

6 WORLD

- Thousands march in Barcelona to protest Israel's war in Gaza
- Sean 'Diddy' Combs gets 4 years in prison for case involving sex workers

8 NATION

- Shah rules out talks with Naxals, tells them to surrender
- DCP among several injured in clash during idol immersion procession

Crime rate in Assam has significantly declined: Himanta

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Oct 4: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday inaugurated the newly constructed headquarters of the 5th Assam Police Commando Battalion at Pabhoi in Biswanath district, marking a major boost to the manpower, mobility, and infrastructure of Assam Police.

Spread over 218 bighas, the battalion complex is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities designed to strengthen the operational readiness of the elite commando force.

The chief minister recalled that during a Cabinet meeting held on July 18, 2022, the Government of Assam had approved the establishment of five commando battalions in Biswanath, Haikalakandi, Karbi Anglong, Sivasagar, and Tinsukia districts.

Subsequently, Sarma laid the foundation stone of the Pabhoi Battalion on December 10, 2022. Within three years, the infrastructure has been fully developed and dedicated



to public service.

The Pabhoi Battalion campus features modern amenities, including residential accommodation for 400 commando personnel, advanced boundary security systems, nine watchtowers, underground bunkers with magazine vaults, and barracks for 256 commandos.

It also houses 144 residential quarters for officers and staff, along with training and operational facilities such as a parade ground, drill shed, obstacle course, shooting range, and classrooms equipped with computer systems.

With this infrastructure, the chief minister said, the Pabhoi Commando Battalion would soon emerge as a centre of excellence for commando training and tactical operations.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarma highlighted that the concerted and decisive steps taken by Assam Police in recent years have resulted in a significant decline in the state's

crime rate.

"Since this government took office, Assam Police has acted decisively against crime and criminal networks. The result is visible in the remarkable fall in crime across the state," he said.

The chief minister also praised the pace of development in Biswanath district, describing it as one of the most inspiring examples of the government's vision for progress.

He said that in just a few years, Biswanath had emerged as a model of balanced growth across multiple sectors.

He noted that a medical college is being set up in the district, a stadium has already been completed, and new buildings for the Deputy Commissioner's office and the Circuit House have been inaugurated.

"Although Biswanath is a newly created district, it has managed to surpass many others in terms of development. The progress achieved here is truly (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Our govt never backs away from the promises made to the people: CM

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Oct 4: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday reiterated his government's commitment to fulfilling every promise made to the people, stating that welfare and empowerment schemes launched in Assam were being implemented with sincerity and measurable results.

He was speaking at a function in Biswanath where cheques of ₹10,000 each were distributed to 37,804 women beneficiaries under the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA).

The beneficiaries included 34,620 women from the Biswanath constituency and 3,184 from Bihali, belonging to both rural and urban areas.

In Biswanath alone, the total disbursement amounted to ₹34.62 crore — with 32,997 rural and 1,623 urban beneficiaries.

The scheme, launched under the Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission, aims to promote women's entrepreneurship by supporting village-based livelihoods in agriculture, animal husbandry, handloom, and handicrafts.

Giving details of the ap-

Painted stork returns to KNP after four years

GUWAHATI, Oct 4: Migratory painted stork or Mycteria Leucocephala has returned to Kaziranga National Park after four years, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday.

"Kaziranga welcomes an old guest after 4 years. The elegant migratory Painted Storks (Mycteria leucocephala) have made a comeback to @kaziranga's skies, soaring once again over our wetlands," he said in a post on X.

The return of the migratory bird proves that nature heals when it is protected properly, Sarma said.

"Another win for our conservation efforts," he added.

Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve is the largest in the North East and is thronged by domestic and international tourists in large numbers (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India, Bhutan hold talks

THIMPHU, Oct 4: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri held wide-ranging talks with Bhutan's Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay during which they discussed bilateral ties including trade and connectivity.

Misri visited Bhutan on Friday, according to the Indian embassy here. His visit came after an inter-governmental Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed earlier this week for the establishment of railway links between India and Bhutan.

During his visit, Misri had an audience with Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, and called on Prime Minister Tobgay and Foreign Minister D N Dhunyel.

"In keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges, Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri visited Bhutan on 3 October 2025 for discussions encompassing the entire gamut (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Northeast's first private coal mine set to begin operations in Arunachal tomorrow



HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Oct 4: In a landmark development for the region's energy sector, the Namchik-Namphuk coal mine in Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh is all set to commence operations on October 6, becoming the first-ever private coal mine in Northeast India.

The inaugural ceremony will be graced by Union Coal Minister G. Kishan Reddy, who will formally launch the mining operations.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu, Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, Environment and Forest Minister Wangki Lowang, and several dignitaries, including industrialists Ratan Sharma and Naveen Singhal, are scheduled to attend the event.

Owned and operated by M/S Coal Pulz Pvt Ltd, a Guwahati-based company under the Mahalaxmi Group, the mine's operationalization marks the culmination of years of planning and regulatory clearances.

Speaking ahead of the launch, Naveen Singhal, Chairman of Mahalaxmi Group and promoter of M/S Coal Pulz Pvt Ltd, said the project represents "the end of a long wait" and will play a transformative role in the region's economic growth.

"The mine will generate employment for local youth, attract new industries, raise living standards, and meet the growing energy demand of the Northeast," he said.

He added that the mine is expected to produce around 2 lakh tonnes of coal annually, contributing (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

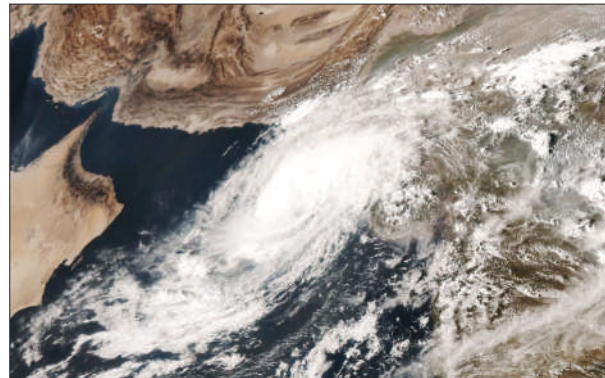
Fishermen warned not to venture into the northwest Arabian Sea

Cyclone Shakhti churns up Arabian Sea off Gujarat coast

NEW DELHI, Oct 4: Cyclone Shakhti, the first cyclonic storm of the post-monsoon season in the Arabian Sea, is churning up the sea, packing a wind speed of 100 kmph and gusting, officials said on Saturday.

Shakhti, which has intensified into a severe cyclonic storm, was moving further into the Arabian Sea and lay centred about 420 km away from Dwarka in Gujarat, the weather office said.

It is likely to move west-southwestwards and reach the northwest and adjoining west-central Arabian Sea by Sunday, the India Meteorological



Department (IMD) said, adding that Shakhti will re-curve and move east-northeastwards from Monday morning, weakening gradually.

Under the influence of the cyclonic storm, sea conditions

are likely to be rough to very rough along and off the Gujarat-North Maharashtra coast and the Pakistan coast until Sunday.

The weather office has warned fishermen not to venture into the northwest Arabian Sea, adjoining areas of the northeast Arabian Sea, central Arabian Sea and along and off the Gujarat-north Maharashtra coasts until Tuesday.

In recent years, storms like Tauktae (2021) and Biparjoy (2023) had formed in the Arabian Sea, which has witnessed fewer cyclones compared to the Bay of Bengal. The (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Let him go, let him go: Sekhar alleges conspiracy in Zubeen Garg's death

Zubeen Garg poisoned in Singapore, alleges arrested bandmate ● Wife returns postmortem report

GUWAHATI, Oct 4: In a shocking claim regarding the death of Zubeen Garg, his band member Shekhar Jyoti Goswami has alleged that the singer was poisoned by his manager Siddharth Sharma and festival organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta.

Sharma was heard shouting 'Jabo de, jabo de' (let him go, let him go) when Garg was gasping for breath, almost drowning in the sea off Singapore, the accompanying drummer said in the 'Detailed Grounds of Arrest' or remand note of the singer's manager.

According to the highly sensitive document, accessed by PTI, Goswami also claimed that there was a "conspiracy" to portray Garg's death as an accident.

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

Meanwhile, Garg's wife Garima returned the post-mortem examination report of her husband to police, saying it is not her "personal document" and investigators will be the best judge to decide



whether it should be made public.

"During the critical moments when Garg was gasping for breath, almost drowning, Sharma was heard shouting 'Jabo de, jabo de' (let him go, let him go). The witness emphasised that the singer was an expert swimmer who had trained both him and the accused, and therefore could not have drowned," the remand note said.

"He (Goswami) alleged that Sharma and Mahanta had poisoned the victim and deliberately chosen a foreign venue to conceal their conspiracy. Sharma also instructed him not to share the yacht videos with anyone," stated the note, signed by SIT member and senior SP Rosie Kalita.

A nine-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) is currently probing the death of Garg.

"The statement of witness Goswami, recorded U/S 175 BNSS, stated that prior to Garg's death, a conspiracy was formulated to portray his death as accidental. He stated that Sharma, who stayed with him in Room No. 3010 at Pan Pacific Hotel, Singapore, had displayed suspicious conduct," the note said.

Asked about Goswami's claim before police, Garima questioned why he was silent for so long.

"If Shekhar had known it, why did he hide it for so long? Anyway, a probe is going on.

If anyone has done so, then he must get the strongest possible punishment.

"Why was he (Garg) pushed to such a level? He loved everyone so much! He only knew how to love people and nothing else. He also taught me only to trust people," she added.

Garima further said, "We considered everyone as our own and part of the family like brothers. He always used to say that they are our extended families and we have to think about their families too. We did that only. Now, what has been done to us, did it really happen? So, the strictest punishment should be given if it really happened."

Quoting Goswami, the note said Sharma forcibly took control of the yacht from its sailor, causing it to wobble dangerously in mid-sea, thereby endangering all passengers.

"He (Goswami) also revealed that Sharma instructed Tannoy Phukan (NRI, member of Assam Association, Singapore) not to arrange drinks, claiming that he alone would provide them," it added. When Garg was frothing by the mouth and nose, Sharma dismissed it as acid reflux (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

71st WILDLIFE WEEK 2025
(2nd - 8th October)

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Haryana CM urges traders to pass GST benefits to consumers and promote indigenous products

CHANDIGARH, Oct 4: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday urged traders across the state to ensure that full benefits of the reduced GST rates are passed on to consumers.

He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, GST reforms have provided significant benefits to the people of India.

Saini called upon traders to actively participate in promoting the 'GST Bachat Utsav'.

He highlighted that this initiative will not only boost trade but also enable consumers to purchase essential items at lower prices.

Affordable prices, growing trade, and a strong economy are the core spirit of the GST Bachat Utsav, which will take Haryana to new heights of progress, he said here.

Saini described the reforms as a historic step toward a self-reliant India and a stronger economy, em-



phasising the crucial role of the business community in delivering these benefits to the public.

He expressed confidence that Haryana's traders would lead by example in implementing the prime minister's vision.

The chief minister said that GST reforms would directly benefit

consumers, especially during the festive season, by lowering prices on many everyday goods and generating additional savings for the middle class.

These savings, he said, would not only provide relief to consumers but also create new opportunities for businesses.

Saini urged traders to focus on the production and promotion of indigenous products.

He said that the prime minister is advancing the vision of a self-reliant India and emphasising the use of domestic products. GST reforms will play a crucial role in realising this vision.

By prioritising local goods, businesses can strengthen both the domestic industry and the state and nation's economy, he said.

Highlighting Haryana's consistent performance in GST collection, Saini said that the state's net SGST collection increased from ₹ 18,910 crore in 2018-19 to ₹ 39,743 crore in 2024-25.

This remarkable achievement reflects Haryana's strong economy and the support of its traders, he said. Haryana has consistently remained the leading state in GST collection with the support and efforts of its business community, he added. (PTI)

Raveena Tandon and Rasha Thadani make their first brand debut

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 4: Reliance Jewels, one of India's leading and most trusted jewellery brands, has unveiled its new festive collection ahead of Diwali, marking the special occasion with the announcement of Bollywood star Raveena Tandon and her daughter Rasha Thadani as its first-ever brand ambassadors.

The collaboration between the mother-daughter duo signifies a celebration of both heritage and modernity — reflecting how jewellery connects generations while evolving with contemporary design sensibilities. Their association with Reliance Jewels aims to capture the emotional and cultural bond Indians share with jewellery as an heirloom, a style statement, and a symbol of tradition.

Speaking on the launch, Gayatri Yadav, Group Chief Marketing Officer, Reliance Industries, said, "We Indians have always shared a deep emotional bond with gold—it marks our traditions, milestones, and sense of identity. Yet, as styles evolve, many pieces no longer match our self-expression. Our New Diwali Collection celebrates this evolution by blending timeless traditions with contemporary tastes. With Raveena Tandon and her daughter Rasha as the faces of this campaign, we connect with two generations of consumers, inspiring families to refresh their jewellery wardrobes with designs that honour heritage while embracing modern style."

The New Festive Collection draws inspiration from the essence of Diwali and its symbolic motifs such as

Goddess Lakshmi, rangoli patterns, diyas, lanterns, marigolds, lotus florals, and peacocks.

Crafted intricately in gold and diamonds, the range includes elegant earrings, chokers, long necklaces, bangles, and rings — perfect for Diwali, Dhanteras, weddings, and other celebratory occasions.

Expressing her excitement, Raveena Tandon said, "I am delighted to begin my journey with Reliance Jewels by launching their festive collection. Festivals are about joy and togetherness, and this collection captures that beautifully—blending tradition with a modern outlook."

Adding her perspective, Rasha Thadani said, "I believe jewellery should reflect who you are, no matter the occasion. This collection lets me express my personality while beautifully embracing the festive spirit. Each piece feels like an extension of me, celebrating individuality and style with festive charm."

As part of its Diwali celebrations, Reliance Jewels has announced a 100% Old Gold Exchange Value offer, enabling customers to upgrade their jewellery by exchanging old gold at full value.

In addition, festive offers include up to 45% off on gold jewellery making charges and up to 35% off on diamond value and making charges, valid till November 2, 2025.

The New Festive Collection is now available across 140+ Reliance Jewels showrooms nationwide, inviting customers to celebrate this Diwali with craftsmanship that blends timeless elegance and modern flair.

CBI arrests 5 in HPZ Crypto Currency Token fraud case

NEW DELHI, Oct 4: The CBI has arrested five individuals in connection with the HPZ Crypto Currency Token fraud case, in which cyber criminals duped victims of hundreds of crores through loan, job, investment, and cryptocurrency schemes, officials said on Saturday.

The agency conducted searches at seven locations in five cities, including Delhi, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru, leading to the recovery of incriminating digital evidence and financial records, they said. The agency registered the FIR under provisions of criminal conspiracy, impersonation and fraud and offences under the Information Technology Act, they said. The case pertains to an elaborate criminal conspiracy orchestrated by foreign-based masterminds in collusion with Indian nationals in which organised cyber frauds were committed across India in the guise of loan, job, investment, and cryptocurrency schemes between 2021 and 2023, a CBI spokesperson said. "These frauds were facilitated through the creation of multiple shell companies, which were used to open mule bank accounts. The proceeds collected from the victims were routed through these accounts, converted into cryptocurrencies, and subsequently transferred outside India through complex financial layering and crypto conversion routes," she said in a statement. The CBI probe in the case has exposed several shell entities which were incorporated in India at the instance of foreign perpetrators. (PTI)

Visa Ind to pump ₹ 200cr in Visa Steel via preferential warrants

KOLKATA, Oct 4: Odisha Visa Steel on Saturday said its board has approved a proposal to raise up to ₹ 200 crore by issuing convertible warrants to its promoter group on a preferential basis.

The company will issue up to 5 crore convertible warrants, each exercisable into one equity share of face value ₹ 10, at an issue price of ₹ 40 per warrant, VISA Steel said in a regulatory filing. The warrants will be allotted to VISA Industries Limited, a promoter group entity, it said. Each warrant can be converted into one equity share within 18 months from the date of allotment, the filing said. Upon full conversion of the warrants, the shareholding of VISA Industries Limited in the steel maker will increase to 40.17 per cent from the current 14.33 per cent. The board has also approved convening an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of shareholders on November 2, 2025, to seek their approval for the fundraise proposal. (PTI)

Name Change

I Sabina Yasmin, D/O.-Late Ismail Ali Laskar, W/O-Nazir Hussain Laskar (New Name) previously called Mina Begum (Old Name) doing as farmer and resident of Vill. Pachim Nilbagan, P.O- Nilbagan, P.S- Hojai, Dist. Hojai (Assam) The name of Sabina Yasmin as my name/surname in place and in substitution of my former name/surname Mina Begum, both Sabina Yasmin and Mina Begum same and one person.

GEON partners with Auto Sales India Ltd to expand green energy solutions across NE

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 4: In a major move to strengthen clean energy adoption in the Northeast, GEON, a leading provider of lithium-ion green energy solutions, has entered into a strategic partnership with Auto Sales India Ltd, a trusted distributor with over 25 years of market leadership in the region.

The collaboration aims to expand GEON's product portfolio and accelerate the availability of sustainable energy technologies across all seven Northeastern states.

The partnership marks a significant milestone in GEON's mission to advance innovative energy solutions for a Viksit Bharat.

Under this alliance, GEON and Auto Sales will introduce electric vehicle (EV) batteries and inverter battery solutions designed for both smart and grid-based applications.

The EV batteries will primarily cater to the fast-growing electric three-wheeler segment, while the inverter batteries will support residential and commercial users seeking efficient, renewable energy alternatives.

GEON's advanced smart batteries are designed for fast charging, extended lifespan, and come with robust online and offline service support, ensuring reliability and ease of maintenance for customers across the region.

Backed by the strong legacy of Kabra Extrusion Technik Limited,



GEON — formerly known as Batrrix — has, since its inception in 2018, emerged as a trusted name in India's clean energy ecosystem.

The company's strengths in research and development, state-of-the-art manufacturing, and nationwide distribution have established it as a preferred OEM partner for high-performance lithium-ion batteries across sectors including mobility, residential, telecom, and grid energy.

Speaking about the partnership, Arun Kumar Bajaj, Chairman of Auto Sales India Ltd, said, "For more than two decades, Auto Sales has built lasting trust with customers across the Northeast. By partnering with GEON, we are proud to bring innovative green energy solutions backed by service

excellence to the entire Northeast market."

Anand Kabra, Chairman and Managing Director of GEON, remarked, "This partnership reflects GEON's mission to power India's sustainable energy landscape with smart, high-performance technologies. With Auto Sales' strong distribution network and our advanced product line, we aim to deliver future-ready energy solutions to every corner of the Northeast."

By combining GEON's technological expertise with Auto Sales' deep-rooted regional presence, the partnership is expected to accelerate the adoption of next-generation energy solutions and foster a cleaner, more sustainable future for the region.

UCO Bank Q2 business grows 13.3 pc YoY to ₹ 5.37 lakh-cr



KOLKATA, Oct 4: State-owned UCO Bank on Saturday reported a 13.29 per cent year-on-year growth in its total business at ₹ 5.37 lakh-crore for the second quarter ended September 2025.

According to a regulatory filing, the bank's total advances rose 16.67 per cent to ₹ 2.31 lakh-crore in the July-September quarter of the current fiscal (Q2 FY26), compared to ₹ 1.98 lakh-crore in the same

quarter last year.

On a sequential basis, advances grew 2.67 per cent from ₹ 2.25 lakh-crore in the June 2025 quarter.

Total deposits increased by 10.87 per cent year-on-year to ₹ 3.06 lakh-crore in the September 2025 quarter, from ₹ 2.76 lakh-crore a year ago.

Domestically, advances grew 17.24 per cent year-on-year to ₹ 2.04 lakh-crore, while domestic deposits increased 9.85 per cent to ₹ 2.90 lakh-crore.

The bank's domestic CASA (Current Account Savings Account) ratio stood at 38.11 per cent as of September 30, an improvement from 36.91 per cent in the previous quarter but slightly lower than 38.24 per cent a year ago.

The Credit-to-Deposit (CD) Ratio was reported at 75.56 per cent, up from 71.77 per cent in the same quarter last fiscal.

The provisional figures for the quarter ended September are subject to review by the bank's statutory central auditors, UCO Bank said in the filing. (PTI)

Nestlé India signs MoU with MoFPI to boost investments in food processing sector

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 4: Nestlé India has reinforced its commitment to India's economic growth by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) at the World Food India Summit 2025 in New Delhi.

The MoU aims to expedite investments in both greenfield and brownfield projects in Odisha as well as in Nestlé India's existing manufacturing locations across the country. Manish Tiwary, Chairman and Managing Director of Nestlé India, said, "The signing of this MoU with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries underscores

Nestlé India's commitment to investments in the food processing sector through greenfield and brownfield projects in Odisha and at our existing manufacturing locations within the next two to three years. This initiative is expected to create both direct and indirect employment opportunities, reinforcing our commitment to India's growth story as we continue our journey towards Atmanirbhar Bharat." Highlighting the company's broader vision, Nestlé India focuses on building sustainable, inclusive, and future-ready food systems.

By investing in brands and infrastructure, the company aims to drive economic progress while im-

proving the quality of life for citizens. Through bold innovations, Nestlé India continues to deliver products and experiences to consumers faster, bigger, and better.

Kunwar Himmat Singh, Head of Corporate Affairs at Nestlé India, noted, "With over 113 years of presence in India, Nestlé India collaborates with more than 100,000 farmers across dairy, coffee, spices, wheat, sugarcane, and rice, while maintaining strong supplier partnerships. Our nine factories across India manufacture products of the highest quality, which are distributed through 10,000 distributors and redistributors and reach 5.2 million retail outlets nationwide."

Contd. from Page 1...

Let him go, let him go

and assured others that there was nothing to worry about "instead of providing necessary medical facilities", the remand note said.

"...he (Sharma) facilitated the early demise of Zubeen Garg," it added.

Sharma has already been arrested along with Mahanta, Goswami and Garg's co-singer Amrit Prabha Mahanta under various charges such as criminal conspiracy, murder and culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

"Material evidence collected during investigation, including documentary records, financial transactions, and witness statements, prima facie establishes his (Sharma's) culpability," the 'Detailed Grounds of Arrest' said. The report claimed that statements of Amrit Prabha and actress Nishita Goswami, who was also present in Singapore, corroborated that Sharma had facilitated Garg's access to liquor and inappropriate company by arranging accommodation for the co-singer in the same room with the icon at Pan Pacific Hotel.

"The accused has failed to provide any satisfactory explanation regarding supply of liquor and women to the deceased prior to his death," it alleged.

The CID is probing the case of Garg's death after more than 60 FIRs have been lodged across the state against Mahanta and almost 10 others, including Sharma and band members Goswami and Amrit Prabha. All four have been arrested and sent to 14 days of police remand.

On Friday, the state government set up a one-man judicial commission, headed by Justice Soumitra Saikia of Gauhati High Court, to probe Garg's death. Garima said she had full confidence in the investigation to unearth the circumstances leading to the singer's death.

"As the investigation is going on, I did not consider the post-mortem examination report as my personal document. So, I have returned it to the investigating officer," she told reporters after CID Additional SP Moramee Das, who had come to hand her over the report, left her residence. "I don't know anything about law. Whether making it public will hamper the ongoing probe, I don't know. That is why I have returned the report. If it can be made public, then you will get it from them," she added. (PTI)

Crime rate in Assam

commendable," Sarma said. He pointed out that until 2016, Biswanath had very few paved roads.

Today, however, all major roads in the district have been blacktopped, and even roads within tea garden lines have been constructed.

The Chief Minister added that Anganwadi centres have been upgraded and new high schools are being established, reflecting the government's focus on education and grassroots infrastructure.

Reiterating his government's commitment to holistic growth, Sarma sought public cooperation in steering Biswanath toward a "new horizon of development."

The event was attended by Health and Family Welfare Minister Ashok Singhal, MP Ranjit Dutta, MLAs Pramod Borthakur, Utpal Bora, Diganta Ghatowar, and Amiya Kumar Bhuyan, ASTC Chairman Pallav Lochan Das, Director General of Police Harmeet Singh, Special DGP Munna Prasad Gupta, and several other senior officials and dignitaries.

Painted stork returns

for its famed great Indian one-horned rhinoceros. The Kaziranga National Park, a UNESCO world heritage site, was declared a National Park in 1974. It is inhabited by the world's largest population of one-horned rhinos as well as many mammals, including tigers, elephants, panthers and bears, and thousands of birds.

The park is located in Golaghat and Nagaon districts of Assam. It is also placed beside the Brahmaputra river on the north and the Karbi Anglong mountains on the south. (PTI)

Our govt never

Several others applied for layer poultry and duck farming as well. Sarma recalled that when the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan was first announced, many doubted its feasibility.

"To provide ₹ 10,000 each to 40 lakh women of 4 lakh self-help groups, the State needed ₹ 4,000 crore. Similarly, the Orunodoi scheme with 30 lakh beneficiaries required ₹ 4,800 crore annually. Many dismissed these as election promises. But our government never backs away from its commitments. The people of Assam can see the results today," he said.

The chief minister informed that the MMUA began with cheque distribution in Bihali on April 1, followed by the second phase in Nalbari on August 22.

So far, cheques have been distributed in 17 constituencies, and the process will continue across others in the coming weeks.

Sarma said the initiative is designed to financially strengthen women through self-help groups (SHGs) by providing revolving funds and access to bank credit.

He stated that nearly eight lakh women have already become Lakhpati — earning ₹ 1 lakh annually — through various livelihood activities, while around 99 per cent of SHGs have successfully repaid their loans on time.

"The dream of making 40 lakh women Lakhpati inspired the launch of this Abhiyan," he added.

Encouraging beneficiaries to make judicious use of the funds, the chief minister advised them to invest in productive ventures.

"If ten women from an SHG pool their ₹ 10,000 each, banks will double the amount as loans, enabling largescale businesses. Even individually, investing the amount in goat, duck, or poultry farming, food processing, or other family enterprises can yield long-term gains," he said.

He announced that beneficiaries who utilize the first installment productively will receive ₹ 25,000 next year and ₹ 50,000 in the third year with bank support.

Sarma also announced that from November 1, ration card holders will receive lentils, sugar, and salt at subsidized prices along with rice, and that edible oil will soon be included.

From October 7, Orunodoi beneficiaries will receive ₹ 1,250 per month, and Ujjwala gas cardholders will get a ₹ 250 subsidy per cylinder.

"The love, trust, and confidence of the people have empowered this government to implement one welfare scheme after another. We remain steadfast in fulfilling every promise made to the people of Assam," the chief minister asserted.

The event was attended by Health and Family Welfare Minister Ashok Singhal, MP Banjit Dutta, MLAs Pramod Borthakur, Padma Hazarika, Utpal Bora, Prithviraj Rabha, Diganta Ghatowar, Amiya Kumar Bhuyan, and Krishnakamal Tanti, former Minister Pallav Lochan Das, and Biswanath Zila Parishad Chairperson Sunita Tanti. Also present were Mission Director, ASRLM Kuntal Moni Sarma Bordoloi, District Commissioner Simanta Kumar Das, and other dignitaries.

India, Bhutan hold

of special and multifaceted bilateral partnership," the Indian embassy said in an X post.

In a social media post, Prime Minister Tobgay said that he was "pleased" to meet Misri and the two discussed "a range of mutual interests, including connectivity, hydropower, people-to-people relations, and trade and commerce between Bhutan and India."

Misri's visit comes after the Bhutanese foreign secretary Aum Pema Choden visited India earlier this week. The two foreign secretaries held consultations on Monday during which they reviewed the "full spectrum of the bilateral engagements", according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

During the Bhutanese foreign secretary's visit, the MoU for the establishment of railway links between the two nations was signed. (PTI)

Northeast's first private

significantly to royalty revenue for the Arunachal Pradesh government while ensuring steady fuel supply for local industries and power projects.

Another promoter, Ratan Sharma, Chairman of the Satyam Group, termed the mine's launch a milestone for private investment in the Northeast.

"This initiative will not only boost state revenue but also bring economic stability to local communities and create ripple effects across the regional economy," he said.

The Namchik-Namphuk coal mine, along with 28 others across India, was put up for auction in November 2022 as part of the country's largest round of commercial coal block auctions. M/S Coal Pulz Pvt Ltd successfully won the bid for a 30-year lease, marking a new chapter in the privatization and modernization of India's coal mining sector.

The project is expected to strengthen India's self-reliance in energy production while promoting industrial growth and employment generation in the frontier state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Cyclone Shakhti churns

cyclone has been named Shakhti, a name suggested by Sri Lanka as per the convention followed by the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones. The names of the cyclones are suggested by 13 countries in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea rim. (PTI)

We are committed to women's welfare and to fulfill every promise: CM Himanta CM distributes cheques of Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan in Biswanath



HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, Oct 4: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday last inaugurated the cheque distribution ceremony at Kamala Kanta Khetra, Biswanath under Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan. A total of 34,620 cheques were dis-

tributed to the beneficiaries. Out of these 34,620 beneficiaries 32,997 are from Biswanath LAC while 3,184 are from Behali LAC. Addressing the public gathering CM Sarma highlighted the various initiatives undertaken by the government to empower women and strengthen their role in

Assam's socio-economic development. "We are committed to women's welfare and will always strive to fulfill every promise" said CM. He outlined three key ways to effectively utilize the funds received under the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan. The ceremony was at-

tended by health and family welfare minister Ashok Singhal, Tezpur HPC MP Ranjit Dutta, Biswanath MLA Pradmod Borthakur, Naduar MLA Padma Hazarika, Gohpur MLA Utpal Bora, Tezpur MLA Prithiviraj Rabha, Behali MLA Diganta Ghatowal, Rangapara MLA Krishna Kamal Tanti, Bihpuria MLA Amiya Kummar Bhuyan, chairman of ASTC Pallab Lochan Das, former minister Prabin Hazarika among others.

After attending the cheque distribution ceremony, CM Sarma inaugurated the 5th Assam Police Commando Battalion at Pabhoi. It has been spread over 218 bighas of land. The battalion can accommodate 400 commandos. It is equipped with advanced security with boundary fencing, 9 watchtowers and underground bunkers with magazine vaults. The area covers training and operational infrastructure like parade ground, drill shed, obstacle course, shooting range, kill house, classrooms with computer facilities, and more.

UPPL holds central working committee meeting

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Oct 4: The United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) convened its 26th Central Working Committee (CWC) meeting on Saturday at the party's central office in Kokrajhar.

The meeting was chaired by UPPL President and former BTC Chief Pramod Boro, and was attended by key leaders including Assam cabinet minister and party's founding president Urkhao Gwra Brahma, former Deputy Chief Gobinda Basumatary, General Secretary Raju Kumar Narzary, Kampa Borgoyary, and several other prominent members.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Raju Kumar Narzary stated that the UPPL has resolved to continue its role as a strong opposition in the Bodoland Territorial Council Legislative Assembly (BTCLA), focusing on the welfare and development of the region.

He also informed that the party is preparing for the upcoming



Assam Legislative Assembly elections in 2026 and reaffirmed UPPL's commitment to its alliance with the NDA at the state level till 2026 and at the Centre till 2029.

In a significant gesture, the party extended its congratulations to BPF Chief Hagrama Mohilyari and his team ahead of the new BTC government's swearing-in ceremony. Narzary also urged BPF

workers to refrain from violence in the Srirampur constituency and respect the public mandate, where UPPL candidate Wilson Hasda secured victory.

The UPPL reiterated its commitment to raising the voice of the people both inside and outside the Assembly and to continuing its efforts for inclusive growth in the region.

Udharlangso Youth Club conducts mass cleaning drive

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Oct 4: The Udharlangso Youth Club (UYC) successfully carried out a Mass Cleaning Drive at Dengkimo Apam, the venue of the recently concluded 33rd Zonal Karbi Youth Festival of the Phuloni Karbi Cultural Society Zone.

Held under the theme "Clean Dengkimo, Green Dengkimo," the initiative aimed to preserve the cleanliness and beauty of the area.

Led by UYC President Lovenson Terang and Secretary Sonse Tisso, the drive witnessed enthusiastic participation from club members, along with the presence of club adviser and BJYM East Karbi Anglong District President Jiten Bey.

The effort highlighted the values of unity, service, and environmental responsibility, aligning with the Swachh Bharat mission to promote community cleanliness.

Hojai administration condoles the demise of Neelakshi Bora



HT Correspondent
HOJAI, Oct 4: The Hojai District Administration expressed deep sorrow over the passing of Neelakshi Bora, wife of former Hojai District Commissioner Lachit Kumar Das.

A condolence meeting was held on Saturday in the conference room of the District Commissioner's office at Srimanta Sankardev Nagar, chaired by District Commissioner Bidyut Bikash Bhagwati. Officers and staff present at the meeting observed a minute of silence in memory of the departed soul and prayed for her eternal peace. They also extended heartfelt prayers for strength and comfort to the bereaved family during this difficult time.

The administration has also sent an official condolence letter to the family. It may be noted that Neelakshi Bora passed away on October 2, 2025.

RSS leader Bishnu Acharjee assaulted



HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, Oct 4: A strong reaction has been triggered by the brutal mob attack on senior RSS leader Bishnu Acharjee in Ledo under the 83rd Margherita Legislative Assembly Constituency in Tinsukia district on the night of Navami Durga Puja.

The incident has drawn serious public attention, especially due to allegations of the involvement of a local BJP leader in the mob.

Bishnu Acharjee, Seva Pramukh of the RSS Tinsukia District Committee and a shop owner in Ledo, was reportedly assaulted by a group of youths who vandalized his shop, beat him severely, and took him to a nearby location where the attack continued. The assailants allegedly accused him of

"harming the unity and brotherhood" of the Ledo area because of his association with the RSS.

According to Acharjee, the mob included local BJP leader Bappi Sarkar along with others. Fearing for his safety, Acharjee fled to Dibrugarh and narrated the incident to the media. He has since filed an FIR at the Ledo police outpost but remains too frightened to reopen his shop.

Sources suggest that the incident may have been triggered by Acharjee's objection to a youth from a particular community staying overnight at a Durga Puja pandal in Ledo Durga Bari.

The timing of the attack during the centenary celebrations of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has raised concerns within RSS circles and among the public. It has also sparked questions about the safety of RSS members under a BJP-led government at both the state and central levels.

As of three days after the incident, no arrests or detentions have been made, and the Margherita Co-District administration and police have yet to take action, according to sources.

Body recovered

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, Oct 4: The body of a youth was found floating on the River Brahmaputra on Saturday morning. The body was recovered near Tinkunia embankment by police and sent for postmortem.

The deceased has been identified as 22-year-old Nabin Choudhury, a resident of Majjan.

According to information, Nabin had gone missing for last several days while playing football on a field close to the banks of the Brahmaputra River.

"The football rolled into the river and Nabin tried to retrieve it and suddenly, he slipped into the river and swept away by the strong current," said a local resident.

Despite, search operations by SDRF and locals, his whereabouts were found after he went missing into the river.

Foundation stone laid for Sakhi Niwas



HT Correspondent
GUWAHATI, Oct 4: A significant step towards women's empowerment and inclusive development was marked on Saturday at Silcoorie, Silchar, with the foundation stone laying of Sakhi Niwas, a Working Women's Hostel under the Assam Government's Mission Shakti scheme.

The ceremony was led by Kaushik Rai, Minister for Food, Public Distribution & Consumer Affairs, Mines & Minerals, and Barak Valley Development, in the presence of Silchar MP Parimal Suklabaidya, Cachar Deputy Commissioner Mridul Yadav, IAS, and other dignitaries.

Speaking at the event, Minister

Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan launched in 19 tribal villages of Howraghat

Centre initiates grassroots development under 'Tribal Village Vision-2030'



HT Correspondent
HOWRAGHAT, Oct 4: The Union Government has launched a special tribal development programme in 19 villages of Howraghat, Karbi Anglong, as part of the nationwide 'Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan'.

The initiative was formally approved during special village meetings held on October 2, coinciding with Gandhi Jayanti. Spearheaded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the programme aims to prepare a comprehensive

'Tribal Village Vision-2030', aligned with the broader national goal of building a developed India by 2047.

Following district and development zone-level training, village-level planning has begun in the first phase. This includes needs assessment, mapping, and the establishment of Adi Seva Kendras in each village.

The scheme is being implemented in the Howraghat Development Block under the leadership of Block Develop-

ment Officer Champak Sharma. Sharma stated that through these Adi Seva Kendras, tribal villagers will be able to communicate their needs directly to relevant departments, which will be expected to address them promptly.

Part of a larger national campaign targeting 100,000 villages, the programme also seeks to empower local youth and self-help group members to contribute actively to community development and social progress.

Petrol pump sealed for operating without trade license

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Oct 4: In a significant crackdown on regulatory violations, the Nagaon district administration sealed an Indian Oil petrol pump at Uriagaon, on the outskirts of Nagaon town, for operating without a trade license and other irregularities.

The action followed a written complaint from a concerned citizen. District Commissioner Debashish Sarma personally led the raid at M/s Highway Carriers Refilling Center on Saturday evening. The inspection revealed the absence of a valid trade license and other mandatory documents.

The petrol pump, reportedly operated by a woman entrepreneur from outside Assam, had been handed over by Indian Oil Limited without obtaining clearance from the district administration. Authorities also

raised concerns over the authenticity of her signature on the trade license application.

Further, the pump lacked a valid calibration certificate from the Legal Metrology Department, required for accurate fuel dispensing. Staff failed to produce the document during the inspection.

DC Sarma stated that the action was necessary due to non-compliance with regulatory norms and stressed that all petrol pump operators must follow established guidelines. He warned that strict action would be taken against any fuel outlet found engaged in malpractice, including tampering with weights and measures.

The incident has underscored the importance of tighter monitoring of fuel stations to safeguard consumer rights in the district.

Adi Sewa Parv observed with focus on tribal empowerment



HT Bureau
DIPHU, Oct 4: The nationwide Adi Sewa Parv was actively observed in Karbi Anglong from September 19 to October 2, with the district administration and council authorities jointly organising various activities aimed at empowering tribal communities.

Seventeen Village Development Committees (VDCs) held Special Gram Sabhas, where Adi Sewa Kendras single-window citizen service centres were established. These centres will facilitate voluntary contributions of "Adi Sewa Samay," where villagers dedicate an hour weekly to community service.

As part of the campaign, a transect walk was conducted in each village, led by Gaon Buras, departmental officials, SHG members, and Adi Saathis. The walks aimed to assess local issues and resources, which will contribute to creating village maps and tailored development plans. The initiative, part of the broader Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan, promotes community-driven development and aligns with the vision of Viksit Bharat, fostering inclusive and participatory governance.

NFR installs Ticket and Water Vending Machines at GHY Station

36 Water Vending Machines have been installed at 13 stations

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Oct 4: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has introduced new passenger-friendly amenities at Guwahati Railway Station with the installation of Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATVMs) and Water Vending Machines (WVMs). The facilities were inaugurated on 03 October 2025 by Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager of NFR.

As part of NFR's broader modernisation initiative, over 100 ATVMs are being installed across major stations to simplify and speed up the ticketing process. These machines offer an easy-to-use interface for purchasing unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season tickets. By supporting digital payments, the ATVMs reduce queues at ticket counters and



promote cashless transactions under the Digital India initiative. In parallel, 36 Water Vending Machines have been installed at 13 stations, including Guwahati, to

provide passengers with clean, safe, and affordable drinking water round the clock. The machines encourage passengers to refill their own containers, promoting environmental sustainability. Water is available at just ₹ 3 per half-litre for refills and ₹ 5 when using a container, with on-site water quality testing facilities ensuring hygiene and safety.

Speaking at the launch, Shrivastava noted that these developments will significantly enhance the travel experience for passengers. He also mentioned that Guwahati station is currently developing sleeping pods, expected to be ready by December, to further improve passenger comfort.

With the addition of ATVMs and WVMs, NFR is taking major strides towards modernising railway infrastructure, improving operational efficiency, and supporting eco-conscious travel while ensuring convenience for lakhs of daily passengers.

Youth and community unite to celebrate Gandhi Jayanti

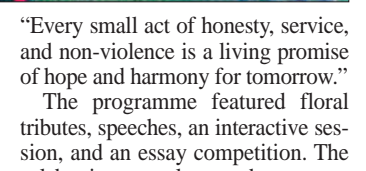
HT Correspondent
MORIGAO, Oct 4: In a heartfelt tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, Career Forum NGO, Bakalia, in collaboration with MY Bharat: Mera Yuva Bharat (Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam) under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India, successfully organised the Gandhi Jayanti celebration at Sokraghat English High School, Karbi Anglong.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, youth, teachers, community members, and volunteers, who came together to honour Mahatma Gandhi's enduring ideals of truth, non-violence, cleanliness, and simplicity.

Representatives of Career Forum NGO emphasised that the celebration was not only an occasion to remember Gandhiji's pivotal role in India's freedom struggle, but also a reminder to incorporate his values into every-

day life. On this occasion, Mithilesh Kumar Singh, Secretary of Career Forum NGO, attended the event and inspired the youth to follow the path of truth, service, and non-violence. He stated,

"Every small act of honesty, service, and non-violence is a living promise of hope and harmony for tomorrow." The programme featured floral tributes, speeches, an interactive session, and an essay competition. The celebration not only spread awareness about Gandhian philosophy but also highlighted the importance of community participation and youth leadership in building a peaceful and united society.



EDITOR'S PICK

Bihar 2025: Will the state break free from caste politics?

By: Sarvesh Tiwari

As Bihar approaches the 2025 Assembly elections, the political cauldron is once again simmering. Caste equations, regional loyalties, the cult of political personalities, and the endless "Tu-Tu, Mai-Mai" exchanges between the NDA-led ruling alliance and the RJD-led Mahagathabandhan dominate speeches, rallies, and media debates. Yet, beneath this shrill din of political rivalry lies a quieter but far more significant aspiration among millions of Biharis—especially migrant workers and the state's restless youth. They are not looking for clever one-liners or recycled promises but for something more substantial: jobs, industries, and socio-economic opportunities that could reduce the compulsion to migrate for survival.

This contrast embodies Bihar's paradox. It is a state of politically sharp and aware voters—descendants of Chanakya's land—who understand the mechanics of power and bargaining better than most. And yet, the political discourse remains locked in the grammar of caste, slowing down the much-needed transition towards an economy-centered debate. The 2025 elections, therefore, are not just about power-sharing; they are about whether Bihar can decisively move away from its "BIMARU" tag and place development at the center of its future.

Caste: The Old Grammar of Bihar Politics

Caste remains an inseparable part of Bihar's electoral script. Political parties and alliances continue to frame strategies around caste arithmetic, mobilising communities through identity, representation, and the promise of empowerment. The 2023 Bihar caste survey offers a clear breakdown: Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) constitute 36 per cent, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) 27 per cent, Scheduled Castes about 20 per cent, Scheduled Tribes 1.6 per cent, and upper castes 15.5 per cent. Muslims make up 17.7 per cent and often align within backward caste groupings.

This structure is not a recent invention—it has deep historical roots. In the 1930s, the Triveni Sangh—a coalition of Yadavs, Kurmis, and Koeris—sought to assert backward caste rights. Karpooi Thakur's 1978 reservation policy institutionalised quotas for OBCs, giving caste-based mobilisation new legitimacy. The Mandal Commission implementation in 1990 further empowered backward classes, propelling leaders like Lalu Prasad Yadav to dominance. His Muslim-Yadav (MY) alliance controlled Bihar's politics in the 1990s, building power through the politics of social justice rather than economic development. Bihar is not unique in using caste as an electoral base, but its depth and persistence here make it decisive. Caste arithmetic shapes alliances, determines candidate selection, and often seals electoral outcomes even before campaigns begin.

Yet, to reduce Bihar's electorate to caste alone is an oversimplification. Since Nitish Kumar's rise in 2005, governance, infrastructure, and targeted welfare have begun to matter. Sub-categorisation of EBCs, schemes for women and girls, roads, schools, and law-and-order improvements have shaped voting behavior. Voters rewarded performance in 2010 and 2015, showing that while caste remains a starting point, governance cannot be ignored. This reflects Bihar's political maturity: identity matters, but delivery matters too.

Migration: Bihar's Unspoken Election Issue

Perhaps the starkest sign of Bihar's economic gap is its scale of migration. Lakhs of young men leave every year for Delhi, Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and southern states to work in construction, factories, and services. The 2011 Census already flagged Bihar as one of the highest out-migration states, with over 7 per cent of its population working outside. The trend has only intensified.

For families, remittances sent home are lifelines. They sustain consumption, fund children's education, and often build houses in villages. Yet the social cost is profound. Children grow up without fathers, women shoulder household burdens alone, and villages lose their most productive age groups.

Migration can support households, but at this scale it highlights the state's failure to generate local opportunities. Any serious political pitch in 2025 must therefore address jobs and livelihoods. Promises that ignore employment generation will fail to resonate with the state's youth, whose central demand is dignity of work at home.

Bihar's Progress and Its Limits

To be fair, Bihar is not where it was in the 1990s. The state has reported impressive GSDP growth of 8.64 per cent in recent years, often above the national average. Roads, bridges, and rural electrification have expanded dramatically. School enrollments have risen, and welfare schemes have reached deeper than ever before. Law and order—once the state's Achilles' heel—has improved. Nitish Kumar's long tenure deserves much credit. His governments, often in partnership with central schemes, have expanded infrastructure and social delivery. These gains explain why Nitish continues to hold political relevance despite shifting alliances. But the limits are equally stark. Economic growth has not translated into industrialisation or large-scale job creation. Agriculture continues to employ most Biharis, but landholdings are fragmented and productivity remains low. Private investment is minimal compared to states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, or Tamil Nadu. In short, Bihar's growth has been broad but shallow—improving lives but not transforming the economic base.

The Shadow of BIMARU

Despite improvements, the old "BIMARU" tag still lingers. Bihar's literacy rate is around 74.3 per cent, below the national average of 80.9 per cent. Female literacy, at just 51.5 per cent, remains among the lowest in India. Health indicators, though improved, continue to trail. Infant mortality, malnutrition, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure undermine human capital. These gaps matter because industries require skilled, healthy workers. Without investment in people-through education, vocational training, and healthcare—industrial growth cannot take off. For Bihar, human capital is not a side issue; it is the precondition for escaping its low-development trap.

A Legacy of Political Awareness

Bihar has always been a land of reforms and resistance. From the Champaran Satyagraha to the JP Movement, it has repeatedly produced movements that reshaped India's politics. This legacy ensures that Bihar voters are anything but naive. They punish governments that fail to deliver and reward those that provide visible benefits.

Political Acumen to Economic Dignity

The challenge before Bihar's next government is clear: to gradually move the state from identity-centered politics to development-centered governance. Caste no longer overshadows the urgency of jobs, industries, and skills.

To shed the BIMARU label and claim economic dignity, Bihar needs a four-pronged strategy:

* **Job Creation and Industrial Growth:** The state must incentivise labor-intensive industries—textiles, agro-processing, food processing, and small-scale manufacturing. Clear land-use policies, reliable electricity, and simplified regulations can attract investors. MSMEs, which employ a large workforce, should be given targeted support.

* **Human Capital Development:** Schools, vocational training centers, and skill hubs linked to industry clusters must be scaled up. Special focus on women's education can unlock massive economic potential. Universities and technical institutions should align with modern industry needs.

* **Infrastructure and Governance:** Expanding road, rail, and digital connectivity across districts can reduce regional imbalances. Governance reforms should make "ease of doing business" a reality, reducing red tape and corruption that deter investors.

* **Balanced Regional Growth:** Development must not remain concentrated in Patna and select urban centers.

The 2025 Test

The Bihar Assembly elections of 2025 are not just another battle of alliances or leadership rivalries. They are a test of whether Bihar's politics can rise above the comfort of caste arithmetic and personality cults. The state's youth—restless, aspirational, and mobile—wants something different: jobs at home, industries that pay, and a life where migration is an option, not a compulsion.

Nitish Kumar's governments have laid foundations—improving law and order, roads, and welfare delivery. But the next stage requires a bigger leap, one that marries Bihar's political acumen with economic dignity. Bihar's soil has always produced sharp minds, from Chanakya to JP. The time has come for its leaders to channel that wisdom not just to win elections but to build a prosperous, dignified Bihar.

The Role of Youth in Assam's Social Transformation

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The story of Assam has always been deeply intertwined with the voice, passion, and resilience of its youth. From the early days of social and cultural awakening to the present age of rapid globalization, young people of the state have consistently played a defining role in shaping the course of its destiny. Their energy has been the driving force behind movements of resistance, reform, and renewal, and their aspirations have continuously guided the region toward reimagining its future. As Assam navigates the challenges of modern times—cultural identity, economic transitions, environmental concerns, and social equity—the role of youth in its social transformation remains central, acting as both a reflection of societal change and a catalyst for further progress.

The historical memory of Assam reveals that the youth have always stood at the forefront whenever the society demanded courage, innovation, or reform. The legacy of the student community in the shaping of Assamese society is particularly significant. The Assam Students' Conference held in the early twentieth century brought together young voices who later played defining roles in strengthening Assamese identity and culture. From contributing to the freedom struggle against colonial rule to organizing social and cultural renaissance movements, the youth established themselves as agents of transformation, standing against injustice and advocating for a society rooted in equality and dignity. This legacy has passed down generations and continues to define the contours of social action in the state.

The youth's role in Assam's cultural transformation is especially remarkable. The modern Assamese identity has been constantly negotiated and reinforced through cultural expressions led by young minds. The rise of literary movements, the flowering of theatre, and the creation of musical traditions have all seen young Assamese taking the lead. Icons like Jyotiprasad Agarwala, Bishunprasad Rabha, and Bhupen Hazarika, though remembered today as towering figures, were themselves young voices when they ignited new cultural sensibilities. Their commitment to social justice and equality found expression in literature, music, and drama, showing that transformation in Assam has always been both cultural and political, and youth have been the bridge connecting the two. Even today, contemporary young artists, writers, and performers continue to question social inequalities, celebrate cultural heritage, and bring new forms of creativity that reassert Assam's uniqueness in the global cultural landscape.

Another sphere where youth have acted as transformative agents is the realm of

politics and mass movements. The Assam Movement of the late 1970s and 1980s is a reminder of how student leadership can reshape the political landscape. Though deeply complex and controversial in its outcomes, it reflected the enormous influence of youth power in demanding accountability, asserting identity, and reshaping governance. Beyond movements, many young leaders have entered mainstream politics, civil society, and community organizations, where they continue to influence policy and discourse. Their presence is not without challenges, for the volatile nature of political agitation often risks being exploited by vested interests. Yet, the consistent participation of youth in political discourse demonstrates their irrefutable desire to influence the course of Assam's future.

The social transformation of Assam cannot be discussed without considering education, where the youth play both roles—as seekers and as reformers. Institutions like Cotton University, Gauhati University, Tezpur University, Dibrugarh University, and countless colleges have historically been breeding grounds for fresh ideas, debates, and activism. Student unions and campus collectives have long been spaces where questions of social justice, environmental protection, women's rights, and cultural preservation are debated with intensity. At the same time, young Assamese professionals returning from other states and abroad have infused global experiences into the local framework, blending traditional knowledge with modern approaches to social change. The exchange of ideas between the local and the global is largely facilitated by the youth, making them the architects of a more inclusive and forward-looking society.

One of the most defining aspects of contemporary Assamese society is its engagement with issues of identity and diversity, and here too, the youth have played a pivotal role. Assam is home to a mosaic of ethnicities, languages, and faiths, and navigating this diversity has always been both a challenge and a strength. Young activists, writers, and entrepreneurs are increasingly championing inclusivity, bridging divides, and celebrating plurality. While inter-community tensions have at times marred Assam's social harmony, it is largely through youth-led initiatives that narratives of coexistence and peace-building gain momentum. Youth forums, cultural exchanges, and grassroots organizations led by young leaders are reshaping dialogues around identity from confrontation to collaboration, thus fostering a more cohesive society.

Equally significant is the role of youth in addressing economic and developmental challenges. Assam's economy, though rich in natural resources, has often struggled

with underdevelopment, unemployment, and migration. For decades, the lack of adequate employment opportunities led to frustration among the youth, but in recent years, a new spirit of entrepreneurship has begun to emerge. Young entrepreneurs are venturing into fields such as information technology, agri-business, eco-tourism, and creative industries, showing that economic transformation is possible when fresh ideas meet determination. Start-ups, community-based enterprises, and digital initiatives are not only generating employment but also reimagining Assam's economic potential in harmony with its environment and culture. By embracing innovation while retaining their connection to the land, young Assamese are gradually rewriting the economic narrative of the region.

The environmental dimension of Assam's social transformation is another space where the youth have taken on a leadership role. Situated in the ecologically fragile Brahmaputra valley, Assam constantly faces the challenges of floods, erosion, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. For a state whose identity is deeply tied to its natural environment, the struggle to preserve ecology is also a struggle to preserve culture and livelihood. Youth-led environmental movements, from tree plantation drives to campaigns against poaching in Kaziranga, reflect the growing awareness among young people of their responsibility toward sustainable development. Social media has become a powerful tool in this regard, allowing youth to amplify ecological concerns, raise awareness about climate change, and mobilize communities for environmental justice. Their activism, often rooted in science but guided by cultural sensitivity, is shaping a more sustainable vision for Assam's future.

The youth's engagement with social issues such as gender equality, rights of marginalized communities, and human trafficking has also brought new momentum to Assam's transformation. Women-led student bodies and youth collectives are increasingly vocal about the need for gender justice, breaking taboos, and pushing for greater participation of women in public life. Simultaneously, youth organizations are actively working against the menace of human trafficking, substance abuse, and domestic violence, which have long haunted Assamese society. By refusing to remain silent, the youth have pushed these issues into the public sphere, demanding structural and policy-level changes that can ensure justice and dignity for vulnerable groups.

Technology and digital platforms have added a new dimension to the role of youth in social change. The rise of social media activism, online campaigns, and digital journalism has created spaces where young Assamese can voice their

opinions instantly and mobilize support across borders. The digital generation of Assam is not confined by geography, and their ability to connect with global movements while articulating local concerns gives them an unprecedented advantage. From climate strikes to cultural preservation initiatives, digital activism has allowed Assamese youth to become global citizens while staying rooted in their immediate realities. The transformative potential of this digital engagement is immense, for it democratizes voices and ensures that social transformation is not confined to elite spaces but is participatory and inclusive.

Yet, the role of youth in Assam's social transformation is not without contradictions and challenges. Economic uncertainty, political manipulation, and social unrest often threaten to derail youthful energy into directions that may not always lead to constructive outcomes. The risks of radicalization, communal polarization, and disillusionment are real, and they highlight the importance of guidance, mentorship, and systemic reforms. For the youth to sustain their transformative role, society must create enabling environments that nurture creativity, critical thinking, and ethical engagement. Education must be more than rote learning; governance must be transparent and inclusive; and platforms must be created where young voices can engage meaningfully with decision-making processes.

The strength of Assam's youth lies in their ability to blend memory with imagination, heritage with innovation, and tradition with transformation. They carry the memories of past struggles, cultural legacies, and social values, while at the same time imagining a society that is more equitable, progressive, and sustainable. In a world marked by uncertainty and rapid change, the youth of Assam embody hope—not as passive inheritors but as active architects of the future. Their role in social transformation is not a matter of choice but of necessity, for without their participation, Assam's journey toward justice, prosperity, and harmony will remain incomplete.

As Assam moves forward, the task is clear: to harness the creative power of its youth, to provide them with opportunities to thrive, and to recognize them as equal partners in the making of a just and inclusive society. The story of social transformation in Assam is far from finished, but it is evident that the youth will continue to be its most dynamic authors. Their courage, creativity, and conviction remain the state's greatest assets, ensuring that the river of change flowing through the Brahmaputra valley carries with it not just memories of the past but also dreams of a brighter tomorrow.

India moving ahead with Modi's vision

By: Prof Mahesh Chand Gupta

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently turned 75. On this occasion, the nation not only remembered his political journey and achievements but also realized how his foresight and positive thinking gave the country a new direction. Modi's story is not just a political journey; it is also the story of ideas and values that aim to take India on the path of development and pride.

On this occasion, I recall Modi's speech on February 7, 2013, which he delivered at Delhi's Shri Ram College of Commerce as the Chief Minister of Gujarat. I remember that "development, progress, and growth" were the key words of his speech. The way he implemented those very ideas after becoming Prime Minister shows how deeply he had already envisioned the nation's future. Destiny, guided by Modi's positive thinking, placed him at the highest position of power in the country. As a dedicated RSS volunteer, Modi always believed the nation was supreme, and he continues to work in that spirit.

I remember Modi had come to the college to speak on Emerging Business Models in the Global Scenario. I was fortunate to witness that extraordinary occasion. The media regarded that address as one of the five landmark speeches that established Modi as a powerful orator and a national leader. It was my privilege not only to listen to him but also to shake hands with him as he departed. Driven by some inner impulse, I told him, "You will be the Prime Minister, and the nation looks at you with great expectations." Modi said nothing—he just smiled and walked ahead. When he stood up to speak, only one thing occupied his mind: the future of the nation. He began working with India at the center of his thoughts, and continues to do so.

In his speech at the college, Modi used the word development 20 times, challenges 16 times, youth 15 times, growth and opportunity 9 times each, governance 8 times, hope 6 times, brand 5 times, pride 5 times, model 4 times—and friends 180 times. At the time, I did not analyze this, but today, reflecting upon it, I realize the kind of vision Modi held for the nation and the determination he carried to turn it into reality. Even if Modi never personally aspired to become Prime Minister, he certainly harbored the ambition to give wings to India's economy, to achieve high growth, to transform India's destiny through its youth, and to make India a "Vishwaguru" (world teacher). Destiny cleared the path for him to become the Prime Minister precisely for this reason. The speech lasted 75 minutes, but every minute revealed how deeply the spirit of national welfare and future planning was embedded in his mind. He repeatedly emphasized development, progress, and growth. His words carried a clear vision that the 21st century would be the century of knowledge and skills, and India would lead it. He said that to take the nation forward, focus was required on skill, speed, and scale. Today, eleven and a half years later, it is clear that Modi has turned those words into reality.

After becoming Prime Minister, Modi took

'Victory over Evil: Did Ravana really die?'

By: Dr Privanka Saurabh

Dussehra, also known as Vijaydashami, symbolizes the victory of good over evil in our society. The burning of Ravana on this day is said to convey the message of the end of evil and the establishment of righteousness and morality. However, today this festival is becoming merely a means of celebration and entertainment. While effigies of Ravana are burned, the demons of Ravana—crime, vice, and moral degradation—continue to pervade society. Every year on Dussehra, people enthusiastically break and burn effigies of Ravana. The purpose has always been to destroy evil and ensure the triumph of good. However, in modern society, this symbolic act has become merely a visual entertainment. People come to watch, post photos and videos on social media, but make no effort to change the evils prevalent in their lives or society.

In ancient times, Ravana was a wise, powerful, and ethical ruler. He was a devotee of Lord Shiva, a scholar, and a valiant warrior. His one mistake—his lustful abduction of Sita—led to his doom. Ravana's life teaches us that no one can stay on the path of moral degradation by virtue of their wisdom, power, or resources. If ego and lust overwhelm the heart, destruction is certain.

Today's society is also filled with similar Ravana figures. The Ravana of old was merely a figure, while today's Ravana exists in every home, street, city, and village. Crime, murder, rape, domestic violence, bribery, and corruption are constantly on the rise. This is not just a police or law and order issue, but also a sign of society's moral decline. The burning of effigies during our Dussehra festival symbolizes the end of evil. But the reality is that evil has not diminished in society. Today's "Ravanas" are cunning, arrogant, and cruel. They do not hesitate to harm anyone for their own gain. Burning wives for dowry, kidnapping women, rape, and child abuse—these are just a few examples. All of this is happening on a large scale in society.

The Ravana of old chose the path of destruction because of his inner demons and ego. The Ravana of today is even more dangerous, as he uses external power and law to pursue his own selfish ends. He has no respect for morality, honesty, or religion. As a result, the crisis of trust and humanity in society is growing.

The true purpose of Ravana Dahan isn't simply to burn effigies. It teaches us to recognize and overcome our inner Ravanas—faults, negative emotions, and evils. Lasting change in society is impossible until we kill the

ego, hatred, lies, deceit, and lust within us. Your poem, "Burning Puppets Ask..." beautifully conveys this message. It shows that effigies are burned, but the real Ravana continues to grow in society. Ravana is killed every year, but the Ravana grows elsewhere in our hearts. This means that external celebrations are merely symbolic, while the real battle must be waged within us.

Today's society is educated and aware, yet evils are on the rise. Crime, rape, domestic violence, corruption, and immoral trade—all are examples of modern Ravanas. Children and youth are particularly affected. If we simply enjoy the Ravana Dahan celebrations without making real efforts to combat evil, the festival will become an empty symbol.

The true meaning of Dussehra is realized when we destroy our inner vices. True victory lies in recognizing and eliminating these—lies, deceit, ego, lust, and hatred. This is not only the path to social and moral reform, but also to personal progress.

Ravana's life is deeply instructive. He was a great scholar, but was destroyed by ego and lust. This lesson is crucial for today's society. We must understand that external symbols can only guide; real change must come from within. Change in society is possible only through the efforts of individuals. Parents, teachers, senior members of society, and policymakers must all work together to sow the seeds of moral education, virtue, and humanity in young people and children. Only then can the true message of Dussehra—the triumph of good over evil—be realized.

If we want the festival of Ravana Dahan to be more than just a burning of effigies, we must eradicate the lies, deceit, arrogance, and hatred within ourselves. We must overcome the crime and immorality prevalent within our society. Only then will Dussehra become not just a celebration, but a true symbol of social reform and morality. Today, Ravana is not just the name of a person, but a symbol of all the evils prevalent in society that harm relationships, family, and social life. Until we destroy these Ravanas within ourselves and in society, Dussehra will continue to lose its true meaning. Ultimately, this should not be merely a symbolic festival, but an opportunity for introspection and reform. Burning effigies only reminds us that Ravana's end is necessary, but true victory is possible only over the evils within ourselves and in society.

If we fail to understand this message, the annual killing of Ravana on Dussehra will remain merely a spectacle, and the real Ravanas will continue to multiply in society.

Short Story Happy Times

By: Meenakshi Gogoi

Durga Puja was around the corner, and the local bazaars were lit up, stocks of earthen colourful pots, piles of artificial hibiscus made garlands, red churning in bunches, and varieties of puja items were hugely displayed at the shops. Priyom felt ecstatic to welcome the saradiyo puja, goddess Durga's arrival in her hometown. The tall sewali tree, fully blossomed with a pleasant fragrance near the entrance gate, enhanced the beauty of her house's ambience. Priyom would meet her grandmother and spend her festival days in the village.

After her grandfather's death from old-age health issues and her mother's untimely demise from cardiac arrest, her grandmother had to live with her and her father. They stood the test of time and stayed together to find happiness again. Her father, a doctor, kept busy at his work, more so after her mother's death. Time flew, and Priyom enrolled in college. Soon after, her grandmother left for their ancestral house in the Phoolpanisigha village to look after their ancestral house, the crop fields, vegetable farm, domestic animals, and the fish pond. Raju, the house's caretaker, and his wife Mukta, were there to manage things, but her grandmother wanted to manage everything herself. She wanted Priyom to be independent and look after herself, attaining adulthood. Her grandmother was a strong-willed woman with a high spirit, even in her sixties. Her freedom of thinking and activities was far ahead of many women of her time. She married the man of her choice against her family's wishes, educated herself after marriage, passed the higher sec-

ondary examination, and continued reading literature books in her old age. Priyom knew her headstrong grandmother would stay in her village.

The day of Priyom's departure to the village arrived. She boarded a bus, and after a long day's journey, Priyom reached her ancestral house in the evening. An autorickshaw dropped her off. She spotted her grandmother sitting in the garden. Their eyes met, she walked to her, and they exchanged warm hugs happily. Priyom missed her grandmother's warmth and caressing. Once reached, Priyom quickly freshened up and sat on a chair in the kitchen where her grandmother was preparing the supper. She spotted two wooden baskets filled with their farm's vegetables. The smell of fresh coriander and pudina was aromatic. Soon, Mukta joined her, and they exchanged greetings. Mukta was pregnant with her first child. She felt at home under Priyom's grandmother's love and care. Priyom was served with hot, fluffy puris and potato curry with mouthwatering, spongy rasagullas, and a few slices of a home-made almond cake. Mukta was served, too. Priyom relished the supper and said, "Aaita, the food is delicious. I am loving it." Her grandmother replied, "Thank you, Majoni. Eat with your stomach filled." Raju came from the pond and excitedly said, "Priyom, I have got some Rohu and prawns from our home pond. Today is your village feast time." "Good, I like cauliflower fish curry. Hope Aaita will prepare some for me tonight," snaps Priyom with a smile. And her grandmother happily agreed.

After eating supper, Priyom explored the home garden and was awestruck to see flowering

plants, lady finger, and green chillies growing together in one corner. A few fruit trees of bananas, litchis, papayas, and guavas were growing in the backyard. She was curious to explore her grandmother's room and her new collection of books. Priyom spotted beautiful indoor plants, a windchime, shining crystal vases, and eye-catching paintings adorning her room. The embroidered bedsheets with soft, fluffy pillows reminded her of childhood days when her grandmother used bedsheets embroidered by her. The bedsheets purchased from the shops hardly get to exhibit their fabric and beauty on her bed. Priyom spotted Assamese magazines, novels, and a gift beautifully wrapped on her desk table. From the window, Priyom spotted Mukta reading a book in her small quarter, sitting and leaning comfortably with her back on a heavy pillow on the bed.

Priyom went and knocked on the half-opened door, and Mukta welcomed her. Mukta was reading the epic Ramayana. Priyom asked, "Baideo, do you like to read epics?" Mukta replied, "I like reading epics to attain patience and perseverance to lead my life. I want my baby to attain good knowledge in my womb." "That's quite a spiritual thought," said Priyom. She asked again, "Do you believe babies can learn inside the womb?" Mukta replied, "Yes, I believe. I am seven months pregnant and can feel my baby's moves inside me, listening to me."

Raju entered the room and interrupted their conversation to call them for dinner. Priyom relished a delicious meal with hot rice, cauliflower-fish gravy, cabbage, fritters, jaggery, and a salad. Post-dinner talks, Raju and Mukta went to sleep. Priyom

went to bed with her grandmother and received a gift from her, which Priyom had seen kept at her desk table. She was glad to receive a short story collection by a budding Assamese writer. Priyom thanked her grandmother, and after a good discussion over the book, they fell asleep.

The next morning, Priyom's grandmother woke up early, bathed, collected and kept fresh flowers and fruits from her garden, put two earthen diyas, a packet of incense sticks, a tiny bottle of oil, and pedas (sweets) inside a colourful, woven basket as offerings to the temple. Priyom accompanied her grandmother. Since childhood, she had seen her grandmother worshipping goddess Durga with great affection and devotion. The light tears flowing down her cheeks during worship symbolised her grandmother's soul connecting to the divine. Priyom's grandmother was not a fast-keeping devotee. But she believed in chanting holy mantras to cleanse the soul from negativity and worrisome thoughts. Priyom worshipped and bowed before the goddess Durga idolo to seek her blessings.

While stepping out of the temple, Priyom saw lines of shops selling various things. Her grandmother entered a clothes shop and purchased three pink, blue, and yellow coloured yarn balls to knit woollen clothes for Mukta's baby. Her grandmother smiled and said, "I want to knit one woollen suit for Mukta's baby. The baby will need it in winter." "That's so sweet of you, Aaita. I always loved your knitted sweaters. Surely, Mukta-baideo would love it," said Priyom. She purchased some hot jalebis and mouthwatering gujiyas. After reaching home, they



sat in the garden. Priyom offered Mukta some temple prasad and jalebis. Raju served them tea. Priyom missed her dead mother and father's company. She thought that if her parents were there, they would have a lovely time together on a pleasant morning. Her grandmother reminisced about her teenage activities during the Puja days. She said she and her friends used to go house to house, collecting flowers and fruits to offer in the temple. They would visit the puja pandals and taste food from different food stalls. Her father asked her to come early after pandal hopping, but Priyom's grandmother would arrive late, breaching her father's protocols, which made him very angry. Her grandmother's fulfilled puja times brought smiles to her face.

Priyom asked, "Aaita, tell me about your first Durga Puja with Grandpa if you remember." Her grandmother's face lit up, and she said, "How could I forget my first Durga Puja after my marriage?" She added, "Your grandfather and I went to a 200-year-old goddess Durga temple across the village river at

a lonely, uninhabited place, a forest surrounded by tall trees and wild bushes." They reached there by boat. The temple door was half-broken. The temple walls and the pavement reaching temple's sanctum were almost deteriorated. The tall stone made goddess Durga idol stood firm and adorned with a red hibiscus flower lace around her neck. The huge bell hung at the temple's front pillar, made a rhythmic, shrill sound with every hit by the cool breeze. The temple pond, filled with water lily blooms, fascinated the visitors. Several newlywed couples like them came there to seek goddess Durga's blessings. Her grandmother wore a handloom-woven mekhela-chador, a red bindi, ornaments, and a bakul lace tied on her hair bun to adorn her newlywed look. Her mother-in-law handed her two earthen diyas to lit in the temple, some hibiscus flowers, and fruits as offerings to worship goddess Durga. They prayed for a lasting marriage. There was no priest, but visitors followed an old tradition of exchanging prasads, and women applied vermilion on each other's faces. It was a

pleasant way to welcome newlywed woman in the temple.

Facing Mukta, Priyom's grandmother asked, "Did you remember we went to the temple after your wedding?" Mukta happily replied, "Of course, Khuri. I can never forget the calmness and spiritual atmosphere inside the temple campus." Raju intervened excitedly, saying, "Yes, I felt the same way." Priyom was curious about visiting the temple but had to hold her horses until marriage.

Priyom had a wonderful time with her grandmother during the Puja days, visiting the pandals and eating food in the stalls. The village fair was eye-catching as children and young, married and unmarried, and older people rejoiced. Priyom accompanied her grandmother in plucking vegetables from their farm and catching fish in the pond. She enjoyed moments with Mukta while her grandmother was happily knitting a woollen suit for Mukta's unborn baby. Priyom treasured the delightful moments in her Sony camera and cell phone to cherish memories once she goes home after spending her Puja days.

Dense Fog

By: Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

Anamika completed her sixty-five years today. Bijoy had woken up early and placed a bouquet of sixty-five red roses on the dressing table beside her. When she rubbed her eyes and looked at them, she smiled faintly. Robert Burns had written, "My love's like a red, red rose." Once upon a time, those lines had carried the fragrance of their own romance. Now, they were memories pressed between the yellowing pages of life's diary. Anamika sighed. "Gone are those days, Bijoya," she murmured. Bijoy, his hair all silver now, adjusted his spectacles and replied softly, "But the love remains, Ami. Only the colours fade a little."

They had reached a stage in life when love had settled into companionship, tender care, and quiet understanding. In the next room, their grandson Rahul's laughter echoed from a video message playing on the phone. The seven-year-old had sent a greeting all the way from London. "Happy Birthday, Deemama! Rahul's voice sparkled with joy. "You are the best Deemama in the world. I love you more than chocolates!"

Anamika's eyes welled up. She touched the phone screen as though caressing the boy's cheeks. To Rahul, she was Deemama; to Bijoy, he was Dadun. These were the names that had stitched their old age with a fresh fabric of affection. Their son, Deepak, was well-settled in London, working as a doctor in one of the city's renowned hospitals. His wife Ragini, also a doctor by profession, had sacrificed her career when she failed to clear the language test required for practice in the UK. She had turned her energy to family and Rahul's upbringing. The couple visited India rarely, and most of the communication with Anamika and Bijoy was through glowing phone screens, voice calls, and hurried video chats.

On this birthday morning, Anamika longed for the warmth of Rahul's hug, the way he once clung to her sari when they visited London three years ago. But such wishes now were like mist on a winter morning—beautiful, yet fleeting, dissolving into the air.

The fog outside was dense that day, a curtain drawn by nature itself. Kolkata's winter mornings often came dressed in haze, but this one seemed unusually heavy. From the balcony, Anamika watched the fog drape the trees, the streetlamps, even the outlines of the nearby houses. Everything blurred, just as memories blur with time. She whispered, "Dense fog, Bijoya. Just like our age. The road ahead is there, but not visible clearly." Bijoy joined her, placing his hand gently over hers. "But fog clears, Ami. The sun always wins, even if it is late." Yet, he knew the fog she referred to was not only outside—it was also within them. The uncertainty of age, the distance of loved ones, the loneliness that crept silently into their evenings. The morning passed with phone calls. Deepak called between his hospital shifts, his voice brisk, hurried. "Happy birthday, Ma! I'll send a gift through Amazon. Take care, and don't skip your medicines."

Ragini's call was warmer. She asked after Anamika's health, whether Bijoy



was managing his blood pressure, whether the domestic help was regular. And then, in her gentle voice, she said, "Ma, Rahul keeps asking when he can visit Deemama and Dadun again. Maybe next summer?"

The words "maybe" and "next summer" floated like soap bubbles—beautiful but fragile. By noon, some neighbours arrived with small gifts and greetings. But once they left, the house sank back into its familiar silence. The roses stood proudly in the vase, yet Anamika felt an ache in her chest. She thought of her youth—her college days when Bijoy first wrote her letters, quoting Burns and Tagore. She thought of their early struggles, of raising Deepak with care and sacrifice. Life had been full then, noisy, demanding. Now it was still, too still. She closed her eyes on the sofa and dozed. When she woke, the fog had thickened again, this time inside her mind. The room appeared hazy. Her thoughts tangled. She called out, "Bijoya?" Bijoy rushed in, alarmed. "What happened, Ami?"

"I... I felt so lost. As if the fog outside entered me." He held her hand. Her palm felt cold. "Don't worry. It's just age. Rest a little." But a shadow of fear passed through his eyes. Evening descended, and with it, the fog grew denser. They had planned a quiet dinner together. Bijoy had even bought a small cake with "65" written on it in pink cream. Lighting a candle, he said, "Make a wish, Ami." She looked at him, her eyes moist. "My wish is the same every year—that we remain together till the end, and that Rahul remembers us even if distance keeps us apart." They cut the cake. Bijoy fed her a small piece. She smiled, but her heart felt heavy. The silence of the house pressed on her ears. "Dense fog," she murmured again.

Later that night, Bijoy suggested, "Let's take a short walk. The fog may be dense, but the air will freshen your mind." They stepped outside, wrapped in woollens. The street was ghostly under the dim lamps. Shapes of trees and rickshaws loomed like shadows. They walked slowly, hand in hand, two silhouettes against the mist. "Remember our walks on the university campus?" Bijoy asked. "We had no money, but plenty of dreams." Anamika chuckled softly. "And you always bought me tea from the road-

side stall. Five paise for two cups." The fog swirled around them, but for a moment, they felt young again. Back home, Anamika grew tired quickly. She sat on the bed and whispered, "Bijoya, life feels like this fog. Sometimes I fear we may lose each other in it." Bijoy kissed her forehead gently. "Even if the fog thickens, Ami, I will hold your hand. We will never lose each other." That night, Anamika dreamed of Rahul running toward her, his laughter piercing the fog. She opened her arms, but the boy dissolved into mist. She woke up with tears on her cheek. The next morning, the sun finally broke through. The fog melted slowly, revealing the brightness of day. Anamika sat by the window, feeling the warmth on her face.

She thought: Life is like this. Days of dense fog, when nothing seems clear, when loneliness chills the bones. Yet, hidden behind it, the sun always waits. She picked up her phone and called Rahul on a video chat. His sleepy little face appeared, hair messy, eyes sparkling. "Deemama! Did you eat cake yesterday? Next time, I will eat with you!" Anamika laughed, her heart filling with sunshine. "Yes, darling. Next time you will eat with me. And you will sing for me too." Behind Rahul, Ragini's gentle voice came: "Happy birthday again, Ma." Anamika turned her eyes to Bijoy, who stood by her side. The fog was clearing—not just outside, but inside her heart too. That evening, she placed the roses in fresh water. The petals were still crimson, their fragrance alive. She whispered Burns' line to herself, "My love's like a red, red rose." The romance of youth might have faded, but a deeper love had taken root—one that survived fog, distance, and time. Anamika held Bijoy's hand. "Dense fog may cover our days, Bijoya, but as long as you are beside me, I will never be lost." Bijoy smiled, his eyes misty but shining. "Nor will I, Ami. Nor will I." And in that moment, as the roses glowed softly in the vase, the fog seemed less threatening, more like a veil of tenderness that wrapped their twilight years. *(The writer of the short story is International Tagore Awardee poet Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee is a former Affiliate Faculty Virginia Commonwealth University USA. Email, profpratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com)*

Echoes of a Promise

(CONTD. ON PRIV ISSUE)

(2)

By: Chafikhur Rahman

Rudra woke before sunrise. The room was still grey and the curtains were like quiet clouds. For a moment he did not know where he was. Then the smell of pine and the soft sound of a far rooster told him: Diphu. He sat up and listened. Somewhere a metal bucket touched a stone floor. Somewhere a bicycle bell rang. The town was waking gently, as if careful not to disturb the hills.

He washed, dressed in a crisp shirt, and went out to the veranda. Cool air touched his face like a hand. The caretaker, who had introduced himself last night as Biren, was already sweeping. He stopped, saluted, and smiled. "Good morning, sa'ab."

"Good morning, Biren. Is there tea?"

"Of course." Biren disappeared and returned with a steel glass of hot tea and two butter biscuits on a plate. "If you want breakfast, I can bring poha from the corner shop. Simple and clean."

"That sounds perfect," Rudra said. He took a sip. The tea was sweet and strong. It warmed him from throat to heart.

"Last night was okay?" Biren asked. "Yes," Rudra said. "I slept well." He paused, remembering the whisper that had not felt like a dream. Then he smiled politely. "The town feels quiet."

Biren nodded, as if he knew a long answer and chose a short one. "Hills are quiet outside," he said. "Inside, they speak."

Rudra looked at him. Biren was not old, but his eyes had the calm of someone who had watched many mornings. "What do they say?" Rudra asked.

Biren gave a small shrug. "They say names. Sometimes the names of people. Sometimes the names of rivers and trees. If we listen, we remember."

Rudra thought of the name he had heard in the dark—Ratneswar—and looked away toward the tall bamboo behind the office wall. "I will try to listen," he said softly.

After a simple breakfast, he walked across the compound to the SP office. The building was old but solid, with thick walls and high windows. The flag rose straight in the morning air. A few constables stood near the gatehouse. They straightened when they saw him.

Inside, his staff gathered to meet him. The Additional SP, a calm man named Prakash Dutta, introduced himself first. Then came the DSP (Headquarters), a young woman with sharp eyes named Mitali Saikia; the traffic inspector, tall and soft-spoken; two clerks with careful handwriting; a computer operator who kept pressing his spectacles up his nose. They all looked a little nervous, a little curious, as people do when a new captain takes charge of a ship.

Rudra shook hands and smiled. He did not want to be the kind of officer who made the air heavy. "I am new to



these hills," he said. "So, teach me. If I am wrong, correct me. If I am slow, nudge me. We will work together."

The words seemed to relax everyone. Shoulders dropped. Smiles grew easier. The staff led him on a quick tour: reception, records room, wireless, the small lock-up that was empty this morning, the canteen that smelled of cardamom and fried bread.

When they reached the records room, a dust smell rose like a shy animal. The door creaked. Files slept on metal racks, tied with cotton tape, their edges brown. A small fan turned slowly, more out of habit than power. A peon named Biku stood on a stool, counting bundles, and got down quickly when he saw the SP.

Rudra stood in the doorway. For a second, without knowing why, he felt he should step inside and pull a file from the third rack on the left, near the back, where the dust was thickest. He almost saw his hand doing it. Then he stopped. There was no reason. And he did not want to start his first hour by sneezing a storm of dust. He gave a simple instruction: "Make a list of the oldest unsolved cases. Put them on my table by evening."

"Yes, sa'ab," said Biku, pleased to have a clear task.

In his office, Rudra signed a few papers, answered a call from the range DIG, and discussed a petty theft case from the weekly reports. He kept his voice even, his sentences short. He was careful to make no big promises on the first morning. He believed in quiet beginnings.

At ten, his phone buzzed with a message from the DC's office. Madam will reach at 10:30. If you are free, please come for a courtesy call. He typed back: On my way at 10:25. He checked the time. It was 10:07. He felt a little foolish for feeling a small excitement at the thought of seeing Kaberi in daylight, in an office, with files and flags and staff. He told himself it was only professional. Two new officers should build a good working link. That was all.

He left at 10:20 with the Additional SP. The road to the DC office passed a school, a small market where women sat with baskets of green vegetables, and a field where two boys tried to teach a puppy to fetch a stick. The puppy preferred to chew the stick and roll on the grass. The boys chased it,

laughing.

The DC office stood behind a clean white gate and an old banyan tree. A bell hung on the tree trunk, not for prayer but perhaps for calling staff in old days. It was polished by many hands. Rudra touched it lightly with his fingertips as he passed. The metal was cool.

Inside, the reception hall was bright. Posters on the wall showed government schemes with smiling faces and large numbers. A map of Karbi Anglong took up one side. A wooden board listed the names of all past Deputy/District Commissioners. The list went back many years. The letters looked like a river of time.

Kaberi met them at the door of her chamber. She wore a cream handloom saree with a thin blue border. Her hair was in a neat bun again, with a small pin like a dot of silver. In the morning light, her face looked fresh, a little less guarded than last evening on the road.

"Welcome," she said. "Please, come in." Her voice was firm and warm at the same time. She shook hands with both men and asked them to sit. Tea arrived—the kind in white cups on small saucers, with sugar in a glass bowl. A plate of puffed rice and small laddoos sat in the middle.

They spoke for a while of simple things: road repairs, a health camp next week, a school that needed a boundary wall, the festival calendar. Rudra noticed how Kaberi listened when others spoke. She looked at the person, not the paper. She made notes quickly, but she did not look down until the speaker finished. When she spoke, she used plain words. She did not push her weight. Yet the room seemed to settle around her like a well-balanced load.

At the end of the meeting, the Additional SP left to make a few calls. Kaberi and Rudra stood by the window for a minute. Outside, two mynas hopped on the grass, arguing. A gardener watered a row of marigolds. The water made an arc like a clear ribbon.

"Thank you for driving together last evening," Kaberi said, looking at the garden. "It was a kind start."

"It felt like the right thing," he said. He did not know how to speak about the other feeling—the sense of knowing her eyes from another season. So, he did not speak of it.

(Contd. on Next Issue)

Italy already saw more than 2 million people rally on Friday Thousands march in Barcelona to protest Israel's war in Gaza

BARCELONA, Oct 4: Tens of thousands of people are marching in Barcelona as Spain, Italy and Portugal gear up for mass demonstrations on Saturday to protest Israel's war in Gaza.

Protests in Spain's second-largest city as well as in Madrid were called for weeks ago, while calls for demonstrations in Rome and Lisbon followed widespread anger after the Israeli interception of a humanitarian aid flotilla that had set sail from Barcelona, trying to break the blockade of the Palestinian territory.

Over 40 Spaniards, including a former Barcelona mayor, are among the 450 activists that Israel removed from the flotilla's boats this week.

Italy already saw more than 2 million people rally on Friday across the country in a one-day general strike to support the residents of Gaza.

Spain has seen an upsurge of support for Palestinians in recent weeks while its left-wing government intensifies diplomatic efforts against the far-right government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

Protests against the presence of an Israeli-owned cycling team reportedly disrupted the Spanish Vuelta last month, while Spanish



Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez called the destruction in Gaza a "genocide" and asked for the ban of all Israeli teams from international sporting events.

The calls for protests in Southern Europe come as Hamas said it has accepted some elements of the plan laid out by US President Donald Trump to end the two-year war, which has left Gaza's largest city in famine and stirred accusations of genocide against Israel.

Barcelona's town hall said police estimated that 70,000 turned out for Saturday's demonstration.

People packed Barcelona's wide Passeig de Gracia, the city's main central boulevard. Many families turned out, along with people of all ages. Protesters carried Palestinian flags or wore t-shirts supporting Palestine. Hand-held signs bore messages like "Gaza hurts me," "Stop the Genocide," and "Hands off the flotilla."

While the protests will likely not sway Israel's government, protesters hope they could inspire other demonstrations and encourage European leaders to take a harder line against Israel.

María Jesús Parra, 63, carried a Palestinian flag high after making an hourlong trip from her home in another town to Barcelona. She wants the European Union to act against what she described as the horrors she watches on televised news on a daily basis.

"How is it possible that we are witnessing a genocide happening live after what we (as Europe) experienced in the 1940s?" Parra said. "Now nobody can say they didn't know what was happening."

The protests in Rome, Madrid and Lisbon are to follow later on Saturday. There are also protests called across many other Spanish cities.

The war in Gaza started after Hamas' attack on Southern Israel on October 7, 2023, which left around 1,200 people dead, while 251 others were taken hostage. Israel's retaliatory military offensive in Gaza has so far killed over 67,000 people and wounded nearly 1,70,000 others, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government. UN agencies and many independent experts view its figures as the most reliable estimate of wartime casualties. (AP)

Sean 'Diddy' Combs gets 4 years in prison for case involving sex workers, violence, 'freak-offs'



NEW YORK, Oct 4: Sean 'Diddy' Combs was sentenced Friday to four years and two months in prison for transporting people across state lines for sexual encounters, capping a sordid federal case that featured harrowing testimony and ended in a forceful reckoning for one of the most influential figures in hip-hop.

Since Combs has already served a year in jail, the sentence means that the 55-year-old could get out in about three years. While prosecutors sought a sentence of more than 11 years, his lawyers wanted him freed immediately and said the time behind bars had already forced his remorse and sobriety.

Combs was convicted in July of flying his girlfriends and male sex workers around the country to engage in drug-fueled sexual encounters in multiple places and over many years. However, he was acquitted of sex trafficking and racketeering charges that could have put him behind bars for life.

"Why did it happen so long?" US District Judge Arun Subramanian asked as he handed down the sentence. "Because you had the power and the resources to keep it going, and because you weren't caught."

Subramanian, who also fined Combs USD 500,000,

the maximum allowed, praised the accusers who testified at trial. They effectively spoke for countless others who experienced abuse, the judge said, "You gave them a voice. You stood up to power."

Combs, sitting at the defence table, looked straight ahead as the judge spoke. He remained subdued afterward and appeared dejected, with none of the enthusiasm and smiles he displayed while interacting with his lawyers and family earlier in the day.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry," he said to his family right before leaving the courtroom.

Combs' lawyers said they'll appeal.

"What we feel today is that the judge acted as a 13th juror, one we did not choose, and that he second-guessed the jury's verdict," defense lawyer Marc Agnifilo told reporters after leaving court.

Before sentencing, Combs wept as his defense lawyers played a video portraying his family life, career and philanthropy, and he went on to make a plea for leniency.

"I ask your honour for a chance to be a father again," Combs said, "a son again ... a leader in my community again ... for a chance to get the help that I desperately need to be a better person." He apologised to the people he hurt physically and mentally with his "disturbing, shameful" actions, and said the domestic violence was a burden he would carry for the rest of his life.

His nearly two-month trial in a federal court in Manhattan featured testimony from women who said Combs beat, threatened, sexually assaulted and blackmailed them. Prosecutor Christy Slavik told the judge Friday that sparing Combs serious prison time would excuse years of violence.

"It's a case about a man who did horrible things to real people to satisfy his own sexual gratification," she said. "His currency was control. And he weaponised that currency to devastating effects on the victims." (AP)

Police question 6 suspects over deadly Manchester synagogue attack



LONDON, Oct 4: Police on Saturday were questioning six people arrested on suspicion of terror offenses after an attack on a synagogue in northwest England that left two men dead and Britain's Jewish community shocked and grieving.

Jihad Al-Shamie, 35, was shot dead by police on Thursday outside the Heaton Park Congregation Synagogue in Manchester after he rammed a car into pedestrians, attacked them with a knife and tried to force his way into the building.

Congregation members Melvin Cravitz, 66, and Adrian Daulby, 53, died in the attack on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year. Police say Daulby was accidentally shot by an armed officer as he and other congregants barricaded the synagogue to block Al-Shamie from entering.

Three other men are hospitalised with serious injuries.

Detectives say Al-Shamie, a British citizen of Syrian origin who lived in Manchester, may have been influenced by "extreme Islamist ideology." He wore what appeared to be an explosives belt, which was found to be fake.

Police said Al-Shamie was on bail over an alleged rape at the time of the attack but had not been charged.

Three men and three women,

aged between 18 and their 60s, were arrested in the greater Manchester area on suspicion of the "commission, preparation and instigation of acts of terrorism," as police work to determine whether the attacker acted alone.

The attack has devastated Britain's Jewish community and intensified debate about the line between criticism of Israel and antisemitism.

Recorded antisemitic incidents in the UK have risen sharply since Hamas' October 7, 2023 attack on Israel and Israel's ensuing war against Hamas in Gaza, according to Community Security Trust, a charity that provides advice and protection for British Jews.

Some politicians and religious leaders claimed pro-Palestinian demonstrations, which have been held regularly since the war in Gaza began, had played a role in spreading hatred of Jews. The protests have been overwhelmingly peaceful but some say chants such as "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" incite anti-Jewish hatred.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his supporters have frequently accused critics of Israel or its conduct of the war of antisemitism. Critics see it as an attempt to stifle even legitimate criticism. (AP)

Iran executes 6 death-row inmates it alleges carried out attacks on behalf of Israel

DUBAI (UAE), Oct 4: Iran executed six death-row inmates Saturday it alleged carried out attacks in the country's oil-rich southwest on behalf of Israel, the latest prisoners to be put to death in a wave of executions believed to be the highest in decades.

The executions follow the 12-day Iran-Israel war in June, which ended with Tehran vowing it would target its enemies at home and abroad. However, activists warn Iran often relies on coerced confessions and closed-door trials in its death penalty cases, particularly those involving Israel.

Iran said the men killed police officers and security forces, as well as orchestrated bombings targeting sites around Khorramshahr in Iran's restive Khuzestan province. Their names weren't immediately recognisable and Iranian state television aired footage of one of the men



talking about the attacks, saying it was the first time the details were being made public.

The Arab population of Khuzestan has long complained of discrimination by Iran's central government, and insurgent groups have attacked oil pipelines there as part of a low-level insurgency. The region also has been roiled like

other parts of Iran in the waves of nationwide protests the country has seen in recent years.

Iran separately put to death another inmate Saturday it accused of killing a Sunni cleric in 2009 in Iran's Kurdistan province, among other crimes.

In response to those protests and the June war, Iran has been putting prisoners to death at a pace unseen since 1988, when it executed thousands at the end of the Iran-Iraq war.

The Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights and the Washington-based Abdorrahman Boroumand Centre for Human Rights in Iran put the number of people executed in 2025 at over 1,000, noting the figure could be higher as Iran does not report on each execution.

Independent human rights experts at the United Nations have also criticised Iran's executions. (AP)

Japan's first female governing-party leader is an ultra-conservative star in male-dominated group

TOKYO, Oct 4: In a country that ranks poorly internationally for gender equality, the new president of Japan's long-governing Liberal Democrats, and likely next prime minister, is an ultra-conservative star of a male-dominated party that critics call an obstacle to women's advancement.

Sanae Takaichi, 64, admires former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and is a proponent of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's conservative vision for Japan. Takaichi is the first female president of Japan's predominantly male ruling party that has dominated Japan's postwar politics almost without interruption.

First elected to parliament from her hometown of Nara in 1993, she has served in key party and government posts, including minister of economic security, internal affairs and gender equality.

Female lawmakers in the conservative Liberal Democratic Party who were given limited ministerial posts have often been shunned as soon as they spoke up about diver-

sity and gender equality. Takaichi has stuck with old-fashioned views favoured by male party heavyweights. Women comprise only about 15 per cent of Japan's lower house, the more powerful of the two parliamentary chambers. Only two of Japan's 47 prefectural governors are women.

A drummer in a heavy-metal band and a motorbike rider as a student, Takaichi has called for a stronger military, more fiscal spending for growth, promotion of nuclear fusion, cybersecurity and tougher policies on immigration.

She vowed to drastically increase female ministers in her government.

But experts say she might actually set back women's advancement because as leader she would have to show loyalty to influential male heavyweights. If not she risks a short-lived leadership.

Takaichi has backed the LDP policy of having women serve in their traditional roles of being good mothers and wives. But she also recently acknowledged her struggles

with menopausal symptoms and stressed the need to educate men about female health to help women at school and work. Takaichi supports the imperial family's male-only succession, opposes same-sex marriage and a revision to the 19th century civil law that would allow separate surnames for married couples so that women don't get pressured into abandoning theirs.

She is a wartime history revisionist and China hawk. She regularly visits Yasukuni Shrine, which Japan's neighbours consider a symbol of militarism, though she has declined to say what she would do as prime minister. Political watchers say her revisionist views of Japan's wartime history may complicate ties with Beijing and Seoul.

Her hawkish stance is also a worry for the LDP's longtime partnership with Komeito, a Buddhist-backed moderate party. While she has said the current coalition is crucial for her party, she says she is open to working with far-right groups. (AP)

Pakistan Govt, protesters sign agreement to end violent protests in PoK



ISLAMABAD, Oct 4: After days of violent unrest in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the federal government and protesters on Saturday signed an agreement to end the on-going demonstrations that have left at least 10 people dead and hundreds injured.

Violence marred the peace of the region due to a strike, which began on September 29 when talks broke down between officials and leaders of the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JKJAAAC), a representative body of protesters.

The protesters had issued a charter of 38 points, urging the authorities to accept them or they would take to the roads, which they did eventually, leading to violent clashes with police that killed at least 10 people, including three police personnel. Hundreds of policemen and civilians were injured in the protests. As the unrest widened, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif dispatched a high-powered delegation to Muzaffarabad on Wednesday to find a negotiated solution to the problem.

The team, led by former premier Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, engaged in extensive discussions for two consecutive days, which concluded around midnight. Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry announced on social media that an agreement had been reached between the two sides.

"Negotiating delegation has signed the final agreement with the Action Committee... The protesters are returning to their homes. All roads have been reopened. This is a victory for peace," he posed on X.

The copy of the agreement shared by Chaudhry on X showed that a detailed document with 25 points was signed to end the protest, including compensation for those killed in violence, registering cases of terrorism on the incidents of violence and vandalism resulting in deaths of police personnel and pro-

Maldives police arrest 8

MALE (MALDIVES), Oct 4: Police in Maldives arrested eight people during an overnight protest Friday accusing the government of corruption and curtailment of basic freedoms.

The protesters violated conditions agreed upon before the march, used unauthorised roads and threw rocks and water bottles, the Maldives Police Service said in a post on social media platform X.

The opposition Maldivian Democratic Party issued a statement condemning police for using pepper spray and riot shields to stop the march and called on the government of President Mohamed Muizzu to free all the protesters unconditionally. (AP)

Project builds on quantum as a key pillar of the India-UK Technology Security Initiative India, UK quantum computing tie-up in focus ahead of UK PM's Mumbai visit

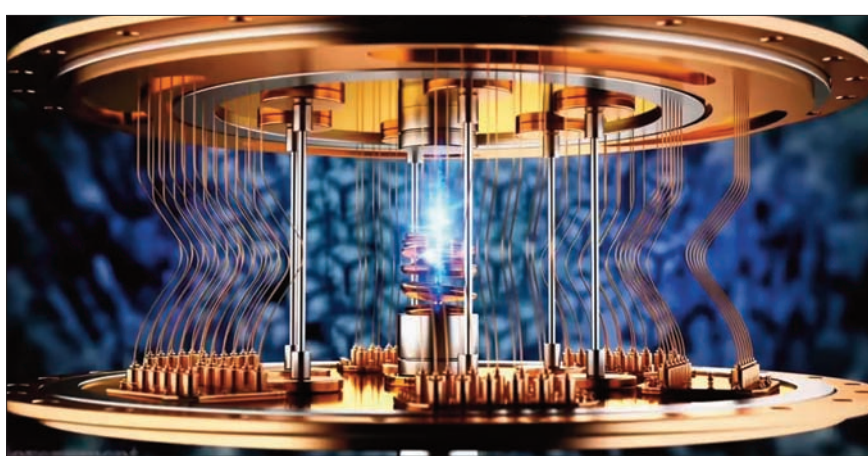
LONDON, Oct 4: A research tie-up between Imperial College London and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay to harness quantum computing and biotechnology to help farmers grow stronger crops that are more resilient to climate change has emerged as a focus area ahead of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's expected visit to Mumbai next week.

The project builds on quantum as a key pillar of the India-UK Technology Security Initiative (TSI), with a mission to cultivate healthier soil microbes and unlock new strategies for protecting crops in arid and climate-vulnerable regions.

The India-UK TSI, signed last year, is scheduled to be at the top of the agenda when Starmer joins Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2025, starting in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Imperial College London President, Professor Hugh Brady, will be among the members of the prime ministerial delegation headed for Mumbai on Starmer's first visit to India as UK PM.

While further partnerships between the UK university and Indian counterparts are expected, a team led by Imperial's Dr Po-Heng (Henry) Lee and IIT Bombay's Dr Indrajit



Chakraborty is already leveraging quantum computing to model the complex interactions between plants and bacteria in the soil.

"This collaboration brings together IIT Bombay's expertise in microbial ecology and genomics with Imperial's strengths in bioinformatics and quantum computing simulation," said Dr Lee.

"This project paves the way for quantum technologies to address urgent challenges in global food security and climate resilience,"

he said.

With a better understanding of how plants and helpful bacteria "talk" to each other, the researchers hope that they can boost natural processes to make crops grow better and more resilient against drought and extreme weather.

The interactions between plants and bacteria are too intricate for traditional computing methods, but by simulating gene regulation and microbial signalling, the researchers hope

to develop new approaches for enhancing soil health and crop productivity, particularly in arid soils.

"By combining our expertise in microbial ecology, we are opening new frontiers in sustainable agriculture. This partnership not only deepens our understanding of plant-microbe interactions but also demonstrates how international collaboration can drive innovative solutions to climate challenges faced by communities worldwide," said Dr Chakraborty.

The project focuses on a special plant chemical called strigolactone. This acts like a messenger, helping plants and bacteria share information and work together. The scientists are also looking at how adding biochar, a type of charcoal, to soil can make these partnerships even stronger.

Experimental work at IIT Bombay will investigate how synthetic strigolactones influence plant growth and microbial behaviour, while Imperial's team is developing quantum circuit models to simulate microbial communication. The partnership strengthens bilateral research ties and harnesses the technology and knowledge of both countries at the intersection of quantum computing and biotechnology. (PTI)

'APC has been the pillar of free and responsible journalism in the state'

APC marks 43rd Foundation Day, reaffirms commitment to ethical journalism

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Oct 4: The Arunachal Press Club (APC) on Saturday celebrated its 43rd Foundation Day with a solemn yet spirited gathering at the APC campus, reflecting on the organisation's rich legacy and renewed commitment to ethical journalism.

Addressing the occasion, APC President Dodum Yangfo underscored the growing need for integrity and professionalism in journalism, cautioning against the rise of plagiarism and unethical reporting practices.

He warned that plagiarism and copyright infringement not only devalue original work but also erode public trust and could invite legal repercussions.

"Plagiarism and copyright infringement are serious offenses. They devalue the original work and erode public trust in media," Yangfo said, urging journalists to credit original sources and adhere to the Press Council of India (PCI) guidelines.

He reiterated APC's zero-tolerance stance on unethical practices, stressing that journalists must ensure transparency and accountability in their work.

Yangfo also spoke on the importance of balanced reporting, particularly in sensitive cases involving allegations.

"One-sided narratives can distort public perception. Journalists must strive to present both sides of a story," he said, adding that adherence to ethical standards serves as protection against defamation and other professional risks.

Arunachal Pradesh Union of Working Journalists (APUWJ) President Amar Sangno paid tribute to the pioneers who laid the foundation for press freedom in the state.

He recalled that the APC was formed in 1982, a year after



the establishment of APUWJ, through the vision of stalwarts PB Dasgupta (PTI), AK Bhattacharjya (UNI), and Prem Bahadur Rai (Hindusthan Samachar).

He also recounted the first informal meeting to form the then Itanagar Press Club, which took place at the residence of

the late Lummer Dai, former Director of Information and Public Relations and editor of Echo of Arunachal.

"AK Bhattacharjya, the founding president of both APC and APUWJ, played a pivotal role in establishing the state's first newspaper, Echo of Arunachal," Sangno noted.

He said the celebration was not only a tribute to APC's historical journey but also a reminder of the responsibilities that come with press freedom.

"This day serves as a clarion call for journalistic integrity, collaboration, and respect for the profession's foundational values," Sangno added.

Extending their greetings, chief minister Pema Khandu, deputy chief minister Chowna Mein, and IPR and Printing Minister Nyato Dukam conveyed their best wishes to the press fraternity on the occasion.

In a social media post, Chief Minister Khandu wrote, "Heartiest greetings to all members of the Arunachal Press Club on its 43rd Foundation Day! Deep appreciation for dedication to truth and tireless service in keeping our people informed and connected. Wishing the press fraternity many more years of impactful journalism and growth."

Deputy chief minister Mein also extended greetings, stating, "Over the decades, APC has stood as a beacon of fearless journalism, shaping informed public opinion and strengthening democracy in Arunachal Pradesh and the Northeast. The dedication of journalists to truth, integrity, and service to society continues to inspire."

IPR Minister Dukam, in his message, said, "Congratulations to Arunachal Press Club on completing 43 years of service. APC has been the pillar of free and responsible journalism in the state. Wishing continued strength in its journey of informing and inspiring society."

The event concluded with a collective reaffirmation of APC's founding principles — truth, ethics, and the enduring spirit of a free press dedicated to serving the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

NCC's Inter-Group Idea & Innovation Competition begins at NIT Jote to inspire young innovators



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Oct 4: In a visionary initiative to harness the creativity and innovation potential of cadets, the 1 Arunachal Pradesh Battalion NCC, Ex GPHQ Tezpur, under the aegis of the NCC Directorate North Eastern Region (NER), has organised a four-day Inter-Group Idea & Innovation Competition at NIT Arunachal Pradesh, Jote, from October 3 to 6, 2025.

The event, inaugurated by Brig Prashant Chauhan, SM, as the chief guest, aligns with the Government of India's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and aims to nurture problem-solving, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit among NCC cadets as part of the

broader goal of building a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Expressing gratitude to Prof Mohan V Aware, director of NIT Jote, for extending institutional support and infrastructure, Col Samudra Vijay Sarma, Commanding Officer of 1 AP Battalion NCC, said the collaboration with NIT has provided the ideal environment for young cadets to explore innovation through a structured and competitive platform.

He also acknowledged the contributions of Capt. Dr Achyuth Sarkar (Assistant Professor, CSE Dept., NIT Arunachal Pradesh), Lt Dr Preetisudha Meher (Head, ECE Dept., NIT Arunachal Pradesh), and CTO Aswini Kumar Patra (Assistant Professor, CSE Dept.,

NERIST) for their invaluable role in organising and coordinating the event.

The competition has drawn 84 participants from nine Group Headquarters across the Northeast Region under NCC Directorate NER.

It provides cadets with an opportunity to present their innovative ideas and compete for recognition at the national level, where selected entries will be showcased in January next year.

The Idea & Innovation Competition is divided into three categories — Labs to Market, Ideas for Social Uplift, and Innovation for Sustainability.

Each theme focuses on transforming academic concepts into

market-ready solutions, proposing inclusive and scalable ideas for societal progress, and promoting sustainable and green technologies.

The initiative also emphasizes the active engagement of cadets in community implementation through awareness drives and volunteer-based activities.

In addition to the main competition, the event features an Innovation Quiz and an Extempore Speech Competition, designed to help cadets develop quick thinking, clarity of expression, and the ability to handle high-pressure situations with confidence — qualities vital for future leadership roles.

Describing the event as an investment in the nation's future, Col Sarma said, "The Idea & Innovation Competition is not merely an event but a movement to empower young minds to think, create, and contribute meaningfully to nation-building. By embracing innovation and critical thinking, our cadets are being shaped into agents of positive change who will help build a stronger, self-reliant India."

The competition, blending innovation with patriotism and teamwork, embodies NCC's mission of holistic development and reflects its unwavering commitment to nurturing responsible, skilled, and visionary youth ready to lead the country toward a sustainable and prosperous future.

Higya Welfare Society tops blood donation record at RK Mission Blood Bank in 2025

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Oct 4: The Higya Welfare Society (HWS) has emerged as the top blood donor organisation of 2025 for the Ramakrishna Mission Hospital (RKMH), Itanagar, contributing a record 78 units of blood to the hospital's blood bank.

The blood donation camp, organised at the conference hall of RKMH, was held as part of the run-up to HWS's 16th Foundation Day celebration on October 12, which will feature several community welfare programmes, including health and social awareness initiatives.

HWS President Gyamar Kuba informed that the Women Wing of the Society took the lead in organising the blood donation drive to promote awareness about the importance of voluntary blood donation.

"We find that blood saves lives, and it is not easily available when needed. A single donor can save a precious life. In many cases, people lose their loved ones due to the non-availability of blood," Kuba said.

He added that the initiative was not meant to be an example but an appeal to inspire others.

"We want NGOs and community-based organisations to come forward and join such life-saving initiatives. This is our first-ever camp, and from the next foundation day onward, we plan to make it a regular event. Our only reli-



gion is humanity, and today's effort reflects that belief," he added.

According to Ramakrishna Mission Hospital sources, the total collection of 78 units by HWS's Women Wing on Saturday marks the highest single-day collection of 2025 at the hospital so far.

The previous record stood at 74

units, collected by Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) on September 17 this year.

Among those present on the occasion were HWS General Secretary Gyamar Tabin, former President Gyamar Tachung, Women Wing Finance Secretary

and Blood Donation Camp Organising Secretary Ania Lamdik Gyamar, Assistant Organising Secretary Gyamar Tutu, and Women Wing Secretary Gyamar Yal, who also interacted with the media and encouraged more citizens to participate in future blood donation initiatives.

The HWS team expressed gratitude to the RKM Hospital authorities, medical staff, and volunteers for their cooperation in ensuring the success of the drive, which they described as a small yet meaningful step toward saving lives and promoting humanitarian values in the community.

3rd PM Youth Camp held at Tawang



HT Correspondent

TAWANG, Oct 4: The 3rd edition of the Prime Minister Youth Camp was successfully conducted at Tawang from September 27 to October 3, 2025. The camp was jointly organised by 2 AP Bn NCC, DDSE Tawang, and the Civil Administration, Tawang, with active support from the Tawang Brigade, under the aegis of the Director of Secondary Education, Itanagar.

The programme saw the participation of around 203 students from 24 districts of Arunachal Pradesh, including 102 NCC cadets, with the rest from NSS and Bharat Scouts and Guides.

The camp aimed to create border

awareness, connect the mainland with border areas, celebrate India's diversity, and build bridges of unity across geography, culture, and community.

It also sought to mould young minds towards patriotism, discipline, and responsibility for nation-building. As part of the activities, students visited the Indo-China border at Bumla Pass (15,000 ft), where they interacted with soldiers guarding the nation's frontiers.

They also explored Shungetar Lake, the iconic Tawang Monastery, Major Bob Kathing Museum, Tawang War Memorial, and the Paramyodha Joginder Singh PVC Memorial at Bumla.

Participants witnessed the Light and Sound Show of the 1962 War, gaining insight into the sacrifices made by the soldiers and the people of Tawang. These experiences left a deep impression, instilling pride and respect for the armed forces.

The camp included cultural performances, sports events, quiz competitions, extempore speeches, and literary contests, promoting cultural exchange among students and helping them appreciate the rich traditions of different districts.

It also encouraged the development of leadership skills, discipline, courage, and brotherhood.

Students participated in the nationwide Swachhata Hi Seva Abhiyan, conducting a cleanliness drive in Tawang and supporting the initiative by chief guest Namgye Tsering, HMLA Tawang, and guest of honour Namgyal Angmo, IAS, DC Tawang, to keep the town plastic-free.

Students gave overwhelmingly positive feedback, stating that the camp strengthened their sense of patriotism and inspired many to consider joining the Armed Forces to serve the nation with pride and courage.

Wildlife Week 2025 observed in Itanagar with focus on human-wildlife coexistence



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Oct 4: The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Arunachal Pradesh Regional Centre (APRC), Itanagar, in collaboration with Government Higher Secondary School, Ganga, observed the Wildlife Week Celebration 2025 on Saturday with the theme "Human-Wildlife Coexistence."

The event was held in line with directives from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Govern-

ment of India.

The celebration saw the participation of around 120 students from Classes X to XII, who engaged in a series of educational and creative activities designed to promote awareness on the importance of harmonious living between humans and wildlife.

Under the sub-theme "Nature 4R" (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Restore), the students prepared and displayed 13 innovative models crafted from best-out-of-waste materials.

These exhibits presented practical ideas and sustainable solutions for wildlife conservation and environmental protection.

Two lectures were delivered during the event. Dr SD Gurumayum, Officer-in-Charge of ZSI-APRC, spoke on social responsibilities and community-based approaches to minimizing conflict and promoting coexistence between humans and wildlife.

Dr Vikram Delu, the event coordinator, addressed the gathering on biodiversity from scientific and conservation perspectives, emphasising the role of youth in ensuring coexistence and sustainability.

The students demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment throughout the programme.

Certificates were presented to all participants, and prizes were awarded for the most outstanding models.

The first prize went to a model focusing on human-wildlife coexistence, while other winning entries highlighted ideas such as rainwater harvesting, eco-friendly activities, and sustainable community practices.

Expressing gratitude to all those involved, ZSI-APRC extended special thanks to the Principal, TGT (Mathematics), and the staff of Government Higher Secondary School, Ganga, for their cooperation and support in making the event a success.

In a message, the ZSI-APRC reiterated that human-wildlife coexistence is not merely a necessity but a shared responsibility. "By adopting eco-friendly practices, reducing habitat destruction, and fostering community awareness, we can create a future where both humans and wildlife thrive together in harmony," the message read.

The event concluded with a renewed pledge to strengthen awareness and inspire the younger generation to actively contribute toward wildlife conservation and sustainable living.

DLPC reviews academic progress, expansion plans in Namsai

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, Oct 4: The second quarterly meeting for the year 2025-26 of the District Library Planning Committee (DLPC), Namsai, was held on Friday at the conference hall of the District Library under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Namsai.

The meeting was attended by the ADC Chongkham, CDPO Namsai, Assistant Engineer (PWD) Namsai, members of the DLPC, and heads of various educational institutions.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the academic progress, activities, and services being rendered by the District Library. Emphasis

was laid on further strengthening and expanding library services to the interior pockets of the district to ensure greater accessibility for students and readers. Later, the DC also inspected the newly constructed Namsai Adult Learning Centre (NALC) building and visited several ongoing civil work sites associated with library infrastructure development.

Expressing satisfaction over the steady progress and achievements made by the District Library, the DC appreciated the efforts of the officials and stakeholders involved. He encouraged the committee members to continue their collaborative efforts toward promoting a vibrant reading culture and enhancing library facilities across Namsai district.

Shah rules out talks with Naxals, tells them to surrender

Reiterates March 2026 target to end menace

JAGDALPUR (CHHATTISGARH), Oct 4: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday ruled out talks with Naxals and said they will have to lay down weapons and accept the government's "lucrative surrender and rehabilitation policy".

Addressing the 'Bastar Dussehra Lokotsav' and 'Swadeshi Mela' in Jagdalpur, the headquarter of Chhattisgarh's Bastar district, he asserted that March 31, 2026 has been set as the deadline to bid farewell to the menace of Naxalism.

"I want to tell all my tribal brothers and sisters to persuade the youth of their villages to lay down their arms. They should shun violence, join the mainstream, and become part of the development of Bastar," he said.

Security forces, including the CRPF and Chhattisgarh police, will give a befitting reply if ultras disrupt peace in Bastar, Shah warned. Shah said he visited the renowned Maa Danteshwari Temple here and had prayed that security forces get strength to free the entire Bastar region from "red terror" by March 31 next year.

Notably, anti-Naxalite operations intensified in Chhattisgarh after the BJP came to power in 2023. Security forces have gunned down over 450 Naxalites in a string of encounters, mostly centred in the Bastar region, since January last year.

"Some people have called for talks (with Naxals). Let me make it clear again that both the Chhattis-



garh and Central governments are committed to development across Bastar and all Naxal-affected areas. What is there to talk about? A lucrative surrender-and-rehabilitation policy has been put in place. Come forward and lay down your weapons," Shah said.

"Some people in Delhi used to spread misinformation for years that the birth of Naxalism was for the fight for development. But I have come to tell my tribal brothers that the entire Bastar has been deprived of development. The root cause of this is Naxalism," he said.

Today, electricity, drinking water, roads, toilets in homes, health insurance of up to ₹ 5 lakh and 5 kg free rice have reached every village in India but Bastar has been deprived of such development, Shah said.

"The Chhattisgarh government has made the best surrender policy in the country. More than 500 peo-

ple have surrendered in a single month. Everyone should surrender. As soon as a village becomes Naxalite-free, the state government will give it ₹ 1 crore for development. Naxalism will not benefit anyone," he said.

"Narendra Modi govt has given more than ₹ 4 lakh crore to Chhattisgarh for development works in 10 years. On behalf of the PM, I want to assure you that after March 31, 2026, Naxalites will not be able to stop your development. They will not be able to stop your rights," he said.

Shah described the 75-day-long Dussehra festival as one of the world's longest and culturally significant festivals, honouring the region's tribal heritage.

"I attended Muria Darbar today and felt immense joy. All the (tribal) community leaders from Bastar division were present and shared their

issues. I will go to Delhi and tell everyone to witness a Muria Darbar at least once. Since 1874, it has reflected active participation, a judicial system, tribal culture, thoughtful dialogue, and people's engagement," Shah said.

In the truest sense, Muria Darbar, with its core democratic values, is a historic and global heritage and a subject of great learning for the entire nation, he pointed out.

The BJP government has launched various schemes in honour of tribals in the state, he added.

Urging to adopt swadeshi products, Shah said no one can stop India from becoming the world's leading economic power if its 140 crore citizens take up this resolve.

"Modi ji has provided significant relief to mothers and sisters across the country by reducing the tax (GST) on 395 items. He has kept the tax on daily use items at only 5 per cent. Our country has never seen such a significant tax cut," Shah said.

On the occasion, the Union Home Minister transferred the 20th monthly instalment of ₹ 1,000 into the bank accounts of nearly 65 lakh women beneficiaries of the state's Mahtari Vandan scheme. The total money transferred on the occasion stood at ₹ 606.94 crore.

Shah also launched the Chief Minister Rural Bus Service scheme mainly for the tribal-dominated Bastar and Surguja divisions. (PTI)

DCP among several injured in clash during idol immersion procession in Odisha's Cuttack, six held

CUTTACK, Oct 4: Six people, including Deputy Commissioner of Police Rishikesh Khillari, were injured after a clash broke out between two groups during a Durga Puja idol immersion procession in Odisha's Cuttack in the early hours of Saturday, police said.

The incident happened near Hatipokhari in the Daraghabazar area around 2 am, when the procession was heading to Debigara on the banks of the Kathajodi river, playing loud music, to which locals objected, they said.

Police Commissioner S Dev Datt Singh said six people have been arrested in connection with the violence.

"Those arrested were involved in stone pelting and were identified through CCTV footage," he said.

Locals objected to high-decibel music being played in the procession, leading to a confrontation. It soon escalated with both groups hurling stones and glass bottles at each other, prompting the police to baton charge the crowd to bring the situation under control, officials said.

Fresh tension flared when another procession reached the area. Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) were called in to tackle the situation, and the immersion processions resumed around 6 am amid heavy security, they said.

Vehicles with a total of 50 idols of various community Durga Pujas in the city remained stuck because of the incident for about four hours, they added.

Singh said 120 idols of Goddess Durga were immersed by 10 am.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who is in charge of the Home Department, is monitoring the situation from Delhi, officials said.

DGP YB Khurania chaired a meeting with senior police officers and reviewed the situation, they said.

Khilari, who was injured in the clashes, is stated to be stable, officials said.

One person with critical injuries was admitted to the



SCB Medical College and Hospital, they said.

Condemning the incident, Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik said the police appeared "completely helpless" in controlling the situation.

"The pressure on the police under the BJP government is disrupting law and order in the state," he alleged.

"Such an unpleasant situation in Cuttack, the city of brotherhood, is quite alarming. The incident of throwing stones and bottles during the Bhusani time points to a major sensitive aspect," he said, noting that in a "peaceful state" like Odisha, this atmosphere of unrest is never acceptable.

Patnaik urged the people to maintain cordiality and goodwill.

"Let peace and friendship prevail in society," he said. (PTI)

TRF commander's property attached under UAPA in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, Oct 4: Police on Saturday attached the property of Sajad Ahmad Sheikh, head of The Resistance Front (TRF) terror outfit and the alleged mastermind of the Pahalgam attack, under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act here, an official said.

The TRF is a proxy of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) outfit. The NIA had designated Sajad Ahmad Sheikh alias Sajad Gul a terrorist in April 2022 and announced a reward of Rs 10 lakh on his head.

"In a significant step towards dismantling terror networks and their support structures, Srinagar Police has attached a three-storey residential house constructed over 15 marlas of land located at Rose Avenue, in HMT locality of the city," a police spokesman said.

The spokesperson said the ownership of the property, valued at approximately ₹ two crore, is in the name of Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh, father of designated terrorist Sajad Ahmad Sheikh alias Sajad Gul, according to the revenue records and verification from Tehsildar Central, Shalteng, Srinagar.

Though the property is registered in the name of the terrorist's father, investigation has revealed that Gul is an active stakeholder, he said.

"The attachment has been executed in connection with FIR No. 235/2022 under sections 13, 38, 20 UAPA and 2/3 EIMCO Act, registered at Police Station Parimpora," the spokesman added.

Proceedings were initiated under Section 25 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), empowering authorities to attach properties used or intended to be used for terrorist activities. The action was carried out in the presence of the concerned executive magistrate, the spokesperson said. "He (Gul) has been involved in facilitating terrorism, running anti-national propaganda and inciting disaffection against the Government through various online and social media platforms," he said.

This attachment forms part of the ongoing strategy of Srinagar Police to disrupt the financial, logistical and operational networks of terrorism, including their cross-border sponsors and sympathisers, the spokesperson said. Holed up in the Cantonment town of Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Gul has been named as the mastermind in several terror attacks in the Kashmir valley, including the April 22 Pahalgam attack that left 26 persons, mostly tourists, dead.

He was allegedly involved in targeted killings between 2020 and 2024 in Central and South Kashmir, grenade attacks in Central Kashmir in 2023, the ambush of J&K police personnel in Bijbehara in Anantnag, Gagangir and the Z-Morh Tunnel attack in Ganderbal. (PTI)

BJP urges EC to verify identity of burqa-clad voters during Bihar polls, RJD calls it political ploy

PATNA, Oct 4: The BJP on Saturday urged the Election Commission to hold the upcoming Bihar assembly elections in one or two phases, and to ensure that women in burqas are properly verified against their voter ID photographs at the polling booths.

The BJP found itself on the same page as the RJD, its principal rival, on the issue of non-staggered elections, but got charged with "political conspiracy" for raising the issue of female voters wearing veils.

After a meeting with the visiting EC team, led by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, state BJP president Dilip Jaiswal said, "We have urged the Election Commission to conduct the elections in one or two phases. The election process need not be staggered. Also, tallying of faces of voters, especially burqa-clad women, must be ensured with respective EPIC cards so that only genuine voters get to exercise their franchise."

The EC, which is on a two-day tour of the state, held talks with representatives of recognised political parties ahead of the announcement of election dates.

The RJD delegation was headed by Abhay Kushwaha, the party's leader in the Lok Sabha, who was accompanied by spokespersons Chitaranjan Gagan and Mukund

Singh.

When Kushwaha's attention was drawn to Jaiswal's contention on burqas, he snapped, "This is a political conspiracy. Only recently has the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls been carried out. New EPIC cards are to be issued to all voters with fresh photographs. Identification of voters is no big deal. But the BJP wants to push its own agenda."

The RJD leader, however, disclosed that, like the BJP, "we urged the EC to consider holding the polls in not more than two phases, since not much time is left (for expiry of the term of the current assembly)".

It was also the RJD's contention that the polls be held after Chhath, the state's most popular festival, held six days after Diwali, which falls at the end of October this year.

Jaiswal, too, had said that the BJP delegation urged the EC to ensure "no further delay in polling dates than the mandatory 28-day gap between the date of announcement of elections and the day on which voting begins. So, if elections are announced in a few days from now, polling should begin November 3-4 onwards".

Smaller parties like Union Minister Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) and INDIA bloc partner CPI(ML) Liberation also told the Election Com-

mission that they were in favour of assembly polls being held in "not more than two phases".

Both the BJP and the RJD acknowledged that there were a large number of villages in Bihar, with a sizeable population of weaker sections who were "intimidated" during polls.

Jaiswal was of the view that "paramilitary forces be deployed in villages with a heavy population of weaker sections like extremely backward classes, a few days in advance, and a flag march-like exercise be conducted to instil confidence among the voters".

He said that in riverine areas, which have had a history of booth capturing, deployment of cavalry must also be ensured.

On the other hand, Kushwaha sought from the EC "identification, at the earliest, of all sensitive booths and the list be shared with us so that we could circulate the same among our cadres in order to prevent intimidation of voters from the weaker sections".

He said the EC also had a few suggestions for political parties.

"It said that upon completion of voting, polling agents must obtain Form 17C from the presiding officer. Many times, the agents leave their assigned booths without doing so, leaving the scope for unnecessary disputes later," he added. (PTI)

Congress hits back at BJP for attacking Rahul Gandhi, accuses it of hypocrisy

NEW DELHI, Oct 4: The Congress on Saturday hit back at the BJP, accusing it of hypocrisy for attacking Rahul Gandhi, who "exposed the misrule, corruption and undemocratic character" of the party in power.

The Congress' counter came a day after the BJP mounted a blistering attack on Gandhi, whom it accused of becoming the "flag-bearer of anti-India forces" for pushing their agenda in the country, and called upon people to be wary of him.

In a post on X, AICC general secretary, organisation, K C Venugopal said, "The BJP's habit is to blame the Congress for its own failures, bringing us international shame. Whether it is said in Colombia or Kanpur, the reality remains the same - India's government has failed to harness the vast potential of our economy and is undoing our demographic dividend."

Venugopal claimed, "Our democratic system being hijacked is a matter that has brought us disrepute across the world, courtesy the BJP itself."

"It is a stale, hackneyed and misdirected tactic by the BJP ecosystem to attack Rahul ji for speaking plainly. It would serve them better if they paid close attention to his statements and acted to rectify the glaring flaws he has been highlighting since 2014," he said.

Recalling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visits abroad, he claimed that Modi had been attacking the Congress in his speeches there, and thus "insulted" India and its people.

"Let us not forget, before he became the PM and for many years after, Narendra Modi used his foreign visits to not only attack the Congress, but insult India and its people."

"It is therefore plain hypocrisy for the BJP to now question Rahul ji for merely exposing the misrule, corruption and undemocratic character of the BJP," Venugopal claimed.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi slammed Gandhi over his latest remarks at a seminar in Colombia and alleged it has now become clear that the Congress, under the control of the Nehru-Gandhi family for more than 100 years, is falling into the clutches of "anti-India" forces.

Referring to the Congress leader's remarks at an event held at a university in Colombia on Thursday, Trivedi said, "He said there are 16-17 languages (in India). You will now see that he will try to create a conflict over the issue of languages. Attempts have already been made in the past to create a north-south conflict (in the country)." (PTI)

PM lauds Nitish govt, says 'some trying to steal' Karpooori Thakur's Jan Nayak honour

NEW DELHI, Oct 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday blamed the "devastated state of education" during the RJD rule as a major reason for the large-scale migration from Bihar and lauded the Nitish Kumar-led NDA government for improving the situation and setting the state on a path to progress.

Speaking at the inauguration of a host of education and skilling initiatives for the youth, including several projects for the poll-bound state, Modi took a veiled swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who is often lauded by his party members as 'Jan Nayak', an honorific associated with respected OBC leader and former Bihar chief minister Karpooori Thakur.

The people of Bihar should be vigilant to attempts by some to "steal" the honour long associated with Thakur, Modi said, without naming Gandhi.

Thakur was not bestowed the title of Jan Nayak by social media trolls, but it is a reflection of people's love for him, he added.

The Modi government had honoured the late OBC leader with Bharat Ratna last year. Modi also unveiled various youth-focused initiatives worth more than ₹ 62,000 crore, with a special emphasis on Bihar, which is likely to go to polls by the end of October or November.

Modi launched PM-SETU (Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs), a centrally sponsored scheme with an investment of ₹ 60,000 crore.

Praising Chief Minister Kumar, Modi said the Bihar government has taken new resolves for the state's development and has decided to double the number of people getting employment in the next five years as compared to the last 20 years.

The idea is to ensure that youngsters of Bihar are employed within the state, he said,

with the issue of migration gaining in sapience during the ongoing assembly poll campaign.

Modi remarked that reviving a tree whose roots have been infested is a formidable feat, and likened the condition of Bihar under the opposition's misgovernance to such a tree.

He stated that, fortunately, the people of Bihar entrusted Kumar with the responsibility of governance, and the "entire team of the coalition government worked collectively to restore the derailed systems".

Noting that thousands of youth from Bihar participated in the programme, Modi asserted that this generation may not fully grasp how the education system in Bihar was devastated two to two-and-a-half decades ago.

He emphasised that every parent wishes for their child to study and progress locally. However, due to compulsions, lakhs of children had to leave Bihar and migrate to places like Banaras, Delhi, and Mumbai. He identified this as the true beginning of migration.

It is rather difficult to restore a tree whose roots are rotting, and this was the state of Bihar during the RJD rule, he said, lauding the NDA government in the state for its work to effect a turnaround.

"India is among the world's youngest nations, and Bihar is one of the states with the highest proportion of youth... compared to the Opposition government in the past, Bihar's education budget has been increased manifold."

"Today, nearly every village and hamlet in Bihar has a school, and the number of engineering and medical colleges has also grown significantly. There was a time when Bihar lacked international-level sports infrastructure, but today, national and international sports events are being held in the state," he said. (PTI)

Kejriwal alleges 'BJP-Congress alliance' in Goa; says AAP will form govt after 2027 polls

PANAJI, Oct 4: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal has said his party will form a government in Goa on its own after the 2027 assembly polls.

Kejriwal, who arrived here on a three-day visit on Friday, said people have lost faith in the ruling BJP and opposition Congress.

Addressing media persons outside Dabolim Airport, Kejriwal said, "The BJP has been ruling Goa for the last 13 years. The Congress has been supporting the BJP to form the government by providing MLAs," he said.

Referring to the attack on social activist Rama Kankonkar, he said it is not an isolated incident.

"Those who speak against the government are suppressed. The law and order situation has plummeted, there are illegal constructions everywhere, there is illegal mining, women are not finding themselves safe," the former Delhi chief minister claimed.

"People of Goa want women's safety and also basic facilities. It is their basic right. AAP will form the government in 2027 on its own," he added.

Kejriwal, who arrived at Dabolim Airport around 9 pm, was received by Delhi's Leader of Opposition, Atishi Marlena, and the party's state unit chief Amit Palekar.

Earlier, in a post on X ahead of his arrival, Kejriwal alleged there was a "BJP-Congress alliance" in Goa and said that the two national outfits had subjected the coastal state to "corruption, violence and gundaraj" for the past 13 years. (PTI)

Authors of the study included those from Department of Neurosurgery, AIIMS Delhi

Study finds very few neurosurgeons, neurologists, critical care specialists trained during MBBS on certifying brain death



NEW DELHI, Oct 4: Less than half of 177 neurosurgeons, neurologists and critical care specialists who took part in a survey were trained on certifying brain death during their MBBS course, a study by AIIMS, Delhi doctors along with others has found.

According to the recently-published study, 37.3 per cent stated that there is no fixed curriculum for resident training in Brainstem death certification (BDC), while only 10 per cent reported regularly training their residents in it.

BDC is a fundamental process in the organ donation workflow, serving as a prerequisite for the ethical and legal procurement of organs from deceased donors. Nearly three-fourth of the respondent doctors were employed at teaching hospitals, with 51.4 per cent in the public sector and 24.9 per cent in the private sector, the study found.

Surprisingly, 22.6 per cent never train their residents on brain death certification and organ donation.

"It is crucial to address gaps in the knowledge and practices of BDC among physicians to enhance organ donation

rates in India," the study highlighted.

Majority of respondents identified a lack of public awareness as the primary reason for low organ donation rates in India. Additionally, 62.1 per cent cited family refusal as a significant factor, the study said.

Other factors included the absence of organ transplant facilities in parent hospitals (43.5 per cent), indifferent attitudes of clinicians toward BDC in brain-dead patients (43.5 per cent), and a lack of confidence among clinicians to declare brain death (36.7 per cent).

Religious beliefs were also noted as a reason for refusal to donate organs by 50.2 per cent of respondents.

Organ donation is a critical aspect of modern medicine, potentially having saved countless lives. Despite this, India faces considerable challenges in organ donation rates, particularly concerning deceased donors, the study said.

India lags significantly behind many other countries, with a rate of only 0.7 per million population (pmp) compared to 40-750 pmp in Spain and the US.

The low rates of organ donation in India can be attributed to multiple factors, including lack of awareness or misinformation among the public and lack of comprehensive knowledge about organ donation among the treating physicians, the study stated.

Adequate understanding and consistent application of brain death criteria by physicians are crucial to ensuring that potential organ donors are accurately identified and managed, the doctors stated.

The Transplantation of Human Organs Act (THOA) was enacted in 1994 in India to regulate the process of removal, storage, and transplantation of human organs for therapeutic purposes and prevent commercial dealings in human organs.

However, its impact has been poor, largely due to gaps in the knowledge and practices among physicians regarding BDC.

The objective of this survey was to assess the key areas in the knowledge gaps and the variability in BDC practices among the specialist physicians involved in organ donation in India, the study said.

Such an effort is imperative to bring policy changes in imparting training and awareness in BDC. Healthcare professionals with adequate knowledge and positive attitudes toward deceased-donor organ transplantation tend to boost the consent rates for donations, ensuring that more lives can be saved through timely and efficient organ transplants.

Authors of the study included those from Department of Neurosurgery, AIIMS Delhi; Department of Anesthesia, AOU Policlinico Gaetano Martino, University of Messina, Italy; Department of Neurosurgery, Christian Medical College, Vellore, Tamil Nadu; Department of Anaesthesiology, Division of Neuroanaesthesia and Neurocritical Care and also Department of Neurosurgery, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Trivandrum, Kerala; and Department of Urology and Renal Transplantation, Madras Medical Mission Hospital, Chennai. (PTI)

Biren Singh, BJP MLAs leave for Delhi to meet central leaders

IMPHAL, Oct 4: Several BJP MLAs from Manipur, including former chief minister N Biren Singh, left Imphal for New Delhi on Saturday to press the Centre for the formation of what they call a "new popular government" in Manipur.

The move comes months after Manipur was placed under President's Rule on February 13, 2025, following Biren Singh's resignation on February 9 amid the continuing ethnic violence that broke out on May 3, 2023.

The state assembly has since remained in suspended animation.

The MLAs who left for Delhi include N Biren Singh, Tongbram Robindro, Sapam Ranjan, and Heikham Dingo.

Speaking to reporters before departure at the Imphal airport, Biren Singh said the legislators would raise issues such as the volatile situation in Manipur and the rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

He confirmed their demand for



the formation of a new government but did not disclose whom they planned to meet.

BJP sources said the group is expected to meet BJP northeast in-charge Sambit Patra first, and later seek an appointment with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Another set of BJP MLAs, including Yumnam Khemchand, may also head to Delhi on Sunday for the same purpose.

BJP MLA Tongbram Robindro said their trip was to "convey the people's aspirations" and to re-

quest central leaders to allow the formation of a government that can bring stability. "Our expectation is that they will listen to the people and take steps to form a government that ensures stability and development," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited Manipur on September 13 for the first time since the violence began, but many in the state expressed disappointment saying his visit did not address the ongoing conflict, and focused only on inaugurating projects. (NNN)

CBSE opens Sub-Regional office in Tripura

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Oct 4: In a significant step towards strengthening the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)'s presence in Tripura, a new sub-regional office has been inaugurated near the Agartala Airport on Saturday.

The new office is expected to streamline CBSE-related services for schools, students, and teachers across the state.

An official from the Education Department informed that this marks the first CBSE sub-regional office in Tripura, fulfilling a long-standing demand from educational institutions.

"Until now, CBSE-affiliated schools in Tripura had to coordinate with the Guwahati regional office, which often led to logistical challenges and delays. For the time being, the office will function from Rabindra Nagar, and operations have already started from today. A dedicated building is expected to be established soon near the airport," the official said.

10 militants arrested from 3 districts of Manipur

IMPHAL, Oct 4: Security forces have arrested 10 militants belonging to various proscribed outfits in Manipur during separate operations over the last few days, officials said.

Personnel of the Assam Rifles arrested a "senior commander" of a banned outfit and five other militants from the jungles of Churachandpur district, the paramilitary force said on Saturday.

The militants were apprehended on October 1 during an operation, it said.

"Assam Rifles in a daring jungle operation codenamed 'Operation Songkot' on October 1 apprehended senior commander SS Lt Jamkhogin Guite Lupho alias Pepsi of United Kuki National Army," it said in a statement.

Five others were also arrested during the operation, it said.

"The successful operation has dealt a crippling setback to UKNA's networks in Churachandpur and Jiribam, reaffirming Assam Rifles' relentless commit-

ment to peace and security in the region," the statement said.

Officials in Manipur said the UKNA commander was allegedly involved in the killing of four members of the Meitei community, including a father and son, in Bishnupur district in January 2024.

Meanwhile, four militants were apprehended from Thoubal and Imphal West districts on Friday, police said.

Two active cadres, including a woman, of the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (Apuaba) were apprehended at Thoubal Wangkhem, while a self-styled corporal of the Peoples' Liberation Army was arrested from Ningombam in Imphal West, a police officer said.

Security forces also nabbed a member of KCP (PWG) from Naoremthong in Imphal West, he added.

Meanwhile, police have directed its personnel in Churachandpur district not to comply with alleged extortion demands by illegal organisations.



In an order, the SP cautioned police personnel against yielding to such demands.

"It has been reported that few illegal organisations are demanding money from police personnel of Churachandpur. It is hereby instructed to the ranks and files of the district police to abstain from yielding to the demand," the SP said.

More than 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups in Manipur since May 2023. (PTI)

6 militants arrested by Assam Rifles in Churachandpur

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Mayer Gaman 2025 (carnival) showcases Tripura's rich cultural traditions: CM

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Oct 4: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Saturday said that this year's Durga Puja was completed peacefully and beautifully without any incident, and one of the government's goals is to further develop and promote art, culture, and literature in the state.

He said that this year's Puja witnessed great enthusiasm among the Janajatis as well.

Saha said this while inaugurating the 'Mayer Gaman 2025' program organized in front of Maharani Tulsibati Girls' School in Agartala on Saturday.

Speaking as the chief guest at this program organized by the Information and Cultural Affairs Department, Saha extended greetings for a happy Bijoya and Dussehra to the people of the state.

He said that such a carnival has been organized for four years.

"From the beginning, the first two years were organized in front of the City Centre. Then, from last year, in consultation with everyone, it has been organized in front of Tulsibati School. One of the main objectives of this event is to organize the Puja in an aesthetic, beautiful environment and in an orderly manner. This has been taken as one of the biggest activities in the annual cultural programs of the ICA Department. Today, children from the Jati and Janajati sections have jointly presented beautiful cultural performances here. This will further enrich our traditions and customs. Our government is also working in that direction. The message of harmony will be further strengthened through such arrangements," he said.

The chief minister said that last year, on October 14, it was organised at the same venue. "After I took charge of the ICA Department, I sat down with other ministers and discussed that during the princely period, a procession was taken from here for the immersion of the idols. Then everyone, including clubs, organizations, and puja organizers, expressed their agreement to determine this place. Therefore, respecting the old tradition, arrangements have been made for the Mother's visit from this place," said Saha.

Saha also said that this auspicious Bijoya or Dussehra is not limited to Hinduism only; its acceptance has increased a lot and is being appreciated all over the world.

"Whether it is Durga Puja or Mayer Gaman, the state government wants the development of art, culture, and literature, and its practice to grow further in Tripura. Keeping that in mind, initiatives have been taken to strengthen such an environment. This time too, I have participated in the Pujas organized by the Janajatis in various parts of the state on the occasion of Puja. Durga Pujas have been organized in tribal areas for many years."

From hills to homes: Meghalaya crafts a new story of culture and community

SHILLONG, Oct 4: Meghalaya's story is no longer just written in its clouds and hills. It lives in the voices of its people, the warmth of its homes, and the traditions that turn the state into a living heritage.

Nestled in the misty hills and valleys, Meghalaya — aptly called the "abode of clouds" — is carving out a new identity as both a cultural and adventure hub.

While its rolling tea gardens, waterfalls, and living root bridges have long charmed visitors, the state government is now consciously weaving a tourism story that goes far beyond the scenic beauty. The focus is on homestays, music festivals, eco-tourism, and even hosting the National Games in 2027, all integrated into a pipeline of initiatives designed to generate jobs, empower citizens, and transform Meghalaya into a high-value destination.

A key part of this strategy is the homestay initiative, which moves away from the conventional "Games Village"

model for the upcoming sporting event. Instead, athletes, officials, and visitors will be hosted in homestays across the state — ensuring long-term benefits for local communities once the games are over. "Music has a unique power to unite, and here in Meghalaya, where people are naturally musically inclined, the atmosphere is perfect for such experiences," says Vera, who runs Risa Forest Green Homestay. "Hosting events like Bryan Adams and Ed Sheeran has been truly commendable — our property saw a full house with guests arriving from across India," he said.

Like her, many homestay owners across the state are witnessing the ripple effects of Meghalaya's tourism push — from extended guest stays to steady revenue streams that outlast marquee events. The initiative reflects a conscious effort to marry hospitality with sustainability, giving tourists not only quality accommodation but also immer-



sive cultural experiences, from the local cuisine to traditional art and music.

The state already has more than 820 registered lodging facilities, 300 recognised tourist sites, and more than 50,000 livelihoods linked to tourism.

The chief minister has repeatedly stressed that the homestay model is a "concrete pillar" of Meghalaya's strategy to enhance accommodation capacity while promoting employment and environmental responsibility.

Known as the "Rock Capital of India," Shillong is now also emerging as the country's music capital, with international concerts and festivals like the Cherry Blossom Festival, Winter Tales, and Shillong Literary Festival drawing lakhs of visitors. In FY24, these events alone attracted 3.37 lakh people, creating nearly 5,000 jobs. "Tourists extended their stay post events, leading to additional nights of occupancy and a steady revenue stream," says Farah of Belmont Homestay, underlining the economic impact of concert tourism.

Tourism in Meghalaya is also backed by initiatives like the Prime Tourism Vehicle Scheme, which helps entrepreneurs acquire commercial vehicles with easier access to credit. Local drivers like Khraw in Shillong testify the change. "Earlier, tourists in Shillong were rare, but now we see visitors every week. Thanks to this boom, my income has increased significantly. I now travel regu-

larly with tourists, guiding them to places like Dawki and Cherrapunjee," he said. The growth is visible in numbers. From around 10 lakh visitors in 2022, Meghalaya welcomed 16 lakh by 2024, and the trend is expected to climb further with the Umroi Airport in Shillong set to become fully operational by 2027.

Adding to this momentum are 14 new eco-tourism projects planned across four districts, projected to generate more than 1,600 jobs. For a state that blends breathtaking landscapes with rich cultural traditions, the push to become a USD 16 billion economy by 2032 has tourism at its heart. As homestays expand, music and cultural festivals grow, infrastructure strengthens, and global artists continue to arrive, Meghalaya's story is shifting. It is no longer just the "abode of clouds" but a destination where hospitality, heritage, and harmony meet — and where the world is being invited to stay a little longer. (PTI)

KARBI ANGLONG HOSPITALS PRIVATE LIMITED

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NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Members of M/s KARBI ANGLONG HOSPITALS PRIVATE LIMITED will be held on Saturday, the 25th day of October, 2025 at the Registered Office of the Company at RONGBIN AKLAM, HARILAL BASTI WARD NO 3, NEAR INGHI GAS AGENCY DIPHU KARBI ANGLONG ASSAM 782460, India at 12:00 p.m. (Noon) to transact the following business:-

ORDINARY BUSINESS:

- To receive, consider and adopt the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March, 2023 and the Reports of the Directors' and Auditor's thereon.
- To fix the remuneration of the statutory auditor for F.Y 2023-24.

By order of the Board of Directors

For, M/s KARBI ANGLONG HOSPITALS PRIVATE LIMITED

Karbi Anglong Hospitals Pvt. Ltd.

Karbi Anglong Hospitals Pvt. Ltd.

Mongve Kro

MONGVE KRO Director

(Director)

DIN: 07738284

Jiten Teron

JITEN TERON Director

(Director)

DIN: 08561702

Date: 03/10/2025

Place: Diphu

KARBI ANGLONG HOSPITALS PRIVATE LIMITED

CIN: U85100AS2019PTC019521

Address: RONGBIN AKLAM, HARILAL BASTI, WARD NO 3, NEAR INGHI GAS AGENCY, DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG-782460, ASSAM, INDIA
Email: rengpoli@gmail.com Ph: +91 93950-65583

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NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Members of M/s KARBI ANGLONG HOSPITALS PRIVATE LIMITED will be held on Saturday, the 25th day of October, 2025 at the Registered Office of the Company at RONGBIN AKLAM, HARILAL BASTI WARD NO 3, NEAR INGHI GAS AGENCY DIPHU KARBI ANGLONG ASSAM 782460, India at 01:30 p.m. to transact the following business:-

ORDINARY BUSINESS:

- To receive, consider and adopt the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March, 2024 and the Reports of the Directors' and Auditor's thereon.
- To fix the remuneration of the statutory auditor for F.Y 2024-25.

By order of the Board of Directors

For, M/s KARBI ANGLONG HOSPITALS PRIVATE LIMITED

Karbi Anglong Hospitals Pvt. Ltd.

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MONGVE KRO Director

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ORDINARY BUSINESS:

- To receive, consider and adopt the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March, 2022 and the Reports of the Directors' and Auditor's thereon.
- To fix the remuneration of the statutory auditor for F.Y 2022-23.

By order of the Board of Directors

For, M/s KARBI ANGLONG HOSPITALS PRIVATE LIMITED

Karbi Anglong Hospitals Pvt. Ltd.

Karbi Anglong Hospitals Pvt. Ltd.

Mongve Kro

MONGVE KRO Director

(Director)

DIN: 07738284

Jiten Teron

JITEN TERON Director

(Director)

DIN: 08561702

Date: 03/10/2025

Place: Diphu

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM DIRECTORATE-CUM- ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, P.W.D. (R&B), HILLS, ASSAM, DIPHU.

NOACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/15,

Dated: 04-10-2025

PRESS NOTICE (RE-TENDER)

The Directorate-cum-Additional Chief Engineer, P.W.D.(R&B), Hills, Assam Diphu, on behalf of Governor of Assam invites Item Rates bids from registered contractors of Class-I(A&B) category for various works" Construction of 50 bedded hostel separately for boys & girls" under the scheme "Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarh Abhiyan" in Karbi Anglong District and West Karbi Anglong District. Details may be seen at e-procurement portal website www.assamtenders.gov.in. and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 07/10/2025 to 13/10/2025. The Bidders must be registered with the E-tendering system (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam.

Sd/-

Director-Cum-Additional Chief Engineer,
P.W.D.(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu.

Memo No ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/15 (A),

Dated 04/10/2025.

Varun Dhawan-starrer 'Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari' earns over ₹ 16 crore at box office



NEW DELHI, Oct 4: "Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari", headlined by Bollywood stars Janhvi Kapoor and Varun Dhawan, has earned ₹ 16.12 crore at the domestic box office in two days of its release, the makers said on Saturday.

Directed by Shashank Khaitan of "Badrinath Ki Dulhania", "Dhadak" and "Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania", the film released in theatres on Thursday. It is produced under Karan Johar's production banner Dharma Productions.

"Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari" also features Sanya Malhotra and Rohit Saraf.

The makers shared the box office numbers on social media. The post featured the film's poster with the day-wise breakdown of the collection.

The film opened at ₹ 10.11 crore and went on to earn ₹ 6.01 crore at the domestic box office on Friday.

"Panwadi ke peeche wali patti gali tak #SunnySanskariKiTulsiKumari chaah chuki hai. In cinemas now. Book your tickets," read the caption of the post.

"Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari" is about Sunny (Dhawan) and Tulsi (Kapoor). Hoping to revive old sparks with their ex-partners, Ananya (Malhotra) and Vikram (Saraf), they hatch a plan to pose as a couple, setting off a chain of humorous misunderstandings and deceptions.

Alongside Johar, Adar Poonawalla, Apoorva Mehta, and Khaitan have produced the film. (PTI)

WANT TO EXPAND MY FAN BASE, DO WORK THAT WILL MAKE ME A HOUSEHOLD NAME: ROHIT SARAF

MUMBAI, Oct 4: Actor Rohit Saraf believes his new film "Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari" is the ideal vehicle for him to fulfil his aspirations of connecting with audiences on a deeper level.

Rohit's journey in the industry started in 2012 with the show "Best Friends Forever?". Since then, he has carved his niche, winning hearts with his charming performances in "Dear Zindagi", "The Sky is Pink", "Vikram Vedha" and the widely-loved OTT series, "Mismatched".

The actor said collaborating with actors like Varun Dhawan, Janhvi Kapoor, and Sanya Malhotra, and working under the direction of Shashank Khaitan felt like a vital film in his acting career.

"I thought that it (film) was a step in the right direction. It had all the people that I wanted to collaborate with. My one true aim now is to do work which I want to be a household name. This felt like this would be a step in the right direction.

"I'm so grateful for all the love that I get on the internet amongst the youth but I want that to expand now. It's very, very deliberate to kind of do this project for that," Rohit told PTI in an interview.

For the 28-year-old actor, one of the most memorable moments on set was recreating an entry sequence inspired by Shah Rukh Khan's iconic helicopter introduction in 2003 hit family drama "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham".

"This (scene) was not something that was planned well in advance. Shashank had many ideas about how he wanted to introduce my character. This whole conversation about me getting out of a chopper and walking, I was like, 'He's not serious about it'. He also had an idea that I want to introduce you with a magazine cover shoot," Rohit recalled.

"I didn't really know what

we're actually going to end up shooting. I couldn't believe that we were actually doing it. Eventually, when we finished shooting it and I saw the shots, I was on cloud nine, I couldn't believe that it was so exciting. It looked amazing. I saw it and I was like, 'Wow, I look like a hero!'"

"Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari" features Dhawan and Kapoor as Sunny and Tulsi, who reunite in Delhi with the intention of rekindling their past romance with their exes — Ananya (Malhotra) and Vikram (Saraf).

To make their ex-partners jealous, they pretend to be a couple, leading to a series of humorous misunderstandings and deceptions.

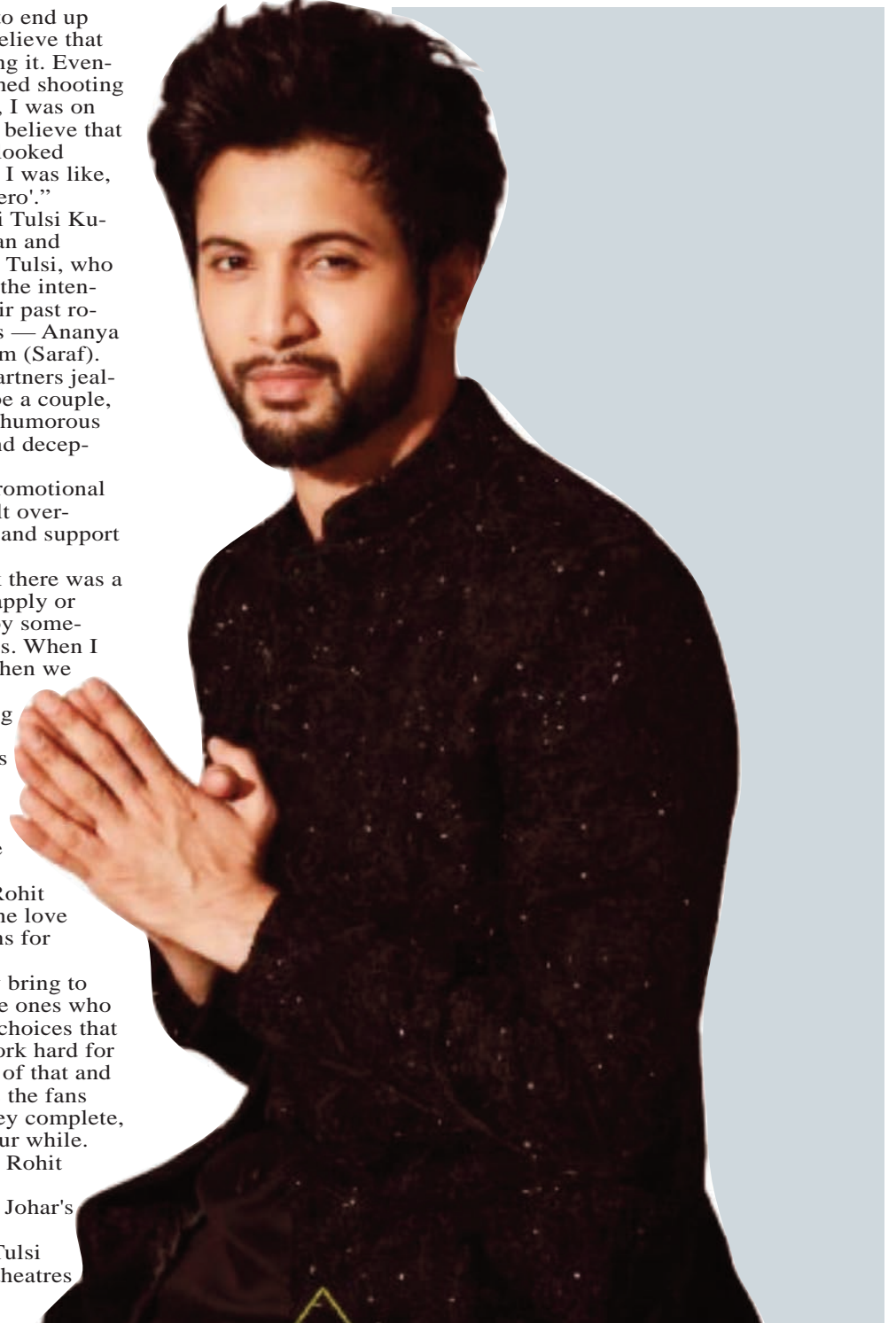
During the film's promotional tour, Rohit said he felt overwhelmed by the love and support from his fans.

"I don't really think there was a formula that I could apply or know in order to enjoy something as special as this. When I do go out in public when we are promoting, I hear people being so loving and supportive towards me, it is always very exciting. It's always very surreal to see it. Of course, one has manifested it," he said.

At the same time, Rohit said he doesn't take the love and support of his fans for granted.

"I realise what they bring to the table. They are the ones who made you. There are choices that you make and you work hard for it. But you can do all of that and still not have this. It's the fans that make your journey complete, and make it worth your while. I'm grateful for that," Rohit added.

Produced by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions, "Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari" released in theatres Thursday. (PTI)



Kerala govt felicitates actor Mohanlal for winning Dadasaheb Phalke Award

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Oct 4: The Kerala government on Saturday felicitated superstar Mohanlal for winning the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the highest honour in Indian cinema, at an event held in the state capital.

Expressing his gratitude, Mohanlal said the felicitation in his home state was more emotional than the award ceremony in New Delhi. "This is the land where I was born and raised. Its air, its buildings, its memories are part of my soul. Such emotions cannot be acted out," he said.

Recalling his early journey, the veteran actor spoke of moving to Chennai with friends to work with director Fazil and said cinema had allowed him to witness societal

changes over the decades.

"An actor is like clay shaped by directors, writers and cameramen. I have faced both success and criticism, and I take them equally," he added. Mohanlal dedicated the award to society, saying, "Without the audience, nothing can be achieved. This recognition belongs to them," while also acknowledging the support of his family and friends. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who presented the honour, described Mohanlal as "the pride of every Malayali," praising his versatility and immense contribution to Indian cinema. He cited Mohanlal's acclaimed performance in "Vanaprastham", screened at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival, and said he was

amazed at how the actor had portrayed diverse characters with ease. "In 1986 alone, he acted in 34 films, whereas today actors take up only two or three films a year," Vijayan noted, wishing him many more milestones as Malayalam cinema approaches its centenary.

Mohanlal was presented with a memento, a scroll, and a painting by A Ramachandran. The event was attended by Ministers V Sivankutty, Saji Cherian, K N Balagopal, and G R Anil, along with veteran filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan, who won the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2004; actresses Ambika, Renjini, and Malavika; director Joshiy; CPI state secretary M V Govindan; and MP A A Rahim. (PTI)

Hrithik Roshan recalls filming 'War 2': Everything was so perfect

NEW DELHI, Oct 4: Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan penned a heartfelt note on his social media describing what went behind making his latest film "War 2" and praised the filmmaker Ayan Mukerji.

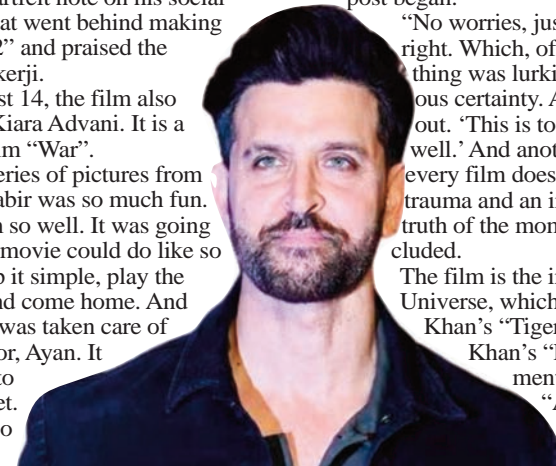
Released on August 14, the film also starred Jr NTR and Kiara Advani. It is a sequel to the 2019 film "War".

Roshan shared a series of pictures from the film. "Playing Kabir was so much fun. So relaxed knew him so well. It was going to be easy. Finally, a movie could do like so many others do, keep it simple, play the actor, do your job, and come home. And it was exactly that. I was taken care of so well by my director, Ayan. It was such a pleasure to have his energy on set. Everything seemed so

perfect. Like it's meant to be. A sure shot," the post began.

"No worries, just needed to do my job right. Which, of course, I did. But something was lurking behind that presumptuous certainty. A voice that I kept shutting out. 'This is too easy... I know this too well.' And another that said 'I deserve it, every film doesn't have to be a torture and trauma and an incessant search for the truth of the moment... just relax,' he concluded.

The film is the installment of the YRF Spy Universe, which also includes Salman Khan's "Tiger" movies and Shah Rukh Khan's "Pathaan". The next installment in the franchise is "Alpha", starring Alia Bhatt and Sharvari. (PTI)



London Film Festival to celebrate 50 years of 'Sholay' with special screening

LONDON, Oct 4: The London Film Festival is set to celebrate 50 years of the Bollywood classic "Sholay", featuring Amitabh Bachchan and Dharmendra, with a special screening of a restored version of the director's cut, complete with the original ending and some deleted scenes.

The British Film Institute's (BFI) annual festival of films from across the globe, which opens next week, has other Indian themes too, including Lucknow-born Ahmed Alauddin Jamal's "Hotel London" and Anupama Roy's debut "Songs of Forgotten Trees" — in the running for the First Feature Competition.

The Ramesh Sippy-directed film that released on August 15, 1975 and gave film lovers characters like Jai-Veeru (Amitabh Bachchan-Dharmendra),

Thakur (Sanjeev Kumar), Gabbar (Amjad Khan), Basanti (Hema Malini), Radha (Jaya Bachchan) and many more.

"It's wonderful that the Film Heritage Foundation has restored 'Sholay' and that they have managed to locate and include the original ending as well as some deleted scenes in the restoration," said Bachchan, who described his role of Jai in the film as "permanently etched" in his mind.

"Shooting for the film was an unforgettable experience, but at the time I had no idea that it would be a watershed for Indian cinema. Its dramatic change in fortunes from being declared an unsuccessful venture, to its record-breaking box office run was an emotional rollercoaster for all of us... I hope that even 50 years later, the film

will capture the imagination of new audiences across the world," he said in a statement.

His co-star Dharmendra, who played his best friend Veeru in the film, often referred to as a "Curry-Western", expressed confidence about its timeless appeal.

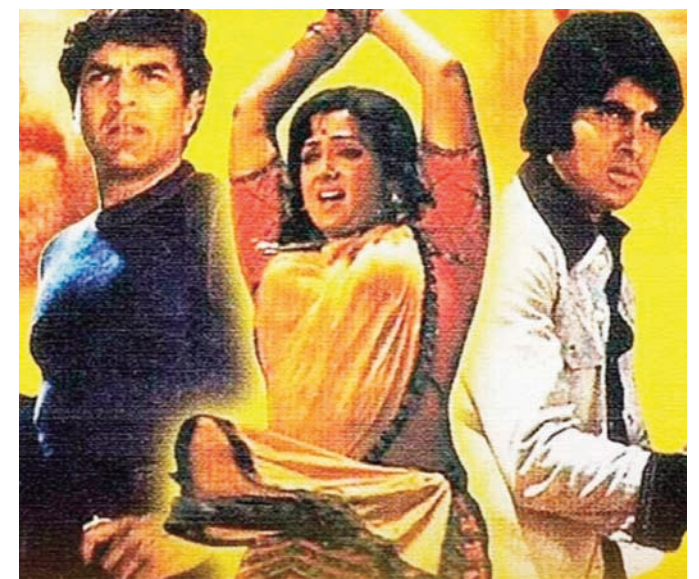
"Who can forget the dialogues of Salim-Javed and the direction of Ramesh Sippy? So many scenes have gone down in the history of Indian cinema and every character became a star," said Dharmendra.

"Few people know that I was offered the role of Gabbar and Thakur, but I was clear that I wanted to play the role of Veeru as he is so much like me. I had so much fun on the shoot. My favourite scenes were the tanki scene, the scene in the temple, and so many

others, but the most powerful scene I feel was the death of Jai, which is still etched in my mind," he added.

Originally released in 1975, the multi-starrer film including Amjad Khan as Gabbar Singh, Sanjeev Kumar as Thakur and Hema Malini as Basanti captivated audiences worldwide with what the BFI describes as a "compelling narrative, memorable characters and groundbreaking action sequences".

"It has taken us three years, but we were able to find the original ending and some deleted scenes. It's been a labour of love to resurrect the film, and this is a tribute to the vision and the legacy of my grandfather G.P. Sippy," said Shehzad Sippy, producer of Sippy Films, who initiated the restoration efforts in 2022.



"'Sholay' was a masterpiece of passion that generations of Indians have loved and seen time and time again. Despite the fact that we could not use the original camera negative and that not a single 70mm print survives, we have left no stone unturned to ensure that this historic film has not only been beautifully restored, but that the restored version will have the original ending and some never-before-seen deleted scenes," said Shivendra Singh Dungarpur, director of Film Heritage Foundation.

The BFI IMAX in London, the UK's biggest screen, will play host to the special screening of the film on October 19, the concluding day of the 2025 London Film Festival. (PTI)



BODOLAND RISES AGAIN

Renewed Mandate for Growth and Progress

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

OF

SHRI HAGRAMA MOHILARY
as Chief

BODOLAND TERRITORIAL COUNCIL

&

MEMBERS OF THE 5th EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

In the august presence of

SHRI LAKSHMAN PRASAD ACHARYA

Governor, Assam

&

DR. HIMANTA BISWA SARMA

Chief Minister, Assam

BTC SECRETARIAT FIELD, BODOFA NWGWR, KOKRAJHAR

5 OCTOBER 2025 | 11:00 AM



WITNESSING HISTORY AS BODOLAND STEPS INTO A NEW ERA

Published by IPRD, BTC

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