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- BNP slams Bangladesh interim govt's plan to enforce July Charter, calls move 'deception'

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- Challenge Modi to refute US president's claims: Rahul
- Lalu wants to make his son Bihar CM: Shah

## Govt to constitute state pay panel soon: CM

**Cashless treatment facility under AA-MMLSAY launched for govt staff, pensioners and their dependents**

**HT Bureau**

GUWAHATI, Oct 29: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday announced that the State Government will soon constitute its own Pay Commission so that employees can start availing the benefits from the same date as those announced by the Central Government.

He made the announcement while launching the cashless treatment facility under the Ayushman Asom Mukhya Mantri Lok Sevak Arogya Yojana (AA-MMLSAY) at a function held in Janata Bhawan.

The new initiative will benefit State Government employees, pensioners and their dependents, enabling them to access medical care without having to bear expenses upfront.

With this launch, beneficiaries will now be able to avail cashless medical services not only in select empanelled hospitals within Assam but also in leading corporate hospitals across the country.

On the occasion, the chief minister also distributed health cards under the scheme and unveiled its



digital newsletter.

The health card will serve as a gateway for both cashless treatment and reimbursement benefits under the scheme.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarma said that MMLSAY was launched on 2nd October 2023 to end the cumbersome and time-consuming reimbursement process for medical expenses.

Previously, employees and pensioners had to pay from their own

convenience during the transition, the Government decided to continue the old reimbursement system in parallel.

Informing that 2,23,826 employees and 6,172 pensioners have registered under the scheme so far, the chief minister said that registration under this scheme can be done anytime.

He added that reimbursements are made as per CGHS rates and the Assam Government adopts the revised CGHS rates as soon as they are updated by the Central Government, ensuring parity in health benefits between Central and State Government employees.

The chief minister said that in the first phase, the cashless service will be available at all Government Medical Colleges and Hospitals in Assam, all hospitals under the Assam Cancer Care Foundation, Dr B Barooah Cancer Institute, CN Centre, GMCH Annex; Medanta - The Medicity, Gurgaon; GNRC Group of Hospitals, Downtown Hospital, Guwahati; Max Healthcare Hospital and Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

and wait years for reimbursements due to bureaucratic delays, sometimes leading to distress and corruption.

He said that to ensure that no one faces such hardships again, the Government decided to introduce this cashless facility. Now, employees and pensioners can receive treatment first, without worrying about funds.

He further mentioned that to ensure that no employee faced incon-

venience during the transition, the Government decided to continue the old reimbursement system in parallel.

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## Zubeen's ashes immersed in Brahmaputra

**We need to know what really happened on that cursed day: Garima**

GUWAHATI, Oct 29: Cultural icon Zubeen Garg's ashes were immersed in the Brahmaputra River by his wife Garima on Wednesday, 37 days after he was cremated with lakhs of followers mourning his untimely demise.

A special ferry was arranged and Garima, along with Garg's sister Palme Borthakur, other relatives and friends, sailed from Lachit Ghat towards the middle of the river in Guwahati.

After brief rituals, the ashes were immersed in the river from two clay pots by Garima, who was seen crying profusely.

After the immersion, Garima took to X to express her emotions in Assamese: "Assam's land, sky, wind and now the vast Brahmapu-



tra... You are the only one in the hearts of people and nature."

"See you again one day soon... I'll talk about reincarnation, I'll write new stories for you and me.

But now, we need to know what really happened to you on that cursed day. #JusticeForZubeenGarg," Garima wrote. The singer's close associate (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## President Murmu flies in Rafale fighter jet, calls it 'unforgettable experience'

AMBALA (HARYANA), Oct 29: President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday took a sortie in a Rafale fighter jet from the Indian Air Force Station in Ambala, and described the experience as "unforgettable", one that instilled a "renewed sense of pride" in India's defence capabilities.

Murmu made history as she became the first President of India to fly in two different fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF). Previously, she undertook a sortie in a Sukhoi 30 MKI in April 2023 from Tezpur in Assam.

Donning a G-suit and sporting sunglasses, Murmu, who is also the commander-in-chief of the Indian Armed Forces, was seen posing for pictures and flashing a thumbs-up gesture before the French-made jet, flown by Group Captain Amit Gehani, Commanding Officer of the 17 Squadron, took off at 11:27 am.

The sortie lasted for approximately 30 minutes, covering about 200 kilometres. The aircraft reached a height of about 15,000 feet above sea level and a speed of approximately 700 kilometres per hour, according to a statement from the President's office.

Upon landing, the President shared her delight in the visitor's book, saying, "The sortie on Rafale is an unforgettable experience for me. This first flight on the potent Rafale aircraft has instilled in me a renewed sense of pride in the nation's defence capabilities. I congratulate the Indian Air Force."

Air Chief Marshal A P Singh also flew a sortie in a separate aircraft from the same air base.

Upon arrival in Ambala, the President was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour. Prior to the flight, President Murmu was pictured with Squadron Leader Shivangi Singh, the country's first woman Rafale fighter jet pilot.

Singh was claimed to have been captured during 'Operation Sindoor' by a pro-Pakistan social media handle. The Press Information Bureau Fact Check had previously confirmed this (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Carcass of one-horned rhino found at Silghat

**HT Correspondent**

NAGAON, Oct 29: A carcass of one-horned rhino was spotted early this morning near the Kamakhya Temple located at Silghat, Kalia-bor. The rhino's carcass was spotted by passersby near the Kaliabor Tea Estate.

According to eyewitnesses, the rhino's horn was intact. The Silghat forest department team reached the spot and initiated an investigation into the cause of death.

Preliminary investigation suggests that the rhino might have been attacked by a tiger, leading to severe injuries on its back, which caused it to fall from a height, resulting in its death.

Further investigation, including a post-mortem examination by a veterinarian, is underway to determine the exact cause of death.

It's reported that the rhino had strayed from the Kaziranga National Park about three months ago and had been roaming in the Kamakhya reserved forest area before entering the Silghat region.

## Cabinet announces major land policy amendment for Moran-Matak communities

**HT Bureau**

GUWAHATI, Oct 29: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday chaired a Cabinet meeting of his Council of Ministers at Lok Sewa Bhawan.

According to an official statement, the State Cabinet approved the proposal for consolidated administrative approval for an amount of ₹ 2,205.75 crore for the additional financing project (Phase II) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)-aided 'Climate Resilient Brahmaputra Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Project'.

The project will be executed through the Flood and River Erosion Management Agency of Assam as the Project Management Unit and the Water Resources Department and Assam Agroforestry Development Board (AADB) as the Project Implementation Units.

The project will cover 76 km of anti-erosion works, 33 km of embankment work and 17.72 km of pro-siltation works covering around 13 districts in Assam.

Together, both phases include around 250 km of intervention on the Brahmaputra riverbank, covering almost 20 per cent of the riverbank reach within Assam.

In order to ensure legal recognition and protection of the rights of people belonging to the Moran and Matak communities, the State Cabinet approved the amendment of the Assam Land Policy, 2019, for the settlement of hereditary land of the Moran and Matak communities on the same lines as done in the case of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Mizoram needs 'double-engine' govt: Jitendra Singh

AIZAWL, Oct 29: Union minister Jitendra Singh on Wednesday said Mizoram required a "double-engine" government to usher in development.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP office in Aizawl, Singh said development and welfare schemes do not reach the people unless a party that is in power at the Centre is simultaneously in power in the state.

"If the party in power in the state is not on the same page with the

ruling party at the Centre, people are often deprived of development and welfare schemes. Mizoram requires BJP representatives to usher in development," Singh said.

He claimed that the BJP-ruled states perform far better than non-BJP states in terms of development and growth.

Singh, the MoS for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, expressed confidence that the BJP will win the upcoming Dampa bypoll in the state.

He also said the BJP has a prospect of growing in the Christian-dominated state in the near future.

He said the NDA government at the Centre gives top priority to the progress of the Northeastern region and has brought development in various sectors.

Singh arrived in Aizawl for a two-day visit to campaign for the party candidate in the bypoll to the Dampa assembly seat on November 11. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Raja Raghuvanshi murder case: Meghalaya court frames charges against five accused

SHILLONG, Oct 29: A court in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district has framed charges against five accused in the murder case of Raja Raghuvanshi, who was hacked to death in May allegedly by three hitmen in the state, where the Madhya Pradesh businessman came with his wife for their honeymoon.

The five accused are Raghuvanshi's wife Sonam, her boyfriend Raj Kushwaha and the three hitmen - Vishal Chauhan, Akash Rajput and Anand Kurmi - who had come from Madhya Pradesh to kill the businessman. All of them denied the allegations against them.

On Tuesday, the court formally framed charges under Sections 103(1) (murder), 238 (a) (disappearance of evidence) and 61(2) (criminal conspiracy) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

According to police, Raja Raghuvanshi of Indore and his wife Sonam travelled to Shillong

on May 21 before heading to Sohra.

On May 26, the couple was reported missing, prompting a massive search operation by Sohra police, the Special Operations Team, NDRF, SDRF, trekking groups and locals.

After days of intensive search, the body of Raja was recovered on June 2 from a deep gorge at a place near the famous Wei Sawdong falls in Sohra. A case was registered at Sohra police station in this regard.

Investigators found that Sonam was in a relationship with Raj Kushwaha.

The duo, along with three hired assailants, allegedly conspired to eliminate Raghuvanshi during their honeymoon.

The killing was carried out by the three hitmen in Sonam's presence, police said.

Within a week of the probe, the five accused, including Sonam, were (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Cong standing by intruders, breaking India for votes: BJP

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: The BJP on Wednesday accused the Congress of "openly" standing by "intruders" and carrying forward "its agenda of breaking India for votes", after a video surfaced on social media purportedly showing one of its leaders singing Bangladesh's national anthem at an official meeting of the Seva Dal in Assam.

In Assam, a senior official of the Sribhumi district administration said they have "received oral instructions from state Fisheries Minister Krishnendu Paul to enquire into the matter, and we are looking into the issue now".

The Congress' Assam unit sought to play down the issue, saying the ruling party is creating "unnecessary controversy" to divert people's attention.

This came after an undated video surfaced on social media showing Congress functionary Bidhu Bhushan Das allegedly singing Bangladesh's national anthem "Amar Sonar Bangla", penned by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, at a Congress Seva Dal meeting in Sribhumi district of southern Assam's Barak valley.

The BJP, on the other hand, grabbed the chance with both (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## No Assamese books bought at Tezpur University in 2 yrs, claims teachers' union

GUWAHATI, Oct 29: Alleging financial anomaly in Tezpur University, its teachers' association on Wednesday claimed that the varsity management has not purchased a single Assamese books during the last two financial years, which is construed as "complete neglect" of the local language.

In a statement, Tezpur University Teachers' Association (TUTA) alleged that Vice Chancellor Sambhu Nath Singh has approved purchasing books only from a few select Delhi-based publishers, influencing the entire procuring process.

The association demanded a thorough probe into the alleged financial anomaly in the handling of public funds.

"It has come to light that during the financial year 2024-25, Tezpur University

received a total allocation of ₹ 6.5 crore under the UGC grant-in-aid for capital assets, meant for books and journals, ICT infrastructure, laboratories, campus development and other facilities," it added.

Out of this amount, ₹ 5.72 crore was approved solely for the purchase of books and journals, and ₹ 4.56 crore was spent under this head, accounting for nearly 70 per cent of the total capital asset allocation.

"Despite this major expenditure, records show that no funds were utilised for Assamese books, even though a budget of ₹ 2.91 lakh had been sanctioned for 146 books under the Department of Assamese," TUTA said.

It further claimed that during the two consecutive financial years of 2024-25 and 2025-26, not a single As-

samese book has been procured by the University, despite substantial allocations and repeated appeals for inclusion of regional literature.

"This complete neglect of the Assamese language in book procurement raises serious questions about the priorities and intent of the University administration," the statement added.

Providing financial details of book procurement from different publishers, the TUTA statement claimed the figures showed that a significant portion of the University's capital asset fund has been directed to a select group of Delhi-based firms that do not supply Assamese books.

"In the procurement process, Vice Chancellor Prof Sambhu Nath Singh personally influenced the selection of these (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## AI-enabled screening for early detection

### Experts warn of rising stroke cases among young Indians

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: As India observes World Stroke Day, medical experts have sounded alarm over a worrying rise in stroke cases among younger adults, warning that the disease is no longer confined to the elderly.

At the World Stroke Day forum organised by Mahajan Imaging and Labs on Wednesday, experts emphasized how AI-enabled, integrated pathology and imaging systems are transforming stroke diagnosis and management, making it possible to detect and treat strokes faster, and even prevent them before symptoms appear.

India's stroke crisis is worsening, with new findings published in the International Journal of Stroke (IJS), revealing that the country records nearly 1.5 million stroke cases every year, yet only one in four Indians has access to a stroke-



ready hospital.

The study highlights a significant gap in emergency preparedness.

Experts noted that the rise in cases among people in their thirties and forties is driven by stress, hy-

pertension, sedentary lifestyles, and chronic exposure to air pollution, underscoring an urgent need for AI-enabled, preventive, and integrated stroke care systems.

Dr MV Padma Srivastava, chairperson of Neurology at Paras

Health, Gurugram, and former Professor and Head of Neurology at AIIMS, New Delhi, said that environmental and lifestyle factors are now major contributors to the rising stroke burden, particularly among younger adults.

Chronic exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5), for instance, is known to trigger inflammation and vascular damage, significantly heightening the risk of ischemic stroke. "In cities like Delhi, where PM2.5 levels are often 10-15 times higher than WHO-recommended limits, individuals with hypertension, diabetes, or pre-existing heart disease face an even greater risk. This makes preventive screening and early diagnosis more critical than ever. Equally important is timely treatment, reaching a stroke-ready centre within the 'golden (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## India condemns 'blinkered' UN report, rejects claim Pahalgam attack impacted Myanmar refugees

UNITED NATIONS/NEW DELHI, Oct 29: India has strongly condemned what it described as a "blinkered analysis" made against it in a UN report on Myanmar's human rights situation, and asserted that the claim that the Pahalgam terrorist attack impacted displaced persons from Myanmar has "absolutely no factual bearing".

India also reiterated its call for an immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar, underlining that sustainable peace can only be secured through inclusive political dialogue and early restoration of democratic processes through credible and participatory elections.

Delivering India's statement during the Interactive Dialogue on the human rights situation in Myanmar at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Lok Sabha MP Dilip Saikia expressed serious objection to the "baseless and biased" observations made by the UN Special Rapporteur against India in its report on Myanmar's human rights situation.

"I express serious objections to the baseless and biased observation in the report regarding my country," he said.

Saikia strongly denounced the "biased approach" adopted by the Special Rapporteur (SR) concerning

the civilian victims of the April 2025 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, which he said was viewed through a "communal lens".

He asserted that the claim linking the April 2025 terrorist attack in Pahalgam with displaced persons from Myanmar has absolutely "no factual bearing".

"My country rejects such prejudice and blinkered analysis by the Special Rapporteur," Saikia said. In his recent report on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Special Rapporteur Thomas H Andrews said, "Following the April 2025 terrorist attack on Hindu tourists in Jammu and Kashmir, refugees from Myanmar have been under severe pressure in India even though no individuals from Myanmar were involved in the attack."

Andrews alleged that Myanmar refugees in India "have been summoned, detained, interrogated and threatened with deportation by Indian authorities in recent months".

Urging the UN expert not to rely on "unverified and skewed media reports whose sole purpose appears to be maligning" India, Saikia underscored that the country is home to over 200 million Muslims, which is about 10 per cent of the world's Muslim population, living in harmony with (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

# Stock markets rally on US Fed rate cut hopes, fresh foreign fund inflows

**MUMBAI, Oct 29:** Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty settled in the positive territory on Wednesday, tracking a rally in global peers, amid hopes of a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve and fresh foreign fund inflows.

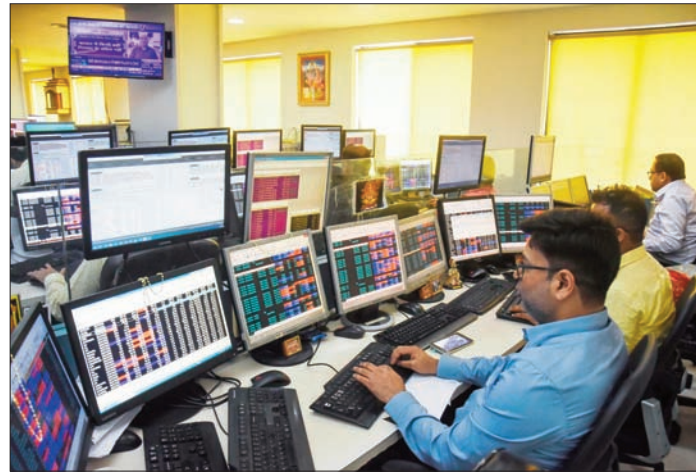
The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 368.97 points or 0.44 per cent to settle at 84,997.13. During the day, it jumped 477.67 points or 0.56 per cent to 85,105.83.

A total of 2,482 stocks advanced, while 1,668 declined and 175 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty went up by 117.70 points or 0.45 per cent to 26,053.90.

"Markets edged higher on Wednesday, gaining nearly half a per cent amid upbeat global cues. Investor sentiment remained supported by expectations of a potential US Federal Reserve rate cut and encouraging updates on possible trade deals," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

From the Sensex firms, Adani



Ports, NTPC, Power Grid, HCL Tech, Tata Steel, Sun Pharma, Trent and Asian Paints were among the major gainers.

However, Bharat Electronics, Eternal, Mahindra & Mahindra and Maruti were among the laggards.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.68 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.56 per cent.

Sectorally, power index jumped

2.72 per cent, utilities (2.61 per cent), oil & gas (2.55 per cent), metal (1.68 per cent), energy (1.51 per cent), services (1.33 per cent), commodities (1.16 per cent) and capital goods (1.01 per cent).

In contrast, auto emerged as the only laggard.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled higher.

Markets in Europe were trading mostly higher. US markets ended in positive territory on Tuesday.

"The domestic market ended on a strong note, supported by positive cues from Asian markets and improved clarity on global trade dynamics. Optimism over potential progress in India-US trade talks further lifted sentiment.

"The upcoming Fed decision remains a key event for global markets; although a 25-bps rate cut is widely anticipated, investors will closely track its commentary for further rate cuts, which will guide the future market trajectory," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹ 10,339.80 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.23 per cent to USD 64.55 a barrel.

On Tuesday, the Sensex declined 150.68 points or 0.18 per cent to settle at 84,628.16. The Nifty dipped 29.85 points or 0.11 per cent to 25,936.20. (PTI)

## Honda presents World Premiere of prototype of Honda 0 α

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Oct 29:** Honda Motor Co, Ltd. On Wednesday presented the world premiere of the prototype of Honda 0 α (alpha), its next-generation EV, at the Japan Mobility Show 2025.

The prototype model will be on display at the Honda booth throughout the duration of the show (Press Days: Oct. 29-30; Public Days: Oct. 31-Nov. 9, 2025).

The Honda 0 α is being developed as an SUV that will blend beautifully with both urban and natural environments, supporting people's lives in every situation.

Following the Honda 0 Saloon and Honda 0 SUV introduced at CES 2025 in January, the Honda 0 α will join the lineup as a "gateway model" for the Honda 0 Series, featuring a refined design and a spacious cabin offering outstanding occupant comfort. Equipped with technologies that embody the Honda 0 Series development philosophy — "Thin, Light, and Wise" — the production model of the Honda 0 α is scheduled to go on sale globally, mainly in Japan and India, starting in 2027.

By applying a packaging design based on the "Thin" approach, the styling achieves a low vehicle height without compromising ground clearance, creating a sleek cabin that still offers a spacious and comfortable interior.

The wide stance expresses stability and dynamic characteristics unique to SUVs.

The exterior design features a sleek and sophisticated body style distinctive to the Honda 0 Series, along with the original proportions of an SUV.

Screen areas are positioned at both the front and rear ends of the vehicle. At the front, components conventionally separated — such as the headlights, charging lid, and illuminated emblem — are integrated into a single screen area.

At the rear, the U-shaped lighting design combines the tail lamps, backup lamps, and turn signal lamps, accentuating the contour of the rear screen area and achieving a design that is both visually and functionally refined.

## HPCL-Mittal Energy JV suspends Russian oil buy; says ships that delivered oil not under US sanctions

**NEW DELHI, Oct 29:** Steel tycoon Lakshmi Mittal's energy joint venture in India, HMEL, on Wednesday said it has decided to suspend further purchases of Russian crude oil in view of the recent sanctions.

HMEL, the equal joint venture of Mital group and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), the first Indian company to officially state that it will not buy Russian crude after the US imposed sanctions on large oil producers of Russia.

In a statement, HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd (HMEL) said it has till now bought Russian oil on a delivered basis - implying the supplier made shipping arrangements. All ships that arrived at Indian ports for such deliveries were unsanctioned.

"HMEL has already taken the decision to suspend further purchases of Russian crude upon recent announcements of new restrictions on imports of crude oil from Russia by the United States, Eu-

ropean Union and United Kingdom, pending receipt of any outstanding orders," it added.

The firm, which owns and operates an oil refinery at Bhatinda in Punjab, said it has always acted in full compliance with government policy and regulations.

HMEL's business activity is in line with the Indian government and its energy security policy.

"All transactions and acceptances of shipping deliveries by HMEL are subject to due diligence and compliance procedures. This includes counterparty KYC, sanctions screening, vessel history and prior port-clearance," it said.

It went on to state that all oil cargoes supplied to the company were on a "delivered-at-port basis".

"This means the company will not be aware of the details of other ships that crude may have been transported on, nor any attempts by those ships to conceal their position to pick up crude from sanctioned vessels," it said. (PTI)

## Kolkata Port inks MoUs worth over ₹ 48,000cr at India Maritime Week

**KOLKATA, Oct 29:** The Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMPK), on Wednesday announced it has secured over ₹ 48,000 crore in strategic investment partnerships through a series of MoUs during the India Maritime Week-2025 in Mumbai.

At the event organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, SMPK entered into agreements with major players.

These include Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) for long-term dredging operations, Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd for investments in tank-farm and POL (petroleum, oil and lubricants) handling infrastructure at the Haldia Dock,

and partnerships with Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd, JSW Infrastructure Ltd and Century Ports & Harbours Ltd for new container-terminal projects under a PPP model.

Among the deals, UltraTech Cement Ltd will establish a cement bulk-terminal at the Kolkata dock on a captive basis, while the port also partnered with real estate firms such as Srijan Real Estate & Infrastructure Pvt Ltd and Eden Realtors Ltd for riverfront development projects on port-land assets, a statement said.

The Kolkata port, however, did not provide a detailed investment breakup by the companies. (PTI)

## Starlink to conduct security, technical demo runs in Mumbai

**NEW DELHI, Oct 29:** Elon Musk-led Starlink is scheduled to conduct demo runs on October 30 and 31 in Mumbai to show compliance with security and technical conditions for satellite broadband services, sources said.

The demo, to be done before law enforcement agencies, will be based on the provisional spectrum assigned to Starlink, sources told PTI.

The move would mark a significant step ahead of its planned entry into the Indian satellite broadband market, as these demos are an essential requirement for Starlink to secure clearances before it can launch commercial services.

Sources said Starlink will run a demo to show compliance with the security and technical conditions of GMPCS authorisation. This will be conducted in Mumbai on October 30 and 31, sources added. (PTI)

## Quite satisfied with economy's response to global events; GDP growth to be near 7 pc in FY26: CEA



**MUMBAI, Oct 29:** Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Wednesday said the Indian economy has responded quite satisfactorily to global headwinds, and exuded confidence that real GDP growth is likely to touch 7 per cent in FY26.

Speaking at the India Maritime Week here, Nageswaran said three global rating agencies have recently upgraded their ratings on India, and if the country continues on the same track, India can "soon" break into the 'A' rating category.

The academic-turned-policy advisor said the resilience shown by the economy, coupled with measures by the government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), places the Indian economy in a "comfortable position".

"We should be quite satisfied with the way the Indian economy has responded to global uncertainties this

year, and the tariff-related developments as well," he said.

The policy measures, including relief in income tax and the recent GST rationalization "have combined to improve the economic growth prospects for this year to near or around 7 per cent in real terms for FY26", he added.

In February, Nageswaran had estimated that real GDP growth may fall to as low as 6.3 per cent for FY26, and the US' tariff moves led them to further revise their expectation down to 6 per cent.

"But the resilience of the economy, the timely policy measures taken to boost demand have actually placed us in a very comfortable position," he added.

Replying to the critique of sluggish bank credit growth, he said one must look at the total resource mobilization in the economy, including the

money raised through non-bank lenders, commercial paper, certificate of deposits, equity markets etc, to arrive at a conclusion.

Citing RBI data, he said the total resource mobilization in the economy has increased by 28.5 per cent per annum over the last six years.

The comments come at a time of widespread concern about sluggish growth in private capital expenditure. Nageswaran asserted that the RBI has cut rates and undertaken liquidity measures to ensure that there is "ample funds availability" in the economy.

Pointing out that three rating agencies, including Standard & Poor's, have upgraded the sovereign ratings in the recent past, Nageswaran said that if the country stays on this track, India will "soon move into A status", which has the potential to further bring down the overall cost of capital.

"It will be our endeavour from the government to continue to adhere to fiscal prudence, fiscal stability, low inflation and therefore low borrowing cost for the industry as well," he said, adding that India has been able to increase the per capita income without accumulating debt.

Broader themes dominating the global landscape over the next 20 years will not be the same as those of the last 40 years, which saw greater market integration and predictability, he said, adding that the future will be full of fragmentation, less predictable, and jostling for market share. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Experts warn of rising

hour' can dramatically improve recovery and functional outcomes," Dr Srivastava said. "With advances in clot-busting drugs, mechanical thrombectomy, and AI-enabled imaging that helps identify salvageable brain tissue, outcomes today are far better than a decade ago. However, these benefits depend on awareness, rapid response, and integrated care pathways that bridge emergency, neurology, and rehabilitation services," she stated. (PTI)

## India condemns 'blinkered'

people of all faiths. The parliamentarian stressed that the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Myanmar remains a "matter of deep concern" for India, particularly because of its "cross-border implications", including the challenges posed by "transnational crimes such as drug, arms and human trafficking".

He cautioned that India has observed an "alarming level of radicalisation" among some displaced persons, leading to "pressure and impact on the law and order situation". According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are over 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar present in Bangladesh, Malaysia, India, Thailand and Indonesia. This figure does not include millions of others from Myanmar who reside abroad under other legal frameworks—such as those available to migrant workers or who have had no contact with UNHCR, many of whom meet the definition of refugees under international law. Saikia said New Delhi continues to support all initiatives aimed at fostering trust and advancing a "Myanmar-owned and Myanmar-led path" toward peace, stability and democracy. (PTI)

## No Assamese books

vendors, bypassing the wider pool of qualified firms empanelled under University norms. "This deliberate restriction of suppliers not only raises questions of favouritism and conflict of interest, but also suggests a possible financial anomaly in the handling of public funds meant for educational development," it claimed. The statement asserted that the final list of books to be procured was largely determined by the titles these vendors were able to supply. "The absence of Assamese books for two consecutive years, despite a dedicated allocation, reflects a serious disregard for regional inclusion and linguistic representation, undermining the academic and cultural ethos of a central university situated in Assam," it added.

TUTA stressed that the matter warrants an independent and transparent investigation by competent authorities to ensure accountability and restore confidence in this central university's procurement and governance processes. (PTI)

## Cong standing by

hands to slam the Congress ahead of next year's election. The ruling party's national spokesperson, Shehzaad Poonawalla, said, "The Congress has been standing by Bangladeshi intruders for years. It helped these intruders settle down during its rule. And now, the Congress is officially supporting them from the party's platform with its leader singing Bangladesh's national anthem."

Reacting to the controversy, Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi hit back at the BJP, alleging that the ruling party was creating "unnecessary controversy" as it has no other issue to divert people's attention.

Sribhumir district Congress president Tapas Purkayastha said, "Don't indulge in politics with Rabindranath Tagore. Our pride, 85-year-old poet Vidhu Bhushan Das, sang only two lines of the song. Criticising this song means insulting Rabindranath Tagore." (PTI)

## Raja Raghuvanshi murder

arrested. Police submitted a 790-page chargesheet before the court of the Judicial Magistrate First Class, Sohra Sub-Division, on September 5. During the framing of charges on Tuesday, the court observed that, prima facie, there is sufficient evidence to proceed against the five accused. The defence, however, maintained that the accused were innocent. The trial is expected to begin shortly. Meanwhile, the police said they are preparing to file a second charge sheet against the remaining three accused - Silom James, Lokendra Tomar and Balbir Ahirbar. They were arrested for their alleged role in destroying evidence. (PTI)

## Cabinet announces major

tribal communities during Mission Basundhara 2.0. The Cabinet approved the insertion of a new clause 1.19 after clause 1.18 of the Land Policy, 2019, which will be applicable to the said communities on a perpetual basis. 1.19: Settlement of hereditary land, inclusive of land for homestead, ordinary cultivation, or any land in rural areas of the State in possession of tribal communities and Moran and Matak communities for the past three generations, may be considered up to a maximum limit of 50 bighas.

An additional two months' time for applications under Mission Basundhara will be permitted for the Moran and Matak communities. The State Cabinet approved the restructuring of the Assam Village Defence Organisation by amending the Assam Village Defence Organisation Rules, 1986.

The amendment will improve and strengthen the organisation and reorient it to be responsive to the current changing scenario and to keep pace with new challenges arising from socio-economic and demographic changes. The state cabinet accorded approval of the revised estimate for the work "Construction of Lachit Moidam Memorial and Cultural Complex at Lahdoigarh, Jorhat, Assam" amounting to approximately ₹ 249.78 crore to represent the life and martial achievements of Lachit Borphukan of the Ahom Kingdom.

The project envisages integrated development comprising a museum, auditorium, residential accommodation, pond redevelopment, research block, parking and community facilities.

The project reflects the State's commitment to preserving cultural significance and honouring the legends of Assam. The State Cabinet approved conferring the following for protocol purposes within the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) area: the deputy chief executive member (Dy CEM) of the BTC with the rank of Cabinet Minister and the Executive Members (EMs) of the BTC with the rank of Minister of State.

The State Cabinet approved The Assam Police (Amendment) Bill, 2025 to amend Section 71(b) and Section 84, related to the State-level Police Accountability Commission and District Police Accountability Authority, respectively, to strengthen existing mechanisms and ensure greater accountability of the police.

The Government also decided to provide one-time financial assistance of ₹ 25,000 to each of the 2,068 Raas Committees across the State and ₹ 50,000 to each of the 67 Raas Committees of Majuli.

In addition, the State Government will exclusively hand over the State's share of the GST realised from the movie Roi Roi Binaile to the Kala Guru Artiste Foundation to assist the foundation in its efforts to support medical treatment for artistes, help flood victims, and assist needy students in their academic pursuits. It may be noted that the Government of Assam realises no entertainment tax from Assamese movies.

Earlier, before the press briefing, chief minister Sarma felicitated the players of the football team of Betkuchi High School, Guwahati, which won the 64th Subroto Cup in the Junior Girls (U-17) category.

The team defeated Nandajhar Adibashi Tapashili High School from West Bengal 3-1 in the final match held in New Delhi on August 28, 2025.

The chief minister presented cheques worth ₹ 50,000 each to the players in appreciation of their victory.

## Mizoram needs 'double

Five candidates are in the fray for the by-election, necessitated by the death of MNF MLA Lalrintluanga Sailo on July 21. The ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) has fielded Mizo singer and preacher Vanlalsailo, the main opposition Mizo National Front (MNF) nominated former health minister R Lalthangliana, and Congress has fielded former transport minister John Rotluangliana.

The BJP has nominated Lalhmingthanga, who recently joined the party, while former chief minister Brig T Sailo's People's Conference has fielded K Zahmingthanga. (PTI)

## President Murmu flies

claim as fake. President Murmu's flight follows in the footsteps of former Presidents who have flown in fighter jets, starting with A P J Abdul Kalam (Sukhoi 30 MKI) on June 8, 2006, and Pratibha Patil (Sukhoi 30 MKI) on November 25, 2009.

Manufactured by Dassault Aviation, Rafale jets were formally inducted into the IAF's 17 Squadron, the 'Golden Arrows', in September 2020 at the Ambala Air Force Station.

The first five Rafale aircraft, which had arrived from France on July 27, 2020, were inducted into the Squadron. The jets were used in Operation Sindoor, which was launched on May 7 to destroy several terror infrastructures in territories controlled by Pakistan. The strikes triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with an understanding between the two neighbours on halting the military actions on May 10. (PTI)

## Zubeen's ashes immersed

Arun Garg, whom Garg had considered a family member and was among the four persons who had lit his funeral pyre, immersed the ashes in Brahmputra in Jorhat. Jorhat is the hometown of the singer.

The celebrated singer died under mysterious circumstances while swimming in the sea in Singapore on September 19. He had gone to the Southeast Asian nation to attend the 4th edition of the North East India Festival. Garg's body was consigned to flames with full state honours as thousands of fans sang his songs to bid farewell to the icon in the sylvan surroundings of Kamarkuchi village in Sonapur on the outskirts of Guwahati on September 23. After the arrival of his body in Guwahati, it was kept for public tribute at Arjun Bhogeshwar Baruah Sports Complex. More than 10 lakh people visited him and paid their last respects. (PTI)

## Govt to constitute state

Hospital, Guwahati. He also informed that discussions are underway with AIIMS Guwahati, Fortis Group of Hospitals, Narayana Group of Hospitals, Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences, New Delhi and several other leading corporate hospitals for inclusion under the cashless module. However, the employees and pensioners can still avail treatment and apply for reimbursement at hospitals not covered under the cashless system, Sarma added. The chief minister pointed out that unlike Ayushman Bharat Jan Arogya Yojana, which depend on government funding, the Mukhya Mantri Lok Sevak Arogya Yojana is self-sustaining, as it is funded through contributions made by employees themselves. He said that since the launch of the scheme, a total of ₹ 65 crore has been reimbursed to employees and pensioners. Earlier, the annual expenditure on medical reimbursement stood at around ₹ 17 to 18 crore. The latest figures, he added, indicate that the expenditure has nearly doubled, reflecting the expanded coverage and improved efficiency of the system.

The chief minister further informed that besides State Government employees and pensioners, those working under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, National Health Mission, the three State power companies and other staff of the State Government have also been brought under the scheme.

He estimated that the total number of beneficiaries could reach 7 to 8 lakh in due course and assured that the Government would continue to strengthen and upgrade the scheme to better serve employees in times of need.

Chief secretary Dr Ravi Kota, principal of Gauhati Medical College & Hospital Dr Achyut Kumar Baishya, chairman & managing director of GNRC Dr Nomal Chandra Bora, president of Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya Dr Harsha Bhattacharya, several senior government officials, representatives of various hospitals and state government employees were present in the programme.

### NAME CORRECTION

1. FAKARUL ISLAM (old name) S/O Late Sekender Ali Residing at Garuajhar no one, PO- Garuajhat, Dist - Udalguri, Assam. Shall Henceforth be known (in my son namely Ahmed Ali video passport No - N1834454 as Fakrudin Ali in place of FAKARUL Islam) as declared be for the Notary public Darrang Dist court State Assam vide Affidavit No - 4854/25 Dated 27/10/25. Fakarul Islam (Old Name) and Fakrudin Ali (New Name) both are same and identical person.

FAKARUL ISLAM

### AFFIDAVIT

I, Mrs. Mina Ronghangpi, wife of Jen Timung resident of Aara Ingti, PO: Bhatir Kalioni PS-Chowkikhola, district Karbi Anglong, Assam, that my name and address has been enrolled wrongly in my Bank Passbook Account no: 7423010089737 as "Bena Ronghangpi" in place of "Mina Ronghangpi" and address as "Rongpur Bey" in place of Aara Ingti".

The proper spelling of my name is "Mina Ronghangpi" and Address is Aara Ingti.

So therefore "Bena Ronghangpi" and "Mina Ronghangpi" is the same and not different individuals.

All the statements made herein above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I sign this affidavit on the 27th day of October, 2025, before Kabita Mala Gogoi, the Notary Public, Bokajan Sub-Division, Karbi Anglong, Assam. (Assam)

### Newly constituted council under Chief Hagrama Mohilary marks a fresh chapter in Bodoland governance and development

## Twelve EMs sworn in at 5<sup>th</sup> BTC Executive Council



**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Oct 29:** The swearing-in ceremony of the Executive Members (EMs) of the 5th Executive Council of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was held on Wednesday at

the Auditorium Hall, Assembly Building, BTCLA, Bodofa Nwgr, Kokrajhar. The event marked a significant milestone in the formal constitution of the new Executive Council. Jayanta Malla Baruah, Minister of Public

Health Engineering, Government of Assam, attended as the Chief Guest. BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary, BTCLA Speaker Tridip Daimari, Deputy Chief Rihon Daimari, along with MCLAs and senior officials were also present.

A total of twelve Executive Members took the oath of office, with four in Bodo, six in English and two in Assamese. The oath-taking sequence was as follows: Mritunjoy Narzary (Bodo), Moon Moon Brahma (English), Rabiram Narzary (Bodo), Derhasat Basumatary (English), Prakash Basumatary (English), Paniram Brahma (English), Dhiraj Borgoyary (Assamese), Begom Akhtara Ahmed (Assamese), Augustush Tigga (English), Ganesh Kachary (English), Lwmsrao Daimary (Bodo) and Fresh Mushahari (Bodo).

The oath of office and secrecy was administered by Mukesh Chandra Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, Welfare of Bodoland Department and Women and Child Development Department.

With this, the 5th Executive Council of the BTC is formally constituted under the leadership of Chief Hagrama Mohilary, marking the beginning of a new chapter in Bodoland's governance and development.

## Gaurav Gogoi questions SIT probe into Zubeen Garg's death

**GUWAHATI, Oct 29:** Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi on Wednesday questioned the ongoing Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the death of singer Zubeen Garg, alleging that there has been no clear information about the cause of his death even after more than 40 days.

Slamming the BJP-led state government, the deputy leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha claimed that people in Assam are "fed up" with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his administration.

"It has been over 40 days, yet we still do not know what exactly happened to Zubeen Garg. Instead of diverting attention, the government must ensure justice. What has the SIT done so far that there is still no clue about his death?" Gogoi said.

He urged the government not to misuse the SIT to target innocent people, intellectuals, artists or opposition leaders and demanded that the investigation remain focused on uncovering the truth behind the incident.

"People are totally fed up with the CM's attitude, growing corruption and the massive illegal wealth accumulated by his family members and associates. That's why several leaders and workers are leaving the BJP, which has now turned into a limited company serving only a few," he alleged during a programme where several BJP workers joined the Congress. The celebrated singer died in Singapore on Septem-



ber 19 while swimming in the sea. He had travelled there to attend the fourth edition of the North East India Festival (NEIF).

A Special Investigation Team under the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Assam Police is probing Garg's death after more than 60 FIRs were filed across the state. So far, seven people, including NEIF chief organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, have been arrested in connection with the case. (PTI)

### Minor goes missing in Itakhola

**HT Correspondent**  
**BISWANATH CHARIALI, Oct 29:** Sumi Koch, a 16-year-old girl and daughter of Diganta Koch and Anju Koch, resident of Padumoni Gaon under Itakhola outpost, went missing on October 24 while on her way to school.

According to reports, Sumi left for school as usual but did not return home. Her parents and relatives searched for her throughout the evening but could not locate her. Following this, the family lodged a missing person report at Itakhola outpost.

The police team has been actively trying to trace Sumi's whereabouts, but no information has emerged till the filing of this report. It is noteworthy that a gang of women traffickers is known to be active in the region. In the past, a girl from Panigaon Samdhara was lured by such traffickers and sold to a brothel in Mumbai, though she was later rescued with the help of Sonitpur police and local youth.

Local residents fear that Sumi may have fallen into the hands of the women traffickers. Authorities continue their search for the minor.

### Earthquake and fire mock drills in Morigaon

**HT Correspondent**  
**MORIGAON, Oct 29:** In a proactive step towards disaster preparedness under the National School Safety Policy (NSSP), the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Morigaon, in collaboration with the Education Department and the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), successfully conducted earthquake and fire evacuation mock drills across 38 schools, covering nearly 19,500 students in the district.

The programme was inaugurated by Anamika Tewari ACS, Deputy Commissioner of Morigaon, in the presence of Anusuya Sharma ACS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Monika Borgohain ACS, Circle Officer, Morigaon Revenue Circle, Apurba Thakuria AES, District Mission Coordinator, Samagra Shiksha, Morigaon, Ranju Sarma District Project Officer, DDMA, Morigaon and other senior district officials. The drills were held in two sessions — the earthquake mock drill at 10:30 AM and the fire mock drill at 12:30 PM — focusing on safe and systematic evacuation procedures for students and staff during emergencies, and reinforcing life-saving protocols.

A wide range of stakeholders actively participated, including officials from the School Education Department, Fire and Emergency Services, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), CQRT/Aapda Mitra volunteers, teachers and students.

The event commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Great Assam Earthquake of 1950 and highlighted the importance of institutionalising disaster resilience in schools.

DDMA, Morigaon expressed gratitude to all participating agencies and stressed that such exercises are vital in building a culture of safety and preparedness among the younger generation.

### Sansad Khel Mahotsav to begin in Dibrugarh

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIBRUGARH, Oct 29:** The month-long Sansad Khel Mahotsav will begin in Dibrugarh on October 31 and will be held across 11 venues in six constituencies of the district.

Addressing a press conference, Dibrugarh District Sports Association (DDSA) president Niranjan Saikia said the national sports festival is being organised across Assam and other parts of the country to promote sports and fitness among youth.

"In Dibrugarh, matches will be held between October 31 and December 25, 2025. The competition will be conducted at three levels — village, block or ward, and parliamentary constituency — to identify and nurture local sporting talent," Saikia said.

He informed that the sports events will include football, cricket, volleyball, athletic and three indigenous games — khoko, kabaddi, pithu and tug of war. "We had planned to start the games in September, but due to the sudden demise of singer Zubeen Garg, it was delayed. This Mahotsav will help in grooming budding players," he added.

Saikia said the Sansad Khel Mahotsav aims to identify and develop young sporting talents at the grassroots while encouraging participation in both indigenous and mainstream sports. It also seeks to promote discipline, teamwork, and perseverance among youth, qualities essential for nation-building.

DDSA working president Manash Jyoti Dutta, vice president Imdad Ahmed, football secretary Ashim Hazarika, and athletic secretary Bipul Chutia were also present at the press conference.

### Party vows stronger presence ahead of 2026 Assam Assembly elections

## UPPL to stick with NDA alliance

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, Oct 29:** The United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) has reaffirmed its commitment to continuing its alliance with the BJP-led NDA both in the Assam government until 2026 and with the NDA government at the Centre until 2029.

Addressing reporters at a press conference in Kokrajhar, UPPL general secretary Raju Kumar Narzary clarified the party's stance, stating that no formal decision has been taken to end ties with the NDA. He emphasised that the party will maintain its relationship with the BJP-led NDA alliance.

Narzary explained that the meeting held on Tuesday at Panbari, Bijnai in Chirang district was purely a district-level meeting and the agenda did not include any discussion regarding the NDA alliance.

The UPPL's tri-annual convention is scheduled for December, during which the party's strategy for the 2026 Assembly elections will be finalised. Narzary reiterated that the party is committed to maintaining its alliance with the NDA — both in the Assam government until 2026 and with the NDA government at the Centre until 2029.

Highlighting the party's recent performance, Narzary stated that UPPL secured 6 lakh 16 thousand votes in the BTC elections and outlined plans to fur-



ther increase its vote share. As part of its efforts to strengthen the party, a week-long motorcycle rally will be organised from Kajigaon to Gohpur starting November 1, aimed at energising and mobilising party workers. Narzary concluded by asserting that UPPL will emerge as a stronger political force ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

## NFR revises schedules of 18 trains for enhanced punctuality

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Oct 29:** The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has revised the timings of 18 trains at selected stations across its network to improve passenger convenience and ensure better punctuality.

The revised schedules are being implemented in phases from October 25 to November 1, 2025. Effective from October 25, the changes affect Train No 15719/15720 (Katihar-Siliguri-Katihar) Intercity Express at Katihar and Siliguri stations, Train No 22301 (Howrah-New Jalpaiguri) Vande Bharat Express at New Jalpaiguri station, Train No. 12363 (Kolkata-Haldibari) Superfast Express at Haldibari and Harishchandrapur stations, Train No 15464 (Siliguri-Balughat) Intercity Express from Balughat to Siliguri, Train No 13246 (Ara-New Jalpaiguri) Capital Express at New Jalpaiguri, and Train No 15723 (Jogbani-Siliguri) Express at Siliguri Train station.

From October 27, the schedule of Train No 13141 (Sealdah-New Alipurduar) Teesta Torsa Express has been revised at New Alipurduar, New Cooch Behar, Ghoksadanga, Falakata, Dhuburi, New Maynaguri, Jalpaiguri Road and Belakoba stations. Effective October 28, Train No 13248 (Ara-Kamakhya) Capital Express will have revised timings at Kamakhya, Goalpara Town and New Bongaigaon stations, while Train No 15077 (Kamakhya-Gomti Nagar) Express will be affected at

Kamakhya, Goalpara Town and New Bongaigaon stations. On October 29, Train No 15661 (Ranchi-Kamakhya) Express will be affected at Kamakhya station.

From October 30, revised timings will apply to Train No 13142 (New Alipurduar-Sealdah) Teesta Torsa Express from Samsi to New Alipurduar, Train No 22302 (New Jalpaiguri-Howrah) Vande Bharat Express at New Jalpaiguri and Kishanganj stations, Train No 22233 (New Jalpaiguri-Patna) Vande Bharat Express at New Jalpaiguri, Kishanganj and Barsoi stations, Train No 22234 (Patna-New Jalpaiguri) Vande Bharat Express at New Jalpaiguri, Kishanganj, Barsoi and Katihar stations and Train No 15644 (Kamakhya-Puri) Express from Kamakhya to Harishchandrapur. On October 31, Train No 12364 (Haldibari-Kolkata) Superfast Express will have revised timings at Haldibari, Jalpaiguri, New Jalpaiguri, Kishanganj and Harishchandrapur stations. Finally, effective November 1, Train No 13245 (New Jalpaiguri-Ara) Capital Express will have revised timing at New Jalpaiguri station.

With continuous infrastructure improvements, NFR has enhanced train speeds and operational efficiency, ensuring a faster, safer and more punctual travel experience for passengers. Travelers are advised to check real-time running status and schedule details on the National Train Enquiry System (NTES) before embarking on their journey.

### Implement the Bodo Peace Accord: ABSU

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, Oct 29:** The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) staged a massive protest rally across Assam on Tuesday, demanding the full implementation of the clauses of the Bodo Peace Accord, 2020.

In Kokrajhar, the rally, organised by the district committee of ABSU, began at 11 AM from Bodofa Children's Park and concluded at the Government High School & Multipurpose School playground via JD Road, led by ABSU president Dipen Boro.

Thousands of student activists and well-wishers participated in the rally, carrying banners, festoons and placards while chanting slogans such as "No Justice, No Rest", "Fulfil Our Demands," and "Long Live ABSU," filling the streets of Kokrajhar with their voices.

The demonstration aimed to press both the Government of India and the Government of Assam for immediate action on key provisions of the Bodo Accord and related constitutional commitments. A memorandum was submitted to the Chief Minister and the Union Home Minister through the District Commissioner of Kokrajhar, urging the government to implement the clauses of the Bodo Peace Accord.

## Wild elephants wreak havoc in West KA, farmers demand compensation

**HT Correspondent**  
**KHERONI, Oct 29:** Chaos continues in West Karbi Anglong district as a herd of wild elephants roams freely, destroying paddy and sugarcane fields across several villages. The crisis intensified after two elephants were electrocuted on October 22 near Kharikhana Bill Gaon on the Hojai-West Karbi Anglong border, causing the surviving herd to move deeper into human settlements.

Villages including Majgaon, Kheroni Nepali Basti, Bagisadubi, Dhikreng (Nawgharwa), Lambapathar, Ranaima, Purana Basti, Watizor and other nearby areas have suffered extensive crop damage. Farmers report that ripe paddy and sugarcane plantations have been trampled and uprooted just ahead of the harvest season.

"The elephants are coming out both day and night. We've lost everything—our paddy is flattened and sugarcane destroyed. How will we feed our families?" said a distressed farmer.

Despite repeated appeals, the forest department has been unable to control the herd or guide them back to the forest. Local residents have criticised authorities for inadequate measures, including ineffective solar fencing and insufficient patrolling, which have worsened the man-animal conflict.

The question of compensation remains urgent,



with affected farmers demanding immediate and fair payouts from the forest and agriculture departments. Forest officials were unavailable for comment, but sources said monitoring efforts are underway. Residents are urging swift action to prevent further damage and ensure relief for the impacted communities.

## Great Assam School Shakeout Program conducted

**HT Correspondent**  
**HOJAI, Oct 29:** The Great Assam School Shakeout Program (GASSP), aimed at earthquake and fire evacuation preparedness was successfully conducted across 87 schools in Hojai district on Wednesday. The program involved 33,863 students and over 500 teachers.

Organised by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) in collaboration with the Department of School Education and the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Hojai, the drills focused on raising awareness about disaster response and teaching essential evacuation techniques and safety protocols.

An inspection team, including Aparupa Borgohain, Circle Officer of Lanka Revenue Circle, Mandira Buragohain, Project Officer ASDMA, district nodal officers and Fire and SDRF officials, monitored the exercises at two schools, using drones to ensure all activities were conducted according to GASSP guidelines.

## Parents shape the future of tomorrow's achievers: Dr Basanta Kumar Goswami

The role of Assam Sahitya Sabha in building greater Assam and Assamese identity is immense, says Atul Bora

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, Oct 29:** The Assam Sahitya Sabha organised a daylong "Bhabisoyt Prajanmorn Samnilan" (Future Generation Conclave) on Tuesday at the Paramananda Lahen Auditorium in Kaziranga. The event was held in association with the Golaghat Zila Sahitya Sabha and hosted by the Dipholupuriya Shatadal Sakha Sahitya Sabha, along with local socio-cultural organisations.

Addressing the gathering, Assam Sahitya Sabha president Dr Basanta Kumar Goswami said that the foundation for tomorrow's achievers is laid by their parents today. He emphasised that families must uphold values and discipline to build a strong, culturally grounded generation. Dr Goswami also noted that it was the first time in the Sabha's history that such a conclave was dedicated to the future generation.

Minister of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Atul Bora, at-



tended the event as Chief Guest and said the role of the Assam Sahitya Sabha in building Greater Assam and nurturing Assamese identity is immense and irreplaceable. During the programme, he formally accepted the Sabha's honorary Suhid Hitoishi Membership. A souvenir titled Prajamar Aikya (Unity of Generations) was un-

veiled by Assam Sahitya Sabha vice-president Padum Rajkhowa.

Assam Sahitya Sabha Principal secretary Debojit Bora, in his address, urged members to preserve the sanctity of the institution, stressing that the Sabha must remain above factional or electoral interests. He reiterated the Sabha's mission to expand its reach by es-

tablishing two thousand branch units across the state. The conclave saw participation from several noted personalities, senior members, sub-committee convenors, former district presidents, central executive members and cultural organisers, including Dr Kajal Saikia, Dr Jyotirekha Hazarika, Rebot Hazarika, Biswajyoti Hazarika, Nurul Sultan, Sankusiddha Nath, Dulal Nath, Sunil Gurung, Nityananda Borah, Naba Rajon, Sayad Maruf Husain, Swargajyoti Chetia and Bonti Bora.

Delegates were welcomed with traditional gamosas, commemorative mementoes of the Kaziranga one-horned rhino and books. The programme began with the chorus "Chiro Senchi Mor Bhasa Jononi" and concluded with the state's Jatiya Sangeet. Earlier, the event included flag hoisting, floral tributes and the ceremonial lighting of the lamp in honour of cultural icon Zubeen Garg.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

All men are equal before fish.  
- Herbert Hoover

## CJI Gavai's impactful tenure

Chief Justice B. R. Gavai's impending retirement next month marks the end of a brief but memorable chapter in India's judicial history. His was one of the shortest tenures for a Chief Justice of India, lasting just about six months, yet in that fleeting span, he managed to leave an imprint that few with longer stints could claim. Justice Gavai combined in his persona a rare mix of humility and courage, simplicity and depth, learning and empathy. He may have entered the office quietly, without the fanfare that usually accompanies a change in the highest seat of the judiciary, but he will be leaving it with the unmistakable aura of a man who restored confidence in the spirit of constitutionalism. From the very outset, Justice Gavai displayed the calm assurance of a judge who knew his role in democracy. He was not merely the custodian of law, but also its moral interpreter, deeply conscious of the judiciary's place as the last refuge of citizens in distress. His approach was unhurried and reflective, which often contrasted with the growing impatience of a society accustomed to quick fixes and televised judgments.

Justice Gavai's rise to the highest judicial office itself was symbolic of India's evolving democratic ethos. Coming from a modest background, his ascent reaffirmed that the judiciary, for all its flaws and hierarchies, remains open to talent and integrity. His presence on the Bench served as a quiet statement of inclusivity and merit, that in India's constitutional order, one's origin cannot determine one's destiny. This awareness of social reality seemed to inform many of his interventions as CJI. He consistently reminded his colleagues and the nation that the judiciary's legitimacy rests not on grandeur or privilege but on its accessibility and fairness. What distinguished Justice Gavai's brief reign was his commitment to the values enshrined in the Constitution — liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice. He did not merely invoke these as ceremonial ideals but sought to translate them into living principles.

During his tenure, the Supreme Court appeared to regain its composure after years of turbulence. He fostered an atmosphere of collegiality within the court, encouraging dialogue rather than division. His administration of the court's affairs was marked by balance: neither authoritarian nor lax, neither excessively formal nor casual.

## Globalisation of Assamese music: Zubeen Garg's contribution

By: Lalit Nath

Jyotiprasad Agarwala was the trailblazer of modern Assamese music. Through Jyoti Sangeet, he ushered in a new era in the Assamese music world. After him, Bishnu Prasad Rabha enriched Assamese music by blending indigenous songs, melodies, and classical traditions. Parbati Prasad Barua created new songs rooted in the originality of folk music, the devotion of Kirtan, the spirituality of Namghosha and the narratives of the Bhagavata, thereby enriching the treasury of Assamese music.

Following these great artists, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika created a universal appeal by fusing the depth of Assamese classical music with Western melodies. For instance, he revitalized Assamese folk music and inspired by Paul Robeson's 'Ol' Man River,' composed 'Bistima Parare Asankhya Janare...'—a song that still flows through the veins of the Assamese people. His voice not only graced Assamese songs but also compositions in Bengali, Hindi, English and various other languages, transcending boundaries of space and time to strengthen universal humanism. This global orientation of Assamese folk music was accelerated by the wizard of melodies and Assam's pride, Zubeen Garg. By blending elements of Assamese folk music with Western influences and leveraging high-tech, digital media, social networks and platforms like YouTube and Spotify, Zubeen Garg has successfully elevated Assamese folk music from the Indian borders to the global music stage.

For the past three decades, the enchantment of his melodies has captivated people from all walks of life—farmers, laborers, artisans, artists, litterateurs, police officers, intellectuals and more. At the core of the universality of Zubeen's music lies the extraordinary versatility and powerful expressiveness of his voice. Every song becomes heart-touching in his rendition. Love and separation, joy and sorrow, hope and despair, happiness and pain—all emotions find expression in his songs. It is this multifaceted voice that has made his songs popular among listeners worldwide. Zubeen Garg is not merely a singer, he is a composer, melodious vocalist, music director, lyricist, skilled actor, screenwriter, reciter, social worker and proficient instrumentalist across various instruments, establishing himself as a cultural icon of Assam. Another hallmark of the global appeal of Zubeen Garg's music is his multilingualism and the beautiful harmony of cultural diversity. From Assamese Borgeet, Bihu songs, folk songs, Bodo, Mising, Karbi, Garo, Rabha, Dimas, Tai-Ahom, to Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, English, Nepali, Bhojpuri and more—he has sung over 40,000 songs in nearly every language, touching the hearts of listeners with the tenderness of their mother tongue. Through a fusion of the earthy fragrance of folk music, the profundity of classical traditions and the modernity of pop-rock, he has created a melodic world that resonates with the same harmony from Assamese Bihu stages to grand concert halls in America. Through this remarkable cultural synthesis, he has not only illuminated Assam's identity on the global stage but also established music as a universal language. Zubeen Garg has proven that language, region, religion and culture—all boundaries can be transcended and ultimately, only the melody of the heart can bind humanity together. The core strength of Zubeen's songs is their humanistic emotion. His music unites people irrespective of caste, creed, or colour. His songs carry the beauty of nature, the simplicity of life and a meaningful message against societal inequalities.

The melodies and lyrics of Zubeen's songs touch the deepest emotions of the human heart. Love, separation, joy, sorrow and the spirit of struggle come alive in his music, making it equally acceptable to people of any language or culture. For example, the song 'Ya Ali' from the film Gangster stands as proof of this ability. Its emotion has conquered the hearts of listeners at national and international levels. In Zubeen's own words, "I am free, I am Kanchenjunga"—this free-spirited attitude is reflected in his music. His songs are unbound by geopolitical or cultural boundaries. This liberated perspective has connected with listeners from diverse cultures worldwide, transforming his music into the melody of every heart. The universality of Zubeen Garg's songs is an immortal force in his music. He deeply realized that the youth are the backbone of a nation's future. Their immense energy, creativity and innovative capacity can propel a country toward progress. That is why he composed and sang thousands of songs to inspire the younger generation. The millions of views his songs garner on YouTube prove that Assamese music has now opened the doors to the world.

The fusion of Assamese language, melodies, and folk consciousness has created a unique melodic universe. The contributions of artists like Zubeen Garg have established Assamese music not only as a medium of entertainment but also as a carrier of cultural identity on the global stage. This globalization has bestowed a proud identity upon Assamese culture, securing a brilliant place for Assamese music on the world music platform. Today, when we listen to his songs, we feel that Zubeen is still alive—in every melody, in the heartbeat of every listener. His music is timeless, for it is not mere entertainment, it is a philosophy of life that teaches us the path to liberation, the power of unity and the triumph of humanity. Zubeen Garg's universal melodies have proven that the power of music can unite even a divided world.

## Political violence and its impact on society

Political violence is an eternal and deeply concerning issue in the history of human society, which is not merely an external manifestation of power rivalry, but rather a symptom of a profound social, economic, and psychological disorder. The meaning of this type of violence is not limited only to physical assault or conflict; its scope is vast and its effects are extremely complex. When force is applied to achieve a specific political objective, such as seizing power, expanding ideological dominance, or establishing control over resources, it is termed political violence. It arises from deep inequalities within society, entrenched systems of exploitation, and the public's distrust and dissatisfaction with the governmental system. The aim of this violence is not only to physically suppress the opponent, but also to create permanent fear and terror in the minds of the general public, thereby rendering them politically inert. In this way, political violence not only destroys lives, but also shakes the foundation of the people's democratic rights and freedoms, resulting in the creation of a latent and unstable environment in society, where the absence of peace and order blocks the path to ordinary living for the public. It stands as a major challenge in the development of a healthy and peaceful society, leading to the degradation of human values and ethics.

The most terrifying impact of political violence falls on the social structure and relationships. Society is a delicate web composed of people from various communities, classes, and ideologies, where peace depends on mutual trust, understanding, and tolerance. But political violence completely tears apart this delicate web, resulting in the creation of permanent rifts among people. Violence creates a deep divide among people based on ethnicity, religion, language, and other social identities. Those who previously lived together peacefully begin to regard each other as enemies due to ideological differences, and this enmity is not confined to the political level; it enters every level of daily life, including family and neighborhood relationships. This violence takes such a deep hold in people's minds that it gives birth to group hatred, which creates a permanent wound in collective memory, and this injury does not heal easily. As a result, in place of unity and tolerance, seeds of distrust,

suspicion, and hatred germinate deeply, completely destroying the internal harmony of society. It divides the various parts of society in such a way that mutual cooperation and empathy disappear, and the lines of division become so deep that they cannot be easily mended, with far-reaching effects. This division eliminates the attitude of non-violence and tolerance in society, and a latent possibility of conflict and violence always prevails, which is a major threat to social stability. This social isolation and division also makes the efforts for societal reconstruction and peace establishment quite complex.

In the economic sphere, the impact of political violence is a slow and long-term destructive factor that hinders the overall development of the country. Peace, security, political stability, and the rule of law are extremely essential for the economic development of any country. But due to political vio-

## DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

lence, all these elements disappear, causing the pace of development to stagnate or come to a complete halt. In places where unrest and uncertainty prevail all the time, domestic and foreign investors do not dare to invest their money. There is a lack of a favorable and safe environment for business, trade, and establishing new industries. Due to violence, instability comes to the market, supply chains are disrupted, and previous production activities also decrease significantly. As a result, employment opportunities decrease, and the unemployment problem increases alarmingly, which further strengthens the cycle of poverty. Moreover, due to violence, attacks occur on important infrastructure of the country such as roads, bridges, hospitals, educational institutions, and power generation centers, the repair or reconstruction of which requires spending a large amount of money from the government treasury. If this money could have been spent on developmental works, the country's economic growth would have increased manifold. But due to violence, this money is unnecessarily spent on security measures and reconstruction, weakening the foundation of the country's economy and causing the public to face financial hardship. This stagnation of economic activities can keep the country backward for years, leading to a decline in the standard of living of

the people and a reduction in the country's credibility in the international market. This economic distress further increases political instability, resulting in the vicious cycle of violence continuing.

The impact of political violence on the human mind and psychology is deep and permanent, touching every aspect of an individual's life. In a violent environment, fear, anxiety, and insecurity permanently settle in the minds of people living there, preventing them from leading a normal life. Those who are directly or indirectly victims or witnesses of violence suffer adverse effects on their mental health. They easily suffer from psychological trauma, stress, and trauma-related mental disorders, which hinder their daily activities. Children, women, and physically weak people are the most affected in this area, as they feel helpless and insecure. This long-term feeling of insecurity adversely affects their personality development and social behavior, causing them to become isolated from the mainstream of society. Due to the lack of trust and faith, they find it difficult to easily establish sincere relationships with others, and this creates an attitude of suspicion and distrust at all levels of society.

The atmosphere of terror created by long-term violence instills a sense of despair among the public, causing them to lose all faith in the political system and become hopeless about the future. The effects of this psychological trauma do not fall only on the present, but also adversely affect the minds of future generations, creating a major obstacle in building a society with healthy and strong mentality. Solving these mental problems requires special psychological treatment and social support, which is not easily available in a violence-affected society.

Due to political violence, the credibility and effectiveness of the governance system and national institutions gradually decrease, which is a major crisis for a democratic state. When the government or institutions fail to control political conflicts, the public loses faith in them. This leads to a lack of political stability and deterioration of law and order, making life difficult for the public. If the government cannot ensure the protection of the people's lives and property, its legitimacy comes into question, and anger against the government increases among the public. Due to violence, political processes such as elections, dis-

ruptions, and peaceful protests are disrupted, weakening democratic principles and reducing the level of political participation. Many times, the instability created by violence increases so much that authoritarian or undemocratic forces get the opportunity to seize power, which is a major threat to democracy. As a result, individual freedoms and human rights are further violated, and citizens may become victims of state repression. Due to the weakness of national institutions, suspicion towards the justice system also increases among the public, as they begin to believe that the perpetrators of violence may not be properly punished, or they are politically protected. This decay of the rule of law creates an anarchic environment in society, where powerful people do not hesitate to take the law into their own hands, and weak people are more oppressed.

Political violence also has a deep and significant impact on the field of education, darkening the future of a healthy society. Education is the foundation of knowledge, tolerance, and modern thinking, but in a violent environment, educational institutions do not remain safe places. Due to schools and colleges being closed for long periods, students' studies are disrupted for a long time, resulting in a huge learning loss. Many families fear sending their children to educational institutions, depriving many children of the fundamental right to education, and increasing the number of child laborers. Without education, building a healthy and aware society becomes difficult, as it provides the public with the ability to make correct decisions and criticize. Due to violence, the lives of teachers and students are also threatened, causing talented and skilled people to not want to stay in the teaching profession or to leave the country for other places. In this way, political violence deprives a society's future generation of the light of knowledge and education, stagnating the intellectual and social development of society. The impact of this educational loss does not fall only on the present, but also stands as a major challenge for the country's long-term development, as education empowers future citizens. Due to this obstacle in education, the number of uneducated and less aware people increases, who can be easily used for political interests, resulting in the cycle of violence continuing.

Political violence also has a deep and significant impact on

human rights, shaking the core foundation of a civilized society. In a violent environment, especially in conflict-prone areas, human rights violations become a common occurrence. Incidents such as the killing of innocent citizens, kidnapping, physical and mental torture, and forced displacement take place. These actions by the government side or the opposition side directly threaten the lives and dignity of citizens. People fear expressing their opinions, resulting in the gradual reduction of fundamental rights such as media and freedom of speech. Those who seek justice also become targets of violence, closing the path to obtaining justice and causing victims to suffer in despair. Women and children are the most victims of this violence, and various types of physical and mental torture are inflicted on them, permanently damaging their lives. This violation of human rights for political purposes weakens the moral foundation of a society. When human rights are not protected, the concept of a healthy society remains only a dream. Violations of international laws and norms defame the country in the world arena and negatively affect its reputation.

In conclusion, it can be said that political violence is a deep, complex, and poisonous disease for society, which not only affects the present but also creates a dark environment for future generations. It touches every aspect of society and its effects are far-reaching. This violence not only causes loss of life and property, but also weakens the peace of the human mind, the sincerity of social relationships, the potential for economic development, and the foundation of democratic institutions. To build a healthy, peaceful, and progressive society, it is extremely essential to think deeply about the root causes of political violence and find solutions. This solution should not be limited only to the implementation of law and order, but should also encompass its social, economic, psychological, and educational aspects. Society needs to unite against violence and restore faith in dialogue, tolerance, and democratic processes. Education can play an important role in building awareness and tolerance among the public. It is essential for both political leadership and the public to work for peace and harmony, only then can the path to a stable and improved life open up and a truly democratic society be built.

## What makes the nationwide SIR different from Bihar's revision?

By: Dipak Kurmi

The Election Commission of India has embarked upon an unprecedented transformation of its electoral roll revision process, learning from the tumultuous experience in Bihar to craft a more inclusive, pragmatic, and politically sensitive approach for the second phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) commencing October 28 across twelve states. The evolution from the Bihar model to the nationwide framework represents not merely procedural refinement but a fundamental philosophical shift from verification to inclusion, from suspicion to trust, and from administrative rigidity to responsive governance. This metamorphosis, driven by field-level feedback and political realities, illuminates how democratic institutions can adapt and improve when confronted with implementation challenges and public anxiety.

The Bihar SIR, notified on June 24, had inadvertently triggered widespread apprehension among existing electors, particularly those registered after 2003, the year Bihar's electoral rolls were last subjected to intensive revision. These voters found themselves in the peculiar position of being asked to furnish documentary proof of their age and citizenship to retain their electoral registration, effectively placing the burden of re-verification on citizens who had already been recognized as legitimate voters. This approach, while perhaps well-intentioned in its quest for electoral roll accuracy, created an atmosphere of uncertainty and raised fundamental questions about the relationship between the state and its citizens. The requirement to produce one of eleven prescribed documents proved onerous for many voters, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, migrants, and individuals whose documentation had been lost or never properly maintained due to various circumstances beyond their control.

The nationwide SIR represents a comprehensive reimagining of this approach, with the enumeration phase undergoing a complete transformation in both purpose and tone. Rather than focusing on verification and document submission at the outset, the enumeration phase now prioritizes inclusion and continuity. Enumerators have been specifically tasked with tracing existing electors through entries in the last SIR rolls, whether their own records or those of their parents or even more distant relatives. Crucially, at this initial stage, no documents are required whatsoever; only basic information necessary to establish continuity with previous electoral rolls is sought. This fundamental shift acknowledges a simple yet profound truth: citizens who have been vot-

ing in previous elections should not be subjected to burdensome re-verification processes unless there are specific grounds for questioning their eligibility.

The enumeration form itself has been redesigned to facilitate this inclusive approach, incorporating two new columns that allow electors to trace their linkage to the last revised roll under the SIR framework. This innovation, while introduced belatedly in Bihar after field officers reported the practical difficulties voters faced in securing prescribed documents, has now been embedded into the process from the beginning. The Bihar experience served as a crucial learning laboratory, where the Election Commission witnessed firsthand how theoretical requirements translated into ground-level hardships. Field officers' reports highlighting the onerous nature of document procurement for voters registered after 2003 prompted the Commission to pivot during the claims-and-objections phase, directing officers to trace as many voters as possible back to the 2003 rolls, even indirectly through family connections, thereby reducing the number required to furnish documentary proof. This feedback-driven adjustment, born of necessity in Bihar, has now been systematically integrated into the enumeration phase itself for the twelve states.

The recalibration extends even further in ways that reflect a sophisticated understanding of India's complex migration patterns and federal structure. While the Bihar SIR allowed electors to trace their connection only to Bihar's 2003 revision rolls, the nationwide exercise permits existing electors to connect their names to the electoral roll of any state's last intensive revision, not merely the state where they currently reside. This represents a quantum leap in administrative coordination and voter-friendly policy design. Booth Level Officers will now gain access to the previous intensive revision rolls of all states, a stark contrast to Bihar's BLOs who could only search within their state's roll. The practical implications of this change are profound: a migrant worker from West Bengal who is currently registered as a voter in Chennai can continue his electoral enrollment in Tamil Nadu by demonstrating that his name, or that of a parent or relative, appeared in West Bengal's 2002 electoral roll. Since West Bengal's last intensive revision occurred in 2002, anyone listed on that roll will be presumed eligible to remain on the roll of another state where they now reside. This approach recognizes the reality of India's vast internal migration, where mil-

lions of workers, students, and families move across state boundaries for economic opportunities, education, and family reasons, yet maintain their citizenship credentials through their original home states.

Document submission requirements have been substantially narrowed and rationalized. In the nationwide SIR, documents will be required only from those individuals who did not feature in any state's electoral roll during the last SIR exercise, a dramatic departure from Bihar's approach where most voters registered after 2003 were asked to submit documents regardless of their continuous electoral participation. The

legal provisions, it was no longer invoked as a central test or focal point of the revision exercise. This subtle but significant recalibration in tone acknowledges the concerns raised by civil society organizations, political parties, and affected communities about the potential for such exercises to be weaponized or to create unnecessary anxiety among marginalized populations. Aadhaar, which was included as the twelfth acceptable document following Supreme Court intervention during the Bihar SIR, remains on the list of acceptable documents for the twelve states and Union Territories, providing an additional pathway for voters to establish their credentials.

New applicants, including young citizens who have just attained voting age at eighteen years, now enjoy a more streamlined registration process. They can submit their Form 6, which is the Election Commission's standard electoral registration form, along with the SIR declaration form during the enumeration phase itself. This contrasts sharply with the Bihar approach, where new electors' forms were processed only during the claims-and-objections period, which commenced after the one-month enumeration period had concluded. By allowing simultaneous processing, the Commission ensures that first-time voters are not disadvantaged or delayed in exercising their fundamental democratic right.

Perhaps most significantly, the nationwide SIR departs from Bihar's experience in its approach to stakeholder consultation and transparency. The Bihar exercise appeared to have taken political parties and even segments of the election machinery by surprise, with limited advance consultation and short notice characterizing the initiative. In stark contrast, the second phase will commence with formal meetings between Chief Electoral Officers and political parties in each state. Election officials have been explicitly directed to explain the process in meticulous detail and involve parties as stakeholders from the outset, recognizing that political parties serve as crucial intermediaries between the state and citizens in India's democracy. This emphasis on transparency, consultation, and collaborative implementation reflects a mature understanding that electoral processes enjoy legitimacy not merely through technical correctness but through inclusive deliberation and shared ownership among democratic stakeholders. The transformation from Bihar to the nationwide model thus represents not just administrative learning but democratic evolution. (The writer can be reached at [dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com](mailto:dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com))



claims-and-objections phase, which constitutes the second stage of the nationwide SIR, will involve issuing notices to prove eligibility specifically to those voters who cannot be traced to any previous intensive revision roll. This represents an expansion in one sense, as previously these notices were issued only to those whose inclusion in the draft roll had been challenged by objectors, or to electors registered after 2003 who could not produce any of the eleven mandated documents. A much larger set of notices will be issued this time, but they will be targeted at a genuinely questionable category of voters rather than casting a wide net of suspicion over all post-2003 registrations. The question of their inclusion, based on their ability to furnish appropriate documents, will be adjudicated during formal hearings, ensuring procedural fairness.

The Commission's rhetorical stance on citizenship verification has undergone noteworthy softening, reflecting sensitivity to the political and social anxieties such language can generate in a diverse democracy. Earlier pronouncements had emphasized the Election Commission's right and obligation to verify citizenship as part of determining electoral eligibility, positioning citizenship checks as a central element of the revision exercise. Monday's announcement marking the launch of the nationwide SIR demonstrated a clear shift in messaging: while citizenship remains an eligibility criterion as mandated by constitutional and

# Oceans of opportunity: Carbon capture for Net-zero India

By: Poornima V B

Climate change, driven by the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and methane, has caused severe environmental impacts. With 2.6 gigatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per annum, India is the world's third-largest emitter after the United States (US) and China. Since the Industrial Revolution, CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations have increased by 32 percent, from 280 to 400 parts per million (ppm). The 2018 IPCC Report warns that unabated global warming could exceed 1.5°C by 2040, triggering sea-level rise and biodiversity loss. Preventing this requires a 45-percent emission reduction by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. Rising CO<sub>2</sub> levels have also caused ocean acidification, harming marine ecosystems. India has committed to halving its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050, with a net-zero target by 2070.

## Beneath the Surface: Techniques for Ocean-Based Carbon Capture

Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS) and Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) technologies have emerged as critical solutions, alongside energy efficiency and renewable energy. CDR removes CO<sub>2</sub> already present in the atmosphere or oceans, whereas CCUS prevents carbon emission by capturing it from sources, including industries and power plants, converting it into chemicals or fuels, for oil recovery or storing it in seawater, deep-sea sediments, or geological sites. Effective implementation of CCUS and CDR can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> by 14 percent by 2060 and stabilise concentrations to 450 ppm by 2100. According to NITI Aayog, CCUS could generate 8-10 million full-time jobs by 2050.

Researchers and companies are increasingly exploring ways to harness the ocean's natural chemical and biological processes to absorb and store CO<sub>2</sub>.

## The Blue Shift in CCUS: Approaches to Ocean-Based CCUS

CCUS technologies employ biological, geological, or ocean-based sequestration. While land-based methods such as reforestation, sustainable agriculture and biochar production have strong decarbonisation potential,

the ocean, covering 70 percent of the Earth, is the largest carbon sink, storing 50 times more carbon than the atmosphere and 16 times more than terrestrial carbon. Ocean-based CCUS thus offers a strategic global decarbonisation pathway. Researchers and companies are increasingly exploring ways to harness the ocean's natural chemical and biological processes to absorb and store CO<sub>2</sub>.

## Ocean-based Negative Emission Techniques

Ocean-based sequestration uses low temperatures and high pressure to stabilise CO<sub>2</sub> in liquid form, minimising leakage. Its deep-sea location prevents groundwater contamination and geological risks from tectonic activity, while remaining scalable without complex land-based infrastructure. Key ocean-based Negative Emission Techniques (NETs) include Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement (OAE), Electrochemical Seawater Processing, Biological Carbon Capture, Enhancement of Blue Carbon Sink, and Ocean Fertilisation.

- OAE increases seawater alkalinity by adding pulverised minerals (e.g., Lime) or by electrochemically boosting rock weathering to accelerate atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>

- Electrochemical seawater processing uses electric currents and electrochemical reactions to treat seawater, recover valuable minerals, and produce oxygen and hydrogen.

- Biological carbon capture leverages marine ecosystems and biological carbon to absorb and store atmospheric carbon. It uses photosynthesis to transfer carbon from the ocean surface to the deep sea via marine organisms such as phytoplankton, microalgae, seaweed and other aquatic media (blue carbon), soil, and seawater. It also enables long-term carbon sequestration through deep-ocean sedimentation.

- Ocean fertilisation promotes the growth of phytoplankton by adding required micronutrients, such as phosphorus, iron, or nitrogen, to specific macronutrient-rich regions of the ocean, facilitating long-term deep-ocean carbon storage.

- Marine protected areas, including coral reefs and mangroves (8.3 percent of the ocean), are vital for ocean health. Mangroves store up to 1,000 tonnes of carbon per hectare, support fisheries, and pro-



vide natural protection against storms and flooding. Coral reefs, though covering less than 0.1 percent of the ocean surface, sustain 25 percent of marine diversity, and offer coastal protection, recreation, medical and tourism benefits.

## Leveraging India's Potential for Ocean-based CCUS

India, with its 11098.8 km coastline and ~2 million sq. km of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), provides vast CCUS potential. OAE offers the most durable storage - up to 100,000 years along with shellfish aquaculture and seaweed farming. Seaweed farming over 20 percent of the ocean could remove 0.6 gigatonnes of carbon annually, rising to one gigatonne with artificial ocean fertilisation. However, achieving this by 2030 requires expanding seaweed farming by 64 percent. The captured CO<sub>2</sub> can be repurposed for industrial applications, including food and beverage, healthcare, biofuels, biopolymers, urea, green hydrogen, enhanced oil recovery, bio-plastics and mineral carbonates used in cement and construction materials.

Global interest in ocean-based NETs is growing. Most nations have included CDR in their long-term climate strategies under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with Japan and the US emphasising ocean-based CDR.

## Global Efforts in Ocean-based

## CCUS: From Startups to National Initiatives

Global interest in ocean-based NETs is growing. Most nations have included CDR in their long-term climate strategies under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with Japan and the US emphasising ocean-based CDR. The US Department of Energy (DoE) supports research funding and scale-up of CDR techniques through the Carbon Negative Shot Initiative, aiming to reduce its cost to approximately US\$100 per net ton of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2030. Initiatives such as Horizon Europe support seaweed cultivation and electrochemical seawater processing. Several European initiatives support biorefinery value chains and ocean fertilisation to enhance biological carbon capture.

Companies worldwide are developing ocean-based CDR solutions. The StartUs Insights 2025 report identifies startups on algae- and cyanobacteria-based CCUS, direct air capture, seawater alkalisation, and CO<sub>2</sub>-to-material conversion, mainly in Western Europe, the US, and India. Amsterdam-based Brineworks uses electrolysis to split seawater and extract CO<sub>2</sub> at under US\$100 per ton, producing green hydrogen as a by-product. Companies like SeaO2 (Amsterdam) and Captura (California) use electrolysers for CO<sub>2</sub> extraction from seawater. The

treated, decarbonised seawater, returned to the ocean, continues to absorb carbon from the atmosphere. Cestore (Sweden), Limenet (Italy), Arbon Earth (Sweden), and Everest Carbon (USA) are other leading startups. Organisations such as the BidCarbon Foundation support research and technical development, sustainability, and the implementation of ocean-based CDR projects across Asia, including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, China, and Indonesia.

The StartUs Insights 2025 report identifies startups on algae- and cyanobacteria-based CCUS, direct air capture, seawater alkalisation, and CO<sub>2</sub>-to-material conversion, mainly in Western Europe, the US, and India.

In India, Alt Carbon uses enhanced rock weathering with silica to remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the ocean, targeting a 500,000-hectare operation and 5 million metric tons of carbon removal by 2030. The Department of Science and Technology (DST) is promoting R&D on cost-effective, safe CCUS-based innovations to achieve net-zero emissions from carbon-intensive industries.

Bangalore-based Sea6Energy is a pioneer in large-scale seaweed farming for CCUS and biofuel production. National Centre for CCUS at research institutes like IIT Bombay and JNCASR are actively working on coastal CCUS and mineral carbonation. India collaborates with Ger-

many, France, Norway, Switzerland, Romania, the Netherlands, Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom to advance ocean-based CCUS.

## What India Must Do Next?

Ocean-based CDR (OCDR) can remove several gigatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually, reducing 10 per cent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However, scale-up, detection, accuracy, environmental impacts, low technological readiness level (TRL), and large knowledge and governance gaps pose significant challenges. Each technique varies in efficiency, TRL, and socio-environmental impact.

## Advancing Research and Development for Scalable Ocean CCUS Solutions

Currently, information on the environmental performance and potential of OCDR approaches is limited. The DST-supported National Mission on Ocean-Based CCUS must, therefore, fund studies on innovation, scale-up, safety, and detailed techno-economic and environmental impact analysis before implementation. Policies must support large-scale field research, as the available data on the effectiveness of the project scale, duration of carbon storage and environmental impacts is limited to lab-based and small-scale trials, with few field test results. India must increase its GDP expenditure on R&D from less than one percent currently to more than 2-3 percent for improving its TRL.

## Fostering Technology and Innovation to Advance Ocean-Based CCUS

Public and private initiatives must facilitate the transition of OCDR technologies from lab to pilot-scale. Innovation support policies should target high-precision sensors, underwater vehicles, and equipment for monitoring seawater chemistry, including dissolved CO<sub>2</sub>, pH, trace metals, minerals and biochemicals. Key agencies, including the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), NITI Aayog, and DST, should provide incentives, funding, regulatory guidelines and collaboration opportunities with research institutions, industries and startups.

India must increase its GDP expenditure on R&D from less than one percent currently to more than 2-3 percent for improving its TRL. **Strengthening Standard Reg-**

## ulatory and Monitoring Systems

The government must implement a standardised Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) framework with transparent CCUS accounting guidelines. It must support studies on variables affecting carbon sequestration and durability, including seawater chemistry, gas exchange, and interactions; complex ocean dynamics, such as water mixing, sediment, and biological interactions; and carbon remobilisation rate variability in coastal blue carbon approaches using seagrass and mangrove ecosystems. Rigorous measurement standards and continuous monitoring by agencies, such as Voluntary Carbon Market Integrity Initiative (VCMI), are essential. While MoES must coordinate the regulatory tracking, DST and NITI Aayog can support the technological progress. Policy reforms must target enhanced efficiency, reduce bureaucratic delays, and increase international cooperation.

## Empowering Coastal Community Engagement in Ocean CCUS Efforts

Policy frameworks must adopt a bottom-up approach, ensuring communities, ecological and social contexts-specific implementation, and benefit-sharing. The MoEFCC and MoES must support capacity building, skill development, and awareness programmes, as involving coastal communities, especially women, can lend momentum to blue carbon initiatives, offshore algae cultivation, and CO<sub>2</sub> extraction from seawater.

## Towards a Net Zero Blue Economy

Ocean-based CCUS represents a critical pathway to achieving India's net-zero target by 2070. While global and Indian initiatives are advancing in CCUS research and implementation, challenges remain in scale-up, TRL, regulatory frameworks, and community engagement. The government should integrate CCUS into core domestic and foreign policy agendas on climate change. Ocean-based CCUS can create new value chains in green fuels, bio-based materials, and carbon credits, directly contributing to sustainable blue growth. With strategic policy support and dedicated funding, India can harness the full potential of ocean resources to achieve its net-zero target and a US\$100 billion blue economy. (Courtesy: ORF)

# From 'wasteland' to conservation reserve: A grassland on Bengaluru's outskirts is a biodiversity hub

By: Max Martin

On the northwestern edge of Bengaluru, beyond the buzz of the tech city, the wind whistles across the golden-green grasslands. Smooth-coated otters glide along the lakeshore, devouring fish, while raptors slice through the blue beyond. The famed grassland around Hesaraghatta lake - Bengaluru's first planned drinking water source - got a new lease of life earlier this year when the Karnataka state government declared it a conservation reserve.

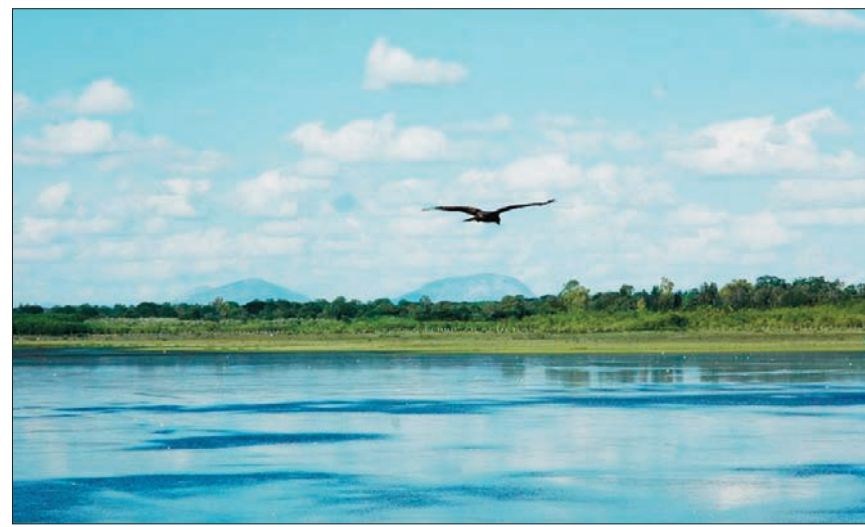
Once dismissed as wasteland and used as a film backdrop, the area now notified as the Greater Hesaraghatta Grassland Conservation Reserve protects 5,678 acres of land after more than a decade of environmental activism, ecological surveys, and bureaucratic deliberations.

It meant saving the grassland from real estate interests, a film city project, and some misplaced notions of conservation. Its notification under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, issued by the State Board for Wildlife and ratified by the state cabinet protects this niche from an unrelenting urban sprawl.

**Biodiversity treasure trove**  
A grassland is an ecosystem of grasses and small plants, with few trees breaking its low skyline. Rain falls just enough for the grass, but not enough for the forests. The savannahs of Africa, the steppes of south-eastern Europe, the pampas of South America, all fill that ecologically unique space between forest and desert, the world's most open and life-filled landscapes.

"Hesaraghatta is an open, semi-wet, freshwater-grassland-marshland, a unique kind of ecosystem and the last remaining grassland-savannah-wood complex in the Bengaluru region," said Chethan Kumar Gandla, a wildlife expert and assistant professor at Christ University in Bengaluru. "Spanning an area of about 1,912 acres of lakebed surrounded by grassland, it hosts a unique landscape and exceptional biodiversity - around 235 species of birds, 400 species of insects, and 100 species of butterflies recorded in the area suggest the biodiversity richness in the area."

The biodiversity is quite unique, Gandla noted. "It includes the rare butterfly species, lilac silverline (Cigaritis lilacinus), birds including European roller (Coracias garrulus), lesser florican (Sypheotides indicus), and sightings of rare birds like Egyptian vulture, steppe eagle, etc. In addition, 55 species of plants, around 10 species of mammals including leopard, jackals, Indian fox & slender loris, seven species of reptiles, and 13 species of frogs and toads, including a remarkable sighting of Sholigara's



narrow-mouthed frog (Microhyla sholigari)."

It is a site for several migratory birds from Europe, Central Asia, and the Himalayas, including several species of raptors, as official data show, with special mentions of greater spotted eagle (Aquila clanga), a vulnerable bird as per the IUCN Red List, and lesser florican, which is critically endangered.

"The place should be conserved for its ecological value," said Vishwanath Srikantiah, a water conservationist and a trustee of Biome Environmental Trust, an organisation assisting communities to find water and sanitation solutions. These grasslands receive an average of 750 mm to 800 mm of annual rainfall, significantly less than Bengaluru's average. The average rainfall for Bengaluru of late is over 1,000 mm. The laterite soil beneath retains moisture and aids grass growth, unlike aquifers that aid tree growth, he explained.

The government notification described the area as a crucial catchment for reviving groundwater levels, aiding recharge and improving the water table - benefiting thousands of farmers in surrounding villages. It also serves as a natural sponge, soaking up monsoon runoff. The grassland forms part of

the larger catchment of the Arkavathi river and Thippagondanahalli reservoir, a drinking water source, as well as the Hesaraghatta lake.

## Golden grass

The value of the grassland lies not so much in its role as a catchment for the lake, but in its intrinsic ecological qualities. Srikantiah pointed out. Rainfall varies across grasslands from season to season, year to year, and grass grows with the rain. Some blades stay short, under a foot. Some reach seven feet. Roots also stay short, extending only three to six feet into the soil. The rain and roots keep the soil rich.

For Bengaluru - a city where lakes are shrinking or just vanishing, wetlands are encroached upon, and groundwater is dipping - the protection of Hesaraghatta signals not just an ecological reprieve but also a shift in how urban nature is understood and valued, Srikantiah said. "Generally, conservation is seen as planting trees; once in Hesaraghatta, too."

Deemed "wastelands" in colonial and post-colonial land records, grasslands are frequently targeted for tree-planting drives, industrial projects, or housing layouts. For instance, the Bangalore Development Authority had an ambitious Rs 100 crore tree-planting project here, and its cost shot up by 40% along the way, with at least a fifth of 400,000 saplings perishing.

"Grasslands are not empty spaces waiting to be forested," Gandla said. "Grasslands and even deserts are rich ecosystems on their own right." Grasslands have an amazing ability to survive - and keep growing back - no matter how much they are

"munched or nibbled" by animals. This resilience allows them to sustain a rich diversity of wildlife.

## Grassland or wasteland?

The bad press that the grasslands get comes from a misunderstanding of their ecology, as scientists argue.

Jayashree Ratnam, who is currently director of the wildlife biology and conservation programme at the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru, has written in a 2016 paper: "The savannahs of Asia remain locally unrecognised as distinctive ecosystems, and continue to be viewed as degraded forests or seasonally dry tropical forests. These colonial-era legacies are problematic because they fail to recognise the unique diversity of Asian savannahs and the critical roles of fire and herbivory in maintaining ecosystem health and diversity." Herbivory means the act of animals feeding on plants.

Critics argue that the forest-centric bias in policy and management has also influenced scientists and cartographers, leading them to continue labelling India's tropical savannahs as tropical dry forests or degraded forests.

## Conservation meets local needs

Grasslands actually cover twice the area fit for crops, yet their role in feeding the world is often overlooked, as research shows. Grazing animals turn grass - inedible to humans - into food and energy without stealing from our fields. Grassland meat and milk may leave a smaller carbon footprint than factory-farmed livestock, they note.

Besides, grasslands hold roughly a third of the world's land-based carbon and serve as vital soil carbon sinks. Recent studies show that greater plant diversity boosts soil organic carbon by increasing carbon flow to roots and enhancing microbial contributions to soil carbon storage.

The conservation reserve model, introduced under Section 36A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, offers a balance - it enables state governments to protect ecologically significant landscapes while allowing local livelihoods and existing land uses to continue. In the case of Hesaraghatta, this designation ensures that no private land acquisition or eviction is involved.

Peri-urban grasslands often slip between forest and farmland, overlooked in policy. As experts note, these fast-changing, semi-natural lands feed cities with water, green spaces, and orchards. Yet urban sprawl eats into them, shrinking green fields, choking open spaces, and draining water.

In this context, declaring the grassland a protected area is a welcome step. As former environment minister and Congress leader Jairam Ramesh commented, it shows that growth, social development, and sustainability can go hand in hand - "as indeed they must". (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

# In the land of seven hundred hills

By: Kanchan Basu

When the Howrah-Koraput Express broke the silence of the morning and left the station, I saw that only a few locals had got off except me. I had come to visit Saranda at the invitation of the Forest Department of the Jharkhand government. It had rained a little while ago, and the wind was blowing fiercely. I set off for the Forest Department bungalow, a short distance from the station. This is my address for now.

The wooden forest bungalow is hundreds years old. The bungalow is surrounded by Sal, Teak, and Palash trees. The next morning, Ramu Shyamal brought the car at exactly nine o'clock. We set off for Kiriburu, 60 k.m. away, in the car sent by the forest department. There are villages on both sides of the road and various plants, in addition to Sal, Segun, Mahua, Kusum, Arjun. There are mines on the way. Work is underway to extract iron by blasting mountains with dynamite. On one side is a green Sal forest and on the other side, nature's red scars. I reached Kiriburu at around 3 p. m. in the afternoon. Arrangements have been made to stay in the forest bungalow here.

After having tea, I passed by the Meghataburu Post Office and reached the Kali Temple. Shiva, Kali and Bajrangbali are seated in the temple. In the coming of spring, Palash, Mahua and Jacaranda trees are adorned with flowers on both sides of the road of the small hill town of Kiriburu. The smell of Mahua is full of fragrance all around. Leaving all this behind, I reached the view point or sunset point. The mountain ahead has descended gradually.

The seven hundred mountain peaks of Saranda rise in all directions. This is one of the largest Sal forests in Asia. The two twin sisters Kiriburu and Meghataburu are the jewels of the forest. Located at an altitude of about 800 feet above sea level, the peaks of the surrounding 700 mountains can be seen from this Kiriburu. That is why it is also called the 'land of seven hundred mountains'. After watching the sunset Holi in this forest-hill in the evening, I returned to the forest bungalow. All the food and drinks here are served in the canteen of the Steel Authority of India.

The next morning, with the permission of the forest department, I set off towards Thalkobad, deeper into the forest. The deep forest was covered in the colors of spring flowers. The reddish water of the Koena River was rushing through the forest. The railway line was in the middle of the forest. The iron of Kiriburu was on this path. Although there are no other big animals, there is a famous herd of elephants and bears in this forest of Saranda. CRPF jawans are sitting in positions and keeping watch. There are also three CRPF camps at a certain distance in the forest. Checking is done everywhere. There is a watch tower 1 k.m. deeper than Thalkobad bungalow. It is almost certain to see wild animals here at night. I have seen bear footprints even during the day. Toebu Falls is 5 k.m. away from here. You have to walk to reach it. I back to Kiriburu.

The next morning, we bid farewell to Kiriburu and visited Giri Rajeshwari Temple (located in Keonjhar district of Odisha), Karo River, Jhinkar or Jhikra Falls and Pachauri Falls. Then we reached Barabur Forest Rest House in Saranda around afternoon. The forest bungalow is located on a hillock in the forest. The forest shows its unique beauty here. I handed over the rations I had brought for the day to the watchman and asked him to prepare the food, then went out to look around the bungalow.

Huge trees in the direction. As the Sun sank in the west, the forest gradually became visible. All traffic on the road was stopped at this time. Now there was no sound except the call of birds returning home and the chirping of crickets. The full moon was in three days. The sky was lit up with the moon a little later. The forest was a little thicker in the moonlight.

"In the morning, when we went around the jungle for a bit, the watchman told us that the elephants' path passes by this gorge. So, elephants can be seen here at any time. There are 5 in a day here". The next day, I reached Manoharpur forest bungalow in Ramu Shyamal's car. From here, I have to catch a train back to Kolkata.



## Trump, Xi to meet in S Korea

# Talks to focus on US-China strategic, long-term issues: Beijing

**BEIJING, Oct 29:** US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping will meet on Thursday in South Korea and exchange views on strategic and long-term bilateral issues, the Chinese foreign ministry announced on Wednesday.

The two leaders will meet on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit.

As agreed between China and the US, President Xi will meet with President Trump in Busan to exchange views on bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Gou Jiakun told a media briefing here.

"We are willing to work with the US side to promote this meeting to yield positive results, provide new guidance and to inject new momentum for the stable development of China-US relations," Gou said.

He added that head-of-state diplomacy plays an irreplaceable strategic guiding role in China-US relations, which are currently bogged down over Trump's massive trade tariffs against Chinese exports and Beijing's retaliatory actions.

At the meeting, the two heads of state will have in-depth discussions on strategic and long-term issues concerning China-US relations, as well as major issues of mutual concern.

This is their first meeting after Trump's



second term in office and comes in the backdrop of a massive trade war between the world's top two economies.

High on the agenda is the formalisation of an agreement for the sale of China's top social media app TikTok to designated American firms, as well as the resumption of rare-earth metals exports, the much-needed key component of dual-use technologies needed for the manufacturing of various items, from mobile phones to defence equipment, blocked by China.

For its part, Beijing wants Washington to lift the restrictions on the exports of semi-

conductor chips needed for the development and expansion of AI-related technology in China.

Xi and Trump spoke over the phone recently and finalised the contours of a trade deal to normalise trade ties.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One on Wednesday morning, Trump said he expected to discuss with Xi fentanyl flows into the US to address the drug menace and American farm exports to China.

Trump's remarks followed a Wall Street Journal report on Tuesday suggesting that Washington might reduce the 20 per cent fen-

tanyl-related tariffs on Chinese exports by half in exchange for Beijing's crackdown on the export of chemicals used to produce fentanyl.

"I expect to be lowering that because I believe that they're gonna help us with the fentanyl situation," Trump said on Wednesday, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

"They're gonna be doing what they could do."

Answering media questions regarding fentanyl, Guo said Beijing had provided help in this regard with positive results and was "open to continuing cooperation".

"The US should take concrete actions to create the necessary conditions for cooperation," added Guo, calling China's stance on the issue consistent and clear.

When asked about a possible one-year pause in Beijing's rare earth export controls and whether it could lead to further concessions, Trump said: "We haven't talked about the timing yet, but we're gonna work out something."

Trump voiced optimism about reaching a "great deal" with China in his talks with Xi as he spoke to business executives on the sidelines of the APEC summit.

Trump said he believed a deal would benefit both the US and China and be "something very exciting for everybody". (PTI)

## BNP slams Bangladesh interim govt's plan to enforce July Charter, calls move 'deception'



**DHAKA, Oct 29:** The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led by former prime minister Khaleda Zia on Wednesday slammed the interim government's plan to implement the July Charter, aimed at institutionalising reforms in the wake of last year's protests that ousted Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government, describing the move as "deception".

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said the party was "astounded" to find that its dissenting notes were missing from the final report published by the National Consensus Commission on Wednesday.

He called the move a "deception" with both the people and political parties.

Alamgir demanded immediate reinstatement of BNP's dissenting views into the Charter, warning that ignoring them would undermine the spirit of national unity.

The July Charter was intended to reflect the aspirations of agitators during the violent street protests, dubbed as "July Uprising", which led to Hasina's ouster in August last year. The document contains over 80 reform proposals for different sectors.

The interim government led by Muhammad Yunus later disbanded the Awami League's activities under anti-terrorism laws, while the Election Commission suspended its registration, disqualifying it from contesting polls. In the absence of the Awami League, BNP has emerged as Bangladesh's main political force.

The National Consensus Commission, chaired by Yunus, drafted the Charter in consultation with political parties and civil groups. BNP and several others signed the draft at a ceremony on October 17. How-

ever, the final version unveiled on Tuesday omitted dissenting opinions and recommended an implementation process, including a possible referendum.

Commission's vice chairman and US-based political scientist Ali Riaz told the media that the panel urged the government to immediately issue a "charter implementation order" and hold a referendum to elicit people's opinions on its recommendations.

BNP's policy-making standing committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said the party is surprised at the Commission's proposal that the Charter be "automatically incorporated into the Constitution" if not passed by Parliament within 270 days.

Ahmed, who represented BNP in a series of talks with the Commission, accused the National Consensus Commission of deepening divisions rather than forging unity.

"It seems the Consensus Commission, the (interim) government and two or three parties are on one side, while we were on the other (during the talks)," he said, describing the Commission report "a goal by the referee" instead of players.

Legal and constitutional experts have also voiced concern over the proposed implementation mechanism.

"If the outcome is predetermined, what is the purpose of discussion in parliament?" prominent jurist Swadhin Malik questioned.

He said the Charter contains 84 provisions, 48 of which relate directly to the Constitution and "if such a large and complex document is put to a referendum, how can ordinary citizens be expected to understand it and make an informed decision?". (PTI)

## Israeli foreign minister to visit India next week

**JERUSALEM, Oct 29:** Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar will visit India next week to meet with the country's top leadership and discuss bilateral initiatives and regional developments.

"Sa'ar will be on a two-day visit to New Delhi, November 4 and 5, and will be meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar, among others," a source in Israel told PTI.

Despite the turmoil in the region, there have been several high-profile visits from Israel to India over the past two years, with recent ones including those of Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, Minister of Economy Nir Barkat, Agriculture Minister Avi Dichter, and Tourism Minister Haim Katz.

India and Israel signed a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) during the visit of Finance Minister Smotrich in September to deepen economic and financial ties, and to assure investors from both sides of appropriate safeguards in light of relevant international precedents and practices.

The agreement increases the comfort level and boosts the confidence of investors by assuring a minimum standard of treatment and non-discrimination, while providing for an independent forum for dispute settlement through arbitration.

The BIT also provides for protection to investments from expropriation, transparency, transfers and compensation for losses.

Israel has signed BITs with over 15 countries since 2000, including the UAE, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, South Africa, etc.

Barkat visited India in February with a large economic delegation.

Israel has also been seeking India's help in overcoming an acute shortage of workers in various sectors. The number of Indians now working in Israel is estimated at close to 40,000.

Several thousand more are expected to join the Israeli workforce in the coming months.

Jaishankar and Sa'ar earlier met in February on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference and discussed US President Donald Trump's vision of connecting Asia, Europe, and the United States through Israel. (PTI)

## Trump says 'it's too bad' he can't run for third term

**GYEONGJU (SOUTH KOREA), Oct 29:** President Donald Trump said Wednesday that "it's too bad" he's not allowed to run for a third term, conceding the constitutional reality even as he expressed interest in continuing to serve.

"If you read it, it's pretty clear," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One enroute from Japan to South Korea. "I'm not allowed to run. It's too bad."

The president's comments, which continue his on-again, off-again musings about a third term, came a day after House Speaker Mike Johnson said it would be impossible for Trump to stay in the White House.

"I don't see the path for that," he told reporters at the US Capitol on Tuesday. Johnson, the Republican leader who has built his career by drawing closer to Trump, said he discussed the issue with the president, and he thinks Trump understands the situation.

"He and I have talked about the constraints of the Constitution," he said. The speaker described how the Constitution's 22nd Amendment does not allow for a third presidential term and changing that, with a new amendment, would be a cumbersome, decade-long process winning over states and votes in Congress.

"But I can tell you that we are not going to take our foot off the gas pedal," he said. "We're going to deliver for the American people, and we've got a great run ahead of us — he'll have four strong years." Trump stopped short of characterizing his conversation with Johnson, and his description of the prohibition on third terms was somewhat less definitive.

"Based on what I read, I guess I'm not allowed to run," he said Wednesday. "So we'll see what happens."

Trump has repeatedly raised the idea of trying to stay in power. Hats saying "Trump 2028" are passed out as souvenir keepsakes to lawmakers and others visiting the White House, and Trump's former 2016 campaign chief-turned-podcaster Stephen Bannon has revived the idea of a third Trump term. (AP)

## North Korea touts missile tests as Trump visits South Korea

**GYEONGJU (SOUTH KOREA), Oct 29:** North Korea said Wednesday that it has conducted successful cruise missile tests, the latest display of its growing military capabilities and one that comes while US President Donald Trump visits South Korea.

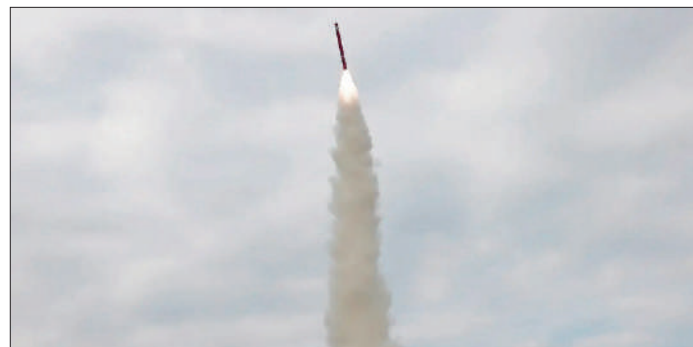
Trump has repeatedly expressed a desire to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during his trip but acknowledged difficulties in arranging a meeting with Kim.

"I know Kim Jong Un very well. We get along very well," Trump said at the beginning of his meeting with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung in the South Korean city of Gyeongju. "We really weren't able to work out timing."

Speaking with reporters earlier aboard Air Force One en route from Japan to South Korea, Trump appeared to downplay the significance of the latest North Korean missile test activities.

"He's been launching missiles for decades, right?" Trump said.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said its sea-to-surface missiles fired Tuesday flew for more than two hours before accurately striking targets in its western waters. It said the weapons would contribute to expanding the



operational sphere of the country's nuclear-armed military.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said that South Korea and the United States were analyzing the weapons and maintaining a combined defense readiness capable of a "dominant response" against any North Korean provocation.

North Korea's latest launches followed short-range ballistic missile tests last week that it said involved a new hypersonic system designed to strengthen its nuclear war deterrent. They were North Korea's first ballistic missile tests in five months.

North Korea hasn't made a direct response to Trump's overture as it has shunned any form of talks with Washington and Seoul since Kim's

high-stakes nuclear diplomacy with Trump fell apart in 2019 due to disputes over US-led sanctions. The two leaders met three times during the American president's first term, and their third and last meeting happened at the Korean border village of Panmunjom.

Many experts say North Korea won't likely return to talks with Trump anytime soon unless it's assured it would get big U.S. concessions like extensive relief of sanctions. But others say North Korea would find it difficult to ignore Trump's repeated outreach because doing so could make it a less important foreign policy agenda for Trump.

Trump earlier said he would be willing to extend his Asian trip —

## Pakistan confirms talks with Afghanistan failed, accuses Kabul of backtracking on commitments

**ISLAMABAD, Oct 29:** Pakistan authorities on Wednesday confirmed that talks with the Afghan Taliban to tackle cross-border terrorism failed, saying Kabul backtracked on commitments to control militancy.

The Four-day talks began on Saturday and were facilitated by the host, Turkey, where officials from Pakistan and Afghanistan attempted to find a common ground but failed to reach a consensus.

Pakistan's Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar, confirmed the peace talks ended without a breakthrough. "The dialogue thus failed to bring about any workable solution," Tarar said in a post on social media.

He said Pakistan had long sought cooperation from Kabul against militants targeting the country.

Tarar said, ever since the assumption of control in Kabul, Pakistan has repeatedly engaged with the Afghan Taliban regime regarding persistent cross-border terrorism.

Tarar added that Islamabad had asked the Taliban regime "time and again to fulfil their written commitments to Pakistan and to the international community in the Doha Agreement."

However, he said, "Pakistan's fervent efforts proved futile due to the Afghan Taliban Regime's unabated support to anti-Pakistan terrorists."

"The Taliban regime bears no responsibility towards the people of Afghanistan and thrives on a war economy," he said, adding that it "desires to drag and mire the Afghan people into a needless war." (PTI)

## Internet disrupted in Tanzania on election day as ruling party seeks to extend decades in power

**NAIROBI, Oct 29:** Internet connectivity was disrupted across Tanzania as the country on Wednesday held an election marked by concerns from human rights groups and the detention of opposition members.

Netblocks, an internet access advocacy group, confirmed the outage, saying on X that "live network data show a nationwide disruption to internet connectivity." Just before the disruption was confirmed, users noted an internet slowdown in the African country.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who is seeking a second term, belongs to the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party that has governed the country since it gained independence in 1961.

Lines formed at three polling stations visited by Associated Press journalists. Voting officially began at 7 a.m. local time and was scheduled to end at 4 p.m., after which vote tallying will begin.

Preliminary results were expected within 24 hours, but the electoral commission has up to



seven days to announce the final outcome.

The leader of the main opposition CHADEMA party, Tundu Lissu, is in prison and faces treason charges after calling for electoral reforms, while the second largest opposition party's candidate was barred from running.

Amnesty International said the atmosphere around the polls was characterised by fear, saying it had verified cases of enforced disappear-

ances, arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings ahead of the polls.

The rights group said alleged abuses by the security forces undermine the legitimacy of the election.

Hassan seeks her first full term in office after completing the term of her predecessor, John Pombe Magufuli, who died suddenly in 2021. Sixteen opposition candidates representing smaller parties are also on the ballot.

Tanzania has more than 37 million registered voters, a 26 per cent increase from 2020, but that growth in voter registration is not likely to lead to more people going to the polls, analysts warn, citing apathy over an appearance that Hassan will cruise to victory unchallenged.

CHADEMA has called for protests on election day. Police dispersed several protesters who gathered in the Kimara Kibo neighbourhood in the commercial capital Dar es Salaam.

Hassan has said that no protests would be allowed. (AP)

## Hegseth welcomes Japan's arms spending increase, says US-Japan alliance key to deter China

**TOKYO, Oct 29:** US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Wednesday welcomed Japan's determination to accelerate its ongoing military buildup and defence spending.

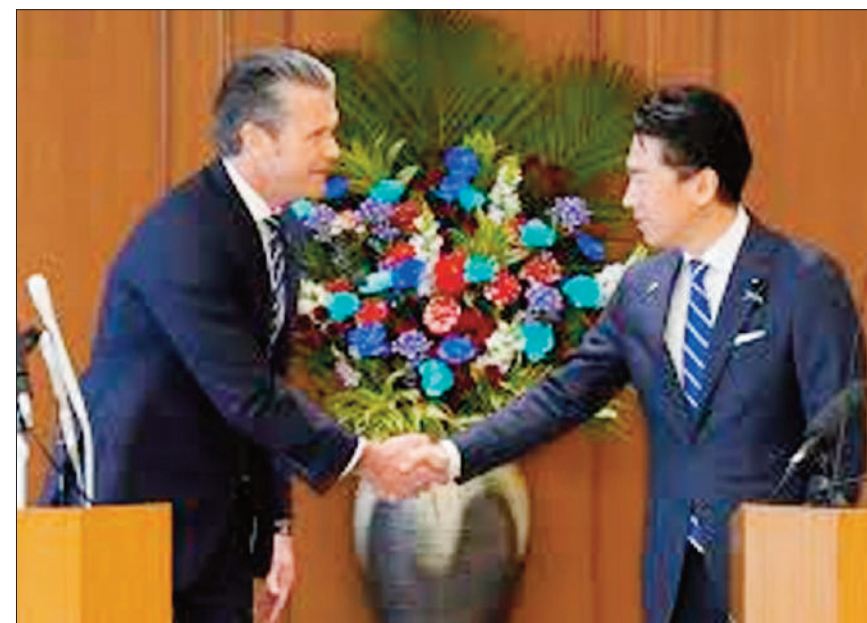
During a visit to Japan, Hegseth said he hopes to see those pledges implemented as soon as possible, noting China's increasingly assertive military activity.

"The threats we face are real, and they are urgent. China's unprecedented military buildup and its aggressive military actions speak for themselves," he said. "Make no mistake about it, our alliance is critical to deterring Chinese military aggression, and keeping our countries safe."

Hegseth said he was "glad" to see Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi — speaking alongside US President Donald Trump this week — make a commitment to increase Japan's defence spending, calling it "wonderful".

He said the US government had not demanded Japan's spending increase.

His comment comes a day after Takaichi, who became prime minister only last week, explained to Trump during their first summit that her government will raise Japan's defence spending to 2% of its gross national product by March, two years ahead of ini-



tially planned. Japan also plans to revise its ongoing national security strategy several years ahead of schedule.

"It's an important step forward, and one that we hope would be implemented and be-

lieve will be as soon as possible," Hegseth told a joint news conference after holding talks with Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi. "The result, through our shared strength, will deter threats."

"We're going to invest now and invest quickly while we still have time," Hegseth said.

Koizumi welcomed the agreement between the two governments to move up deliveries of US-made Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) though he did not give further details.

Japan is seeking to create a more self-sufficient military as a deterrence against China's increasingly assertive military activity in the region, and has concentrated on defence buildup on its southwestern islands. Japan also has concerns about the rising tensions caused by North Korea and Russia.

Japan has already moved up a planned deployment of its medium and long-range missiles such as Tomahawk and Japanese-made Tupe-12 anti-ship missiles.

These efforts mark a historic shift from Japan's longstanding policy of limiting use of force to self-defence only under a pacifist Constitution written after World War II.

It made a major break from that policy under the 2022 security strategy that calls for more offensive roles for Japan's Self-Defence Forces and easing restrictions on arms exports. The Takaichi government is also seeking to further relax weapons transfers. (AP)

CM says reopening border trade routes with Bhutan and Myanmar will boost connectivity, growth and regional cooperation

## Arunachal Pradesh poised to be India's gateway to Southeast Asia: CM Khandu



ITANAGAR, Oct 29: Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday said Arunachal Pradesh is poised to become India's next major gateway to Southeast Asia, serving as a vibrant bridge linking the country with Bhutan and Myanmar and creating new opportunities for growth and collaboration.

Khandu made the remarks after an interaction with noted economist Prof Mahendra P Lama in Itanagar on a study report focused on reopening and operationalising traditional trade routes along the Arunachal-Bhutan and

Arunachal-Myanmar borders.

"Prof Lama's deep insights on inclusive border development, livelihood generation and sustainable connectivity were truly enlightening," the chief minister said in a post on X.

He emphasised that developing these traditional corridors would redefine connectivity for the border state, extending benefits far beyond infrastructure. "Arunachal Pradesh holds immense potential to emerge as a vibrant bridge between India, Bhutan and Myanmar, where connectivity means

not just roads, but opportunities and relationships," Khandu added.

Officials said the proposed trade routes form an integral part of India's Act East Policy, which aims to strengthen economic ties with neighbouring countries while supporting border communities. Opening regulated land border trading points is expected to stimulate local markets, promote tourism, enhance cultural exchanges and create employment in remote areas that have long depended on subsistence livelihoods. (PTI)

## APIYO submits memo to CM, warns of continued democratic movement

HT correspondent

ITANAGAR, Oct 29: The Arunachal Pradesh Indigenous Youth Organisation (APIYO) has submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister outlining its charter of demands and warned of continuing its democratic movement if the state government fails to act promptly. Addressing a press conference at the Arunachal Press Club, APIYO leaders said the organisation has urged the government to safeguard the interests of indigenous communities and preserve the cultural balance of the capital complex.

The charter of demands includes the identification and deportation of illegal immigrants, cancellation of alleged illegal constructions of Jama Masjid, mosques and madrasas within the capital complex, and recognition of only two legal Jama Masjids to maintain transparency and order.

APIYO expressed concern over the rising number of illegal immigrants in the state, particularly in Itanagar and Naharlagun, claiming that their influx is straining limited local resources and opportunities. The organisation clarified that it is not against any religion or community but emphasised the need for all non-locals to obtain proper Inner Line Permits (ILPs).

The group also demanded a ban on weekly markets within the Twin Capital Complex and nearby areas such as Doimukh and Hollongi, citing unregulated trade and potential law-and-order issues.

APIYO said it has raised the issue with various authorities and warned that if the government fails to act within 15 days, it will intensify its democratic movement. The organisation added that only individuals possessing Permanent Resident Certificates (PRC) should be included in the state's voter list.

## Dy CM welcomes Cabinet decisions on pay commission, fertiliser subsidy

ITANAGAR, Oct 29: Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on Wednesday welcomed the Union Cabinet's approval of the terms of reference for the 8th Pay Commission and the decision to ensure affordable fertilisers for farmers in the upcoming Rabi season.

He called the move "a strong reflection of the prime minister's commitment to the welfare of government employees and the prosperity of farmers across the nation".

Mein said the 8th Central Pay Commission, which will review pay, allowances and pensions of central government employees, is expected to boost fairness, motivation and the overall well-being of our dedicated



workforce, adding that the revised structure is likely to be implemented from January 1, 2026.

"These measures reaffirm the Centre's intent to empower those who serve the nation tirelessly," he said in a post on X.

Welcoming the approval of new nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) rates to keep input costs stable for farmers, Mein said the Cabinet's allocation of ₹ 37,952 crore will ensure continuous availability of fertilisers like DAP and NPKS at affordable prices despite fluctuating global rates.

"This decision is a testament to the government's resolve to support every farmer for a prosperous harvest," he said in another social media post, expressing confidence that the move will greatly benefit cultivators in Arunachal Pradesh as well. (PTI)

## Guv urges youth to use technology and creativity for social change

ITANAGAR, Oct 29: Arunachal Pradesh Governor K T Parnaik on Wednesday called upon the youth to harness technology and creativity to tackle grassroots issues, raise social awareness, and inspire collective action. Interacting with NSS volunteers and programme officers of Rajiv Gandhi University at Raj Bhavan, he encouraged them to adopt a problem-solving mindset and approach challenges constructively.

Highlighting concerns over drug abuse, the governor urged volunteers to lead awareness campaigns across all sections of society. He also emphasised initiatives on conservation, sustainable waste management and village adoption to promote self-sufficiency and community participation. (PTI)

## BJP pays tribute to late Taba Hare Ji

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Oct 29: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Arunachal Pradesh held a condolence programme on Wednesday to honour the former State President, Late Taba Hare Ji. Senior party leaders, office bearers, and members gathered to pay tribute to his life, service and contributions to the party and the state. During the meeting, State General Secretary Tadar Nigral recalled Late Hare Ji's remarkable journey and his pivotal role in strengthening the party's foundation in Arunachal Pradesh. He highlighted his efforts in promoting the party's ideology and organisational structure.

Late Taba Hare Ji's achievements extended beyond politics, earning him several prestigious awards, including the State Silver Medal, IFCAP Ratna Award and Sant Eshwar Award. Appointed as State General Secretary in 1994, he became State President in 2004, under whose leadership the BJP won both Lok Sabha seats from Arunachal Pradesh, a historic milestone for the party.

Following the programme, BJP State President Kalang Moyong led a team to Late Hare Ji's residence in Dobam Village, Karsinga, where they offered floral tributes, interacted with the bereaved family and draped the party flag over his mortal remains as a mark of honor.

## ECI launches 1950 Helpline and 'Book-a-Call with BLO'

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 29: The Election Commission of India (ECI) has activated the National Voter Helpline and all 36 State and District-level helplines to address citizens' queries and grievances related to elections. The National Contact Centre (NCC) serves as the central helpline for all States and Union Territories, operating daily from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM through the toll-free number 1800-11-1950. Trained executives at the centre assist citizens and other stakeholders with electoral services and queries.

In addition, ECI has directed each State and District to establish its own State Contact Centre (SCC) and District Contact Centre (DCC) to provide timely and localised responses. These centres operate during office hours on all working days throughout the year and offer assistance in the regional languages of the respective States and Union Territories. All complaints and queries are recorded and tracked through the

National Grievance Service Portal (NGSP 2.0).

The commission has also launched the 'Book-a-Call with BLO' facility, allowing citizens to directly contact their respective Booth Level Officers (BLOs) through the ECINET platform. Voters can further connect with election officials using the ECINET App. Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs), District Election Officers (DEOs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have been instructed to monitor these requests and ensure resolution within 48 hours.

These new facilities complement existing mechanisms for addressing election-related grievances and citizens can also send emails to [complaints@eci.gov.in] (mailto:complaints@eci.gov.in). The Election Commission encourages all voters to use the 1950 Voter Helpline and the 'Book-a-Call with BLO' facility for prompt and transparent resolution of election-related queries, feedback, suggestions and complaints.

## Civil-military trek to Athupopu symbolises unity and devotion: CM Khandu

Khandu hails Indian Army and Idu Mishmi community for preserving ancestral faith and cultural harmony

ITANAGAR, Oct 29: Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday lauded the successful completion of the civil-military trek to the sacred Idu Mishmi site Athupopu in Dibang Valley district, calling it a powerful symbol of unity, devotion and cooperation between the Indian Army and local communities.

In a post on X, Khandu said the trek celebrated faith and togetherness while highlighting the spiritual significance of Athupopu, revered by the Idu Mishmi people as the resting place of souls on their journey to the afterlife.

The chief minister expressed gratitude to the Indian Army's Spear Corps for participating in the event and helping locals reconnect with their ancestral traditions. He said such initiatives strengthen the bond between the armed forces and the people they protect.

Jointly organised with community leaders, the trek brought together army personnel and residents who navigated a challenging route through the pristine Dibang Valley. Partici-



pants retraced traditional paths leading to Athupopu, reaffirming cultural identity and promoting camaraderie and respect for indigenous knowledge.

Khandu said the initiative beautifully blended service, spirituality and cultural pride, reaffirming the government's commitment to preserving the state's diverse heritage. He added that protecting sacred landscapes like Athupopu is vital to strengthening Arunachal Pradesh's indigenous legacy. (PTI)

## Nyishi and Mising communities sign historic friendship treaty

The pact renews centuries-old ties, promotes cultural cooperation and establishes a framework for dispute resolution until 2040



ITANAGAR, Oct 29: In a landmark move to strengthen shared ancestry and mutual cooperation, the Nyishi community of Arunachal Pradesh and the Mising community of Assam signed a historic 'Treaty of Friendship' on Wednesday, reaffirming ancient bonds and pledging people-to-people engagement.

The treaty, signed by the Nyishi Elite Society (NES) and the Mising Ba:Ne Kebang (MBK), acknowledges the communities' common ancestral lineage through Abo Tani and aims to reinforce bilateral relations by recognising their cultural homogeneity. Both sides emphasised that the relationship, deeply rooted in history, continues to guide contemporary engagement and must be preserved for future generations. The agreement outlines 11 key articles of cooperation, including mutual respect, shared heritage, cultural collaboration, economic and social cooperation and mechanisms for peaceful dispute resolution through a standing coordination committee.

The treaty will come into force immediately and remain valid for 15 years, until October 29, 2040, with a provision for withdrawal by either community with six months' notice.

Signatories from the Nyishi side included NES president Prof Tana Showren, general secretary Heri Maring, All Nyishi Youth Association president Jamru Rujia and All Nyishi Students' Union president Lizen Gyadi. Representing the Mising community were Paramananda Chayengia, president and Indra Kumar Chungrang, general secretary of MBK, along with leaders from Mising Mimang Kebang and Takam Mising Porin and Mime Kebangs.

The treaty marks a historic step in preserving heritage, fostering goodwill and promoting collaborative development between the two communities. (PTI)

No. SHTO/Scrap/58/2023/1311

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER



Sealed tender affixing non-refundable Court Fee Stamp of Rs.8.25 (Rupees eight and paisa twenty five) only are invited from intending Bidder for disposal of unserviceable damaged items of Health and F.W. Department "AS IS WHERE IS" basis.


The Tender documents along with Terms and conditions and other details may be obtained from the O/o the Joint Director of Health Services(T), SHTO, Assam, Narengi, Guwahati-71 and bidder can also inspect the scrap materials during office hours upto 12/11/2025.

The tenders will be received from 11 A.M. upto 1 P.M. on 13/11/2025 and will be opened on the same day at 1.30 PM in presence of participating tenderer or their one authorised representative.

Sd/-  
Joint Director of Health Services(T),  
SHTO Assam, Narengi, Guwahati-71.

DIPR /C/HLT/200/30-Oct-25

रजिस्ट्री सं.डी.एल.- 33004/99	REGD. No. D.L.- 33004/99
 <b>भारत का राजपत्र</b> <b>The Gazette of India</b> सौ.जी.-डी.एल.-अ.-03102025-266609 CG-DL-E-03102025-266609 असाधारण EXTRAORDINARY भाग II--खण्ड 3--उप-खण्ड (ii) PART II--Section 3--Sub-section(ii) प्राधिकार से प्रकाशित PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY	
सं. 4352]	नई दिल्ली, मंगलवार, सितम्बर 30, 2025 / आश्विन 8, 1947
No. 4352]	NEW DELHI, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2025/ASVINA 8, 1947
<b>MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS</b> <b>Notification</b> <b>New Delhi, the 30 September 2025</b>	
<p>S.O 4476 In exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highways Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government, after being satisfied that for the public purpose, the land, the brief description of which is given in the Schedule below, is required for building (widening/two lane with paved shoulder/four laning etc.), maintenance, management and operation of NH37(New NH-715) in the stretch of land from Km. 315.315 to Km. 403 (From Kaliabor to Numaligarh) in the village(s) namely- Bordeka Taluk- Phuloni in the district of KARBI ANGLONG in the state of ASSAM hereby declares its intention to acquire such land.</p> <p>Any person interested in the said land may, within twenty-one days from the date of publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, object to the use of such land for the aforesaid purpose under sub-section(1) of section 3C of the said Act.</p> <p>Every such objection shall be made to the Competent Authority, namely, Joint Secretary, Karbi Anglong in writing and shall set out the grounds thereof and the Competent Authority shall give the objector an opportunity of being heard, either in person or by a legal practitioner, and may, after hearing all such objections and after making such further enquiry, if any, as the Competent Authority thinks necessary, by order, either allow or disallow the objections.</p> <p>Any order made by the Competent Authority under sub-section (2) of section 3C of the said Act shall be final.</p> <p>The land plans and other details of the land to be acquired under their notification are available and can be inspected by the interested person at the aforesaid office of the Competent Authority.</p>	
<b>SCHEDULE</b> Brief Description of the land to be acquired with or without structures falling NH37(New NH-715) in the stretch of land from Km. 315.315 to Km. 403 (From Kaliabor to Numaligarh) in the village(s) namely- Bordeka Taluk-Phuloni in the district of KARBI ANGLONG in the state of ASSAM 6591 GI/2025	
 File Number: Kaziranga Bhoomi Rashi Portal File/3A	
District: KARBI ANGLONG <a href="https://egazette.gov.in">https://egazette.gov.in</a> Publication Date: 30 September 2025 <a href="https://egazette.gov.in">https://egazette.gov.in</a> <a href="https://bhoomirashi.gov.in">https://bhoomirashi.gov.in</a> <b>Note:</b> The physical copy of this notification is also available at the office of CALA/PIU/PMU/RO/ED and Landowners may also see the notification there.	

কোর্ট অফিসের কার্যালয় :: কার্ভি অংলং :: ডিবিউ OFFICE OF THE SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE :: KARBI ANGLONG :: DIPIU	
	
The above is a photograph of missing women in connection with Uttar Borbil OP GDE No.433 Dtd.25/09/2025 (MMR No.13/25). Please make an all out effort to trace out the missing women, if found intimate to Police control Room (PCR), Karbi Anglong either at 60269-00775 & 93659-72436 for follow up action.	
<b>Description:</b> 1. Name - Anna Majumdar @ Anna Basumotary (Age 28 years.) W/O - Kuwar Basumotary R/o- Rangjokan (Lorinthepe) Height - 5 feet Complexion - Swarthy. Wearing - Multi Colour Shree 2. Name - Tanisha Basumotary (age 09 years.) D/O - Kuwar Basumotary R/o- Rangjokan (Lorinthepe) Height - 3 feet 6 inch Complexion - Swarthy. Wearing - White T-shirt Sd/- Addl. Superintendent of Police (Crime) Karbi Anglong, Diphu	

<b>DIPR /D/HLT/202/30-Oct-25</b> <b>E-AUCTION FOR CATERING STALL OVER TINSUKIA DIVISION</b>			
E-Auction is invited for Catering Tea Stall (GMU & SMU) at Tinsukia, Jorhat Town, Titabar & Namrup station over Tinsukia Division. Auction Catalogue No.: Catg-gmu-smu-17. Lot Auction Start (All Lots): At 10:00 hrs. on 10-11-2025; Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee; Days : 1826;			
SL.No.	Lot No./Category	At Location	
AA/1	Catg-TSK-TSK-SMU-181-25-1 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Tea Stall no 2 at PF-2	
AA/2	Catg-TSK-JTTN-SMU-178-25-2 (Catering - Special Minor Unit (SMU))	Tea stalls no 2(TS2) at PF-1	
AB/1	Catg-TSK-TTB-GMU-110-25-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	At PF-1, GMU	
AB/2	Catg-TSK-TTB-GMU-109-25-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	At PF-1, GMU	
AB/3	Catg-TSK-TTB-GMU-111-25-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	At PF-1, GMU	
AB/4	Catg-TSK-NAM-GMU-60-24-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	At PF-1, GMU	
AB/5	Catg-TSK-NAM-GMU-64-24-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	At PF-1, GMU	
AB/6	Catg-TSK-NAM-GMU-6-24-1 (Catering - General Minor Unit (GMU))	At PF-1, GMU	
<b>Auction closing Date:</b> At 11:40 hrs. on 10-11-2025. Initial Cooling off period is 30 minutes. <b>Note:</b> Prospective bidder are requested to visit e-Auction leasing module on IREPS website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> for more details.			
Divisional Railway Manager (C), Tinsukia <b>NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY</b> Serving Customers With A Smile			

# Challenge Modi to refute US president's claims: Rahul

'One who cannot tell the American president on his face that 'you are lying'

NEW DELHI/DARBHANGA, Oct 29: The Congress on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over US President Donald Trump repeating his claim that he stopped the conflict between India and Pakistan using trade, with Rahul Gandhi saying that the prime minister is "scared" of the American leader and must find the courage to respond.

Gandhi also challenged Modi that when he comes to Bihar, he should state that Trump is lying.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared on X video clips of Trump's remarks in Japan and later in South Korea in which he repeated his claim that he stopped the India-Pakistan military conflict using trade.

In his post, Ramesh said "the self-styled but now thoroughly shrunken and deeply exposed 56-inch chest is still quiet".

Addressing a poll rally in Bihar's Darbhanga, Gandhi claimed that "Modi is scared of Trump" as the US President has said 50 times that he stopped Operation Sindoor by threatening the PM, who "hasn't uttered a word".

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said that those who lack the courage cannot develop Bihar.

"Trump is insulting him (Modi) daily in different countries. He says Narendra Modi has no guts and he has made him bow before him. Modi never once said that Trump is speaking nonsense and lying," Gandhi said.

"One who cannot tell the American president on his face that 'you are lying', he cannot do anything in Bihar," Gandhi added.

Referring to the Bangladesh Liberation War,



Gandhi said, "In 1971, Indira Gandhi told the US President (Richard Nixon), 'We are not afraid of you.' This is what being a Prime Minister means."

"Trump is making statements about our army and air force, but Narendra Modi cannot tell him that 'this is wrong, you are lying', he does not have the guts to do so...I challenge Narendra Modi that when he comes to Bihar, he should state that Trump is lying. But he cannot say that as he lacks courage," he said.

Later, in a post on X, the former Congress president said, "Trump is insulting Modi in country after country. Latest is South Korea. 1. Repeated that he used trade to frighten Modi into stopping Operation Sindoor. 2. Said 7 planes were shot down."

"Don't be scared Modi ji, find the courage to respond," Gandhi said.

Earlier in the day, Ramesh also launched stinging attacks at Prime Minister Modi over Trump's remarks.

"So far he has said it 54 times. He has said it in the US, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UK. He has said it mid-flight and on land. Now President Trump has said it again, while addressing business leaders in Japan last evening," Ramesh said on X.

"No wonder his good friend in New Delhi does not want to hug him any more," he said.

In another post, Ramesh shared the video clip of Trump's remarks in South Korea.

"This is President Trump addressing the APEC CEO Summit in South Korea just a few minutes ago. Much more detailed than before. 56th time that President Trump has spoken about the abrupt halt to Operation Sindoor," Ramesh said.

"But the self-styled but now thoroughly shrunken and deeply exposed 56-inch chest is still quiet," he said, in an apparent swipe at Prime Minister Modi.

In his remarks in Japan on Tuesday, Trump said, "A lot of the wars that I stopped were because of tariffs. And, frankly, I did a great service to the world because of tariffs, because of trade. If you look at India and Pakistan, they were going at it.

"Seven planes were shot down. Seven brand-new, beautiful planes were shot down, and they were going at it, two big nuclear powers. I said to Prime Minister Modi, and I said to the prime minister and the Field Marshal over in Pakistan, I said that we're not going to do any trade if you're going to be fighting," Trump said. (PTI)

# 'Sonia her son PM but both posts not vacant' Lalu wants to make his son Bihar CM: Shah

DARBHANGA/SAMASTIPUR/BEGUSARA (BIHAR), Oct 29: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday

attacked the INDIA bloc, alleging that RJD supremo Lalu Prasad wants to make his son Tejashwi the chief minister of Bihar and Congress leader Sonia Gandhi her son Rahul the PM, while asserting that "both posts were not vacant".

Addressing a public rally in Darbhanga, Shah also questioned whether the members of radical outfit Popular Front of India (PFI), who were arrested after the Centre banned the organisation, would remain behind bars if the Congress-RJD combine came to power in Bihar.

"The BJP has given tickets to many youngsters for the Bihar assembly polls, but the RJD and Congress have not, as Lalu ji wants to make his son Tejashwi the chief minister and Sonia ji wants her son Rahul to be the PM... but I want to let them know that both posts are not vacant," he said.

Shah termed the Mahagathbandhan as 'thug bandhan', alleging that Lalu Prasad is involved in fodder, bitumen and land-for-jobs scams, while Congress was involved in corruption cases worth Rs 12 lakh crore. The home minister asserted that it was the NDA government that banned PFI.

"PFI operatives were active in Patna's Phulwari Sharif. Searches



were conducted across the country and members of the organisation were put behind bars. Do you think that the PFI members will remain in prison if the RJD-Congress combine comes to power in Bihar?" he questioned.

Addressing a rally in Begusarai district, Shah attacked the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, saying that the latter came to Bihar a few months ago and launched 'save infiltrators yatra', while referring to Voter Adhikar Yatra. "Rahul Gandhi and Lalu Prasad want to ensure that names of infiltrators remain in voter list... Tejashwi and Rahul want to bring back 'jungle raj' in Bihar," he alleged.

At another rally in Samastipur, Shah said, "The Bihar polls are an election to prevent the return of 'jungle raj' to the state. The NDA

in the state is like 'paanch paandav' - a strong alliance of five parties. The INDIA bloc will be routed and we will form the government after registering a historic victory this time." Shah alleged that the INDIA bloc wants to snatch the title of 'Jannayak' of former chief minister Karpoori Thakur.

"Modi ji bestowed Bharat Ratna upon Jannayak Karpoori Thakur. Now, they (opposition) want to take away the title from Karpoori ji. We will not let this happen. People have seen the real face of Congress that had prevented Babu Jagjivan Ram from becoming the PM," he alleged.

"Lalu Prasad and Rabri Devi did nothing for Bihar's development... Mahagathbandhan cannot think of the state's development and welfare of its youth," Shah alleged. (PTI)

## Omar Abdullah betrayed the poor by opposing land rights bill: Mehbooba Mufti

SRINAGAR, Oct 29: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday accused Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah of betraying the poor by opposing the land rights bill brought by her party MLA Waheed Para in the assembly.

The former chief minister asserted that the bill was aimed at protecting poor families who had built small houses on grazing land decades ago, and not to legalise recent encroachments.

The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on Tuesday rejected Para's bill on recognising proprietary rights for houses illegally built on government and community lands, with CM Abdullah saying its passage would "open floodgates for land grab".

"Omar did not betray the PDP, but all the poor people from whom he wants to snatch shelter from over their heads," Mehbooba Mufti told reporters when asked if the chief minister had "betrayed" her party after getting support for the Rajya Sabha elections.

The PDP president said Para's bill was not for legalising recent encroachments on state land, but for providing a roof over the heads of the poor.

"We were talking about the poor person who has no option and has constructed a house on four-five marlas of state land and has been living there for the last 20-25 years. We were not talking about those who occupied land now, but those

who have already been there for the last 20-30 years," she added.

By rejecting the bill, Chief Minister Abdullah has rejected the efforts to provide shelter to the poor, Mehbooba Mufti said.

"The BJP called it land 'jehad', Omar said land grabbers, meaning the people of Kashmir and Jammu are land thieves. We wanted to save the roofs over the heads of poor people who have faced bulldozers since 2019. By rejecting that (bill), Omar has rejected our attempts to save those people," she said.

Referring to the PDP's support to the ruling National Conference (NC) in the recent Rajya Sabha elections, the former chief minister of the erstwhile state of J-K said her party voted for the NC in exchange for support for the bill.

"We tried at our own level. We have three votes and we told them to take our votes but save the shelters for the poor, but what can I do if he does not want to," she said.

On the issue of regularisation of daily wagers, Mehbooba Mufti said her party had also brought a bill in this regard.

"We had also brought a bill on daily wagers. These are very poor people, the poorest section of society but they run the PHE, Irrigation, Power development, Health and Education departments. They have been working for the last 20-25 years. The government had sought votes to regularise the daily wagers and to safeguard the land in J-K," she said. (PTI)

## In poll-bound Bihar, Yogi recalls Lalu's 'sin' of stopping Advani's Ram Rath Yatra

SIWAN/BHOJPUR/BUXAR, Oct 29: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday charged RJD president Lalu Prasad with having committed a "sin" by arresting BJP patriarch Lal Krishna Advani, who had taken out the Ram Rath Yatra decades ago.

The BJP leader made the remark on the campaign trail in Bihar, where he addressed three back-to-back rallies in the districts of Siwan, Bhojpur and Buxar.

Without mentioning Prasad by name, the then chief minister of Bihar, Adityanath recalled the incident of 1990 in Samastipur, which the RJD supremo proudly claims while asserting his "secular" credentials.

"The construction of the Ram temple at Ayodhya wiped off the blot (kalank) that had mortified the nation for 500 years. But the RJD's men had committed the sin of stopping the Rath of Lord Ram," the UP chief minister claimed.

He also alleged, "The Congress, which is the RJD's ally, has been claiming that Lord Ram did not exist".

The allusion was to an affidavit submitted before the Supreme Court in 2007, when the Centre was ruled by the Congress-ruled UPA.

Raking up an incident of 1989, when Mulayam Singh Yadav was the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Adityanath said "the Samajwadi



Party, which is the partner of the Congress-RJD in UP, had ordered firing on devotees of Lord Ram".

At one of his rallies, in Raghunathpur assembly segment of Siwan district, Adityanath referred to local RJD candidate Osama Shahab, whose late father Mohammed Shahabuddin was a dreaded gangster-turned-politician and several-term MP.

Referring to one of the infamous cases in which Shahabuddin was named, the Uttar Pradesh CM said, "This district of Bihar has been witness to the horrific instance of people being doused with acid, leading to their death. Now the RJD wants to bring back the 'jungle raj' by fielding a member of the family which had gained notoriety not just across the country but around the world".

In line with the BJP's charge that the INDIA bloc pursued a pol-

itics of minority appeasement, Adityanath also alleged, "The Congress and the RJD are known to offer 'sajda' (prostration) before the tomb of Aurangzeb...Do not allow such forces to come to power." "Bihar's women are getting empowered through assistance from a double-engine government, which can only guarantee development and women's safety," Adityanath asserted.

The Uttar Pradesh chief minister also claimed, "The double-engine NDA government in Bihar is working on the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'. The NDA government governs Bihar on the principles of leaders like Karpoori Thakur, Jagjivan Ram, Rajendra Prasad and Jayaprakash Narayan."

Referring to the erstwhile RJD rule in the state, he claimed, "Before 2005, there used to be 'Sabka Saath, Parivar Ka Vikas'." (PTI)

## Two died due to cyclone; precautionary measures minimised losses: Andhra CM

AMARAVATI, Oct 29: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday said two persons died in the state due to the severe cyclonic storm 'Mon-tha', and noted that precautionary measures had "minimised the loss". Naidu called on the entire government machinery to continue their efforts for another two days to provide further relief to cyclone-affected people.

"If we work in the same way for another two days, we can give much relief to people. Due to the cyclone, two persons died," Naidu said in a release. He directed officials to restore normalcy at the earliest and instructed ministers and senior officials to visit affected areas and address people's grievances.

The CM also asked departments to assess the damage caused by the cyclone and furnish details to the union government.

He further ordered the distribution of essential supplies to affected families and appreciated the efforts of the SDRF, police, and fire service personnel in clearing uprooted trees and snapped power lines "on a war footing".

To restore damaged power infra-

structure, the CM said 10,000 personnel were kept on standby, adding that power supply would be normalised by this afternoon.

Naidu also undertook an aerial survey of cyclone-affected districts, including Bapatla, Palnadu, Krishna, Konaseema, and Eluru.

Speaking to reporters during the tour, he said heavy winds were recorded where the cyclone crossed the coast, while major rainfall occurred in Prakasam and Nellore districts.

"Winds reached up to 75 kmph. Had they exceeded that, coconut trees would have been damaged in Konaseema district," he said.

Naidu said damage to houses and cattle was minimal, but recurring civic issues, such as blocked drainage systems, persisted.

"Whatever extensive damage occurred because of this cyclone, it is still a major calamity for the state. However, we managed to save a bit. We brought 1.8 lakh people into relief camps. I came to see how the camps are," he said.

He said power was turned off in emergencies and restored immediately, except for four substations. (PTI)

## 2/3rds majority for NDA in Bihar will be fitting tribute to Nehru: Rajnath

PATNA/DARBHANGA, Oct 29: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said a two-thirds majority for the NDA in the 243-member Bihar assembly will be a fitting tribute to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on his birthday on November 14, the day poll results will be announced.

Alluding to the RJD's rule in the state, he claimed that people of Bihar do not want "goonda raj".

"Bihar CM Nitish Kumar has largely been successful in undoing damage inflicted by RJD's 'jungle raj'," Singh said during a poll rally at Barh in Patna district.

He slammed the Congress and the RJD for attacking the Election Commission, and wondered "how will democracy run if constitutional bodies are defamed".

Alleging that the RJD has tarnished Bihar across the world, the defence minister said the issue of the assembly polls in the state was clear -- whether it will be taken back to the days of "jungle raj" or remain on the path of development.

Addressing an election rally in Darbhanga district earlier in the day, Singh slammed the RJD, alleging that it made an "unrealistic promise" of providing a government job to each household in the state. (PTI)

## Tejashwi claims PM keen to open factories in Gujarat

MUZAFFARPUR/DARBHANGA, Oct 29: RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Wednesday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is interested in opening factories in Gujarat, but wants victory in the assembly elections in Bihar.

Addressing polls rallies in Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, INDIA bloc's CM candidate in Bihar also promised that cooking gas cylinders would be made available for ₹ 500 if the RJD-led opposition came to power in the

state. "The Prime Minister is interested in opening factories in Gujarat but wants victory in the Bihar polls. This will not happen," Yadav said in Darbhanga.

"We will make all contractual employees of the Bihar government permanent," he said.

In both Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, he shared the stage with Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha.

"Gas cylinders will be available for

₹ 500 if Tejashwi forms the next government," he told the rally in Muzaffarpur.

He also claimed that the slew of populist measures taken in the recent past by the NDA government in the state had been a "copy" of whatever he had promised earlier.

Citing an example, Yadav said, "We had promised 200 units of free electricity. Those in power got scared that this would resonate with voters. So, they made 125 units free." (PTI)

## 51 Naxalites surrender in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur

BIJAPUR, Oct 29: As many as 51 Naxalites, 20 of them carrying a collective bounty of ₹ 66 lakh, surrendered in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh on Wednesday, police said.

The cadres, including nine women, have returned to the mainstream citing that they were impressed by the state government's rehabilitation policy and development initiatives, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav said.

Their decision to quit the path of violence marks another significant step in the state government's ongoing mission to eradicate Naxalism through peace, dialogue and development, he said.

Their surrender as part of 'Poona Margem - Punarwas se Punarjeevan' (rehabilitation for social integration), a rehabilitation initiative launched by Bastar Range police for Naxalites. (PTI)

## Experts warn of rising stroke cases among young Indians, urge AI-enabled screening for early detection

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: As India observes World Stroke Day, medical experts have sounded alarm over a worrying rise in stroke cases among younger adults, warning that the disease is no longer confined to the elderly.

At the World Stroke Day forum organised by Mahajan Imaging and Labs on Wednesday, experts emphasized how AI-enabled, integrated pathology and imaging systems are transforming stroke diagnosis and management, making it possible to detect and treat strokes faster, and even prevent them before symptoms appear.

India's stroke crisis is worsening, with new findings published in the International Journal of Stroke (IJS), revealing that the country records nearly 1.5 million stroke cases every year, yet only one in four Indians has access to a stroke-ready hospital.

The study highlights a significant gap in emergency preparedness.

Experts noted that the rise in cases among people in their thirties and forties is driven by stress, hypertension, sedentary lifestyles, and chronic exposure to air pollution, underscoring an urgent need for AI-enabled, preventive, and integrated stroke care systems.

Dr MV Padma Srivastava, chairperson of Neurology at Paras Health, Gurugram, and former Pro-

fessor and Head of Neurology at AIIMS, New Delhi, said that environmental and lifestyle factors are now major contributors to the rising stroke burden, particularly among younger adults.

Chronic exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5), for instance, is known to trigger inflammation and vascular damage, significantly heightening the risk of ischemic stroke.

"In cities like Delhi, where PM2.5 levels are often 10-215 times higher than WHO-recommended limits, individuals with hypertension, diabetes, or pre-existing heart disease face an even greater risk. This makes preventive screening and early diagnosis more critical than ever. Equally important is timely treatment, reaching a stroke-ready centre within the 'golden hour' can dramatically improve recovery and functional outcomes," Dr Srivastava said.

"With advances in clot-busting drugs, mechanical thrombectomy, and AI-enabled imaging that helps identify salvageable brain tissue, outcomes today are far better than a decade ago. However, these benefits depend on awareness, rapid response, and integrated care pathways that bridge emergency, neurology, and rehabilitation services," she stated.

The profile of a stroke patient has changed dramatically in the last decade, said Dr Harsh Mahajan,



founder and managing director, Mahajan Imaging and Labs.

"We are seeing strokes in younger, otherwise healthy adults, often triggered by high stress, poor sleep, uncontrolled hypertension, and prolonged exposure to air pollution. The key is to act before a stroke occurs, and that's where AI-driven diagnostics and integrated lab-imaging models are making a real difference," he said.

Dr. Mahajan further explained that AI-powered imaging platforms now assist radiologists in identifying subtle clots, vessel blockages, or microbleeds that can be missed on early scans.

"When advanced CT, MRI, and diffusion-weighted imaging are combined with AI models trained on large datasets, interpretation time reduces

and diagnostic accuracy improves," he said. Indian scientists and doctors have been at the forefront in finding solutions for early and accurate diagnosis of stroke using artificial intelligence, he said.

The first publication on AI in the prestigious medical journal The Lancet was in October 2018, authored by Qure.ai and Mahajan Imaging and Labs, on AI-based automated diagnosis and report generation from head CT scans in patients with hemorrhagic stroke, a revolutionary step in applying AI to the diagnosis of critical illnesses, Dr. Mahajan said.

"It was a proud moment for India when the health-tech startup Qure.ai published this landmark paper, demonstrating deep-learning algorithms for detecting critical findings in head CT scans, a milestone that highlighted the nation's growing leadership in medical AI. More such collaborative research and innovation are essential to ensure faster and more accurate diagnosis in critical conditions," he said.

On the laboratory side, specialists highlighted how pathology is equally crucial in decoding the clot.

Advanced tests such as D-dimer, PT/INR, fibrinogen levels, lipid subfraction analysis, and ge-

netic marker screening help determine who is predisposed to stroke or at risk of recurrence. Blood biomarkers like Glial Fibrillary Acidic Protein (GFAP) and Neurofilament Light Chain (NfL) can even detect neuronal injury within hours of onset, enabling faster and more precise interventions.

Dr Shelly Mahajan, Lab Director, Mahajan Imaging and Labs explained, "Our approach combines real-time pathology with imaging to create a complete diagnostic map for each patient. We can now deliver coagulation and biomarker results within 45 minutes, critical information that enables neurologists to decide on thrombolysis or surgical intervention without delay.

"This integration of laboratory analytics with advanced imaging is not just improving precision; it is redefining the speed and quality of stroke care across institutions."

The event concluded with a strong call to shift from reactive treatment to preventive, patient-centric stroke care driven by early detection and continuous monitoring.

Experts urged that screening for blood pressure, cholesterol, coagulation factors, and blood sugar become as routine as annual check-ups, especially for those with sedentary lifestyles, high stress, or a family history of heart disease. (PTI)

# 'People across the state strongly supported the shutdown' MNF stages 10-hour shutdown in Mizoram over forest Act extension

**AIZAWL, Oct 29:** Mizoram's main opposition party, the Mizo National Front (MNF), on Wednesday staged a 10-hour statewide shutdown protesting the state government's decision to adopt the Forest Conservation (Amendment) Act (FCAA), 2023, through a resolution.

Chief Minister Lalduhoma heads the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) government in the state. The shutdown, which began at 6 am, was observed across the state except in Mamit district in view of the upcoming bypoll to Dampa assembly seat on November 11, MNF vice-president and leader of opposition Lalchhandama Ralte said. All government and private offices, educational institutions, commercial banks and business establishments were closed due to the strike, he added.

Streets in state capital Aizawl and other towns wore a deserted look as no vehicle except those on emergency plied.

The People's Conference party and the Joint Civil Society Mizoram (JCSM), a coalition of several organisations, supported the strike. Ralte claimed the strike received overwhelming support from the public.

"People across the state strongly supported the shutdown, and the



party may call it off earlier than the scheduled 4 pm due to the response," he said. MNF president and former chief minister Zoramthanga said his party has consistently opposed the extension of the FCAA in Mizoram, terming it unsafe for the state. "The FCAA is dangerous for the Mizo people and Mizoram as the Centre could take control of almost the entire land in the name of national security and strategic projects. The law exempts a 100-km area from international borders. We will withdraw the resolution

endorsing the Act when the MNF returns to power," Zoramthanga told PTI. Mizoram is sandwiched between two international borders - Bangladesh in the west and Myanmar in the east- and if the new law allows exemption of forest clearance for "strategic linear projects of national importance and concerning national security" within 100 km of international borders, a small state like Mizoram may lose almost its entire land, he said. He blamed Lalduhoma for allegedly supporting the law despite his strong stance against it when he

was in the opposition bench. The former rebel leader also said the extension of the FCAA in Mizoram violates article 371G of the Constitution, which provides special protection to Mizoram in terms of custom, religion, and transfer and ownership of lands, among others, he said. The Mizoram Assembly during its monsoon session on August 27 adopted a resolution to extend the FCAA, 2023 in the state from this year, which was a reverse from its earlier resolution adopted in August 2023 during the MNF rule. (PTI)

# Meghalaya's pristine Umngot river turns brown, MP urges Centre to step in

**SHILLONG, Oct 29:** Meghalaya MP Ricky J Syngkon has written to the Centre seeking immediate intervention over what he described as "severe environmental degradation" of the Umngot River in West Jaintia Hills, allegedly caused by construction activities under the Shillong-Tamabil road expansion project.

The river popular for its pristine clear water at Dawki along the Indo-Bangladesh border has now turned brown, the MP highlighted.

In his letter to Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari and Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, the MP said the Umngot, once celebrated as 'Asia's cleanest river', has turned muddy and lifeless due to large-scale dumping of soil and debris from ongoing hill-cutting work along the 71-km NH-40 expansion project. The project is funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), he said.

"The Umngot River, a symbol of Meghalaya's pristine natural heritage and a major tourism asset, has tragically turned muddy and lifeless this October, a period when its waters should be crystal clear," the MP said, adding that the development has alarmed local communities, tourism operators and environmental organisations.

Syngkon alleged that large quantities of excavated materials have been dumped directly into the Umngot and Umngot river systems "under NHIDCL supervision," and that "no visible spoil bank management or silt containment measures" have been put in place, violating basic environmental safeguards.

He further said the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board has not yet taken action despite clear evidence of violations, drawing parallels with a similar case involving the Bhagirathi River in Uttarakhand, where the National Green Tribunal (NGT) imposed a ₹ 2 crore penalty for comparable offences.

Highlighting the social and economic impact, Syngkon said the Umngot River supports hundreds of families through tourism-based livelihoods such as boating, homestays and handicrafts.

Thousands of domestic and international tourists flock to Dawki every year to witness the river's crys-



tal-clear waters, sustaining the livelihoods of boatmen, homestay owners, food suppliers and transporters.

"Its global reputation for 'floating boats' has been badly affected, with many tourists cancelling their trips this season," he said.

Syngkon also expressed concern over possible lapses in environmental oversight, questioning whether JICA's stringent environmental and social safeguards had been followed.

"It is crucial to ascertain whether proper Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and monitoring reports were filed and acted upon," he said.

In his letter, Syngkon urged the ministries to take immediate steps, including a halt to all hill-cutting and soil disposal activities impacting the Umngot and its tributaries, a joint inspection by a high-level central team, and environmental compensation against NHIDCL on the lines of the NGT's Bhagirathi case.

He also called for quarterly independent monitoring of roadwork impacts, revision of the project design to protect environmentally sensitive zones, and preparation of a river restoration and rehabilitation plan.

"The Umngot River is not merely a water body, it is a living symbol of Meghalaya's heritage and the spirit of sustainable coexistence," Syngkon wrote.

"If immediate remedial measures are not taken, we risk losing a globally renowned natural wonder," he warned. (PTI)

# Two militants arrested in Manipur

**IMPHAL, Oct 29:** Two militants belonging to proscribed outfits were arrested from Manipur's Imphal East and West districts for their alleged involvement in extortion activities, police said on Wednesday.

A 48-year-old member of the banned KCP (PWG) was apprehended from his residence at Mayang in Imphal West district on Tuesday, a senior officer said. The militant had allegedly extorted money from government schools in the district, he said. A 43-year-old cadre of the outlawed People's Liberation Army was arrested on Monday from his residence at Langdum in Imphal East district, he said. Two hand grenades were seized from his possession, the officer said.

Meanwhile, security forces recovered a cache of arms and ammunition from the foothills of Ngariyan Hill in Imphal East district on Tuesday, he said. Four firearms, hand grenades and ammunition were recovered during the operation, the officer said.

Security forces have been conducting search operations in Manipur since ethnic violence broke out two years ago. More than 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023. The Centre had, on February 13, imposed the President's rule in Manipur after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned. The state assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation. (PTI)

# Former minister Zenith Sangma rejoins Congress in Meghalaya

**SHILLONG, Oct 29:** The Congress in Meghalaya on Wednesday welcomed former minister Zenith Sangma back into its fold, a day after he resigned from the Trinamool Congress.

In a letter to A Chellakumar, AICC secretary in-charge of Meghalaya, Congress general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal said party president Mallikarjun Kharge has approved the proposal for Sangma's rejoining of the Indian National Congress (INC).

Sangma was formally welcomed into the party in Shillong by Meghalaya PCC president Vincent H Pala and other senior leaders.

He had joined the TMC after quitting the Congress in 2021 along with his brother and former chief minister Mukul Sangma. (PTI)

# NSCN(IM) successfully negotiating with Centre for 28 years, says Muivah

**IMPHAL/SENAPATI, Oct 29:** NSCN(IM) supremo Th Muivah on Wednesday asserted that the organisation has "patiently and successfully" negotiating with the central government for the past 28 years.

He was alluding to the ceasefire agreement between the NSCN(IM) and the Centre, which was signed in 1997 after over 80 rounds of negotiations spanning 18 years. The pact was sealed after decades of insurgency in Nagaland, which started alongside Independence in 1947.

The 91-year-old Naga leader came to Senapati town to attend a function.

"I thank the Naga people gathered here who have acknowledged and responded positively to the successful political steps taken by the NSCN/GPRN during the political conflict and in the ongoing political negotiation between the government of India and the NSCN," he said.

The GPRN refers to the Government of the People's Republic of Nagalim, which is a government-in-exile established by the NSCN.

The NSCN(IM) "with great endurance and perseverance has patiently and successfully negotiated with the Government of India for the past 28 years", and its commitment and contribution are commendable, he said.

Muivah's message was read out by senior leader VS Atem.

"My late friend, chairman Isak Chishi Swu, has also appended his signature in the historic Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015, which no one should violate and tar-



nish," the NSCN(IM) chief said.

The Framework Agreement was signed aiming at bringing lasting peace to Nagaland.

However, the Centre has not accepted NSCN-IM's persistent demand for a separate flag and constitution for the Nagas, which has led to prolonged negotiations.

Subsequently, the government entered into parallel negotiations with the WC-NNPGs, a coalition of seven Naga groups, in 2017, and inked the Agreed Position on

November 17 of the same year.

Earlier, thousands of people welcomed Muivah and presented a cultural programme. He arrived at the Naga-majority Senapati district by helicopter from his native village of Somdal in Ukhrul district.

Meanwhile, the United Naga Council, the apex body of Nagas in Manipur, reiterated its stance for an "honourable and acceptable solution" to the Naga political issue based on the Framework Agreement. (PTI)

# 2 drug smugglers sentenced to six years imprisonment in Meghalaya

**SHILLONG, Oct 29:** Two drug smugglers were sentenced to six years' imprisonment by a local court in Meghalaya, even as another accused was handed a seven-year jail term for rape in a separate case, officials said on Wednesday.

The East Khasi Hills Special Judge (NDPS) court on October 27 convicted Marvinson Jyrwa and Skhem Kupar Massar under Sections 21(b) and 29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act,

and Section 77 of the Juvenile Justice Act for distributing drugs to minors. Both were sentenced to six years of rigorous imprisonment and fined ₹ 60,000 each.

The prosecution proved that the duo was involved in the possession and distribution of narcotic substances and that they targeted minors, a factor the court termed "deeply aggravating" while delivering the verdict.

Public Prosecutor SS Das represented the state in the case. (PTI)

# AIR Kohima holds folk song competition to mark its 90th anniversary

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, Oct 29:** As part of the year-long celebration commemorating 90 years of radio broadcasting in India, Akashvani Kohima, in collaboration with the North East Zone Cultural Centre (NEZCC) and the Task Force for Music and Arts (TaFMA), organized 'Voice of the Youth' folk song competition at Regional Centre of Excellence for Music & Performing Arts (RCEMPA), Jotsoma, in Kohima district Tuesday night.

In her welcome address, Ella Kayina, head of programme, AIR Kohima, said the 90th anniversary of Akashvani highlights the rich legacy the institution has preserved over the years.

She said Akashvani Kohima has been organising a series of activities to mark the milestone, including essay competitions for government school students in both Hindi and English, and a Hindi singing competition.

"This folk song competition, which we are hosting today, is also a part of the commemoration," she said, adding that related events will continue till June 2026.

Kayina further highlighted the signif-



icant contribution of Akashvani Kohima at both the regional and national levels.

"We broadcast 15 tribal dialect programmes, each lasting 30 minutes, exclusively on the primary channel. These dialect programmes are the backbone of our station," she said, noting that representatives from these 15 programmes were among the audience, along with of-

ficials and guests.

She stated that the folk song competition serves as a tribute to the folk artists whose work has helped preserve the region's cultural heritage.

"Many of them may have passed away, but their legacy remains cherished forever in our hearts. Their efforts in preserving our culture have

kept it alive today and have greatly shaped Akashvani Kohima into what it is," she added.

The competition featured captivating performances by 15 tribes of Nagaland, each showcasing their distinct musical traditions and rich cultural heritage. The Khamniungan tribe emerged as the winner of the event.

# Sambit Patra chairs key BJP meet in Tripura to address internal discord, strengthen organisation

**HT Correspondent**

**AGARTALA, Oct 29:** Amid growing factionalism within Tripura's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and rising tensions with its alliance partner Tipra Motha Party, the party held a high-level closed-door meeting at its state headquarters in Agartala on Wednesday to review internal challenges and organizational strategy.

The meeting was chaired by BJP North East Coordinator and MP Dr. Sambit Patra, and attended by state in-charge Dr. Rajdeep Roy, state president and Rajya Sabha MP Rajib Bhattacharjee, along with ministers, MLAs, and key office bearers. The discussions primarily focused on bridging internal differences, strengthening coordination with Tipra Motha, and preparing for the upcoming TTAADC and Village Committee elections.


According to party insiders, the leadership undertook a detailed assessment of the state unit's organizational gaps and discussed ways to realign grassroots strategies to bolster the BJP's position in tribal-dominated regions, where Tipra Motha remains a crucial ally.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, BJP Tripura President Rajib Bhattacharjee said, "Our central leaders, including Dr. Sambit Patra and Dr. Rajdeep Roy, have come to review our organizational work. Today's discussions with ministers, MLAs, moucha leaders, and office bearers ere held in the spirit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Har Ghar Swadeshi' and 'Vocal for Local' campaigns. We also deliberated on preparations for observing the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on October 31."

Bhattacharjee emphasized that strengthening the party's structure and ensuring unity among all factions were top priorities. Referring to the recent civil society strike and ensuing violence, he said, "Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha, former CM Biplab Kumar Deb, and I have all strongly condemned the incidents. We must stay united and focus on Tripura's progress and development. Building a 'Srestha Tripura' requires joint efforts from both tribal and non-tribal communities."

He further added that the BJP will continue its dialogue with Tipra Motha to resolve outstanding issues and maintain smooth coordination between the alliance partners.

জ্যেষ্ঠ আৰক্ষী অধীক্ষকৰ কাৰ্যালয় :: কাৰ্বি আংলং :: ডিফু  
OFFICE OF THE SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE :: KARBI ANGLONG :: DIPHU




The above is a photograph of missing women in connection with Uttar Borbil OP GDE No.152 Dtd.09/10/2025 (MMR No.14/25). Please make an all out effort to trace out the missing women, if found intimate to Police control Room (PCR), Karbi Anglong either at 60269-00775 & 93659-72436 for follow up action.

**Description:**  
Name - Smti Jinku Das (30 Years)  
W/O - Bhaskor Majumdar, R/o- Rongkut block No.1 PS- Howraghat, Karbi Anglong  
Height - 5 feet 1 inch.  
Complexion - Fair.  
Wearing - Black colour Sharee.

**DIPR/D/HLT/201/30-Oct-25** Sd/-  
Addl. Superintendent of Police (Crime)  
Karbi Anglong, Diphu

জ্যেষ্ঠ আৰক্ষী অধীক্ষকৰ কাৰ্যালয় :: কাৰ্বি আংলং :: ডিফু  
OFFICE OF THE SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE :: KARBI ANGLONG :: DIPHU



The above is a photograph of missing women in connection with Uttar Borbil OP GDE No.292 Dtd.17/09/2025 (MMR No.12/25). Please make an all out effort to trace out the missing women, if found intimate to Police control Room (PCR), Karbi Anglong either at 60269-00775 & 93659-72436 for follow up action.

**Description:**  
1. Name - Rita Mazumdar (Age 33 years.)  
W/O - Ajoy Mazumdar  
R/o- Uttar Borbil Block No-02, PS- Howraghat, Dist. Karbi Anglong  
Height - 5 feet 1 inch  
Complexion - Fair.  
Wearing - Multi Colour Shree

**DIPR/D/HLT/203/30-Oct-25** Sd/-  
Addl. Superintendent of Police (Crime)  
Karbi Anglong, Diphu

# Music finds a way to be authentic: Vishal Dadlani



**NEW DELHI, Oct 29:** Singer-composer Vishal Dadlani, who is judging the reality show "Indian Idol" for the ninth time, says music is a genuine expression of emotion and it will always find a way to be authentic.

At a time when AI can replicate the voice of singers of the past, Dadlani is not too worried. He rather believes technology can be beneficial if used properly.

"When it comes to music, everything is positive. Music finds a way to be authentic and to be a genuine expression of emotion. Any machine or any software, including AI, these are tools, right? Human beings can decide how they want to use them.

"If we become dependent on it, the beauty of authentic human expression through music is lost. And if people add it correctly, it will just make things faster. People might have access to different types of sounds and samples, and creativity," he told PTI in an interview.

The singer is judging the

16th season of "Indian Idol" alongside singers Shreya Ghoshal and Badshah. The theme of the season is "Yaadon Ki Playlist", which premiered on Sony Entertainment Television on October 18 and is also available for streaming on Sony LIV.

Dadlani, one half of the Vishal-Shekhar duo and known for hits like 'Kurban Hua', 'Jee le Zara', 'Jab Mila Tu', 'Tu Meri' and 'Har funn Maula', said judging the reality show is a way to "musically refresh" himself as every season comes with new surprises.

"Every set of contestants has its own personalities, its own idiosyncrasies, its own talents, its own limitations. And I always say this, for me it's a way to musically refresh myself," he said.

Asked what makes him continue to be associated with the singing show for so many years, Dadlani said, "The connection is essentially music. And then also just the joy that we all sort of bring each other. There's an understanding. It's

home ground," he added.

Speaking on the theme of the show, Dadlani said, "In India, life is celebrated through music, films are celebrated through music. Every major occasion in everybody's life is celebrated through music. So your memories are always associated with music, and it's the same for all of us. So songs are markers of time."

For Dadlani, who was introduced to music at an early age, everything around him serves as an inspiration to continue his musical journey.

"As a musician, life is your inspiration. Everything inspires you. There's not a day in my life that I don't hum a tune that I've just made. As a thought process starts going, I put something down on my phone. You know, all of those ideas eventually become songs that people have. What continues to inspire me is the joy and the fun," he said.

"Indian Idol" first began airing on Sony Entertainment Television in 2004 and has produced multiple seasons since then. (PTI)

## Emraan Hashmi on viral cameo in 'Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood': 'People were missing me in loverboy image'



**MUMBAI, Oct 29:** Actor Emraan Hashmi says the popularity of his cameo scene in Aryan Khan's debut series "The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood" comes from fans' nostalgia for his lover boy persona that defined his early 2000s films.

The recently-released Netflix show featured a standout moment in episode three where Raghav Juyal's Parvaiz, who is a friend of Lakshya's Aasmaan, meets his idol, Hashmi.

Juyal's character then unexpectedly breaks into a rendition of Hashmi's iconic song "Kaho Na Kaho" from "Murder" (2004), blending both Hindi and Arabic lyrics.

"It was a fun scene to do... It just got the recognition and the attention that I didn't know it was going to get, but it's great. I'm happy for everyone who's part of the show. It just has blown up and become this viral thing," Hashmi told PTI.

In the viral scene, Hashmi serves as an intimacy coordinator owing to his experience playing the lover boy in movies such as "Murder", "Zeher", "Aashiq Banaya

Aapne", "Kalyug", "Aksar" and "Gangster".

"This is the image that people used to love me for, they were missing it for a while and then they saw a little glimpse of it and it kind of just blew up. So yeah, it's fun," the actor said.

Asked if he would like to revisit his loverboy image, the actor said he wouldn't mind returning to that space if the right opportunity came along.

"I've always said that I'm not serving an image or running away from something. If there's something that comes my way, which is in a similar vein as that, I would still do it. And from the looks of it, people want to see me do it, at least.

"Although I don't want to get stuck in an image, but I definitely would play up that image again if I get an opportunity," Hashmi said.

The actor will next be seen in "Haq", a legal drama movie co-starring Yami Gautam. The film, directed by Suparn Varma, will be released in theatres on November 7. (PTI)

## Emphasis on showing off production values in big budget pan-Indian films now: RGV

**MUMBAI, Aug 24:** Streamer Prime Video has offered details of the characters from "Gen V", the upcoming spin-off series to smash hit show "The Boys". The Amazon original series is set to launch on Prime Video on September 29.

"Gen V" follows the training of the first generation of superheroes to know about Compound V, a mysterious substance that accords powers to humans. The new generation will get to know that their powers were injected into them, rather than God-given, as per the official description.

"These young, competitive heroes put their physical and moral boundaries to the test, competing for the school's highly coveted top ranking. They quickly come to learn that ambition comes with sacrifice, and the difference between right and wrong is not as clear as they once believed.

"When the university's dark secrets come to light, the students must come to grips with what type of heroes they are going to become," it added.

Showrun by Michele Fazekas and Tara Butters, "Gen V" features an ensemble cast of Jaz Sinclair, Chance Perdomo, Lizze Broadway, Shelley Conn, Maddie Phillips, London Thor, Derek Luh, Asa Germann, Patrick Schwarzenegger, Sean Patrick Thomas, and Marco Pigossi.

Sinclair essays the role of Marie Moreau, an 18-year-old superhero with the ability to control and weaponise her



own blood. As an incoming freshman at Vought-run Godolkin University, she is eager to prove she has what it takes to join The Seven, but is sidetracked by a mystery she begins to unravel at the school.

Perdomo is playing Andre Anderson, a junior at Godolkin University with magnetic powers, whereas Broadway portrays Emma Meyer, who is also known by her superhero name, Little Cricket, for her ability to get super small.

Conn will be seen in the role of Indira Shetty, the dean of Godolkin University. She doesn't have powers, but her background in superhero psychology and her peerless ability to analyze what makes them tick make her indispensable to the school. Phillips plays Cate Dunlap, a junior at Godolkin University who is good friends with Jordan and Andre.

Actors Thor and Luh are portraying Jordan Li, a competitive student who has a unique ability of changing between male and female forms, through which different powers manifest—the man is dense and indestructible, while the woman is agile and can launch energy blasts.

Germann plays Sam, a troubled supe who is desperately trying to escape his unfortunate circumstances. (PTI)

## 'THE FAMILY MAN' SEASON 3 TO DEBUT ON PRIME VIDEO ON NOVEMBER 21

**MUMBAI, Oct 29:** The much-awaited third season of hit spy action-thriller series "The Family Man" will premiere on Prime Video on November 21, the streamer said on Tuesday.

Created by filmmaker duo Raj & DK, the new chapter will raise the stakes for Manoj Bajpayee's Srikant Tiwari, an elite undercover agent who continues to juggle the complexities of national duty with his turbulent personal life.

"In this season, the stakes and dangers are higher than ever before, as he is pushed to his limits when he comes face-to-face with formidable new adversaries in Jaideep Ahlawat (Rukma) and Nimrat Kaur (Meera).

"On the run, Srikant must navigate uncharted territories while confronting threats and enemies from both within and beyond the nation's borders," read the official plotline for the third installment.

Season three also brings back Sharib Hashmi, Priyamani, Ashlesha Thakur, Vedant Sinha, Shreya Dhanwanthary, and Gul Panag.

"We know the audience has been patient, and we wanted to ensure that the wait was worth it. This season, the hunter

becomes the hunted, as Srikant faces a threat unlike any before -- one that endangers not just him and his career, but his family too." Raj & DK said in a joint statement.

Written by Raj, DK, and Suman Kumar, with dialogues by Sumit Arora, the series is directed by Raj & DK, with Suman Kumar and Tusshar Seyth also coming on board as directors for the upcoming season.

Nikhil Madhok, Director and Head of Originals, Prime Video India, hailed the show as one that has "redefined long-format storytelling, becoming part of everyday conversations and cultural discourse".

"The upcoming season promises an even more thrilling ride, with its signature blend of humour, action, and stellar performances," he added.

The first season of "The Family Man" debuted on Prime Video in late 2019 and received glowing reviews. The second season, also starring Samantha Ruth Prabhu, premiered in 2021 and was also praised by the critics.

The show is produced by Raj & DK's banner D2R Films. (PTI)

## 'Haq' should start a conversation: Emraan Hashmi on movie inspired by Shah Bano case

**MUMBAI, Oct 29:** The job of an artist is to spark discussion with their work and that is what Bollywood star Emraan Hashmi hopes to do with his upcoming movie "Haq", a courtroom drama inspired by the Shah Bano Begum case of 1985. Directed by Suparn Varma, the film dramatises the events surrounding the landmark Mohd Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum case, as depicted in Jigna Vora's book "Bano: Bharat Ki Beti".

The legal battle started in 1978 when Shah Bano was divorced by her lawyer husband and reached the Supreme Court in 1985. It ended with a judgment by a five-judge Constitution bench of the apex court that ruled that Muslim women were also entitled to maintenance under the law.

The film features Yami Gautam as Shazia Bano and Hashmi as her husband, Lawyer Abbas Khan. Though the film narrates a story from the 1970s and 1980s, Hashmi said the issue is still quite relevant.

"Haq" shows what happened and what is happening today. Ultimately, it's up to the audience how and what they take from it. But

conversation is great, arguments are great, any kind of change will only come from that," Hashmi told PTI in an interview.

The actor said there are many bad divorces where women are denied their basic right to dignity.

"They are just left to fend for themselves and God forbid if she is not an independent woman, she is not working, the man washes his hands off her responsibility... To make things worse, sometimes the woman is left with the kids and the man denies her fair chance at any kind of maintenance beyond and after the divorce. So, these are problems that are ongoing," he said.

Hashmi, who identifies as a feminist and advocate for women's rights, said the film explores the ingrained biases of men in a deeply patriarchal society.

"I think there's no doubt about it that we live in a patriarchal society. I'm a feminist and always pro-women's rights. There are certain biases that men have in society and as someone, trying to facilitate a subject like this, it's important for me to address those biases by play-

ing these characters," Hashmi said.

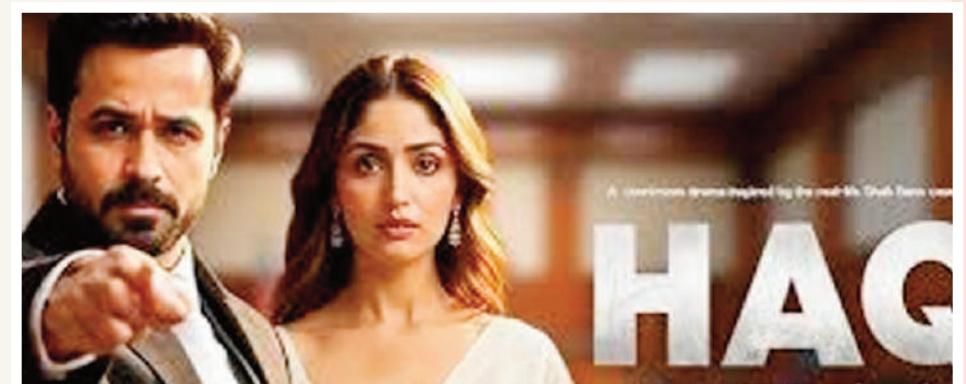
Shah Bano was 62 when she was divorced by her husband Mohammed Ahmed Khan through triple talaq. Khan refused to provide financial support of Rs 200.

She went to a district court which eventually awarded her a sum of Rs 20 per month, which was later increased to Rs 179 by the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

Dissatisfied, Khan challenged the decision in the Supreme Court.

A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court upheld the maintenance amount granted by the High Court. It also dwelt on the need for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC), a common set of laws on marriage, divorce and inheritance that would be applicable to all Indian citizens irrespective of religion, tribe or other local customs.

Asked if he believes that the film should start a discussion about the UCC, Hashmi said, "I think it should. If we don't spark conversation, don't spark some kind of deep thinking about something like this, about what society is constantly tucking under the carpet, unan-



swered questions, then we're not on a job."

The actor, known for his versatile performances in films such as "Gangster", "Awarapan", "Dirty Picture", "Once Upon a Time in Mumbai" and "Shanghai", said he had to set aside his own belief system to portray a character like Abbas.

"I got to change my mindset and play someone who is a little more chauvinistic and has

that mindset of oppression. But then that's acting... I don't know how people will see the character ultimately. When I play the character, I play him to understand him. I don't play characters to judge them," he said.

Produced by Jungle Pictures, in association with Insomnia Films and Baweja Studios, "Haq" will be released in theatres on November 7. (PTI)

# India face stern test against Australia in Women's World Cup semis

NAVI MUMBAI, Oct 29: Alive in the tournament by a touch of fortune, hosts India will search for a spark of magic reminiscent of skipper Harmanpreet Kaur's legendary knock eight years ago as they take on the mighty Australia in a blockbuster Women's World Cup semifinal here on Thursday.

Kaur's 115-ball 171 not out at Derby, England, in 2017 semifinal against Australia was seminal moment which catapulted women's cricket from the foot-note to the headlines.

A victory over the seven-time world champions would not only ignite India's campaign but also fuel belief that an elusive ICC crown is within reach.

For a team that has flirted with inconsistency, Thursday's game offers India a chance to defeat one of sport's most dominant sides.

Shafali's campaign has been as taxing as it can be for a World Cup host, especially when the team had its back pressed firmly against the wall following three defeats on the trot, from which

they fought back to find a place in the semifinals. But then they lost a key batter in Pratika Rawal to injury.

There is no room for error now as India are left in the ring with each of those opponents who had outmatched them in league meetings.

But before they take the field, India will face some most pertinent questions on nailing their team combination.

The inclusion of the big-hitting Shafali Verma, who was neither in India's plans nor among the six reserve players, indeed adds more fuel to the fire.

But her record with vice-captain Smriti Mandhana -- 893 runs in 25 innings at 37.20 -- looks inferior to Rawal and Mandhana's 1,799 runs in 23 innings at 78.21 as an opening pair.

Should India pick Shafali, whose aggressive style could put pressure on the opponents and match Mandhana's rich form and resolve to deliver rich results, or should they promote Harleen Deol in the opening slot in order to accommodate a sixth bowler?



This, perhaps, is the toughest question the dressing room is facing.

Harleen's 169 runs without a fifty in seven matches at 75.11 do not promise fireworks but her propensity of sticking to the crease can provide India solidity at the top and also give Mandhana a familiar cushion which Rawal provides from the other end.

Despite forecasts of unseasonal rains, the pitch remains a

batting haven and scoreboard pressure may not work as effectively on the chasing side.

Additionally, should India stick with left-arm spinner Radha Yadav, who was brilliant on the field and accurate in her bowling as shown against Bangladesh, particularly when pitted against Sneha Rana who has given away 201 runs in the last three matches for one wicket.

Kaur, who has largely misfired

with the bat, would certainly look to draw from that brutal assault on Australia eight years ago for inspiration, as there isn't any doubt that India need something special to overcome their toughest opponent.

A lot would hinge on Mandhana, who has played a lead role in India's pursuit for their maiden World Cup title across formats with 365 runs at 60.83 with one century and two fifties, topping the batting charts with a dominant show in recent matches.

If anything, Australia once again have been the epitome of performance and perfection.

There is hardly any other team which could match their skill-set or doggedness, but it all comes down to how good a team is on the day and Australia would know a plucky India give away nothing.

When challenged, like against Pakistan or England, Australia have staged those fightbacks that reflect their deep resolve and a dressing room oozing with talent.

And when not challenged, like against South Africa in Indore, Australia have not only fired the first shots but crushed the opponent completely.

On Tuesday, while Alyssa Healy went through her drills to prove her fitness after missing matches against England and South Africa, Beth Mooney went through her training session which also included wicketkeeping practice.

While Healy looks on track to make her comeback in the semifinal, Australia would want their regular captain back in the middle who has struck centuries in each of her last two outings against Bangladesh and India.

An unbeaten 84 against a lowly Bangladesh notwithstanding, Phoebe Litchfield has been in an ordinary form this World Cup but as an exponent of the reverse-sweep shot, she would be looking forward to the outing against India on a better.

There should, of course, be some concern on the form of Tahlia McGrath, who has stood in for Healy in the last two

matches but has only 43 runs to show from six outings.

But in Ashleigh Gardner (265 runs including two tons, 7 wickets), Annabel Sutherland (114 runs and 15 wickets) and Alana King (13 wickets and 55 runs), Australia have a long list of players until No. 11 who can stage comebacks that can influence the outcomes.

## The Teams:

**India:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Uma Chetty (wk), Richa Ghosh (wk), Harleen Deol, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Amanjot Kaur, Sneha Rana, Deepti Sharma, Kranti Gaud, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Shree Charani, Radha Yadav.

**Australia:** Alyssa Healy (c&wk), Tahlia McGrath (vc), Ellyse Perry, Beth Mooney (wk), Phoebe Litchfield, Georgia Voll, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Heather Graham, Alana King, Sophie Molineux, Annabel Sutherland, Darcie Brown, Megan Schutt, Georgia Wareham.

Match starts at 3:00pm. (PTI)

## I felt bad for Pratika but God has sent me to do something good: Shafali

NAVI MUMBAI, Oct 29: The last thing that Shafali Verma wanted was an in-form Pratika Rawal getting injured but she feels that it indeed had to be divine intervention which would see her getting pitchforked into the Indian playing eleven in a World Cup semi-final against Australia after not even being a part of the official reserves let alone the squad proper.

Shafali was leading Haryana in National Women's T20 when she was summoned from Surat to Mumbai on SOS after Rawal sustained a hairline fracture on her ankle while fielding in the last group league game against Bangladesh.

"What happened with Pratika, as a sports person, it wasn't a good thing. No one wants any sports person to sustain such an injury. But God has sent me here to do something good," Shafali told mediapersons ahead of the marquee semi-final clash against Australia.

Shafali had hit a 24-ball 55 in her last outing for Haryana and also had a string of good scores for India A in their recent tour to Australia.

While her record in WODIs is modest -- an average of 23 across 29 games and only four half-centuries, the big stage isn't new for the 21-year-old, who had played the T20 World Cup final in Australia back in 2020.

"I was playing domestic (cricket) and I was in a very good touch and talking about the semifinals, it's not like it's something new for



me because I have played in the semifinals before. It depends how I keep myself clear mentally and keep giving myself confidence. I have played in semifinals before," she said.

Shafali is still trying to get a grip of 50 over format which doesn't come to her as easily as the T20 where she enjoys a strike-rate of 131 and has played 90 games for the national team.

"I was playing T20s but as a batter, it's not that easy to switch. But we had a practice session today as well as yesterday (Tuesday). I tried to stay calm while batting. I tried to play good balls along the ground and those that were in my range, I tried to hit them well."

"I have had long batting sessions in the last two days, today and tomorrow and I felt great knowing I did all that I was trying to do," she added.

In the past couple of years, she has been in and out of the team due to inconsistent form but as she checked in, she was welcomed as if she had never left.

"When I joined the team, everyone was very welcoming and it felt good to see that and all the players I have spoken to have boosted me up," she said.

"All the players I have spoken to, coach, captain and even Smriti di, they all said that I have to play my game. There is nothing to panic about and when I am getting this kind of freedom, I will try to respect the good balls and I will obviously hit those who are in my length (hitting range)."

Having played a lot of games against Australia, Shafali knows what is expected of her in a big-ticket clash.

"I have played against Australia a lot of times and it's not the case where I would assess first and then react. I know how their bowlers bowl. I have to back my strengths (because) absolutely they will come hard at us and we have prepared well for it," she said.

In semi-final, just 100 percent won't be enough and one would need to give 200 percent, she said.

"We are in the semis now and everyone knows that we have to give 200 percent. There is no other chance because it is a knockout (game) and everyone will try to give their best." (PTI)

LAUSANNE, Oct 29: Oman will replace Pakistan in the FIH Men's Junior World after the latter withdraw from the tournament to be held in Chennai and Madurai from November 28 till December 10, the International Hockey Federation (FIH) confirmed on Wednesday.

"After the Pakistan Hockey Federation has notified the International Hockey Federation (FIH) that they have not accepted the invitation to participate in the upcoming FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Tamil Nadu 2025, after their team had qualified for this event at the Asia Junior Cup last year, the Men's Junior team of Oman will now join the list of participating teams for this event that will take place from 28 November to 10 December 2025 in the cities of Chennai and Madurai, India," the FIH said in a statement.

Oman joins as the next highest placed team in the continental championship (Junior Asia Cup 2024), which was the qualifying tournament for the Junior World Cup.

"For the very first time, the FIH Hockey Junior World Cups 2025,



women and men, will involve 24 teams each, enabling greater accessibility to FIH events, which is one of the fundamental principles of the FIH Empowerment and Engagement strategy," the FIH statement further read.

Pakistan were placed in Group B alongside India, Chile, and Switzerland. This is the second event in India that Pakistan has pulled out from after the men's Asia Cup in Rajgir, Bihar held from August 29 to September 7 this year.

The Indo-Pak relation has deteriorated since the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack and India's

subsequent Operation Sindoor.

The Indian government recently announced a new policy under which it will not engage in bilateral sporting contests with Pakistan but will continue to compete against them in multi-nation tournaments.

During the recent Asia Cup, India skipper Suryakumar Yadav had refused to shake hands with his Pakistan counterpart Salman Ali Agha.

Interestingly, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has expressed its willingness to compete in the tournament at a neutral venue, which was rejected by the FIH. (PTI)

## Wolvaardt's epic 169 fires South Africa to 319/7

Wolvaardt ensured that England would need to pull off a record chase in a World Cup semifinal



GUWAHATI, Oct 29: Captain Laura Wolvaardt singlehandedly pushed South Africa to a formidable 319 for seven with an epic 169 off 143 balls in the Women's ODI Cup semifinal against England here on Wednesday, negating the impact of two mini collapses caused by left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone.

Wolvaardt ensured that England would need to pull off a record chase in a World Cup semifinal.

Put in to bat, South Africa set the platform for a 300 plus total with a 116-run stand between Wolvaardt and Tazmin Brits (45 off 65). However, Ecclestone (4/44) stuck twice in the 22nd over to put the brakes on South Africa scoring rate.

A 72-run stand between Wolvaardt and Marizanne Kapp (42 off 33) followed before Ecclestone broke a threatening partnership once gain. At 202 for six, South Africa seemed to be heading for a below par total but Wolvaardt took her sublime game to the next level to fire her team past the 300-run mark.

The first half of her innings was a lot about her regal drives through the off-side before she targeted the midwicket boundary against the England pacers and spinners to ensure South Africa regained the momentum. Her innings comprised 17 fours and three maximums.

Wolvaardt, who has 184 as her highest ODI score, took left-arm spinner Linsey Smith to the cleaners in the 47th over yielding 20 runs. Batting with a wishful stance, Wolvaardt was quick to dispatch balls on the leg-side. She brought up her 150 with a six over midwicket and also completed 5000 ODI during the course of her marathon knock.

Chloe Tryon (33 not out off 26) and Nadine de Klerk (11 not out off 6) did the needful towards the end of the innings. The last 10 overs yielded 117 runs for the Proteas women.

Their batting performance was a far cry from their 69 all out against the same opponent in the league stage of the tournament. (PTI)

## 17-year-old Anahat stuns defending champion Tinne Gilis to reach Canadian Open squash semis

TORONTO (CANADA), Oct 29: India's 17-year-old rising star Anahat Singh stunned defending champion and second seed Tinne Gilis of Belgium to storm into the semifinals of Canadian Women's Open squash tournament here.

Unseeded Anahat won 3-0 (12-10, 11-9, 11-9) against her world number 7 opponent in the quarterfinal match that lasted 36 minutes Tuesday night. The Indian is currently ranked 43rd in the world.

This was Anahat's biggest win in her career and first against a top-10 player.

She has been in tremendous form in the tournament, a PSA ODI silver level event, having also beaten world number 20 Melissa Alves of France in the pre-quarterfinals.

She now faces world number 10 and fourth seed Gina Kennedy of England in the semifinals.

"I'm really excited and she's (Tinne Gilis) a top 10 player and this is the first time (to beat a player



in top 10)," said Anahat.

"I've been really happy with the way I've been playing this week and I was talking to my coaches earlier today and they said if I play the way I played yesterday, I have a chance against anyone. "I just came in with the mentality that I'm just coming in to play my best squash and it paid off at the end."

The Indian teenager said coming

into the event, she was not thinking of going so deep in the tournament.

"I wasn't really playing too well the week before this event was coming up, but Greg (Gaultier) was there during the US Open and I went and trained with him for four days. I knew that if I trained hard and I was focused, I had a chance coming into this event and I'm really happy." (PTI)

## I'd like India to have extra bowling depth against Australia: Ian bishop

NEW DELHI, Oct 29: Former West Indies pacer Ian Bishop feels hosts India should go in with an extra bowler against the mighty Australians in the Women's ODI World Cup semifinal on Thursday.

India and Australia clash in the second semifinal in Navi Mumbai on Thursday.

The combination of five batters, a wicketkeeper, and five bowlers -- three of them all-rounders -- has been India's trusted template through much of this World Cup cycle.

But its limitations were being brutally exposed in the league stage losses against South Africa, Australia and England. As a result India were forced to bring in specialist pacer Renuka Thakur in place of fast-bowling all-rounder Amanjot Kaur in their must-win game against New Zealand.

"I would like India to have that

extra bowling depth and allow the batters to take responsibility, whatever that combination is," Bishop said on JioStar media day ahead of the second semifinal.

"With the batting depth of Australia, I would want to have that extra bowling combination. I don't like part-timers in such a big game. Back the batting at the top, they are specialists to get you runs, but always have that fallback, especially at the DY Patil, which looks to a good batting surface," he added.

Australia possess a staggering batting depth, which makes them extremely difficult to beat. They have had different match winners through the tournament.

"You go in with five specialist bowlers, Australia are going to look to target even harder one or two of those to put pressure on India so that



captain Harmanpreet (Kaur) then has to go, whether it's to herself for some part-time bowling.

"I like that comfort of knowing I have an all-rounder who can give me some runs if called upon, but who can also give me some specialist," Bishop added.

In a major blow to India, in-form opener Pratika Rawal has been ruled out of the tournament after injuring her ankle and knee in the last group match against Bangladesh.

The big-hitting Shafali Verma, who hasn't been in the best of form, has been called up as a replacement and

is likely to open alongside Smriti Mandhana. "It comes down to hoping that she's been working at her game. Obviously her run of form in recent times internationally hasn't been great," said Bishop.

"But again, it is a one-off game and she has to come in and her mindset like 'I got this opportunity to make a difference I'll try to be as relaxed as possible, but I'm going to go out there and make best use of this opportunity and fill the void adequately.'"

The 58-year-old cricketer-turned-commentator added that he would like India to be "aggressive" in the field when they have the upper hand.

"I want to see teams like India be more aggressive. If wickets have fallen, don't sit back and wait for the next wicket to fall by pushing your fielders deep and allowing easy singles." (PTI)



Hagrama Mohilary  
Chief, BTC



Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma  
Chief Minister, Assam

# Assuring Potable Water, Securing Future

## Inauguration of Nonai Multi Village Piped Water Supply scheme

by

**Hagrama Mohilary**  
Chief, BTC

In the august presence of

**Biswajit Daimary**  
Speaker,  
Assam Legislative Assembly

**Jayanta Mallabaruah**  
Minister  
Public Health Engineering Department, etc.

**Rihan Daimary**  
Deputy Chief, BTC

**Begom Akhtara Ahmed**  
Executive Member, PHED, BTC

Date : 30 October 2025



67

Villages  
to be benefitted

20661

Households  
to be benefitted

108478

Population  
to be benefitted

227

PWSS Getting  
Clear Water

228874  
RM

Length of  
Clear Water Gravity Main