first officially recognised classical language.

As part of their visit, the research scholars had the opportunity to interact with RN Ravi, Governor of Tamil Nadu, in what was described as a significant step towards fostering academic and cultural ties between the two states.

Speaking at the event, Professor K Sambathkumar of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research underlined the importance of every regional language in contributing to India's cultural fabric. He also extended his congratulations to the Assamese scholarly community for the classical language status granted to Assamese last year.

Adding a literary perspective, Professor P Marudhanayagam, former Head of the English Department at Pondicherry Central University, drew thoughtful parallels between Assamese and Tamil cultural traditions. He referenced the works

of Srimanta Sankardeva and Madhavdeva, highlighting the continued relevance of Borgeet and Bhaona in Assamese culture.

He also recalled the Borgeet "Tejore Kamalapati" and pointed out that the first Indian translation of the Ramayana was into Tamil—emphasising the long-standing literary legacy of the language.

The participation of Gauhati University's scholars in this workshop not only showcased Assam's vibrant literary culture but also served to deepen cultural understanding and national unity between the people of Assam and Tamil Nadu.

# Himanta reviews preparations for 'Sewa Saptah'

**GUWAHATI, Sept 13:** A series of programmes has been lined up by the Assam government for the 'Sewa Saptah' (service week), from distribution of land rights documents to felicitation of young writers to healthcare initiatives, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said on Saturday.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reviewed the preparation for the week-long events, it added.

"HCM Dr. @himantabiswa chaired a Video Conference today with Hon'ble Ministers, MLAs, and all Deputy Commissioners (excluding those from BTR districts) to review preparations for the upcoming 'Sewa Saptah', scheduled from 17th to 23rd September," the CMO said in a post on X.

The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) districts have been excluded as the model code of conduct is in place there, as elections for the Council are scheduled on



September 22.

The CMO said that a series of meaningful, citizen-centric activities will be held across the state during the period.

Some of the key highlights of 'Sewa Saptah' are launch of a mega blood donation drive under the theme 'Sewa-hi-Samarpan',

aiming to plant over 15 lakh seedlings in schools across the state will be undertaken on September 19.

One thousand young writers will be felicitated for their literary contribution on September 21, and the next day, around 7,500 'Nikshay Mitras' will distribute nutrition baskets to TB patients, offering both physical and emotional support.

Distribution of allotment certificates, special periodic pattas, offers of allotment and land transfer documents to 24,688 government and non-government institutions will be done on September 23.

The CMO said Sarma also reviewed preparations for the Orunodoi 3.0 beneficiary certificate distribution programme, scheduled for September 25.

"HCM directed all officials to ensure the smooth execution of every planned initiative during Sewa Saptah," it added. (PTI)

# One seriously injured in road mishap at Demow

**HT Correspondent**  
**DEMOW, Sept 13:** A serious road accident occurred on Saturday morning at Demow Chariali near NH-37, leaving one person critically injured. The injured individual has been identified as Narayan Nahotia, a daily wage earner.

According to reports, a Traveller car named Darpan (registration number AS 06 BC 2250) lost control and rammed into a roadside stall named Kartick Puchka and Chat Corner. The impact of the collision resulted in severe injuries to Nahotia, who was at the stall at the time.

Local residents immediately rushed the injured man to Demow Model Hospital, located in Demow Konwar Dehingia, for medical treatment. The incident was promptly reported to the Demow Police, and traffic police arrived at the scene to assess the situation.

The Traveller car involved in the accident has been seized and is currently at the Demow Police Station. Police sources confirmed that the driver of the vehicle fled the scene following the accident. Fortunately, there were no passengers in the vehicle at the time.

The accident occurred in close proximity to the Demow Sitala Mandir, located behind the roadside stall, which narrowly escaped any damage.

# PM to pass through 'neem corridor' during visit to Assam's Golaghat today



**GUWAHATI, Sept 13:** A special corridor lined with Neem saplings has been readied in Numaligarh in Assam's Golaghat district through which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel during his visit on Sunday.

Modi will pass through the 2.6-km 'PM Neem Corridor' on his trip to this upper Assam district, during which he will visit the Numaligarh Refinery and inaugurate an over ₹ 5,000-crore bamboo-based ethanol plant. He will also lay the foundation stone for the Petro Fluidised Catalytic Cracker Unit, which has a capacity to produce 360 KTPA propylene.

The PM will also address a public rally at the Numaligarh Tanker Stand later on Sunday, the second day of his two-day visit to the state.

"A Green Tribute to India's biggest green warrior - Adarniya @narendramodi ji," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a post on X.

"On September 14, as the Hon'ble Prime Minister makes his way to the venue in Golaghat, he will be welcomed through the PM Neem Corridor - a 2.6km corridor planted with neem saplings," he added, sharing a video clip of the stretch. The 'PM Neem Corridor' is an initiative led by Khumtai (Golaghat district) MLA Mrinal Saikia, with the chief minister also planting a seed during his visit to Numaligarh last week to review preparations for Modi's visit.

Saikia said the initiative is a step to spread awareness on environment conservation and encourage youngsters towards it. (PTI)

# Second Phase Poll training held ahead of BTC elections 2025

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, Sept 13:** The second phase of training for Presiding and Polling Officers for the upcoming BTC Election 2025 began on Saturday in Kokrajhar, featuring a series of group training sessions scheduled to continue through Sunday.

Training sessions are being held at Kokrajhar University for Kokrajhar Sadar Sub-Division, Gossaigaon College for Gossaigaon Sub-Division, and at Kazigaon MV School and Kazigaon High School for Parbatjhora Sub-Division. A total of 10 rooms were allocated at Kokrajhar University, with additional venues arranged at Gossaigaon and Parbatjhora to ensure smooth execution of the training programme.

The training is being conducted under the overall supervision of Kokrajhar District Commissioner and Returning Officer Masanda M Pertin, along with Election Observers, Training Cell In-Charge, senior district officials, and Master Trainers appointed for the BTC Election 2025.

In parallel, the second phase of randomisation of polling personnel was completed on 9th September by the DC and RO, in the presence of Election Observers, SDOs (C) of Gossaigaon, ADCs, the Election Officer, and other senior officials of the district administration.

# Teacher Manashi Bora accorded public felicitation

**HT Correspondent**  
**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Sept 13:** Manashi Bora, headmistress of Sootea Academy and a resident of Kacharigaon, Sootea, was accorded a public felicitation at a programme held at the Kacharigaon Namghar premises on Friday. She was recently honoured with the District Level Best Teacher Award by the Biswanath district administration on the occasion of Teachers' Day.

Binu Bora, a teacher at Borbhagiya MV School, who also received the District Level Best Teacher Award from the Sonitpur district administration, was felicitated at the same event.

**AFFIDAVIT**  
 I Nazir Hussain Laskar S/O-Late Faizur Rahman Laskar, Vill- Pachim Nilbagan, P.O.-Nilbagan, P.S.-Hojai, Dist. Hojai, (Assam) That, my Fathers actual and correct name is Faizur Rahman Laskar, but in my Passport Documents Vide File No-GUWA02417411, wherein my Fathers name has been recorded as Faizur Rahman, instead of Faizur Rahman Laskar, That aforesaid Faizur Rahman Laskar, and Faizur Rahman, are the name of one and same person.  
**Nazir Hussain Laskar**

# Modi's visit to Manipur focussed more on PM's 'image' than ground realities: Gaurav

**GUWAHATI, Sept 13:** Congress' Deputy Leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "two years late" visit to Manipur on Saturday, claiming that it was focussed more on the image of the BJP leader than the ground reality.

He said Modi's visit should have been the first step towards peace in the northeastern state, when ethnic strife broke out in May 2023.

Clashes between the Meitei and Kuki communities left at least 260 people dead and thousands homeless in Manipur. Opposition parties have been criticising the Prime Minister for not visiting the state.

"The first step on the journey to peace and healing in Manipur should have been Prime Minister Modi's visit to the state two years ago," Gogoi said in a post on X.

"Now two years late, his visit should primarily be about respecting the sentiments of the Northeast. Instead, the optics are tone deaf and concentrated on the image of the Prime Minister rather than the ground reality," Gogoi, who is also the president of Assam Congress, added.

Modi, in his visit to Kuki-majority Churachandpur and state capital Imphal, a Meitei stronghold, interacted with internally displaced people in both places.

He also addressed public meetings in the two towns and announced projects worth ₹ 8,500 crores for the state. (PTI)



# Margherita comes alive with Women's Empowerment Fair hosted by Coal India Mahila Samaj

**HT Correspondent**  
**MARGHERITA, Sept 13:** The coal town of Margherita buzzed with creativity and entrepreneurial energy as the Coal India Mahila Samaj launched a vibrant two-day Exhibition and Sale Fair at the prestigious Margherita India Club, beginning on Saturday. The event is a celebration of women's talent, empowerment, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

The fair was inaugurated with grace and enthusiasm by Margherita Co-District Commissioner Rahul Doley, whose presence added a touch of prestige to the occasion. The event was further elevated by the attendance of distinguished guests, including NEC CIL Margherita General Managers K Mere and MP Dutta, Director of Kidzee Shine High School Papori Gogoi, and renowned artist Shivani Phukan. Their presence underscored the significance of the initiative in fostering community development and supporting women's empowerment.

Organized by the Coal India Mahila Samaj of Margherita, the exhibition is a heartfelt effort to uplift women entrepreneurs by providing a platform to showcase their creativity and business acumen. From delectable homemade food products to exquisite clothing, intricate jewellery, and a wide range of handcrafted goods, the stalls brim with unique offerings—each reflecting stories of skill, dedication, and passion.

The Coal India Mahila Samaj emphasized that the core mission of the event is to champion women's empowerment, promote skill development, and pave the way for economic self-reliance.

"This exhibition is more than just a marketplace—it's a movement to inspire and empower women in this busy world," said K Mere, General Manager of North-eastern Coalfields, Coal India Ltd, Margherita.

# Book on Bhupen Hazarika relevant for today's youth, says author Anuradha Sarma

**GUWAHATI, Sept 13:** The new generation remembers Bhupen Hazarika mostly through his songs and music, but his biography 'Bharat Ratna Bhupen Hazarika' by Sahitya Akademi awardee Anuradha Sarma Pujari seeks to highlight the varied genres of his creativity.

"It is unfortunate that the youth today — those born after 1980 — believe he was a mere singer. My book aims to bring forth the many facets of this creative genius so that they understand his philosophy of life and the wide gamut of his work," Pujari told PTI in an interview.

The book, written in Assamese, will be released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Bhupen Hazarika birth centenary celebrations here on Saturday and will be translated into all recognised Indian languages.

It is important to understand his life through his songs, films, writings — poetry, essays, and editorials — and their universal appeal, which still holds true decades after they were created, she said.

A singer, composer, filmmaker, actor, poet, author, and journalist, Hazarika achieved creative heights that few in the region could even aspire to.

He was single-handedly responsible for placing the cultural heritage of the Northeast prominently on the national — and



even international — stage.

His creative versatility knew no boundaries, traversing through varied fields and stamping his unique individual identity on each genre, she said.

"Today's youth, whose life revolves around social media, will wonder how in an age where there was no television or even radio in the remote corners of the North East, his songs reached and mesmerised the people," she added.

"Bhupen da," as he is affectionately called, was often moved during his travels to the remotest corners of the region when tribal communities requested him to sing his latest compositions, she recalled.

"It was his intellectual prowess, unique but universal thought process and profound philosophy that made him the person that he was. It is this essence that I have tried to capture in the book and take it to the people, particularly the youth," she added.

Pujari pointed out that people — especially present-day artists — should be reminded that the maestro never took money for stage performances until he shifted to Kolkata. He would often say his "songs were a medium of social change and not a means to earn money."

"His livelihood was through cinema and as a music director for films both in Assam and outside. On many occasions, Hazarika said that he does not want to be just a singer, but his songs should have a message that can transform society," Pujari pointed out.

Hazarika's songs addressed varied themes — from caste and creed to war and violence, from breaking down social evils to fostering harmony among the Northeast states carved out of Greater Assam. They also reflected his vision of a compassionate world, as well as his deep patriotism for Assam and for India.

Despite completing higher studies in the US, securing a job at UNESCO, and marrying into a wealthy Gujarati-African family who offered him two coffee estates, Hazarika spurned those opportunities.

Instead, he returned to India — and to Assam — to highlight the culture of his homeland.

"After his return to Assam from the US, he faced many struggles and monetary hardships, but he continued undeterred to create some of his evergreen songs, films and writings that remain relevant to this day in this crisis-ridden world," she said.

"He, however, did not remain confined to Assam alone but travelled the world. He noticed racism, discrimination, the divide between the rich and poor, realised these were universal and were reflected in many of his songs and writings," she added.

Pujari revealed that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had approached her in March to write a book on Hazarika for his birth centenary. "I was daunted as the time frame was too short, and I usually take at least two years to write a book after considerable research," she said.

Nevertheless, she took up the challenge and wrote it "with all my emotions, feelings, honesty, and literary flavour. I consider it both a privilege and an honour to have written about the legend with whom I had an association of nearly three decades."

The life of Hazarika cannot be encapsulated in a 250-page book, and this may not be considered a biography in the true sense of the word, she said.

"I have, however, tried to highlight some new and unique dimensions of his life which may appear as a fable to today's youth, but should also help instil in them the values of an artist towards society who remained rooted to his cultural traditions," Pujari asserted. (PTI)



By: Satyabrata Borah

Madhavdev stands as one of the most luminous figures in the rich tapestry of Assamese history, a saint, poet, dramatist, and reformer whose life and works profoundly shaped the spiritual, literary, and cultural landscape of Assam. Born in 1489 in the village of Leteku Pukhuri in present-day Lakhimpur district, Madhavdev entered the world as the son of Govinda Agari and Manorama. From his early years, he displayed an innate curiosity for the scriptures and mystical traditions, initially immersing himself in Shakta practices and studying Tantras, Tarka-shastra, and Puranas under the guidance of scholars in Mitani. His life took a transformative turn in 1519 when he encountered Srimanta Sankardev, the visionary founder of the Ekasarana Dharma, during a pilgrimage. This meeting ignited a profound conversion, drawing Madhavdev into the fold of Vaishnavism and establishing him as Sankardev's most devoted disciple and successor. For the next five

decades, until his passing in 1596, Madhavdev's unwavering loyalty and creative genius propelled the Bhakti movement forward, ensuring its enduring legacy in Assamese society.

Madhavdev's contributions to literature form the cornerstone of his enduring fame, elevating the Assamese language to new heights of expression and accessibility. As a prolific writer, he produced a vast corpus of works that blended profound theological insights with poetic elegance, making complex spiritual concepts approachable for the common folk. His magnum opus, the Namghosa, often hailed as the Hajari Ghosa for its approximately one thousand verses, draws extensively from the Bhagavata Purana to extol the virtues of devotion to Lord Krishna. Composed in simple yet rhythmic Assamese, this devotional anthology weaves themes of surrender, divine love, and ethical living into a tapestry of lyrical beauty. Each verse pulses with the essence of Bhakti-rasa, portraying Krishna's leelas with vivid imagery that evokes both joy and introspection. The

## Madhavdev: Assam's Bhakti Luminary

*Madhavdev's innovations in drama further amplified his cultural impact, introducing forms that intertwined faith with folklore to engage rural audiences. His Ankiya Nats, one-act plays performed during Bhaonas, dramatize Puranic tales with a blend of dialogue, song, and dance, making moral lessons vivid and memorable. Works like Choradhara, which narrates the slaying of the demoness Putana by young Krishna, exemplify his skill in weaving spectacle with sermon. Similarly, his Jhumura Nats, rooted in folk traditions, incorporate local idioms and humor to convey ethical teachings, as seen in Pimpra Guchowa, a lighthearted exploration of humility and devotion amid everyday village life. Other notable plays include Arjuna Bhanjan, drawing from the Mahabharata to highlight Arjuna's trials under Krishna's guidance, and Ram Avatara, which celebrates Rama's incarnation with rhythmic verses and communal participation*

Namghosa not only served as a manual for prayer and meditation in Namghars but also standardized the devotional idiom in Assamese literature, influencing generations of poets and scholars. Its verses, recited daily in Vaishnava households, continue to foster a sense of communal spirituality, underscoring Madhavdev's role in democratizing sacred knowledge.

Complementing the Namghosa is the Bhakti Ratnavali, another jewel in Madhavdev's literary crown. This work is an eloquent Assamese adaptation of the Sanskrit text by Vishnu Puri, distilling the essence of Bhakti philosophy into concise, heartfelt stanzas. Through it, Madhavdev elucidates the nine forms of devotion, from shravana (listening) to atmanivedana (complete self-surrender), urging readers to cultivate an intimate bond with the divine. The language is unadorned yet profound, allowing even the illiterate to grasp its wisdom through oral transmission. Madhavdev's genius lay in his ability to infuse Sanskrit erudition with the vernacular vitality of Assamese, bridging the gap between elite scholarship and grassroots piety. These texts, alongside his completion of the Kirtan Ghosa solidified the foundations of Vaishnava literature in Assam, transforming it from sporadic epics like Madhav Kandali's Ramayana into a vibrant, living tradition.

Beyond prose and poetry, Madhavdev's musical compositions enriched Assamese performing arts, particularly through his creation of Borgeets, the noble songs of the

Bhakti movement. He authored 191 of these soul-stirring melodies, which fuse classical ragas with devotional lyrics to celebrate Krishna's childhood exploits and the devotee's longing for union with the divine. Sung in the Namghars with traditional instruments like the khol and cymbals, Borgeets transcend mere entertainment, serving as vehicles for emotional catharsis and spiritual elevation. Madhavdev's songs often depict tender scenes, the playful antics of infant Krishna, the yearning of the gopis, infusing them with a universal appeal that resonates across social divides. His contributions to music extended the Bhakti movement's reach, turning abstract theology into audible ecstasy and preserving Assamese musical heritage against the erosion of time.

Madhavdev's innovations in drama further amplified his cultural impact, introducing forms that intertwined faith with folklore to engage rural audiences. His Ankiya Nats, one-act plays performed during Bhaonas, dramatize Puranic tales with a blend of dialogue, song, and dance, making moral lessons vivid and memorable. Works like Choradhara, which narrates the slaying of the demoness Putana by young Krishna, exemplify his skill in weaving spectacle with sermon. Similarly, his Jhumura Nats, rooted in folk traditions, incorporate local idioms and humor to convey ethical teachings, as seen in Pimpra Guchowa, a lighthearted exploration of humility and devotion amid everyday village life. Other notable plays include Arjuna

Bhanjan, drawing from the Mahabharata to highlight Arjuna's trials under Krishna's guidance, and Ram Avatara, which celebrates Rama's incarnation with rhythmic verses and communal participation. These dramatic forms not only propagated Ekasarana Dharma but also nurtured Sattriya dance, a classical style that evolved from Bhaona performances, embedding Vaishnava aesthetics into Assam's performing arts. By staging these plays in open spaces, Madhavdev fostered social cohesion, inviting people from all castes to partake in sacred narratives.

Madhavdev's influence transcended the realms of art and letters, extending deeply into religious and social reforms that reshaped Assamese society. As Sankardev's spiritual heir, he shouldered the responsibility of disseminating Ekasarana Dharma after his guru's death in 1568, establishing numerous Satras which were monastic centers that doubled as hubs of learning, worship, and community service. These institutions, scattered across Assam, promoted education in scriptures, arts, and crafts, while eradicating entrenched evils like animal sacrifices, caste discrimination, and widow ill-treatment. Madhavdev advocated for women's upliftment, encouraging their involvement in religious discourses and cultural activities, a progressive stance in a feudal era. His emphasis on self-reliance urged followers to engage in agriculture and trade, blending spiritual dis-

cipline with practical ethics. Through Namghars, simple prayer halls open to all, he created egalitarian spaces for kirtan and discourse, dissolving barriers of class and gender. This institutional framework not only sustained the Bhakti movement but also ignited a cultural renaissance, preserving Assamese identity amid political upheavals.

At the heart of Madhavdev's philosophy lay an unyielding devotion to Sankardev, whom he revered as an incarnation of divine grace. His Guru Bhatima, a poignant eulogy, chronicles Sankardev's life and teachings, portraying him as the torchbearer of salvation. This hagiographic poem, alongside works like Janma Rahasya which probes the mysteries of creation and dissolution and Naam Malika, a garland of sacred names, reveals Madhavdev's contemplative depth. He viewed life as a pilgrimage toward Krishna consciousness, where devotion supplanted ritualism, and love supplanted fear. His personal trials, including exile and schisms within the Vaishnava fold, only fortified his resolve, as evidenced by his reconciliation efforts and establishment of harmonious Satra lineages.

Madhavdev's legacy endures as a beacon of cultural continuity in modern Assam. His literary oeuvre, from the soulful Namghosa to the dramatic Ankiya Nats, continues to be studied in universities and performed in festivals, informing curricula on Assamese heritage. The Satras he founded, like those in Majuli, remain vibrant

repositories of Sattriya dance, Borgeet recitals, and manuscript preservation, drawing scholars and tourists alike. In an era of globalization, his teachings on unity and compassion offer antidotes to division, inspiring contemporary artists and activists. Figures like Indra Goswami and Homen Borgohain, pioneers of modern Assamese prose, trace their roots to the Bhakti tradition he nurtured. Moreover, Madhavdev's role in standardizing Brajavali, a literary dialect blending Assamese with Sanskrit, laid the groundwork for linguistic evolution, influencing even the missionary-led revival of the 19th century.

In reflecting on Madhavdev's life, one discerns a seamless harmony between the personal and the communal, the ethereal and the earthly. His journey from a Shakta scholar to a Bhakti luminary exemplifies transformation through surrender, a theme echoed in his verses. By rendering sacred texts in the people's tongue, he empowered the marginalized, fostering a renaissance that elevated Assam's global stature. Madhavdev's vision of a society bound by devotion, enriched by art, and united in purpose remains profoundly relevant. His contributions, immortalized in stone inscriptions and living traditions, affirm that true reform springs from the heart, enduring long after the echoes of his songs fade into the evening air of the Brahmaputra valley. Through him, Assam's soul finds its eternal voice, a testament to the power of one man's faith to illuminate an entire civilization.

## Sri Krishna's Miracles: Timeless tales of divinity and inspiration

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The life of Sri Krishna, one of the most revered figures in Hinduism, is a tapestry woven with stories of divine intervention, profound wisdom, and extraordinary feats that continue to captivate the hearts and minds of millions. As the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu, Krishna's life is not merely a historical or mythological account but a spiritual guidepost, illuminating paths of devotion, righteousness, and resilience. His miracles, as narrated in ancient texts like the 'Bhagavata Purana', 'Mahabharata', and 'Harivamsa', are not just fantastical tales but profound allegories that reveal the interplay of the divine with the human. These stories, steeped in mysticism and meaning, inspire people across generations to seek truth, embrace compassion, and navigate life's complexities with grace. This editorial explores some of Krishna's most iconic miracles, delving into their deeper significance and their enduring relevance in a world grappling with moral and existential dilemmas.

Another remarkable childhood miracle is Krishna's encounter with the whirlwind demon Trinavarta. Sent by Kamsa to abduct and kill the young Krishna, Trinavarta appeared as a fierce tornado, sweeping Krishna into the sky. Yet, Krishna, with his divine weight, became too heavy for the demon to carry. The whirlwind collapsed, and Trinavarta was destroyed. This episode illustrates Krishna's ability to transform chaos into order. The whirlwind symbolizes the turbulent challenges of life—unpredictable, overwhelming, and disorienting. Krishna's triumph teaches that inner strength and divine connection can ground us, no matter how fierce the storm. In an era marked by uncertainty, from global crises to personal struggles, this story encourages resilience and faith, reminding us that even the most chaotic forces can be subdued with spiritual fortitude.

Perhaps one of the most awe-inspiring miracles of Krishna's childhood is the lifting of Govardhan Hill. When the people of Vrindavan were preparing to offer sacrifices to Indra, the god of rain, Krishna persuaded them to worship Govardhan Hill instead, emphasizing gratitude for nature's bounty over ritualistic appeasement. Enraged, Indra unleashed torrential rains to flood Vrindavan. Krishna, undeterred, lifted the massive Govardhan Hill with his little finger, sheltering the entire community beneath it for seven days. This miracle is a profound commentary on humility, devotion, and environmental harmony. Krishna's act challenged the ego of Indra, symbolizing the need to transcend pride and recognize the divine in all creation. The hill, a symbol of nature, became a protector under Krishna's guidance, highlighting the importance of living in balance with the environment. In today's context, as climate change and environmental degradation threaten humanity, this story serves as a powerful call to respect and protect na-

ture, acknowledging its sacred role in sustaining life. It also underscores the idea that true leadership lies in humility and service, as Krishna, a divine being, stood among the villagers as their protector, not their ruler.

Another significant miracle in the 'Mahabharata' is Krishna's protection of Draupadi during her disrobing in the Kurukuru. When Dushasana attempted to humiliate Draupadi by stripping her sari, Krishna, responding to her fervent prayers, miraculously extended her garment, making it impossible to disrobe her. This act of divine intervention is a testament to Krishna's role as a protector of dignity and righteousness. It also underscores the power of surrender and faith—Draupadi's unwavering devotion invoked Krishna's grace, turning a moment of vulnerability into one of triumph. For contemporary audiences, this story resonates deeply in discussions about gender, respect, and justice. It serves as a reminder that divine justice prevails when faith and righteousness are upheld, offering hope to those facing oppression or injustice.

Krishna's miracles are not limited to grand displays of power; they often manifest in subtle, compassionate acts that reveal his deep connection with his devotees. The story of Sudama, Krishna's impoverished childhood friend, exemplifies this. When Sudama visited Krishna in Dwarka, carrying a humble offering of flattened rice, Krishna welcomed him with unparalleled warmth and showered him with wealth, all without Sudama asking for it. This miracle highlights Krishna's boundless love and accessibility to all, regardless of status or wealth. It teaches the value of sincerity and devotion over material offerings and underscores the idea that true wealth lies in spiritual connection. In a materialistic world, this story reminds us to prioritize relationships and humility over possessions, fostering a sense of gratitude and contentment.

The miracles of Krishna are not merely historical or mythological events but timeless narratives that carry universal truths. They address the human condition—fear, doubt, pride, and vulnerability—while offering pathways to transcendence. Krishna's playful miracles, like stealing butter or dancing with the gopis in the Rasa Lila, reveal the joy of divine love, encouraging us to find spirituality in everyday moments. His heroic feats, like slaying demons or lifting mountains, inspire courage and faith in the face of adversity. His philosophical guidance, as seen in the 'Bhagavad Gita', provides a roadmap for navigating life's moral complexities. Together, these stories create a holistic vision of divinity that is both transcendent and immanent, cosmic and personal.

In the modern context, Krishna's miracles hold profound relevance. They speak to a world grappling with environmental crises, social injustices, and spiritual disconnection. The lifting of Govardhan Hill calls for environmental stewardship; the protection of Draupadi advocates for dignity and justice; the Vishwaroopa urges us to see the interconnectedness of all life. Krishna's life exemplifies the balance of action and contemplation, playfulness and responsibility, power and compassion—qualities that are desperately needed in today's fragmented world. His miracles are not relics of the past but living teachings that inspire us to rise above challenges, embrace our shared humanity, and seek the divine in all aspects of life.

As we reflect on these stories, we are reminded that Krishna's miracles are not just about divine intervention but about awakening the divine within us. They challenge us to act with courage, love with sincerity, and live with purpose. In an age of uncertainty, Krishna's life offers a beacon of hope, urging us to trust in the eternal truth that righteousness, guided by divine grace, will always prevail. These timeless tales, passed down through generations, continue to inspire, not because they are fantastical, but because they speak to the eternal quest for meaning, connection, and transcendence that defines the human spirit.

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## JANMASHTAMI: The celebration of divine birth

By: Dipak Kurmi

As midnight approaches and the world falls into a hush, a celestial glow emerges from the darkness, heralding the birth of Lord Krishna. This moment, immortalized through centuries, marks the festival of Janmashtami—a celebration deeply rooted in Hindu tradition. Observed with devotion across India and by Hindu communities worldwide, Janmashtami transcends the mere commemoration of Krishna's birth; it is a profound reflection on the eternal struggle between good and evil, the pursuit of righteousness, and the journey towards spiritual enlightenment.

The Significance of Janmashtami: Janmashtami, also known as Krishnashtami or Gokulashtami, holds a special place in the Hindu calendar. This sacred day marks the appearance of Lord Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu, whose teachings and life continue to inspire millions. Celebrated on the eighth day (Ashtami) of the dark fortnight (Krishna Paksha) during the months of Shravana or Bhadrapada, Janmashtami typically falls in late August. The festival is not merely a religious event but an homage to the timeless principles and virtues embodied by Krishna. The Divine Drama of Krishna's Birth: The story of Krishna's birth is a vivid tapestry woven with divine intervention. Born to Queen Devaki and King Vasudeva in the city of Mathura, Krishna's arrival was fraught with peril. Devaki's brother, the tyrannical King Kamsa, had imprisoned the couple after a prophecy foretold that their eighth child would be his downfall. Having already eliminated six of their children out of fear, Kamsa sought to eliminate Krishna as well. To protect the newborn, Vasudeva embarked on a perilous journey, carrying the infant across the Yamuna River to the village of Gokul. There, Krishna was lovingly raised by Nanda Maharaj and Yashoda, escaping Kamsa's murderous intent.

Krishna's escape and eventual victory over Kamsa symbolize the triumph of good over evil—a central theme of Janmashtami. This festival serves as a reminder of the ongoing battle between righteousness and wrongdoing, encouraging devotees to uphold moral values and resist injustice. Krishna's life exemplifies how divine intervention can restore justice and promote harmony, reinforcing the importance of standing against evil.

Symbolism and Spiritual Reflection: The festival of Janmashtami is rich with symbolism, portraying the eternal conflict between good and evil and the soul's quest for spiritual enlightenment. In this metaphor, Kamsa represents the ego's destructive qualities—arrogance, pride, and ignorance. Devaki symbolizes the human consciousness that harbors divine potential, while Vasudeva stands for the alignment of human will with divine purpose. Krishna, as the incarnate soul, is nurtured in a righteous environment and ultimately overcomes the ego (Kamsa), bringing about peace and harmony. This allegory reflects the soul's journey to transcend ego and realize its divine nature.

Sadhvi Tapeshwari Bharti Ji of Divya Jyoti Jagrati Sansthan offers a profound interpretation of these symbols. She describes Kamsa as embodying the ego with its demonic traits, while Devaki represents human consciousness and Vasudeva signifies the divine alignment of will. Krishna's journey illustrates the necessity of distancing oneself from the ego to fulfill one's divine mission, mirroring the soul's path to detach from worldly desires and achieve spiritual enlightenment. Divya Guru Shri Ashutosh Maharaj Ji further elucidates this symbolism, explaining that the soul, when nurtured in a pure and virtuous environment—represented by Yashoda and Nandlal—undergoes growth and transformation to conquer the ego. This journey ultimately leads to inner peace and harmony.

Krishna's Timeless Teachings: Sri Gaur Prabhuji, Vice President of ISKCON Temple Dwarka, Delhi, highlights that Janmashtami is a powerful reminder of Krishna's enduring teachings. As we mark the 5251st anniversary of His appearance, the relevance of the Bhagavad Gita becomes increasingly evident. Krishna's teachings guide humanity toward a life of devotion, humility, and love, providing crucial wisdom in a world fraught with challenges. The festival is an opportunity to reconnect with dharma and deepen our bond with the Supreme Personality. In today's fast-paced and often chaotic world, Krishna's teachings offer valuable insights for managing stress, living ethically, and fostering personal growth. The Bhagavad Gita's emphasis on equanimity and detachment provides practical tools for navigating modern pressures. Krishna's principles of selfless duty and moral integrity serve as a compass for making ethical decisions and achieving balance in life. His focus on self-realization encourages introspection, helping individuals understand their true selves amid daily distractions.

Nourishment and Balance: The philosophy behind Janmashtami is also reflected in the festival's foods. These are chosen to align with Krishna's principles of balance, purity, and nourishment. Simple, wholesome ingredients like fruits, nuts, seeds, and grains are not only nourishing but also promote mental clarity and spiritual focus. Just as Krishna's teachings guide toward a balanced life, these foods sustain both body and soul, highlighting the connection between what we consume and how we live.

Janmashtami is much more than a celebration of Lord Krishna's birth. It is a deep reflection on the battle between good and evil, the significance of righteousness, and the journey towards spiritual awakening. As devotees gather to observe this sacred festival, they are reminded of Krishna's timeless teachings, which continue to illuminate the path of virtue and divine love. (The writer can be reached at [dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com](mailto:dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com))

# Echoes of a Promise

## A Love Story Beyond Time

By: Chafikhur Rahman

Rudra Baruah drove his white SUV up the winding hill road that led to Diphu. The sky was pale blue, and thin clouds hung like cotton over the ridges. Pine trees stood in lines on both sides. The air smelled of wet leaves, wild lemon, and distant smoke from a kitchen fire. He lowered the window and took a deep breath. He was a police officer—an IPS officer—and now the new Superintendent of Police for Karbi Anglong. But at that moment he was also a traveller, a man entering a land that felt both new and old at the same time.

He had never been to Diphu before. He knew this as a fact. Yet as the road curved around a shoulder of the hill and the valley opened on his left, his heart gave a small jump. The shape of the river below, the bend like a sleeping snake, the tall bamboo clumps leaning together as if whispering—it all felt familiar. He could not explain it. He told himself it was only the beauty of the place, the kind of view that makes anyone feel at home. But the feeling did not pass. It grew stronger with each turn of the road.

On the right side of the road, a small shrine appeared—just a stone under a young banyan tree, covered by a red cloth. A woman had placed marigolds there. Someone had left a clay lamp. Rudra slowed down without thinking, and his fingers brushed the steering wheel in a gentle bow, the way a child salutes an elder. He smiled at himself. “You are getting soft,” he said out loud, and his voice sounded too loud in the quiet car. He turned on the radio, then turned it off again. The hill wanted silence.

The sun was sliding down. He had started late from Nagaon and had not planned his stops well. If he reached Diphu after dark, he was not sure what he would find open. He was not afraid of the dark, but he knew hills are different at night. So, when he saw a tea stall at a bend—a bamboo hut with a tin roof, a small counter, and a hand-painted sign that said “Mintu Store”—he stopped.

The ground was damp. A dog lifted its head and wagged its tail. Inside the shop, glass jars held biscuits, candies, and roasted peanuts. A kettle steamed on a little stove. The shopkeeper, a man with kind eyes and a towel over his shoulder, looked up and smiled.

“Namaskar, sa’ab. Tea?” he asked. “Please,” Rudra said. “And two water bottles. Some snacks also. I will reach Diphu at night.”

The shopkeeper moved quickly. “Biscuit? Banana? We also have muri and chanachur.”

“Banana and biscuit are fine,” Rudra said. He glanced around. A wall calendar showed a mountain lake. A poster of a football team hung beside it. In one corner lay a small pile of firewood, neatly tied.

As the tea boiled, an old man walked past the shop and stopped. His hair was the color of ash. His beard was thin and long. His clothes were clean but worn. He stared into the shop with wide eyes. Then he stared at Rudra. The old man’s mouth opened. For a second, he did not speak. Then he shouted.

“My son! My son has come back!” Rudra stood still, the paper cup in his hand. The old man stepped closer, trembling. Tears filled his eyes. He raised a shaking hand, as if to touch Rudra’s face. Then he turned and began to run down a narrow path into the trees.

“Baba!” the shopkeeper called. “Wait!”

But the old man disappeared between bamboo and fern. Only the sound of dry leaves under his feet remained, and then even that faded.

The dog whined. The kettle hissed. The hills were suddenly very quiet.

“I am sorry, sa’ab,” the shopkeeper said softly. He poured the tea and pushed it across the counter. “That old man is from the next village. He lost his son thirty years ago in the river. Since then he is not right in his mind. Some days he is calm. Some days he cries. When he sees strangers, sometimes he calls them by his son’s name.”

Rudra looked at the path where the old man had gone. Something in his chest ached, a small ache like a needle. “What is his name?” he asked.

“Ratneswar’s father,” the shopkeeper said, as if that were the only name that mattered. Then he shook his head. “But please do not worry. He will come back by night. He knows the forest like his own palm.”

“Thirty years is a long time,” Rudra said without thinking. The number hung like a bell in the air.

The shopkeeper nodded. “Yes, sa’ab. In these hills, time moves slowly. But grief never grows old.”

Rudra paid for the tea, water, bananas, and biscuits. He packed them in a small bag and thanked the man. As he turned to leave, a sound of a car engine rose on the road. A silver sedan stopped near his SUV. The driver’s window came down. A woman leaned out. She wore a pale blue cotton kurta and had a neat bun. Her eyes were bright and direct.

“Excuse me,” she said, “is this the road to Diphu? My map is showing something strange.”

Rudra blinked. For a second, he forgot how to speak. He had never seen this woman before. Yet her eyes were familiar. Not just familiar—known. He knew their calm, their light, their slight sadness, as if he had seen those eyes in many seasons, in sunlight and in rain, in laughter and in fear.

He smiled to hide his confusion. “Yes,” he said. “I am also new to this place. I am following Google Map. It says Diphu is straight ahead. But the signal goes up and down.”

She laughed softly. “It happens in hills.” She paused. “I am Kaberi Mahanta,” she said, and then added, “newly posted— District Commissioner.” She said it lightly, without pride. It sounded like she was telling him her blood group.

“Rudra Baruah,” he replied. “Superintendent of Police.”

They looked at each other for a moment. The mountains around them were green and patient. The dog yawned. The shopkeeper watched with a curious smile.

“If you like,” Rudra said, “we can drive together. It is safer. If one car has a problem, the other can help.”

“That is a good idea,” Kaberi said. She checked her watch. “Before dark, if we keep steady.”

They both started their cars. Rudra pulled out first, and Kaberi followed. For a while, they drove in silence, keeping a safe distance. The road narrowed and then widened. A flock of birds flew across, drawing a line like ink in the sky.

Rudra felt calmer now. Maybe it was the presence of another traveler. Maybe it was the sound of the road. But every few minutes, he found his eyes in the rear-view mirror. He was not checking for traffic. He was checking for Kaberi’s car. He saw the silver shape behind him, steady, sure. He did not know why that made him feel strong. It just did.

They crossed a small bridge over a stream. The water rushed below, white and fast. On the far side, a group of children were flying a kite from a field. The kite was red and bright, dancing wildly.

One boy slipped and fell, and the others laughed and pulled him up. Kaberi honked once, a friendly beep. The children waved with both hands. The kite climbed higher.

A signboard said: “Diphu—32 km.” The sun pressed lower. The light turned honey-gold.

Rudra’s phone buzzed on the passenger seat. He did not pick it up. He did not want to talk to anyone from his last posting, from the past week of farewell dinners and formal speeches. He wanted the hills to be quiet inside him. He wanted to listen.

And the hills did speak, though not in words. They spoke in the rhythm of cicadas, in the echo of a horn at a far bend, in the smell of green pepper vines and wet stone. They spoke in memories he did not remember making. A flash of a stone step. A whisper of a temple bell.

The cool shade of a riverbank at noon. A hand he had held. A promise made to water and sky. He shook his head to clear it, but the feelings stayed like a soft fog.

They stopped once more, at a viewpoint where the valley opened wide. The land below was a patchwork of fields and forests. A far village was a cluster of roofs like shells in a row.

Kaberi got out of her car and stood by the railing. The wind lifted a strand of hair from her bun. Rudra joined her. Nei-

ther spoke for a while. The silence felt right, like a prayer.

“I feel strange,” Kaberi said at last. “As if I have seen this place many times.”

Rudra looked at her profile—the clear line of her nose, the gentle curve of her cheek, the thoughtful mouth. “I feel the same,” he said. “It is like a dream I can almost remember.”

Kaberi smiled without looking at him. “Or a story someone told us a long time ago,” she said. “And we believed it so much that it became our own.”

Rudra laughed softly. “You speak like a poet, Madam DC.”

“Do I?” she said. “It is only the air here. It has old words in it.”

A small memory rose in Rudra’s mind: a boy in a white shirt, books under his arm, waiting at a temple gate. He felt as if someone called his name—Ratneswar. The name came like the taste of salt on the tongue, quick and sharp. He blinked, and it was gone. He felt silly. He did not know anyone by that name. He did not know why the name felt like it belonged to him for a second.

They drove on. The sky turned orange-pink. A cool breeze rose from the valleys. Somewhere far off, a drum beat began, slow and steady, the start of a small village festival. A woman walked along the road with a basket on her head and a baby on her hip. She turned and looked at the two cars passing. Her eyes were deep and old. She did not smile or frown. She simply watched, as if measuring the weight of the moment.

The road dipped into a tunnel of trees. It was darker there. Rudra turned on his headlights. Fireflies flashed like tiny lamps. He felt a sudden loneliness, the kind that comes in tunnels, in trains at night, in hotel rooms—then it passed, and the day opened again. They reached police check post near a village crossing. A constable raised his hand and then, seeing the red and blue plates on Rudra’s car, saluted. Rudra stopped anyway. He stepped out and greeted the men. Their faces were lined from sun and wind. Their smiles were honest.

“This is Madam DC,” Rudra said, pointing to Kaberi’s car. “She is also going to Diphu tonight.”

The constable saluted again, more carefully now. “Namaskar, Madam,” he said. “Welcome.”

“Thank you,” Kaberi replied. “How is the road ahead?”

“Good, Madam,” the constable said. “Only one bad patch near the old bridge. Drive slowly there. And—” He hesitated. “If you hear drums from the east, it is only the festival in Rongchepo. Do not worry.”

“We will be careful,” Rudra said. They drove the last stretch. The sky grew deeper. The first stars appeared, shy pinpoints of light. The town of Diphu showed itself as a quiet glow far ahead, like a small bowl of fireflies on the hills. The road signs changed, showing names



that would soon become their daily companions: Kheroni, Rongkhong, Matipung.

As they entered the outskirts of Diphu, the streets became wider. Small shops sold vegetables and fish. A school gate stood open, its motto painted in big letters: WORK IS WORSHIP. A boy in uniform cycled past with a tiffin carrier on his handle. A woman watered plants in front of a house. The air carried the mixed smell of incense and fried onions.

Rudra felt a slow warmth in his chest. He had moved many times in his career. He had seen many towns. But this arrival felt like a circle closing. He did not know why.

They reached the District Commissioner’s bungalow first. It stood on a rise, with tall trees around it and a neat garden inside a white wall. The gate guard opened quickly when he saw Kaberi’s car. Rudra parked outside and stepped out.

“Thank you for the company,” Kaberi said, lowering her window. In the porch light, her face looked calm but a little tired. “It is not easy to be new.”

“It is easier when there are two,” Rudra said. He offered a quick, formal smile. “Good night, Madam.”

She laughed softly. “Good night, Mr. Superintendent.” Then she paused. “Tomorrow morning, I will visit the office. If you are free, we can meet for five minutes. Only to say hello in daylight.”

“I will be free,” Rudra said, and he meant it.

He drove on to his quarters, a solid old building near the SP office. The caretaker, a short man with fast hands and kind eyes, greeted him with tea and keys. The rooms were clean, the sheets fresh, the furniture simple. A big window looked over dark trees. The night wind came in and made the curtain breathe like a living thing.

Rudra washed his face and stood by the window. Distant dogs barked. Somewhere, a scooter passed and faded. He unpacked slowly, placing his files and a single framed photograph on the table—the photograph of his parents on their wedding day. He touched the frame with care. “I reached,” he said into the room, as if reporting to someone who could not answer.

He ate two bananas and a handful of biscuits. He drank water. He lay on the bed, not too soft, not too hard, the kind

of bed that tells you to rest without tricks. He closed his eyes.

At once the road returned—the curve by the river, the marigold under the banyan, the old man’s trembling hand, the silver car with the woman whose eyes he felt he knew, the children with the kite, the drumbeat rising from the east. The pictures moved in a slow circle, again and again, like prayer beads. He turned on his side. He opened his eyes and saw the square of the window, black and still.

He was almost asleep when the first whisper came. It came not from the room but from inside his chest, like a memory knocking. He heard a name, soft and clear: Ratneswar. The name did not frighten him. It only made him sit up. His heart beat fast.

He listened. The night answered with silence. He smiled at himself. “Hill air,” he said softly, echoing Kaberi’s words. “Old words.”

He lay down again. Before sleep took him, a picture moved once more behind his eyes: a small, old temple by a river, its steps wet, its bell quiet, its stone cool under his palm. He saw a girl there, young, with bright eyes and a red dupatta. He could not see her face fully, only the glint of her eyes. They were Kaberi’s eyes, and they were also someone else’s. The girl lifted her hand, as if to call him. He heard a voice like a bell after class: “I will wait at the temple.”

Rudra’s breath slowed. The picture faded. Outside, the hills stood tall under the stars, and Diphu slept. Far away, in a bamboo house at the edge of a village, an old man who had cried “My son has come back” also slept. His tear-wet cheek dried in the night wind. He dreamed of a boy with books under his arm, walking down a path to the river, whistling a tune that no one else knew.

And in the bungalow on the rise, Kaberi lay awake for a while, listening to the soft hiss of the wind in the trees. She had unpacked only one suitcase. On her bedside table lay a small notebook where she wrote one line before turning off the lamp: “The hills remember.” She did not know why she wrote it. But when she closed her eyes, a temple bell sounded in the distance of her mind, and a voice inside her whispered a name she had never spoken: Kabita.

Morning was many hours away. But the story had already begun.

(TO BE CONTD. NEXT ISSUE)

# Poets on Riparian Beauty of Kashmir

By: Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

The valley of Kashmir has been described for centuries as Paradise on Earth, not only because of its snow-clad peaks and enchanting meadows but also because of its unique riparian landscape. Flowing rivers, shimmering streams, crystal lakes, and whispering brooks shape its identity as much as its mountains and chinars. In celebrating the riparian beauty of Kashmir, poetry performs its highest function: to preserve beauty against time, to transform nature into culture, and to remind humanity of its deepest bond with water. Kashmir’s riparian beauty remains one of the most evocative subjects in world poetry. Whether described as divine mother, beloved muse, witness of sorrow, or endangered heritage, the rivers of the valley have inspired centuries of lyrical imagination. Poets have ensured that the waters of Kashmir are not merely seen but also felt, not only admired but also remembered.

Poets, from ancient Sanskrit visionaries to modern Kashmiri voices, have woven lyrical tapestries celebrating this aquatic beauty that gives life to the valley’s culture, history, and imagination. The riparian setting of Kashmir—where rivers and poetry merge—has become an endless source of inspiration for world literature. Poets across time have responded to the riparian beauty of Kashmir, capturing the spiritual, romantic, and cultural essence of the valley’s waters. It also reflects on how these poetic responses preserve the ecological and emotional soul of Kashmir. The primary waterway of the valley is Jhelum. Besides Jhelum, the rivers that shape the valley are the Indus, the Chenab, and the Ravi, all originating in the Himalayas. Other significant rivers are the Lidder, Sind, Zaskar, Neelum (Kishanganga), and Tawi. These rivers are vital for irrigation, hydropower, and offer opportunities for recreational activities like rafting and fishing.

The Jhelum (Vitasta in Sanskrit), the Lidder, the Sindh, the Kishanganga, and innumerable smaller streams and springs crisscross Kashmir. The Dal Lake, Wular, and Nigeen are its water jewels. Each of these has been immortalized in verse, often anthropomorphized as a goddess, a lover, or a divine muse. The gentle flow of the Jhelum through Srinagar has witnessed dynasties rise and fall, Sufi saints meditate on its ghats, and poets of every generation find metaphors for life and transience in its waters. In Kashmiri culture, rivers are not merely geographical entities; they embody memory, mythology, and meaning. It is no wonder then that poetry, the most sensitive register of human imagination, finds in them both inspiration and solace. The earliest poetic invocations of Kashmir’s rivers are found in Sanskrit literature. Kalhana’s Rajatarangini (12th century), though essentially a historical chronicle, employs lyrical passages that describe the riparian landscapes of the valley. Kalhana refers to the Vitasta (the Jhelum) as the life-line of Kashmir, a river sanctified by the goddess Parvati herself. The very name Vitasta evokes the idea of divine blessing—water as both sustenance and spirituality. In Kalhana’s narrative, the river is not static. It flows with time, marking the cycles of history. Battles are fought on

its banks, kings are consecrated in its waters, and lovers whisper to each other under its willow-lined shores. Thus, in the earliest record of Kashmiri identity, the river already occupies the dual role of witness and participant. Sanskrit hymns to the Vitasta celebrate her as motherly, flowing gently yet nurturing the valley like a womb. The ancient risish of Kashmir spoke of rivers as pathways between the earthly and the divine, their murmurs resembling mantras. This spiritual interpretation continues to echo in Kashmiri poetics even today.

With the coming of Islam and Persian literary culture, Kashmir’s rivers and lakes acquired fresh poetic dimensions. The Mughal emperors, who adored Kashmir as their summer retreat, commissioned Persian poets to celebrate its waters and gardens. Jahangir, himself a lover of nature,



is said to have exclaimed that if there is a paradise on earth, it is here in Kashmir—and his poets mirrored this vision in ghazals and masnavis. The riparian beauty became inseparable from the Mughal gardens—Nishat, Shalimar, and Chashme Shahi—where fountains and cascades symbolized controlled beauty and divine harmony. Water, in Persian poetics, often symbolizes purity, eternity, and love’s fluid nature. In Kashmir, these associations mingled with the valley’s natural scenery. Persian poets imagined the Jhelum as a lover’s veil, hiding secrets, or as a mirror reflecting divine radiance. Sufi poets of Kashmir such as Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani (Nund Rishi) also drew upon riparian imagery. For them, flowing water was a metaphor for spiritual cleansing, the passage of the soul, and the unity of existence. Thus, water was not only beautiful but also transformative. Kashmiri poets writing in their mother tongue infused the imagery of rivers with deep cultural roots. Habba Khatoon, the 16th-century nightingale of Kashmir, composed songs where rivers and streams mirrored the flow of longing and separation. In her verses, the Lidder or the small mountain streams became confidantes of her pain, carrying messages of love and loss. The riparian setting amplified the mood of melancholy central to Kashmiri folk tradition. Later, poets such as Mahjoor and Dina Nath Nadim embraced the rivers of Kashmir as symbols of identity and resistance. Mahjoor’s songs about the Dal Lake or the Jhelum were not merely aesthetic—they were reminders of the homeland’s nurturing embrace.

Nadim, writing in the 20th century, often evoked rivers as witnesses to political upheaval, embodying both sorrow and hope for Kashmir’s future. For ordinary Kashmiris, water is inseparable from everyday life—be it through the shikaras gliding on Dal Lake, the irrigation channels that nurture saffron fields, or the springs that provide drinking water. Poets amplified these lived realities into lyrical images, turning daily dependence into timeless beauty.

When European travelers and colonial writers reached Kashmir in the 18th and 19th centuries, they too were captivated by its riparian charm. Many likened the Dal Lake to Venice, though more serene and picturesque. The willow-lined banks of the Jhelum reminded them of pastoral English rivers, though Kashmir’s setting appeared more dramatic. The metaphors of paradise, garden, and Eden dominated their descriptions. Sir Walter Lawrence, though primarily a chronicler, often lapsed into poetic cadences when describing the riverine scenery. Later, Kashmiri English poets such as Agha Shahid Ali brought riparian imagery into the modern idiom. Ali’s elegiac poems about Kashmir frequently use rivers as metaphors of memory, exile, and loss. In his lines, the Jhelum is both a real river and a current of nostalgia carrying away fragments of home. Thus, English poetry on Kashmir reinterpreted riparian beauty for a global audience, blending personal emotions with the universal flow of rivers.

Across languages and traditions, certain symbolic patterns emerge in poetic representations of Kashmir’s rivers. As a source of life and nourishment, rivers are mothers feeding the valley, ensuring fertility and abundance. Flowing water mirrors romantic yearning such as love’s restlessness, separation, and reunion. Water symbolizes purity, prayer, and union with the divine emphasizing spiritual cleansing. Rivers observe dynasties, wars, and human struggles silently. Rivers mirror loss especially in modern poetry. We see rivers embodying exile, nostalgia, and trauma in the poetry of contemporary Kashmiri poets like Rafiq Raaz or Naseem Shafaie blend nostalgia with alarm. Their verses plead for the survival of rivers not merely as poetic motifs but as lifelines of Kashmiri civilization. The riparian beauty, once an eternal paradise, is now fragile and endangered. The aesthetics of riparian poetry lie in how poets fuse these meanings with sensory details: the shimmer of moonlight on Dal Lake, the murmur of Jhelum under old bridges, or the sudden sparkle of Lidder among pine forests. Such images appeal both visually and musically, making Kashmir’s waters a unique poetic subject. From Kalhana’s Sanskrit verses to Habba Khatoon’s folk songs, from Persian ghazals to Agha Shahid Ali’s English elegies, the riparian beauty of Kashmir continues to ripple across centuries of poetry. Each generation reinvents the imagery—sometimes romantic, sometimes mystical, sometimes tragic—but always deeply rooted in the waters of the valley. The rivers will continue to flow, and as long as they do, poets will continue to sing. And in their singing, the riparian beauty of Kashmir will remain immortal. (International Tagore Awardee Poet Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee is a former Affiliate Faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University USA. Email prof@ratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com)

## On facing the waves of Sadness

By: Bipul Chandra Kalita

Waves strengthen selfish sailors  
In reaching destined shores,  
Remaining safe  
Like hearts searching hearts  
With or without well loaded cargos.

My eyes are full of dreamy visions  
Containing many a confident sun:  
Sights smoothen ways  
To insights,  
Sensitizing events,  
Even negligible fantasies,  
Visualizing life’s functional realities.

Undoubtedly a couple of dreams  
Spends or celebrates  
Nuptial nights  
Like youthful longings  
In keenly passionate fantasy;  
Oft actuality fails to show its face  
When hard reality knocks its doors!

Love enlivened even ‘the dying me’  
To prove its power  
To give me a lively life;  
I sprang erect to see the sun,  
Resolved to paint its beams  
In dreams’ waves in spotless skies...

I’ve been hurt in my sweet efforts  
To enliven your dying smile  
During my journeys,  
Oft undertaken with an open heart,  
To any fountain of life’s sweetest light;  
I cant paint properly that pain  
Neither in fantasy  
Nor in reality,  
Carrying such a sadness like my sadow.

## The Ghat at Uzanbazar

By: Aniruddh Oghri

I sit by the river,  
And watch the ferries go.

Crawling and turning,  
The snake struggles against the flow.

The river dolphins  
Remain between the banks,  
Jumping out of the water,  
And diving in at an instant.  
The stoners will smoke,  
Their cannabis at the sandy banks,  
And feel the freshness of the wind,  
And the calmness of the land.  
The crow caws across the sky.  
The ferryman, washes his feet  
In the waters of the mighty river,  
And the boats return, in fleet.

## Threats of tomorrow can only be met by collaborations we build today: Navy chief

**NEW DELHI, Sept 13:** In the increasingly complex and challenging maritime environment, where threats can emerge swiftly and "often invisibly", the ability to collect, analyse and share information in real-time will "define both deterrence and defence," Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi has said.

In his address on the commissioning of the Navy's latest naval base – INS Aravali – in Gurugram on Friday, he asserted that the "threats of tomorrow can only be met by the collaborations we build today".

Deriving its name from the unwavering Aravali range, it shall support various information and communication centres of the Indian Navy, which are key to the country's and the Navy's command, control and Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)

framework, the defence ministry said.

"In the increasingly complex and challenging maritime environment, where threats can emerge swiftly and often invisibly, the ability to collect, analyse, and share information in real time will define both deterrence and defence," the Navy chief said in his address.

"As we dedicate INS Aravali to the service of the nation, in a way, these ancient guardians are extending their watch over the maritime domain. From its humble beginnings in 1949, this campus has witnessed a remarkable growth over the last 15 years," he said.

With the establishment of IMAC (Information Management and Analysis Centre) in 2014 and IFC-IOR (Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region) in 2018, now these premises are



a "promising beacon of collaborative maritime information-sharing for the nation and beyond", the admiral said. IFC-IOR is a centre hosted by the Navy in Gurugram, with an aim to strengthen mar-

itime safety and security in the region and build a common, coherent maritime situation picture.

Looking ahead, it is evident that information will remain a "decisive currency of maritime power," he said. "In the increasingly complex and challenging maritime environment, where threats can emerge swiftly and often invisibly, the ability to collect, analyse, and share information in real time will define both deterrence and defence," the Navy chief said.

As India moves towards the vision of Viksit Bharat, "our maritime interests are set to increase manifold, stretching across trade, energy and connectivity. To safeguard these growing interests, our approach to maritime information must be guided by the trinity of invention, innovation, and integration," he said.

"With an increase in the scale and sophistication of facilities here, it is only fitting that they receive a strong and resilient administrative-cum-logistic support. And, the commissioning of the base depot ship, INS Aravali, provides precisely that foundation," he added.

This new base would not only be a hub of technology, but also of collaboration, linking our platforms and partners across the oceans, the Navy chief said.

In that context, INS Aravali is a true embodiment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's collaborative vision of MAHASAGAR or Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions, and would "further strengthen India's role" as the preferred security partner in the Indian Ocean Region, the admiral said. (PTI)

## 'Under the NDA, Bihar has been registering a double-digit growth rate' People of Bihar will give befitting reply to opposition for insulting Modi's mother

**PATNA, Sept 13:** BJP president JP Nadda on Saturday alleged that the repeated insults aimed at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's late mother reflected the "filthy mindset" of the Congress and claimed that the opposition party will get "a befitting reply from the people of Bihar."

Addressing a function, Nadda, who is also the Union Health Minister, termed the opposition "irresponsible" and "power-hungry," and accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of "inconsistency" in his allegations of voter list manipulation.

"Abuses were hurled at the late mother of Modi, by someone who was understood to have been instigated by the Congress and its allies. Now, the latest video of the Congress confirms that they have a filthy mindset", said Nadda, referring to the Darbhanga incident during the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' last month and an AI-generated video shared by the opposition party on social media. Hinting that the BJP would raise the issue in the upcoming state assembly polls, Nadda said, "They will get a befitting reply from the people".

Nadda also criticised Rahul



Gandhi, the leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha, for raising objections to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

"He has never been consistent in his allegations about Maharashtra. Sometimes, he alleges 70 lakh voters were added ahead of assembly polls last year, and at other times, he puts the number at one crore".

The BJP leader, who spent his childhood in Bihar, asserted he has been a "witness" to the lawlessness that prevailed in the state until 2005, when the BJP-led NDA came to power with JD(U) presi-

dent Nitish Kumar as the chief minister.

Taking a dig at RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, Nadda said, "Under the NDA, Bihar has been registering a double-digit growth rate. But those who never reached class 10 can obviously not appreciate this fact". "People of Bihar can never forget the jungle raj. During Lalu Prasad's tenure, people here were forced to migrate from the state. I must say the RJD is associated with corruption and jungle raj. R stands for 'Rangdaari', J for 'Jungleraj' and D means 'Dadagiri'.

Today, under the leaderships of Modi and Nitish Kumar, people of Bihar are witnessing growth", he added.

"Today, I have two pictures of Bihar before me — one is a dark Bihar, and the other is moving towards light. Everyone knows what Bihar's situation was before 2005 and what the current situation is. Before 2005, there was politics of appeasement, corruption and state-supported crime. Today, under the NDA government, Bihar is progressing on the path of development," Nadda added.

"India was the 11th largest economy when Modi came to power, and now the country will soon become the world's third-largest economy", he added.

"Through the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, 25 crore people in the country have today come out of poverty. In the same way, there has been an 80 per cent reduction in extreme poverty. Modi has provided water through taps to more than 14 crore households and housing to more than 4 crore poor people," he added.

Later in the day, Nadda will inaugurate a hospital in Saran district. (PTI)

## Kerala cabinet clears draft bill to amend Wildlife Protection Act

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Sept 13:** The Kerala government on Saturday approved a draft bill to amend the Wildlife Protection Act with the objective of reducing the increasing human-animal conflicts in the state.

A special cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, gave a nod to the draft legislation that empowers the Chief Wildlife Warden to order the immediate killing of any wild animal that enters an inhabited area and attacks and injures a person, official sources said.

This is the first time that a state has brought such an amendment to the central law, a CMO statement said.

"The draft of the Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2025 has been approved by the Cabinet. The bill seeks to amend the central Wildlife (Protection) Act. This is the first time in India that a state is bringing such an amendment to a central law," it said.

State Forest Minister A K Saseendran later said the provisions in the Bill help to avoid impractical and time-consuming procedures in the central law and in the standard operating procedures issued by the union government.

However, the minister said that there is no legal obstacle to protecting those wildlife species that need to be protected, as per the draft bill.

If someone is seriously injured in a wildlife attack and the matter is reported to the chief wildlife warden, he can take necessary action, including killing the wild animal, without wasting time on other procedures, the minister said, quoting the provisions in the draft bill.

At present, central law has the authority to declare any wild animal in Schedule II as a vermin if its numbers are found to have increased uncontrollably, Saseendran said. A provision has been added to the present draft bill to give this authority to the state government, he explained.

Once declared as a vermin, anyone can kill that particular wild animal in any way they want, Saseendran further explained the provisions of the draft bill.

There is no obstacle to eating its meat as well, the minister added. The Kerala cabinet cleared the draft bill to amend the Wildlife (Protection) Act months after CM Vijayan called for amending the central law citing challenges faced by the state government in dealing with instances of wild animals encroaching into human habitats. (PTI)

## Rahul, UP minister engage in heated exchange during meeting in Raebareli

**RAEBARELI, Sept 13:** A high-level review meeting of key central schemes here saw a heated exchange between Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, and Uttar Pradesh Minister Dinesh Pratap Singh after the latter was told that members must seek the chair's permission before speaking.

A video of the exchange at the September 11 meeting went viral on social media on Friday.

The incident occurred during the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meeting held at the Collectorate's Bachat Bhawan. Amethi MP and DISHA co-chairperson Kishori Lal Sharma, several MLAs and block chiefs were also present at the meeting.

Sharma told PTI that the confrontation arose when Singh began directly questioning officials.

"In DISHA meetings, members must seek the chair's permission before speaking. I reminded him of this procedure, just as all questions in the Lok Sabha are addressed through the Speaker," Sharma said.

A minister should know parliamentary etiquette, he said, adding, "The chief minister should take

note of such conduct. What message does it send about cabinet discipline?"

Meanwhile, Singh, the minister of state (independent charge) for horticulture, posted a lengthy statement on social media in response to a viral photograph of Gandhi shaking hands with his son, also a local block chief.

Singh alleged that Congress supporters circulated the image to troll him.

"My son should not have merely shaken hands but touched Rahul Gandhi's feet as a mark of respect since he is my age," he said.

The minister claimed that he stood up and greeted Gandhi, but "he did not shake hands with me".

Calling for "an end to the controversy", Singh wrote, "Let us move forward in 'apni apni disha' (our own directions)".

The DISHA meeting was boycotted by expelled Samajwadi Party MLA from Unchahar, Manoj Kumar Pandey, over one of his proposals being denied indulgence, while an upset Lalgarh block head Shivani Singh chose to skip it after her vehicle was allegedly denied entry into the collectorate premises.

"I don't like using such platforms for pushing agendas of politics, I prefer doing my work there," she added. (PTI)

## Ayurveda gaining attention for holistic approach to emotional well-being, say experts

**NEW DELHI, Sept 13:** Emotional health is inseparable from physical well-being, and if one gets disturbed, the other is directly affected, experts have said, underlining that ayurveda is gaining attention in modern wellness circles for its holistic approach to balancing emotions.

Aryurveda, the Indian traditional system of healing, refers to well-being as a state when the mind, body, and soul are in harmony. This balance is influenced by 'Vata', 'Pitta' and 'Kapha', and mental qualities, including 'Satva', 'Raja' and 'Tama', experts said.

Understanding one's personal constitution offers guidance on how to maintain emotional and physical balance, they underlined.

"Emotions such as anxiety, irritability, and sadness are not just mental states but symptoms of deeper imbalances in the body's energy. By identifying whether 'vata', 'pitta', or 'kapha' is disturbed, we can suggest lifestyle adjustments, dietary changes, and breathing practices that bring sta-

bility and calmness," said Dr Puneet Dhawan, the founder and director of Karma Ayurveda.

"Vata" imbalances may result in anxiety and restlessness, while excess 'Pitta' can lead to irritability and anger. 'Kapha'-related disturbances often cause lethargy and sadness.

Tailored practices like managing diet and lifestyle, considering one's temperament and the solar system can help restore balance and emotional clarity, explained Dr R P Parasher, the National President of All India Doctors Association of Indian System of Medicine.

"Ayurveda's emphasis on daily routines and foods in accordance with the basic principles of Ayurveda like 'Dincharya' (as per different times of the day based on earth's movement on its axis during 24 hours) and 'Ritucharya' (as per different seasons based on earth's movement around the sun during the year) and mindful living offers practical tools for anyone seeking emotional resilience. These methods complement mod-



ern therapies and support long-term wellness." Ayurveda also recommends enhancing 'sattva' -- mental clarity and peace -- while reducing 'rajas' (overactivity) and 'tamas' (inertia), which are linked to stress and low mood. Techniques like yoga, meditation, and self-massage therapies are widely used to strengthen this balance.

Dr Himanshu S Tiwari, president (Technical) at Karma

## Cong committed sin of denying Muslim women legitimate rights due to appeasement policy: MP CM

**INDORE, Sept 13:** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Saturday accused the Congress of committing the sin of depriving Muslim women of their legitimate rights due to its appeasement policy.

He made the statement while referring to the Shah Bano case during his speech at an event organised by the legal cell of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) here.

Shah Bano, a resident of Indore, had filed a case in 1978 seeking maintenance after being divorced by her husband. The Supreme Court ruled in her favour in 1985, but after protests by Muslim organisations, the Rajiv Gandhi government enacted the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act in 1986, which nullified the apex court verdict.

"The Congress and Rajiv Gandhi committed the sin of doing injustice to Muslim sisters, who were fighting for their legitimate rights," Yadav alleged. He also said a grand temple of Lord Ram was built in Ayodhya in a peaceful manner following the Supreme Court's verdict, and expressed hope over resolution of the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura. (PTI)

## Cloudburst in Himachal village buries vehicles in debris, damage farms

**SHIMLA, Sept 13:** Several vehicles were buried under debris and crops were damaged due to a cloudburst in Himachal Pradesh's Bilaspur district in the early hours of Saturday, officials said.

No casualty was reported in the cloudburst that occurred around 3 am in the Gutrahan village in the Naina Devi assembly constituency.

Gushing waters carrying debris scattered all over agricultural lands, said Kashmir Singh, a villager whose land and crops have been damaged.

Four vehicles were buried under debris, said Deputy Commissioner of Bilaspur Rahul Kumar, adding that crop damage is being assessed and relief will be provided after receiving the report. As soon as the information about the incident was received, officials reached the spot and took stock of the situation. The Public Works Department has begun removing the debris to restore traffic at the earliest.

There are reports of water and debris damaging houses in the Mamal and Kamliari villages of the Bhattiyat assembly constituency in Chamba district. In the state capital of Shimla, fog engulfed reduced visibility to about a few metres, inconveniencing motorists.

The local weather office has issued a yellow warning of heavy rains in isolated parts of the state on Saturday and Sunday.

Light to moderate rains continued to lash parts of the state, and Palampur received 86 mm of rain since Friday evening, followed by Murari Devi 69.2 mm, Kangra 58.2 mm, Jogindernagar 45 mm, Aghar 16.8 mm, Naina Devi 16.6 mm, Dharamshala 14.8 mm and Mandi 13.6 mm. A total of 577 roads, including the Attari-Leh stretch of National Highway-3, Ait-Saini section of NH-305 and Amritsar-Bhota stretch of NH-503A, were closed for traffic on Saturday morning. (PTI)

ayurveda offers a time-tested framework that connects emotional and physical well-being in a meaningful way. "Actually, our body performs all its functions as per the instructions received from the brain. Secretions of hormones, chemicals and enzymes change according to our thinking.

"If our thinking is positive with a firm determination to achieve the desired goals, our mind will signal the brain, endocrine system and other body systems to secrete the hormones of positivity like serotonin, oxytocin, as well as digestive enzymes in the gut in abundance," he explained.

It will lead to good physical and mental health with contentment and happiness, Dr Parasher said, adding that "if our thinking is negative, it will impact our wellbeing adversely".

Experts recommended consulting trained Ayurveda practitioners for personalised guidance, while adopting small, mindful changes that support lasting balance in everyday life. (PTI)

## State produces 5.2 lakh million tonnes (MT) of foodgrain and 15,000 MT of pulses annually Arunachal unveils new agri policies to ensure prosperity of farmers



ITANAGAR, Sept 13: Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on Saturday unveiled the Agriculture and Horticulture Policies (2025-2035), aimed at driving agri-transformation and securing the prosperity of farmers in the state.

Mein asserted that the northeastern state is not just cultivating crops, it is cultivating opportunities and futures.

"With our new agri and horticulture vision, we are empowering farmers, boosting production, and positioning Arunachal as a leader in sustainable growth," the deputy chief minister said in a post on X.

Mein underlined that Arunachal has emerged as India's leading organic kiwi producer, and is a major contributor to orange and cardamom cultivation.

He said the state has also taken "pioneering steps" by establishing Palm Oil Mills at

Roing and Ruksin, "the first of its kind in the country". "We are committed to transforming our agrarian economy and ensuring prosperity reaches every farmer of Arunachal Pradesh," Mein said.

According to official data, the state produces 5.2 lakh million tonnes (MT) of foodgrain and 15,000 MT of pulses annually.

Over the last nine years, more than 20,900 hectares of farmland have been added, substantially expanding the agricultural base of the frontier state.

The policies for the next decade will focus on sustainable farming, strengthening market linkages, and introducing modern technologies, an official said.

"The emphasis is on not just increasing production, but also ensuring that farmers get better returns for their produce," he added. (PTI)

## Operation Dawn 2.0 Peddler arrested with contraband, sale proceeds in pasighat



**HT Correspondent**  
PASIGHAT, Sept 13: Under the ongoing Operation Dawn 2.0, the East Siang Police apprehended a drug peddler and seized approximately 9.69 grams of suspected heroin, along with cash and other items, an official statement said.

Acting on credible intelligence, the Anti-Drugs Squad (ADS) of East Siang, in coordination with Anti-Drugs Warriors, Pasighat, arrested the accused, identified as Gonong Taloh, son of Ojing Taloh of Yagrun Village, Pasighat.

An undercover operation was carried out, and the peddler, who has been involved in the illicit sale of narcotics, was caught red-handed.

The operation was led by ADS In-charge, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Ayup Boko, along with SI K Tangha, Constable K. Perme, and Constable K Ninu, in close coordination with Anti-Drugs Warriors, Pasighat.

The seizure was conducted under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, in the

presence of Executive Magistrate Miss Oter Gao and independent witnesses.

During the search, the police recovered 9.67 grams of suspected heroin, cash amounting to ₹17,800, six tobacco containers, three transparent vials, 23 live cartridges of 12 gauge and 70 mm size, and one smartphone. The accused, along with the seized items, was brought to Pasighat Police Station and handed over to the Officer-in-Charge.

A case has been registered under PS/GT/PS/C/No.76/2025 U/S 21(b) of the NDPS Act read with Section 25(1-B)(a) of the Arms Act, and the investigation is currently underway.

Superintendent of Police, East Siang, Shri Pankaj Lamba, IPS, commended the team's efforts and reaffirmed the district police's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach towards drug-related crimes. He also urged the public to report any suspicious activities, emphasising that community cooperation is essential to maintaining a drug-free East Siang, the statement added.

## Army conducts first aid, CPR training and cleanliness drive in Shi-Yomi

ITANAGAR, Sept 13: The Indian Army observed World First Aid Day in Shi-Yomi district of Arunachal Pradesh on Saturday with a twin outreach initiative that combined lifesaving medical training and an environmental cleanliness drive, a defence official said.

While comprehensive first aid and CPR awareness sessions were conducted at Manigong and Menchuka, a parallel campaign on waste management and garbage disposal was launched in Menchuka, underscoring the Army's commitment to both health security and sustainable living.

The programmes directly benefited over 200 civilians, Guwahati-based Defence spokesperson Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said.

At Manigong, the Regimental Medical Officer (RMO) conducted a detailed session, which included lectures and live demonstrations of essential first-aid techniques and hands-only CPR.

The outreach drew 110 participants, comprising 80 men, 18 women and 12 children.

At Menchuka, the training emphasised foundational first-aid principles and CPR familiarisation.

The RMO placed special focus on equipping civilian medical staff, village volunteers and community members with practical, step-by-step techniques to respond



during the critical 'golden hour' before professional help arrives, the spokesperson said.

"Immediate, informed response saves lives," the RMO stressed, adding that simple but sequential actions, checking scene safety, calling for help, controlling bleeding and administering CPR when needed, can make the difference between life and death, he added.

The Indian Army also joined hands with the district's tourist information office to drive home the importance of environmental hygiene through an awareness lecture and cleanliness campaign in Menchuka.

Speakers also highlighted the

link between clean surroundings, tourism potential and long-term livelihoods in the high-altitude, eco-sensitive valley. "Clean surroundings are fundamental to public health, force readiness, and sustainable tourism. Community awareness, disciplined habits, and regular drives will keep Menchuka pristine," a representative of the local military authority said.

The Army also announced that it would support fortnightly cleanliness drives, school outreach programmes, and refresher training sessions in partnership with local institutions under Op Sadhbhavana, its flagship initiative to strengthen civil-military cooperation. (PTI)

## Agri minister inspects farmer's hub in Naharlagun

**HT Correspondent**  
NAHARLAGUN, Sept 13: Agriculture and Allied Minister Gabriel Denwang Wangsu on Friday visited the Directorate of Agriculture campus at Naharlagun and inspected the ongoing construction of the State Level Agricultural Information Hub cum Farmer's Hotel.

Speaking to the media, the Minister described the project as an important initiative for the welfare of the state's farming community.

He said that farmers visiting the state capital for meetings and training sessions previously lacked adequate facilities, and the government has now decided to build infrastructure that provides all necessary amenities.

"I visited the Directorate of Agriculture campus in D Sector, Naharlagun, and reviewed the project. Most of the work has

been completed, and the finishing touches are underway. Once completed, the building will be inaugurated and dedicated for the holistic benefit of the farming community and the department," the minister added.

Describing the project as much-awaited and significant, minister Wangsu expressed his excitement at witnessing its progress.

"This facility will serve as a comprehensive resource center for farmers by providing valuable agricultural information, training opportunities, and comfortable accommodation for visiting farmers," he said.

Director of Agriculture T D Nkam and other senior officials were present during the inspection and later held discussions on various issues related to the project and other departmental concerns.

## National workshop for farmers held at Tawang

**HT Correspondent**  
TAWANG, Sept 13: A National Workshop on "Strengthening of FPOs for Agri-Enterprise Development and Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Border Communities" was inaugurated today at Kalawangpo Convention Hall, Tawang.

The event is being organised by the College of Agriculture, Central Agricultural University (Imphal), Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh, in collaboration with ICAR-IVRI Itanagar, ICAR-NDRI Karnal, ICAR-RCER Patna, RLBCAU Jhansi, RPCAU Samastipur, and ATARI-VI Guwahati, an official statement said.

The inaugural session was attended by eminent dignitaries including Namgyal Angmo, IAS, deputy commissioner, Tawang; Dr G Kadirvel, director, ATARI-Zone VI, Guwahati; Dr Atul Jain, DRI, New Delhi; Dr Anup Das, director, ICAR-RCER Patna; Dr P S Pandey, vice chancellor, RPCAU

Samastipur; and Dr A K Singh, vice chancellor, RLBCAU Jhansi.

The chief guest, Lt Konsam Himalay Singh, retired lieutenant general of the Indian Army, delivered an inspiring address, emphasising the role of agricultural enterprises in promoting sustainable livelihoods in border regions.

He said, "Border communities are the true sentinels of our nation. Strengthening FPOs and agri-enterprises in these regions not only ensures sustainable livelihoods but also enhances national security by empowering people to stay rooted in their land with dignity and prosperity. The spirit of self-reliance must begin from our villages. By uniting farmers through FPOs and linking them with modern technology, markets, and government support, we can transform border areas into hubs of agricultural growth and enterprise."

He further added, "Sustainable development in the border regions is not just an economic necessity,

but a strategic imperative. Empowered farmers are the backbone of a strong and resilient nation."

Presidential remarks were given by Dr Anupam Mishra, HVC, CAU-Imphal; Dr L M Garnayak, director of research, CAU-Imphal; and Dr Ph Ranjit Sharma, DEE, CAU-Imphal.

Nawang Chonzom of Tawang Green Farmer Producer Co Ltd facilitated the dignitaries with locally produced incense.

The inauguration was followed by Farmer-Scientist Interaction sessions, technical presentations, and an input distribution programme for farmers.

The day concluded with cultural events and a community lunch.

The workshop aims to strengthen Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), promote agri-enterprise development, and enhance sustainable livelihoods in rural border communities by bringing together experts, scientists, and farmers on a common platform.

## Mizoram, Manipur projects unveiled by PM milestone for northeast: Khandu

ITANAGAR, Sept 13: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday described the inauguration of the Bairabi-Sairang railway line in Mizoram and the launch of multiple projects in Manipur by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "historic milestones" in India's development journey.

Khandu said the commissioning of the 51.38-km Bairabi-Sairang railway line, built at a cost of ₹ 8,071 crore, has for the first time connected Aizawl to the country's railway network.

"A great and historic day for Mizoram, a proud moment for the entire Northeast, and a significant milestone in India's development journey," Khandu said

in a post on X. The chief minister said the new connectivity will transform trade, commerce, and opportunities for Mizoram and the region.

"Aizawl's first-ever railway link is a transformative achievement that will greatly enhance regional connectivity, trade, and opportunities," he said.

"These visionary steps under the Act East Policy will catalyse development not only in Mizoram but across the entire Northeast, advancing our shared goal of a Viksit Bharat by 2047," Khandu noted.

Khandu also hailed the foundation stone-laying by Modi for development projects worth over ₹ 7,300 crore at Churachandpur in Manipur. (PTI)

## Leader engagement workshop organised in Rono

**HT Correspondent**

RONO, Sept 13: The Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), organised a one-day leader engagement workshop as part of a research project aimed at reducing suicide risk and improving mental well-being among school and college students, an official statement said.

The workshop was attended by nine dignitaries from various institutions in the ICR region, including Dr Margaret Kathing, associate professor, CSE, NERIST; Dr Akhilesh Sharma, assistant professor, EE, NERIST; Bhagyalakshmi, assistant professor, ECE, NERIST; Margreeta Nongstie, vice principal, and Roselin Ratan, Nursing Tutor, from North East Nursing College of Health Science; Dr Aruna Gyati Lod, principal of Binni Yangga Government Women College, Lekhi; Purabi Bordoloi, Principal, Arunachal Law Academy; Dr Narendra Singh, assistant professor, Department of Education, RGU; and Dr Dhritiman Sharma, assistant professor, Department of Anthropology, RGU.

The participants discussed strategies to foster institutional support for mental wellbeing and suicide risk reduction among youth.

The event addressed growing concerns over youth mental health challenges in Arunachal Pradesh, where limited access to mental health resources, academic pressures, complex family dynamics, and socio-cultural transitions contribute to rising cases of depression, anxiety, and suicide among adolescents and young adults. The session began with a welcome address by Dr Tarun Mene, Principal Investigator of the project, who highlighted the role of early intervention and awareness initiatives in addressing mental health challenges in the state.

Technical sessions focused on understanding mental health and wellbeing, child and adolescent development, action planning for crisis response teams, and institutional protocols for mental health support.

The sessions, led by key members of the ICMR-AITS research team - Dr Tadu Rimi, Dr Tuyir Riba, Chara Lowangcha, Mayuri Handique, and Abhishek Rajak - enabled participants to engage in interactive discussions and draft practical strategies to support mental health initiatives.

The workshop concluded with the distribution of participation certificates and a closing address by Co-Principal Investigator Dr Dharmeshwari Lourembam, who underscored the need for trained counsellors in educational institutions and community-level sensitisation.

## Itanagar Mayor reviews mural project

**HT Correspondent**

ITANAGAR, Sept 13: Mayor Tamme Phassang recently reviewed the ongoing mural painting work at the Underpass-Itanagar, accompanied by Corporators and officials from the Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC), according to an official statement.

The mural, being created by local artists as part of the Vocal for Local initiative, is aimed at beautifying the city while promoting awareness on cleanliness, environmental protection, and peaceful living. Appreciating the efforts, Mayor Phassang said it was his distinct honor to witness the progress of the mural, which he said would enhance the city's aesthetic appeal and encourage citizens to maintain cleanliness and support a green and peaceful environment. "This initiative reflects the creativity and talent of our community, making urban spaces more vibrant and engaging for residents and visitors alike," he added. The mural is part of IMC's wider effort to support local artists and foster community involvement in keeping the city clean and visually appealing.

The project is expected to serve as a visual reminder of collective responsibility toward a healthier and more sustainable urban environment, the statement said.

## IMD warns of heavy rain in Arunachal from today

ITANAGAR, Sept 13: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy rain across several Arunachal Pradesh districts from Sunday.

Heavy rainfall has been predicted over parts of Papum Pare, East Kameng, West Kameng, Namsai, Lohit, Tirap, Longding and Lower Subansiri, it said.

The weather office has issued an 'Orange' alert (be prepared) for these regions, urging residents and authorities to remain cautious against possible waterlogging, flash floods, and landslides.

The intensity of rainfall is likely to escalate in Upper Subansiri, Siang belt, West Kameng, Tawang, Lohit, Anjaw and parts of Lower Dibang Valley on Monday, it said.

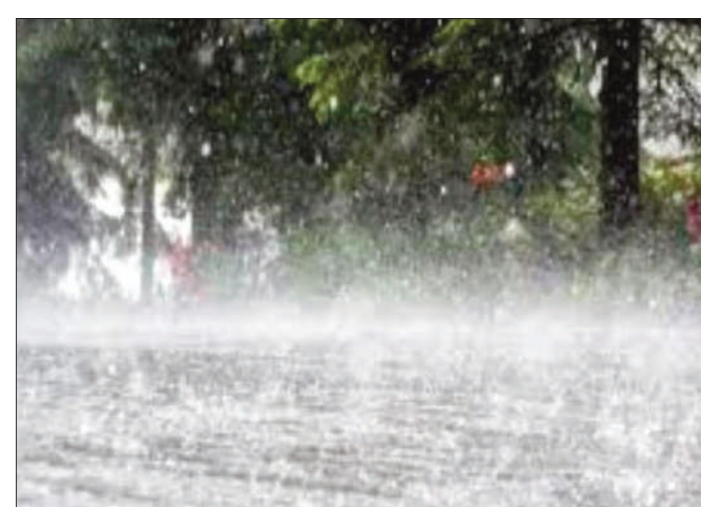
The IMD has sounded a 'Red' warning (take action) for these districts, highlighting the likelihood of very heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning. Other districts - Papum Pare,

East Kameng, Namsai and Changlang - will remain under 'Orange' alert. On Tuesday, rainfall activity will remain widespread though slightly reduced in severity. Heavy downpours are expected in East Kameng, West Kameng, Papum Pare, East Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, Changlang and Longding, for which an 'Orange' alert has been issued.

The IMD has cautioned of continuing risks of waterlogging in low-lying areas and road blockages due to landslides.

On Wednesday, widespread showers are again predicted, particularly affecting Upper Subansiri, Kurung Kumey, West Kameng, East Kameng, Lower Siang, Namsai and Lohit. While most districts will be under a 'Yellow' watch (be updated), heavy rainfall is expected in some pockets, keeping the risk of localised flooding.

The meteorological centre here



in its bulletin said fairly widespread to widespread rainfall with thunderstorms was very likely over almost all districts of the state on September 13.

Heavy rainfall has been reported or predicted in Papum Pare, West

Kameng, East Kameng, Upper Subansiri, Namsai, Lohit and Anjaw. Accordingly, an 'Orange' alert has been sounded in several parts of the state, with authorities advising people in vulnerable areas to remain on guard. (PTI)

## APTGA holds general meeting; executive committee reshuffled, awareness drive planned

**HT Correspondent**

NAHARLAGUN, Sept 13: The Arunachal Pradesh Tea Growers' Association (APTGA) held its general body meeting recently at the Old Conference Hall of the Directorate of Agriculture, Naharlagun, during which several issues affecting tea growers were discussed and plans were made to create greater awareness among the state's citizens, an official statement said.

The meeting was chaired by senior member and former president Tadak Gab, who highlighted the various challenges faced by tea cultivators across the state.

Representatives from different tea-growing regions participated and deliberated on the difficulties and opportunities in tea cultivation, business, and marketing.

Speaking to the media, Tadak Gab said the meeting was convened to restructure the executive committee to better serve the tea growers and promote sustainable development in the sector.

The initiative was undertaken with the guidance and support of Agriculture Minister Gabriel Denwang Wangsu and the Directorate of Agriculture led by T D Neckom.

Given that the organisation had been functioning smoothly but required revitalisation, the house unanimously resolved to reshuffle the executive committee. Tadak Gab was reelected as President, with Tabir



Tatan Eko as vice president, Kapwang Arangham as General Secretary, Adv Tabang Pangng as assistant general secretary, Okit Paling as convener, and Tama Baja as office secretary.

Social worker Nabam Nekia and journalist Manoj Singh were also unanimously appointed as chief advisor and advisor respectively.

Tadak Gab added that several issues now need to be resolved with the Environment and Forest Department, Tea Board of India, and the State Agriculture Department.

He expressed hope that more farmers in the state would associate with tea cultivation, similar to other regions of the country.

## DC chairs DLMC-cum-DDR review meeting in Tawang

**HT Correspondent**

TAWANG, Sept 13: A meeting of the District Level Monitoring Committee (DLMC) along with a review of the District Development Report (DDR) was held at the conference hall of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Tawang recently.

The meeting was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Ms. Namgyal Angmo, IAS, an official statement said.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner instructed all administrative officers to conduct regular site inspections and submit reports accordingly.

She also directed that officers serving as school adopters must visit the schools at least once a month and share their observations.

Angmo reviewed the status and progress of various programs and projects across the district and took a detailed look at the revenue generation efforts of different departments.

She urged all departments to work in close coordination to ensure effective implementation of government schemes and programs at the grassroots level.

Assistant Commissioner-cum-District Planning Officer (DPO) Sangye Wangmu Mosobi highlighted the importance of using a structured reporting format in the DDR to assess the district's overall performance.

She emphasised the need to monitor the saturation level under different schemes and directed that revenue collection data be reported in a timely manner for effective review.

# Satwik-Chirag reach first final of season

**HONG KONG, Sept 13:** India's star men's doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty ended a long wait for a title shot this year, storming into the final of the Hong Kong Open Super 500 with a straight-game win on Saturday.

The world No. 9 duo defeated Chinese Taipei's Bing-Wei Lin and Chen Cheng Kuan 21-17, 21-15 to make their first final of the season after six semifinal heartbreaks.

The eighth seeded Indians will face the winners of the other semifinal between China's Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang and Chinese Taipei's Fang-Chih Lee and Fang-Jen Lee.

The opening game saw the two pairs locked at 3-3 and 6-6 before Satwik's smashes and Chirag's sharp interceptions helped the Indians inch ahead 11-8.

Though the Taiwanese clawed back to 12-12, the Indians surged to 15-12 and closed the game on their second game point with Chirag's angled, high-paced return.

Chen and Lin started stronger in the second, leading 4-2, but India restored parity at 6-6 after a service misjudgment from their opponents.

A couple of errors from Chirag gave the Taiwanese a 10-8 cushion, only for Satwik



## Hong Kong Open

to unleash another booming smash to level things at 12-11.

From there, the Indians tightened their

grip, moving to 17-15 as Satwik punished a weak return.

Soon it became 19-15 in India's favour

before a net error by Chen handed Satwik and Chirag five match points.

The Indians converted immediately after the Taiwanese went long.

For Satwik and Chirag, the result is more than just a step into another summit clash.

It marks a stirring comeback from a grueling year that tested both their bodies and spirits.

A year ago, the Indians endured the anguish of missing out on an Olympic medal after being stopped by Malaysia's Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik.

They salvaged some pride with a bronze at the World Championships becoming only the third Indian pair after Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu to win multiple medals at the event.

Satwik has battled back and elbow injuries in the months after the Olympics, only to be struck by personal tragedy when his father died from a cardiac arrest in February.

His comeback was cut short again by a bout of chickenpox. Chirag too struggled with a recurring back injury, leaving the pair short of rhythm and results.

Saturday's win, therefore, was a statement of resilience as much as form, offering a glimpse of the hunger that once made them trailblazers for Indian doubles on the world stage. (PTI)

# India eye redemption against Australia in crucial World Cup dress rehearsal



**MULLANPUR, Sept 13:**

Buoyed by recent encouraging results and revenge in mind, India will begin their final phase of preparations for the Women's World Cup with a three-match ODI series against the Australia, starting here Sunday.

For Harmanpreet Kaur's side, the series offers not just a chance to fine-tune combinations ahead of the home World Cup but also an opportunity to avenge the 0-3 whitewash suffered in Australia last December.

Since that setback, India have enjoyed an impressive run, sweeping Ireland 3-0 at home, winning a tri-series in Sri Lanka involving South Africa, and beating England across formats (T20s 3-2, ODIs 2-1). All eyes will be on pacer Renuka Singh, who returns to international cricket after nearly nine months following a stress fracture.

Chief selector Neetu David underlined her importance: "Renuka has been a precious player for us. She had niggles and has been out of the game, but is available. She is our main player. This is a main event, great she's part of the team."

Renuka will lead India's three-pronged seam attack alongside Kranti Goud who is the highest wicket-taker in the England ODIs, and Arundhati Reddy.

The spin department is well-stocked with Sneha Rana, who impressed during the Sri Lanka tri-series, young Shree Charani, as well as the seasoned duo of Deepti Sharma and Radha Yadav.

In batting, Smriti Mandhana will continue to open with Pratikha Rawal, who has cemented her place in Shafali Verma's position.

Harleen Deol has also been consistent at No 3, while Harmanpreet and Jemimah Rodrigues provide experience in the middle order.

Match starts: 1.30pm. (PTI)

Record seven-time world champions Australia will be playing their first internationals since the Ashes in February but remain confident given their settled core.

"We've been pretty lucky with the stability of our squad. It's a good opportunity to try different roles and combinations. We've got so much talent, so much depth that we're in pretty good hands," skipper Tahila McGrath said. Keeper-batter Beth Mooney, who has been a standout performer against India in recent ODIs, once again poses a big threat in Australia's top order.

On the bowling front, Megan Schutt, the experienced pacer, will be Australia's go-to wicket-taking option.

Left-arm spinner Sophie Molineux, recovering from knee surgery, is unlikely to play the India series with an eye on the World Cup. Uncapped wicketkeeper Nicole Faltum and all-rounder Charli Knott have been included for exposure and are expected to feature only if injuries arise.

The first two ODIs will be played here in Mullanpur before the series-decider in New Delhi on September 20.

**Teams:**  
**India:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Pratikha Rawal, Harleen Deol, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Renuka Singh, Arundhati Reddy, Richa Ghosh, Kranti Goud, Sayali Satghare, Radha Yadav, N Sree Charani, Yastika Bhatia, Sneha Rana.

**Australia:** Alyssa Healy (c), Tahila McGrath (vc), Darcie Brown, Nicole Faltum, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Grace Harris, Alana King, Charli Knott, Phoebe Litchfield, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Voll, Georgia Wareham.

Match starts: 1.30pm. (PTI)

## Sharma misses 15<sup>th</sup> cut in a row

**WENTWORTH (UK), Sept 13:** Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma missed his 15th cut in a row as he crashed out of the BMW PGA Championship with rounds of 71-74, here.

The first cut fell at 2-under with 82 players and a second additional cut will be applied after the third round after which a maximum of 78 players will play the final round.

Sharma, who has not made a cut since the Indian Open in his home country, has been struggling with his form since then.

Veer Ahlawat, who came through by topping the PGTI Order of Merit in India, did not get into the field this week.

Hideki Matsuyama leads the field by one shot at the halfway stage after firing two extraordinary eagles in his second-round 64, but he has a world-class chasing pack waiting to pounce over the weekend.

The tournament debutant found himself four shots off the lead at the conclusion of the weather-affected first round but soon set about closing the gap when he teed off in the afternoon.

The Major Champion turned in 31 after making an eagle and two birdies on the front nine before a run of three gains in four holes after the turn catapulted him up the leaderboard. (PTI)

# Phil Salt and England smash T20 records at South Africa's expense

**MANCHESTER (ENGLAND), Sept 13:** Phil Salt's fastest and highest Twenty20 hundred for England launched the third biggest ever men's total and a smashing 146-run win over South Africa on Friday.

Salt's 141 not out and Jos Buttler's 83 propped up England's 304-2, which included 18 sixes and 30 boundaries.

South Africa followed with resolve but was 64-3 after the powerplay and lost captain Aiden Markram for a team-high 41 off 20 in the eighth over when the result became inevitable. The Proteas were all out for 158 in the 17th over.

It was their heaviest T20 loss by runs and England's biggest win by runs.

"That was really good fun," Salt told broadcaster Sky Sports. "A personal milestone but the fact we got 300 and won by such a big margin, I can't have asked for much more."

The three-match series goes to a tiebreaker on Sunday in Nottingham.

"With the batting lineup we have got there are not many heights we can't reach," England captain Harry Brook said. "Every must-win game we have now leading to the T20 World Cup (in February) is awesome preparation for us."

The Proteas chose to bowl first in hope of using the moisture in the air, but all they caught was lightning from openers Salt and Buttler at their club ground, Old Trafford.

Salt clobbered the game's first three deliveries to the boundary off Marco Jansen but was soon overtaken by Buttler.

A fourth consecutive boundary brought up Buttler's 50 in 18 balls, the third fastest half-century for England. He and Salt crashed 100 in the powerplay with a ball to spare, only the third time that's been done in a men's T20.

Buttler was on 83 from 30 balls and had Liam



Livingstone's fastest England T20 century in 40 balls in his grasp. Then he hit straight to the fielder at deep square leg at 126-1 in the eighth over and Old Trafford rose to applaud.

Salt reached his 50 in 19 balls, one more ball than Buttler.

But Salt broke Livingstone's fastest record by one in 39 balls and the crowd was back on its feet. The century was Salt's fourth for England. No other Englishman has more than one, and only Glenn Maxwell and Rohit Sharma (five each) have more T20 hundreds.

Salt's hundred came in a 23-run over bowled by Kagiso Rabada, who overstepped twice and bowled wide twice.

Salt passed his and England's highest T20 score of 119 from December 2023, and survived being out caught on 126 because Kwena Maphaka stepped on the rope at long-on, giving up Salt's sixth six.

England arrived at the last over needing 16 runs to break 300 and ultimately got there thanks to another no ball by Rabada. His 70 runs conceded were the most by a South African in men's T20s.

The only higher totals were Zimbabwe's 344-4 against Gambia in 2024 and Nepal's 314-3 versus Mongolia in 2023. England eclipsed the best total by an ICC full member, India's 297-6 versus Bangladesh in 2024. (AP)

## Jersey sponsors will be finalised in 15-20 days: Rajiv Shukla

**SINGAPORE, Sept 13:** BCCI vice president Rajiv Shukla on Saturday said the new jersey sponsor of the Indian cricket team will be finalised in the next two to three weeks, with bids scheduled to close on September 16.

Team India is without a shirt sponsor in the ongoing Asia Cup after the BCCI's deal with online gaming company Dream11, worth ₹ 358 crore per year, was cut short following the enactment of the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, which banned real-money gaming applications. The BCCI has since floated a new tender that bars companies

involved in real-money gaming, betting, cryptocurrency, or alcoholic products from bidding. "The tender process has been released and there are a lot of bidders. We will tell you after it's finalised. I think it will be finalised in 15-20 days," said Shukla at an event organised by realtors' apex body CREDAI here.

Asked if any name had emerged as a frontrunner, Shukla added: "No, there is no name yet. There are a lot of bidders. We will tell you after it's finalised."

Shukla also spoke about the recent GST hike on IPL tickets, which now places them in the 40 per cent slab, alongside

casinos and race clubs.

As a result, a ₹ 500 ticket will now cost ₹ 700 and a ₹ 2,000 ticket will go up to ₹ 2,800. Regular international and domestic matches will continue to attract 18 per cent GST.

"I am seeing that a lot of common people come to watch IPL. It will definitely have an impact. But I am hopeful that a lot of people will come to watch IPL," he said. On criticism that the BCCI enjoys tax exemptions, Shukla responded: "BCCI pays income tax like a corporate company. It also pays GST. We don't have any exemptions." (PTI)

## Theegala makes first cut since April, lies 14<sup>th</sup>; Bhatia is 37<sup>th</sup>

**NAPA (US), Sept 13:** Sahith Theegala rediscovered some touch from his title run here three years ago, carding rounds of 68 and 70 to make the cut at the Procore Championship. It was his first cut since RBC Heritage in April this year. After that he withdrew once and missed the cut four times, as he struggled with a neck injury. The Indian-American golfer, who was sixth after the first round, is currently Tied-14th at the halfway stage. Among those tied at 14th was World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler (70-68), who is using this event to tune up ahead of the Ryder Cup. Akshay Bhatia, also sixth after the first round 68, added 73 in the second to be Tied-37th. While Theegala missed the Play-offs, Bhatia made the second event and finished

in the Top-50 of Fedex Cup standings.

Ben Griffin, who makes his Ryder Cup debut this year, played bogey-free for the second straight day with a 6-under 66 to build a three-shot lead.

Two "cup" players were behind him — one of them fellow Ryder Cup rookie Russell Henley (68), the other Jackson Koivun, the top-ranked amateur who went 3-1 last week at Cypress Point to help lead the Americans to a Walker Cup victory.

They tied, three behind Griffin, who was at 14-under 130. J.J. Spaun, the U.S. Open champion who also will be at Bethpage Black for Ryder Cup, shot 68 but was five shots behind, along with Lanto Griffin (70). (PTI)

## Hitaashee and Ridhima make the cut in Swiss Ladies Open

**ZUG (SWITZERLAND), Sept 13:** Ridhima Dilawari, playing on an invite, and Hitaashee Bakshi were the only two Indians to make the cut at the VP Bank Swiss Ladies Open.

Both the Indian golfers shot 71-69 to get to 2-under 140 at the Par-71 Golfpark Holzhausen in wet conditions. They were both Tied-23rd.

The other Indians Vani Kapoor (74-70), Sneha Singh (70-75), last year's runner-up Tvesha Malik (72-74) and Pranavi Urs (74-76) missed the cut and exited early.

England's Alice Hewson took a two-shot lead, sitting at nine under par after 36 holes. The two-time LET winner — and defending champion — began the day on the 10th tee.

After a shaky start with bogeys on the 12th and 13th, she found her rhythm, rolling in six birdies on the way to a second-round of four under par (67).

Ridhima, who has had very few starts on the LET this season, began well as she had five birdies against three bogeys. In one stretch between the sixth and the 12th, she had four birdies, two bogeys and just one par.

Hitaashee had four birdies and just one bogey for his 2-under 69.

Defending champion Hewson credited her work with sports psychologist Dan for helping her stay in the moment and focus on one shot at a time, a mindset she feels has been a big positive this week.

Two shots back are Ireland's Lauren Walsh and Australia's Sarah Kemp, who sit in a tie for second place on seven under par through 36 holes. Walsh had a steady, bogey-free round, with back-to-back birdies on the 9th and 10th holes.

A further shot back are a total of three players in a tie for fourth place, including Spain's Nuria Iturrioz, Wales' Lydia Hall, and Germany's Celina Sattelkau, who all sit on six-under par. (PTI)

## National Sports Board to be constituted in next 3 months: Ministry source

**NEW DELHI, Sept 13:** The eagerly-anticipated National Sports Board, which will have paramount authority to grant or suspend affiliation to federations and monitor their financial conduct as part of the National Sports Governance Act, will be constituted by December end.

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandavji has promised full implementation of the Act by end of January next year and the constitution of the NSB would be the most significant milestone of that process.

"The National Sports Board will be constituted in the next three months and the process has already been set in motion for this. Also in the works is the framing of regulations for the implementation of the act," a sports ministry source told PTI on Saturday when asked about the timeline of the entire procedure but did not reveal the specifics.

The regulations of the act imply the set of criteria and principles that would be laid down for its execution. This would include the criteria for grant of affiliation to National Sports Federations among other aspects.

The NSB will comprise a chairperson, and its members (number yet to be decided) and will be appointed by the central government from "amongst persons of ability, integrity and standing who possess special knowledge or practical experience in the field of public administration, sports governance, sports law and other related fields."

The appointments will be done on the recommendation of a search-cum-selection committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary. The details of other members of this panel are not yet known but the Act states that they would be required to have wide experience in public administration, sports administration and also be recipients of national sports awards.

Once constituted, it would be mandatory for all National Sports Federations to seek affiliation from the Board to be eligible for central government funding. (PTI)

# I don't remember how I felt when Pakistan lost to India in New York: Saim Ayub

**DUBAI, Sept 13:** There is a quiet confidence that Saim Ayub exudes while answering tricky questions just like the effortless ease with which he plays the "no-look" pick-up pull shot which has become his signature stroke in a nascent but eventful career so far.

So, when he was asked about his feelings about losing to India in New York in a T20 World Cup game last year which he didn't play, the retort was short and crisp.

"Sir, it has been a year and half. At that time, if you had asked me, I would have told you how I felt. Do you remember? I do not remember now," his reply was almost a counter-punch ahead of Pakistan's most important Asia Cup game against India on Sunday. Does it make things easier that he doesn't know what kind of pressure is associated with an India game?

"I think this is the message of our team management for the last three-four months. The most important thing is to learn from the past and move forward. We don't want to remember the past and don't want to focus too much on the future."

The 23-year-old, who will com-



pete against India for the first time in an international fixture, played down the hype just like all others do on the eve of the game.

"It is going to be a big match for the people. We do not see it like this as a team. We see that we follow the same process day by day in the next match."

Ayub wasn't ready to give the India match any extra importance

and even brushed aside queries about his childhood memories of watching Indo-Pak games.

"Memories do not matter. This tournament matters the most. We are not just looking forward to the Pakistan-India match. We are looking forward to win the tournament."

His last four scores have been 0, 17, 11 and 0 but Ayub believes that the team management has a lot of

confidence in his abilities.

"It's in our hands to just make an effort. No one can tell who will perform at the end of the day. We all trust each other," he kept it short.

However, he indicated that there wasn't much dew while bowling second against Oman and the wicket remained dry which might prompt head coach Mike Hesson and captain Salman Ali Agha to play all their three specialist spinners -- leg spinner Abrar Ahmed, left-arm orthodox spinner Mohammed Nawaz and left-arm wrist spinner Sufiyan Muqueem.

"If it looks too dry, then we go for three spinners. And if we feel that it is important to play fast bowlers, then we will go that way."

He also didn't feel that playing Jasprit Bumrah is a greater challenge for him even though he hasn't ever faced him.

"Definitely, it is a challenge. When you play a match, every type of bowler is a challenge for you. The biggest challenge is to make the team win. To find ways to do that. We are in the present moment. We are in the match. That is what is important." (PTI)