

6 WORLD NATION 8 ● Trump says he's open to health care deal but government must reopen first ● Pak, China, Russia and Iran reaffirm commitment to 'stable and peaceful' Afghan ● PM to inaugurate Navi Mumbai airport, Mumbai Metro-3 ● BJP MLA Manoj Oraon attacked while distributing flood relief materials

Orunodoi 3.0 launched in Karbi Anglong



HT Bureau DIPHU, Oct 7: The Government of Assam on Tuesday launched Orunodoi 3.0, its flagship welfare scheme, in Karbi Anglong, aiming to empower women and support underprivileged families. The district-level programme was held at Langkung Habe Memorial Town Hall, Diphu, with Tuliram Ronghang, Chief Executive Member of KAAC, as chief guest. MP Amarsing Tisso, MLA Dorsing Ronghang, EM KAAC Richard Tokbi, District Commissioner Nirola Phangocho, and officials from various departments attended the event. Ronghang highlighted that while Karbi Anglong's target was 91,500 beneficiaries, 1,06,877 applications were received, and 82,775 were (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Now 38 lakh women to get ₹ 1250 per month

Assam govt expands 'Orunodoi' scheme ● Special surprise to come in February: CM

GUWAHATI, Oct 7: The Assam government on Tuesday expanded its flagship financial support scheme for women, rolling out 'Orunodoi 3.0', making it the largest such programme in the state, in which 38 lakh families will get ₹ 1,250 each a month. Announcing this, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said a "special surprise" will come in February. "₹ 1,250 to over 38 lakh women instantly. Assam today expanded its flagship financial support scheme, #Orunodoi3 to become the largest ever anti-poverty scheme in the state," Sarma said in a post on X, after attending the launch of the third phase of the programme here. He said over 38 lakh families will get ₹1,250 per month, along with an extra ₹ 250 on purchase of LPG cylinder. "This scheme, since its inception, has helped a lot of families escape poverty, as reflected in leading reports and live a life of dignity," Sarma maintained.



He affirmed the government's commitment to expand this scheme and enhance its efficacy to ensure no poor person is left out. "With #Orunodoi3, we have laid a comprehensive support net for our people that aligns with Antyodaya," Sarma said. "A special surprise is coming up in February," the chief minister said, without sharing any details. At the central launch programme of the scheme, Sarma addressed the beneficiaries virtually gathered across 25,991 polling centers. Terming Orunodoi 3.0 as the largest welfare scheme in the state's history post-independence, he said the state government will spend about ₹5,000 crore annually for it. Sarma said the scheme was launched in 2020, during his tenure as the state's finance minister, to help the poor during the economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, about 18 lakh beneficiaries received ₹ 830 each month, directly transferred to their bank accounts on the 10th of every month. Responding to public demand, the government increased the monthly assistance from October 2021 onward, Sarma said. "Orunodoi is a journey of inclusion and empowerment. From 18 lakh to 28 lakh to 38 lakh beneficiaries. From ₹830 to ₹ 1,000 to ₹ 1,250 per month. A growing commitment to support, dignity and self-reliance," he said. The CM said that Orunodoi 3.0 has been launched as many eligible women were left behind earlier. Sarma added that beneficiaries under Bodoland Territorial Council will be included soon as work on beneficiary identification was stalled there due to elections. Dismissing opposition criticism that it is a beneficiary-centric scheme, the chief minister said, "Orunodoi represents more than just financial aid. It stands as a symbol of respect and gratitude from the state government toward the women and mothers of the state." He said that from November onwards, families with ration cards will receive pulses, salt and sugar at subsidised rates. Beneficiaries who submit their cooking gas documents will receive an additional ₹ 250 as government support, he said, adding that the government also plans to provide edible oil at subsidised rates through the ration card in the coming months. He claimed that the success of Orunodoi scheme has inspired other states like Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra to adopt programmes in its model. (PTI)

ST STATUS DEMAND OF SIX COMMUNITIES

GoM to submit report on Nov 25: CM

TINSUKIA, Oct 7: A group of ministers (GoM) formed by the Assam government to look into the demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status by six communities of the state will submit its report in November, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Tuesday. He said the report will be placed in the state Assembly and the matter will be taken forward based on the outcome of the discussion in the House. Six communities -- Moran, Matak, Ahom, Chutia, Koch-Rajbongshi and Tea Tribes -- have been demanding ST status for several years, with political parties lending support to it though the demand has not been fulfilled by any ruling dispensation.

"Our government had formed a GoM to look into the matter. It will submit the report on November 25. After that, it will be placed in the Assembly and taken up for discussion. Based on the decision in the Assembly, the matter will be taken forward," Sarma told reporters on the sidelines of a programme here, when asked about the status of the six communities' demand. He said that a proposal was adopted in the Assembly during the Congress regime that the benefits of the tribes already declared ST should not be disturbed while according the similar ST status to the six communities. "But after examining the matter, we have found that in some way or the other, there will be

some benefits and some disturbances. The proposal adopted in the Assembly may need some amendments. That's why we have to wait till the report comes," the chief minister added. The previous BJP-led state government under Sarbananda Sonowal had initially formed the GoM, which was later reconstituted after Sarma-government took over. The communities have upped the ante over the last couple of months with state elections approaching early next year. Moran, Matak and Koch-Rajbongshi communities held protests like road blockade and demonstrations last month to further press for their demand. (PTI)

Wife, sister seek to know truth behind Zubeen's death

Things are moving in so many directions and we are not feeling good about it: Garima ● One member of Assam Association of Singapore appears before CID

GUWAHATI, Oct 7: Zubeen Garg's wife Garima Saikia Garg and his sister Palme Borthakur on Tuesday sought to know the circumstances that led to the singer's death in Singapore last month. They also demanded justice for the deceased singer. "...we will be together again, very soon Goldie (the name by which Garg was called by the family). But now, very soon, I/we all want to know the reason why you went away physically from us...Why? This is a big question. This question is burning my empty heart day and night. I want an answer..." Garima said on her Facebook page. Garg's sister, in her social media post, said, "You will again call me 'Momon' (her pet name)...when we meet on the other side... now we have only one goal... to ensure justice for you." She urged people to provide mental support and help them get justice for her brother. The singer's wife later told mediapersons that



they do not want "any kind of politics or distraction but just want to know the truth and that will be justice for him. Things are moving in so many directions and we are not feeling good about it." Garima was speaking at a location of Garg's last film 'Roi Roi Binale', scheduled to be re-

leased on October 31, where work began after his death to complete the sequence of a song which he had planned to shoot after his return from Singapore. "Not knowing what exactly happened to him during his last moments is hurting me day and night. He gave so much love to everyone and we also had kept him wrapped in love and respect. But then, did he have to die neglected?" she said. Garima urged all to cooperate and expressed her anguish over the members of the Assam Association in Singapore, who were with him during his last moments, not coming forward to reveal what happened. "Why are they not cooperating? Don't they have any humanity and values left?" she asked. "We have lost a person who was Zubeen Garg... He is just not my husband but the world has recognised him. Why are they not saying anything?" she said. Garima said that the family just wants the answer (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Terror funding case: SC denies bail to NSCN-IM leader Alemla Jamir

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to grant bail to self-styled cabinet minister of the Naga insurgent outfit NSCN-IM, Alemla Jamir, in an alleged case of terror funding. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and Satish Chandra Sharma said it is not inclined to grant bail at this stage as trial in progress. "The allegations are very serious, shocks our conscience," the bench said. The top court directed the trial court to adopt video conferencing facilities and proceed with the trial. It directed Jamir to cooperate in the probe and posted the matter for hearing in the second week of January. On January 13, the Delhi High Court had refused to grant bail to Jamir and said going by the allegations, the evidence and the fact that (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Centre finalises new contractor for stalled Majuli-Jorhat bridge: CM

GUWAHATI, Oct 7: A new contractor has been appointed to complete the stalled Majuli-Jorhat bridge over the Brahmaputra river in Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. The construction work of the two-lane bridge has been stalled since September 2024 after its earlier contractor, UP State Bridge Corporation Ltd (UPSBCL), left the site. No reason was made public for leaving the work midway. "Another step closer to connecting Majuli and Jorhat. The Letter of Acceptance for completing the balance work on the crucial Majuli-Jorhat bridge has been issued," Sarma said in a post on X on Monday night. This step of appointing the new contractor by the Union government paves the way for work to resume soon on the project, which will be a lifeline for the people of Majuli, he added.

According to the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways' Letter of Acceptance (LOA), which was shared by Sarma along with his post, Haryana-based SPS Construction India Pvt Ltd placed a bid of ₹ 657.66 crore for construction of the main bridge. The company will construct a total of 8.03 km, which will include the approach and the main bridge portion of 6.81 km, it added. The LOA noted that the quoted bid price of "₹ 657,66,40,388 without GST has been determined to be the lowest evaluated bid and is substantially responsive and has been accepted." The Union government has asked the company to furnish a performance security of ₹ 32.88 crore as part of the necessary formalities. The LOA, however, has not mentioned any deadline to start or finish the construction work, which is (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Bombs its own people, sanctions genocidal mass rape': India

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 7: In a strong re-tort against Pakistan in the UN Security Council, India on Monday said its neighbour as a country that "bombs its own people" and conducts "systematic genocide". During his remarks to the UNSC open debate on "Women, Peace and Security", India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish said Pakistan conducted Operation Searchlight in 1971 and sanctioned a systematic campaign of genocidal mass rape of 400,000 women citizens by its own army. "Every year, we are unfortunately fated to listen to the delusional tirade of Pakistan against my country, especially on Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian territory they covet," the Indian envoy said. "A country that bombs its own people, conducts systematic genocide, can only attempt to distract the world with misdirection and hyperbole," Harish said. The world sees through Pakistan's propaganda, he added. On March 25, 1971, the Pakistani army had launched a brutal crackdown involving widespread civilian killings throughout East Pakistan code-named 'Operation Searchlight'. Harish told the council meeting chaired by Russia that India's record on the "women, peace and security" agenda is unblemished and unscathed. India's strong response in the council came after Pakistan, in its statement, raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. "To exclude Kashmiri women from the Women, Peace and Security agenda erases its legitimacy and undermines its universality," the Pakistani delegate said in her statement. Harish, in his remarks, also said that India remains unwavering in its commitment to the "Women, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam youth to participate in World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi

GUWAHATI, Oct 7: Assam's youth Tanuj Samaddar has been selected to participate in the IUCN World Conservation Congress to be held at Abu Dhabi from October 9, according to a statement. He has been selected by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), it said. The World Conservation Congress, held every four years, will be attended by nature conservation experts, leaders and decision-makers from around the world, according to the IUCN release issued on Monday. The theme of this year's congress, which will continue till October 15, is 'Power of Transformative Change'. The congress will constitute a "major milestone in the countdown towards the goals set for both the Convention on Biological Diversity and those agreed since COP21 in Paris regarding climate change", the release said. A resident of Rangia in Kamrup district, Samaddar is currently pursuing his undergraduate studies in a college under the Delhi University and is a recipient of the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Our discovery in some ways is basis of quantum computing' Nobel Prize in Physics goes to 3 scientists

STOCKHOLM, Oct 7: John Clarke, Michel H. Devoret and John M. Martinis won the Nobel Prize in Physics on Tuesday for research on seemingly obscure quantum tunnelling that is advancing digital technology. Clarke, 83, conducted his research at the University of California, Berkeley; Martinis at the University of California, Santa Barbara; and Devoret at Yale and also at the University of California, Santa Barbara. "To put it mildly, it was the surprise of my life," Clarke told reporters at the announcement by phone after being told of his win. He paid tribute to the other two laureates, saying that "their contributions are just overwhelming." "Our discovery in some ways is the basis of quantum computing. Exactly at this moment, where this



fits in is not entirely clear to me." However, speaking from his cellphone, Clarke added: "One of the underlying reasons that cell-phones work is because of all this work." The Nobel committee said that the laureates' work in the 1980s continues to provide opportunities to develop "the next generation of quantum technology, including quantum cryptography, quantum computers, and quantum sensors." "It is wonderful to be able to celebrate the way that century-old

quantum mechanics continually offers new surprises. It is also enormously useful, as quantum mechanics is the foundation of all digital technology," said Olle Eriksson, Chair of the Nobel Committee for Physics. The 100-year-old field of quantum mechanics deals with the seemingly impossible subatomic world where switches can be on and off at the same time and parts of atoms tunnel through what seems like impenetrable barriers. The prize-winning trio's work helped take that into the larger world, where it has the potential to supercharge computing and communications. What the three physicists did "is taking the scale of something that we can't see, we can't touch, we can't feel and bringing it up to the scale of (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India procured military hardware from domestic sources in 2024-25: Rajnath

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: India procured military hardware and weapons worth ₹1,20,000 crore from domestic sources by end of 2024-25 as it is increasingly focusing on boosting self-reliance to confront national security challenges, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday. In an address at an event, Singh said self-reliance in defence is not just a matter of production or economy but it is the "first and foremost" priority as it is linked to India's strategic autonomy as well as sovereignty. "Defence and security are the collective responsibility of the entire nation and strengthening the defence sector is not just the duty of one institution or government but the shared resolve of all Indians," he said at a conference. In his remarks, Singh called upon states and Union territories to become active partners in

building a robust, globally competitive defence manufacturing ecosystem. He asserted that self-reliance in defence is not just a matter of production or economy for us, it is first and foremost a matter of strategic autonomy and is directly linked to sovereignty. Singh said the government is fully aware of the changing dynamics of battle-field, especially the importance of non-contact warfare such as use of drones, and preparing for it accordingly. In this context, he underlined the importance of enhancing India's own defence industries to meet myriad security challenges. "In 2021-22, our capital acquisition from domestic sources was around ₹ 74,000 crore, but by the end of 2024-25, the capital acquisition from domestic sources has increased to approximately ₹ 1,20,000 crore," he said. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Indian Army concludes seminar on China

HT Correspondent DIBRUGARH, Oct 7: The Indian Army on Tuesday concluded a two-day seminar on China's evolving strategic role at the Dinjari Military Station. Organised by the Diao Division under the aegis of Spear Corps, the event brought together military leaders, security experts, and academicians to assess the complex dynamics along India's northern borders. The seminar featured four sessions covering China's defence capabilities, lessons from past interactions, trans-boundary dynamics, and geopolitical asymmetry between India and China. Eminent speakers provided in-depth insights into China's military posture and its implications for India's security planning. The event saw participation from senior military officers, ITBP officials, policymakers, bureaucrats, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Sitharaman asks fintechs to strengthen risk management to check AI misuse

MUMBAI, Oct 7: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday asked fintech firms to focus on risk management at a time when criminals are using AI to mimic voices, clone identities and create lifelike videos to manipulate people.

Speaking at the 6th edition of Global Fintech Fest 2025 here, the finance minister also said India has the potential of becoming the global hub for building various AI products and services.

During the event, Sitharaman launched the Foreign Currency Settlement System (FCSS) of GIFT IFSC designed to settle transactions in foreign currencies on a real-time or near real-time basis. With the operationalisation of the FCSS, GIFT IFSC joins a select group of global financial centres - including Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Manila - that have the infrastructure to settle foreign currency transactions locally.

The minister said India can also build AI products that fits diverse use-cases across the world. It can be a laboratory for developing and testing AI ideas. "Our AI stack must be rooted in Indian languages, local contexts, and multimodal interfaces, so that it can be widely accepted and accessed by our citizens," she said and added that focused approach across the AI stack can make India the AI torchbearer for the Global South. She



said while artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed finance and governance, there are darker sides of the technology also.

"Even as AI opens extraordinary possibilities, we must confront its darker side. The same tools that power innovation can be weaponised for deception and for fraud. I'm not personalising it, but I can say, I have seen several deepfake videos of myself being circulated online, manipulated to mislead citizens and distort facts. "It was a reminder of the urgency with which we must strengthen our defences," the finance minister said. The new generation of

fraud is no longer about breaching firewalls, it is about hacking trust, Sitharaman said.

Criminals, she added, are using AI to mimic voices, clone identities and create lifelike videos that can manipulate people. The minister further said fintech in India is not a niche urban convenience, it is a nationwide enabler of economic empowerment. India's fintech journey has transformed everyday payments into an invisible and inseparable habit, powered by UPI and digital public infrastructure.

"This is a good moment to reflect on what kind of financial future we wish to build and how do we get there. Fintechs must essentially focus on the fundamentals such as revenue growth, innovative product offerings, profitability, risk and compliance capabilities," she said.

The minister emphasised that responsible regulation is not a brake on progress; it is a seat belt for safe acceleration. Fintech sector must help cover the small remaining gaps in the financial ecosystem, she added.

In the span of a single decade, India has connected a population equivalent to that of the entire European Union (EU) to the formal banking system, opening over 56 Crore Jan Dhan bank accounts. (PTI)

Udhyan Vyapaar's Istri Project records ₹100 crore income uplift

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 7: Udhyan Vyapaar has announced a major milestone with its flagship initiative, The Istri Project, which has enabled ironing vendors across India to achieve a cumulative income uplift of ₹100 crore as of September 2025.

The Istri Project aims to modernise the age-old ironing industry by helping roadside ironing vendors switch from coal-based to LPG-based iron boxes at subsidised rates. This transition allows vendors to reduce fuel costs by nearly half and increase productivity by up to two hours daily — enabling them to serve more customers and earn higher incomes. The move to LPG also promotes cleaner energy use, significantly improving health outcomes and reducing environmental impact. Over the past four years, Udhyan Vyapaar has scaled the initiative from one city to five cities, supporting more than 8,000 ironing vendors in making the switch to LPG iron boxes. Vendors associated with the project have reported an average income rise of 25%, alongside the elimination of over 6,000 tons of CO₂ emissions annually.

Krishnan Ranganathan, Co-Founder of Udhyan Learning Foundation, said, "At Udhyan, we believe that nano-entrepreneurs are a significant pillar of India's economic fabric, capable of improving lives when given the right support. Crossing the ₹100 crore milestone with The Istri Project is a proud moment not just for us, but for the thousands of ironing vendors who chose to embrace change. It also demonstrates how localized livelihood solutions can create national-scale impact-improving incomes, health, and environmental outcomes at the same time." Cyril Joseph, Program Head of The Istri Project, added, "This milestone belongs to the thousands of ironing vendors who trusted us, made the switch from coal to LPG, and reimagined what their businesses could achieve. The Istri Project began with a simple idea — to help vendors save fuel costs and boost productivity. Now, it has grown into a movement with measurable impact on livelihoods and the environment."

India-US in continuous dialogue for trade pact: Goyal

DOHA, Oct 7: India and the US are in continuous dialogue on the proposed bilateral trade agreement, and all possibilities are there to meet the November deadline for concluding the talks, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday.

On the possibility of the next round of trade negotiations in a physical mode, he said that every possibility exists, but with the US government currently in shutdown mode, it remains to be seen how, where, and when the next round of talks can take place.

"Aap sub jante hain ki USA me aaj-kal government shut down mode me hai, toh uske maddenazar dekhna padega ki kaise baat-cheet ho sakti hai, kahan ho sakti hai, aur kab ho sakti hai (As you all know, the US government is currently in shutdown mode. So, keeping that in mind, we'll have to see how, where, and when the discussions can take place)," he told reporters here.

The US government has stopped working since midnight on October 1 as Congress failed to pass a funding bill. Theoretically, this means many government workers will not be paid for now, and services centres are closed. However, important operations, such as in the field of defence and social work, will continue to function.

Goyal is here for a one-day official visit. He is leading a business delegation and discussing ways to boost trade and investment ties between the two countries.

"We are in constant dialogue with the USA (on the trade pact), and talks are on at various levels. We will give more information on this soon on how we are thinking to take it forward," he said.

When asked if the two sides are sticking to the November deadline to conclude the negotiations, he said:

"There is every possibility".

Last month, the minister led an official delegation to New York for trade talks. After that meeting, India and the US decided to continue negotiations for an early conclusion of a mutually beneficial bilateral trade agreement.

Both sides held constructive meetings on various aspects of the trade deal. During the visit, the minister held meetings with United States Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer and US Ambassador-designate to India Sergio Gor.

Those deliberations were important as they took place after the US imposed a 25 per cent reciprocal tariff and an additional 25 per cent penalty on Indian goods entering the American market for purchasing Russian crude oil.

At present, a total of 50 per cent additional import duty is imposed on Indian goods.

In February this year, leaders of the two countries directed officials to negotiate a proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA).

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

The US remained India's largest trading partner for the fourth consecutive year in 2024-25, with bilateral trade valued at USD 131.84 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports). The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in the country's total merchandise trade. (PTI)

ECMS response doubles targets, building on SEMICON India 2025 buzz

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 7: The response to the Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) has been truly extraordinary, with investment proposals worth ₹1.15 lakh crore and commitments to create nearly 1.41 lakh jobs.

The industry's strong participation reflects growing confidence in India's electronics growth trajectory, backed by robust support from both the Central and State governments.

The India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA) and SEMI have congratulated the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) for launching this landmark scheme, which not only strengthens India's electronics manufacturing ecosystem but also complements the

country's semiconductor policy framework by driving higher domestic value addition.

IESA has been actively engaged from the policy-discussion stage through to the formal launch by the Minister on April 26, 2025.

At the launch, IESA outlined a five-pronged strategy for ECMS promotion and execution, focusing on international collaborations, state-level partnerships, deeper engagement with distributors, support for EMS and OEM industries, global promotion of India's policies, and alignment with semiconductor sector initiatives.

These measures aim to empower MSMEs, strengthen value chains, drive technology adoption, and enhance ease of doing business.

The investment proposals cover a wide spectrum of component cat-

egories — including passives, modules, PCBs, displays, cameras, casings, battery cells, and more — effectively encompassing the end-to-end requirements of electronics manufacturing inputs.

The overwhelming response, with proposals nearly twice the original targets, clearly signals that India is well on its way to becoming a global hub for electronic components manufacturing.

This surge in interest builds on the momentum and excitement generated by the SEMICON India 2025 event held last month.

IESA and SEMI reaffirmed their commitment to working closely with the government and industry to ensure that these proposals translate into tangible manufacturing growth, sustainable job creation, and a resilient ecosystem.

Conid. from Page 1...

Orunodoi 3.0 launched in Karbi Anglong

found eligible. Under the scheme, each beneficiary will receive ₹ 1,250 per month through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), along with an additional ₹ 250 per month as LPG subsidy under Mukhyamantrir Sulav Indhan Asoni, bringing total monthly support to ₹ 1,500.

The programme, organised by the District Administration and Diphu Municipal Board, covers seven development blocks and six municipal boards, reaching 571 rural and 103 urban areas.

Officials said the initiative is a major step toward strengthening women's financial independence and ensuring inclusive development across Karbi Anglong and Assam.

Wife, sister seek to know

to why did the incident happen that day. She said that the family has full faith in the investigations and "it is progressing well but we just want it to end soon and we get justice".

Garg's sister, who was also present at the location, appealed to those who were with "Dada (brother) in Singapore to come to Assam and say what happened to him in his last moments. We want know everything." "There is no point in giving different angles to his death. Tell us the truth so that we know happened and Dada gets justice," Borthakur said.

Regarding Garg's last movie, his wife said that it was his "dream film...a completely musical love story of a blind singer which he had planned for many years and has parallels to his life and music". He wanted the film to be released on October 31 and "we will try to do so and the post production work of the film is going on," Garima said. The singer's wife on October 4 returned the report of the second post-mortem examination of Garg's body, which was conducted at the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital, to the government, saying that it was not her "personal document" and the investigators would be the best judges to decide whether it should be made public or not.

The SIT, probing into the singer's death, had issued summonses to several people associated with the singer, including eight of the 11 members of the Assam Association of Singapore, who were with the singer during his last moments on the yacht, to appear before it by October 6. One of them, Rukamal Kalita, appeared before the SIT here on Tuesday and remained inside the CID office for nearly six hours.

He left in a vehicle and did not speak to media persons present outside the CID office. The other members of the association are yet to respond to the summonses. Garg's manager Siddhartha Sharma, musician Shikharjyoti Goswami, singer Amritprava Mahanta and North East India Festival organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta have been arrested in connection with the singer's death. Garg died by drowning while swimming in the sea on September 19 in Singapore where he had gone to perform in the festival.

More than 60 FIRs were filed against Mahanta, Sharma and several others, following which the chief minister had directed the DGP to transfer all the cases to the CID and register a consolidated case for a thorough investigation. The CID constituted an SIT, led by Special DGP Munna Prasad Gupta, to probe into the singer's death. (PTI)

Terror funding case: SC denies

her husband was absconding, her appeal against an order dismissing her bail plea for the second time had no merit. The high court had observed the trial judge was trying to speed up the trial and the prosecution was also attempting to conclude the trial as soon as possible.

"Justice hurried is justice buried. We also cannot lose sight of the element that quality of evidence that is to be adduced before the trial cannot be compromised," the HC had said. Observing Jamir was a flight risk, the court had said she allegedly held a high position in the NSCN(IM) and was also in a position to influence the witnesses and tamper with the evidence.

"Accordingly, the present appeal is dismissed," the order held. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) lodged a case against Jamir after she was intercepted at the Delhi airport on December 17, 2019, before she could fly to Dimapur with about ₹ 72 in cash. The agency said she was unable to explain the source of the recovered cash and an intimation was sent to income tax department prompting an investigation. While opposing the bail plea, the prosecution alleged Jamir and other accused connived and established a "sophisticated network" through the armed cadres of the "Naga Army" to extort money for terror funding.

Jamir said sufficient evidence was not on record to support the alleged serious accusations against her.

In the judgement, the high court said the NIA's investigation revealed the NSCN(IM) was a terrorist outfit with her sophisticated weaponry and ran a parallel government. "Allegations against the appellant are specific of her being involved in a criminal conspiracy...for raising and collecting lots of funds from businessmen in Dimapur," the order said, adding, "by creating a systematic mechanism for collecting extortion money for the NSCN(IM), for which she had opened, as many as 20 bank accounts, some in fictitious names also." Jamir and other accused persons were acting in a surreptitious manner trying to leave behind no trail of evidence over the extortion of money for carrying out NSCN(IM)'s terror operations, it added. (PTI)

Centre finalises new contractor for

already much delayed. In March this year, the overall project cost of this crucial road link to the world's largest river island was revised to ₹ 1,019.17 crore, an escalation of nearly ₹ 94 crore from the previous estimation. For construction of the Majuli-Jorhat bridge, including immediate approaches over Brahmaputra on NH-715K at Dakshinpat in Majuli, the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways had earlier sanctioned ₹ 925.47 crore.

In November 2021, Sarma had launched the construction works of the bridge over the Brahmaputra. The state government had constituted a cabinet committee to regularly monitor the progress of the project, which was scheduled to be commissioned by November 2025. To connect Majuli with the mainland, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari had in February 2016 laid the foundation of a bridge over the Brahmaputra connecting Jorhat on the south bank and Lakhimpur on the north bank via the river island.

For the same project, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, before the state Assembly polls in February 2021, again laid the foundation stone for an eight-km-long Jorhat-Majuli bridge. (PTI)

'Bombs its own people, sanctions

Peace and Security" agenda and stands ready to share its expertise with partners, particularly those in the Global South, fostering collective solutions to shared challenges. He highlighted India's consistent contribution to UN peacekeeping as an expression of its commitment to global peace.

"What distinguishes India's peacekeeping legacy is not merely the scale of our contribution, but our pioneering recognition of women as indispensable agents of peace," he said. As early as the 1960s, India deployed women medical officers to the Congo, marking one of the earliest instances of women serving in UN peacekeeping operations, the ambassador said.

This was not merely a symbolic gesture but a practical acknowledgement that women's perspectives, skills, and presence are essential to effective peacekeeping, he said. In February 2025, India hosted the International Conference on Women Peacekeepers from the Global South, bringing together women peacekeepers from 35 nations. The two-day gathering examined the evolving challenges facing women in peacekeeping operations — from addressing sexual exploitation and abuse to leveraging technology for enhanced effectiveness.

The conference was not merely a forum for discussion but a platform for developing actionable strategies to increase women's participation and their impact in future peace missions, he said. (PTI)

Assam youth to participate in World

He also serves as a member of the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) at IUCN. Tanuj was scheduled to participate in the thematic sessions of the commission and country-specific pavilions as well, the release said. He will also engage with policymakers and activists from across the globe to spotlight the growing threat of encroachment on Assam's wetlands, it added. (PTI)

Indian Army concludes seminar

academicians, and students from across the northeastern region. It generated actionable recommendations aimed at refining strategies, enhancing operational preparedness, and strengthening India's strategic approach to border security.

Army officials stated that the seminar helped improve national awareness, preparedness, and strategic foresight concerning developments along India's sensitive northern frontiers. The programme underscored the importance of informed dialogue, collaborative research, and analytical rigour in addressing evolving security challenges, promoting a cooperative approach across institutional boundaries.

Nobel Prize in Physics

something recognisable and make it something you can build upon," said Physics Today editor-in-chief Richard Fitzgerald, who in the 1990s worked in the field on a competitor's group.

"Quantum computers is one very sort of obvious use, but they're also can be used for quantum sensors, so to be able to make very sensitive measurements of, for example, magnetic fields, and perhaps also for cryptography, so to encode information so it cannot be easily listened to by a third party," Mark Pearce, a professor of astrophysics and Nobel Physics Committee member, told The Associated Press.(AP)

India procured military hardware

"This change is not just about data, but also about mindset," he said.

The defence minister highlighted the "unprecedented growth" of India's defence manufacturing sector over the past decade underscoring that the defence production, which was over ₹ 46,000 crore in 2014, has now increased to over ₹ 1.5 lakh crore in 2025. He added that over ₹ 33,000 crore came from the private sector, a clear indication that industry has become an equal stakeholder in the Aatmanirbharta mission. Singh said India aims to achieve defence manufacturing worth ₹ 3 lakh crore and defence exports worth ₹ 50,000 crore by 2029.

The defence minister said the Modi government has taken several policy initiatives in the last 10 years to encourage indigenous design, development, and manufacturing of defence equipment in the country.

Under these initiatives, the highest priority is now being given to domestic sourcing in procurement of military hardware, he noted. "The government of India is fully aware of the changing nature of modern warfare. Today's warfare has become completely technology-oriented. We have seen a demonstration of this in Operation Sindoor as well," he said. "In this, we observed that the importance of non-contact warfare, such as drones, anti-drone warfare, and air-defence systems, has significantly increased," he said.

Singh also listed goals in the defence sector to realise India's overall aim to become a developed country by 2047. "First is that we must achieve a high degree of self-reliance in the critical defence capabilities. Second, we must become a prominent global exporter in the defence sector," he said.

"Third, to take India forward in cutting-edge technology sectors, we must achieve advancements in some new niche technologies," he said. (PTI)

India-EU trade talks: Commerce Secretary to visit Brussels this week

DOHA, Oct 7: Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal will visit Brussels this week to meet European Commission Director General for Trade Sabine Weyand to give impetus to the ongoing negotiations on the proposed free trade agreement, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday here.

The Commerce and Industry Minister said "very" good discussions are going on between the EU and India in Brussels.

India is hoping to work together in a spirit of understanding each other's sensitivities so that the two sides can conclude an equitable, fair and balanced free trade agreement, he added.

The minister is here on a two-day official visit. He is leading a business delegation to discuss ways to boost trade and investment ties between India and Qatar.

"Once this round gets over, Commerce Secretary, Rajesh Agrawal, will be going to Brussels to meet his counterpart, DG Sabine Weyand by the end of this week. After that, we will be working out what are the next steps," Goyal said.

When asked about the December deadline to conclude the negotiations, the minister said both sides will make every endeavour to



meet the leaders' expectations and complete the negotiations before the end of the year.

He added that India's young, talented and skilled population is a great resource for the European Union. "The innovation and technology base of the European Union holds tremendous potential for Indian businesses, and jointly, the EU and Indian companies can leverage each other's strengths so that we can serve the world together," he added. The Indian team, led by Special Secretary in the Department of Commerce L Satya Srinivas is in Brussels for the 14th round of negotiations. The five-day talks began on October 6.

Goyal is also expected to visit Brussels on October 27-28.

The pact aims at boosting two-way commerce and investments. Both sides have targeted to conclude negotiations by December.

In June 2022, India and the EU bloc resumed negotiations for a comprehensive FTA, an investment protection agreement and a pact on geographical indications after a gap of over eight years. It was stalled in 2013 due to differences on the level of opening up markets.

Besides demanding significant duty cuts in automobiles and medical devices, the EU wants tax reduction in other products like

wine, spirits, meat, poultry, and a strong intellectual property regime.

Indian goods' exports to the EU, such as ready-made garments, pharmaceuticals, steel, petroleum products, and electrical machinery, can become more competitive if the pact sails through.

The India-EU trade pact negotiations cover 23 policy areas or chapters, including trade in goods, trade in services, investment, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, trade remedies, rules of origin, customs and trade facilitation, competition, trade defence, government procurement, dispute settlement, intellectual property rights, geographical indications, and sustainable development.

India's bilateral trade in goods with the EU was USD 136.53 billion in 2024-25 (exports worth USD 75.85 billion and imports worth USD 60.68 billion), making it the largest trading partner for goods. The EU market accounts for about 17 per cent of India's total exports, and the bloc's exports to India constitute 9 per cent of its total overseas shipments.

In addition, the bilateral trade in services between India and the EU was estimated at USD 51.45 billion in 2023. (PTI)

Orunodoi 3.0 launched statewide, empowering women

Flagship DBT scheme brings timely financial support to over 38 lakh women beneficiaries

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Oct 7: The 3rd edition of Orunodoi 3.0, Assam's flagship Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme, was officially launched on 7 October across various locations in Dima Hasao through virtual events.

At Kalibari, Lower Haflong, the programme was attended by Minister Nandita Gorlosa, District Commissioner Munindra Nath Ngatey, ACS, and Additional District Commissioner Sangeeta Devi, ACS, among others. A live stream of the state-level launch was played during the event, connecting local participants with the broader rollout of the scheme.

Minister Gorlosa praised the district administration for its efforts in implementing the scheme and thanked Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and the Finance Department for their support in empowering the people of Assam.

Simultaneously, Chief Executive Member Debolal Gorlosa launched the programme virtually from Sampardisa Community Hall. He was joined by Additional District Commissioner AK Ilyias Ahmed, ACS, Assistant Commissioner Raghuraj Vaidhya, local leaders, and CDC Chairman Rongmanon Johori. CEM Gorlosa highlighted the importance of proper documentation to access benefits and reaffirmed the Autonomous Council's commitment to supporting residents through financial assistance.

In this phase, 26,790 beneficiaries have been identified in Dima Hasao, with 26,665 approved for disbursement.

Launched in October 2020, the Orunodoi scheme provides monthly financial assistance of ₹ 1,250 to economically vulnerable households, with a focus on women-led families. The initiative aims to ensure dignity, transparency, and timely support

through direct transfers to beneficiaries' bank accounts.

In a major push towards inclusive welfare, Cachar district joined the rest of Assam in the grand launch of Orunodoi 3.0. The launch was observed across 1,575 polling stations in the district, marking a significant milestone in transparent and timely delivery of financial support.

CM Sarma was streamed live from Guwahati to venues across the state. Beneficiaries in Cachar witnessed the live event through large screens and mobile devices, symbolising the collective spirit behind the transformative initiative.

At the Meherpur Durgabari centre in Silchar, Guardian Minister for Cachar Jayanta Malla Baruah attended the event, interacting with beneficiaries and officials. He praised the district administration for its smooth coordination and effective rollout. District Commissioner Mridul Yadav, IAS, and other senior officers were present, ensuring that all arrangements met official protocol and beneficiaries were welcomed warmly.

Earlier in the morning, the Guardian Minister ceremonially inaugurated the district-level launch by lighting the traditional lamp at Booth No 22 of Durga Palli under Chatla Mandal in Borkhola LAC. In his address, he highlighted the evolution of the Orunodoi scheme since its inception in December 2020 — from providing ₹ 830 per month, to ₹ 1,000, and now ₹ 1,250 under Orunodoi 3.0.

He informed that the government plans to extend the scheme to 40 lakh women across Assam, with each Legislative Assembly constituency (LAC) covering 25,000–30,000 beneficiaries selected transparently through booth-level committees. In Borkhola LAC alone, 25,980 women have been



selected, including 90 beneficiaries from Booth No 22.

Minister Baruah stressed that the scheme is designed to eliminate middlemen, with the entire amount directly credited to the beneficiary's bank account through the DBT system. He reiterated that funds will be transferred on the 10th of every month, ensuring timely and predictable support. He also addressed concerns about temporary exclusions in families with multiple eligible women under different ration cards, assuring that such cases will be resolved in future phases.

Our Jorhat correspondent add: The Arunodoi 3.0 scheme, aimed at providing financial aid to women, was launched in Jorhat district along with the rest of the state. A total of 113,210 beneficiaries in the district will receive ₹ 1,250 directly into their bank accounts. The launch event was held at Nowsolia Health Sub Centre in Jorhat, following a live telecast of Chief Minister's launch from Guwahati.

Jorhat MLA Hitendra Nath Goswami and District Commissioner Jay Shivani highlighted the

scheme's benefits for empowering underprivileged women. Additionally, beneficiaries will receive a Rs 250 subsidy per gas cylinder, also transferred directly to their accounts.

In a similar event at 260 No Dulia Primary School, Kaziranga MP Kamakhya Prasad Tasa inaugurated the scheme and spoke about various women-focused initiatives by the BJP government.

Our Tezpur correspondent add: The central launch of Orunodoi 3.0, Assam's flagship poverty alleviation and women-centric initiative, held on Tuesday at the Veterinary Science College Ground in Khanapara, Guwahati, under the leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Sonitpur district joined the event virtually. The launch was streamed across 1,151 polling stations in all five Legislative Assembly Constituencies (LACs), enrolling approximately 1,41,426 beneficiaries under the latest phase of the scheme. District-level programmes were held simultaneously, attended by MLAs, PRI members, senior officials including the District Commissioner, Co-DCs, ADCs, Circle Officers, BDOs, and

the general public, who expressed strong support for the Chief Minister's vision.

Prominent attendees at the LAC-level events included Cabinet Minister and Dhekiajuli MLA Ashok Singhal, Naduar MLA Padma Hazarika, Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rava, Barchalla MLA Ganesh Kumar Limbu, and Rangapara MLA Krishna Kamal Tanti. District Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das joined the programme from Gabharu Development Block under Tezpur LAC.

As highlighted during the state launch, Orunodoi 3.0 aims to uplift over 38 lakh families across Assam with direct monthly financial assistance of ₹ 1,250 per Antyodaya household via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), amounting to a monthly outlay of over ₹ 410 crore. The scheme is designed to ensure economic dignity, financial inclusion, and social security for vulnerable families, especially women-led households.

Our Margherita correspondent add: The live telecast of the state-level launch of Orunodoi 3.0, Assam's flagship Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme, by CM

Himanta Biswa Sarma from the College of Veterinary Sciences Ground, Khanapara, Guwahati, was successfully organised across 200 polling stations under the 83rd Margherita Legislative Assembly Constituency (LAC) in Tinsukia district on Tuesday.

In Margherita Co-District, the event was observed at each polling station with enthusiastic participation from beneficiaries, government officials, and members of the local community. The live telecast enabled real-time participation in the ceremonial launch, fostering a sense of unity across the state.

Margherita currently has a total of 28,847 beneficiaries under the scheme, including 24,727 from 13 Gaon Panchayats and 4,120 from 10 wards under the Margherita Municipal Board.

While addressing the state from Khanapara, CM Sarma highlighted the transformative nature of Orunodoi 3.0, emphasising its focus on women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to inclusive growth, stating that the scheme is a cornerstone of women-led development in

Assam. Under Orunodoi 3.0, each eligible woman from an economically weaker household receives ₹ 1,250 per month directly into her bank account through a transparent DBT process. With this latest phase, the total number of households benefiting from the scheme has crossed 38 lakh, involving a monthly financial outlay of ₹ 410 crore.

CM Sarma reiterated that empowering women is at the heart of the state's developmental vision and that Orunodoi is a key tool to ensure dignity and financial independence for women across Assam.

Speaking at the local event in Margherita, Co-District Commissioner Rahul Doley noted that the Orunodoi scheme continues to bring significant improvement to the socio-economic conditions of women in the region. He appreciated the smooth conduct of the programme and the coordinated efforts of all involved.

Beneficiaries at various polling stations expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the government for the continued support, describing the assistance as timely and impactful in meeting household needs.

53rd commemoration of martyr Anil Borah

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Oct 7: The 53rd commemoration day of martyr Anil Borah, who laid down his life during the Medium Movement in 1972, was observed with solemnity at his ancestral village, Palasani, in Nagaon district on Monday.

Organised by the Palasani Cultural and Sports Association, the day-long programme began with a flag hoisting ceremony, followed by lighting of earthen lamps and floral tributes at the martyr's statue. The event saw participation from local residents, youth, and students of Palasani Primary School and Anganwadi Centre.

Speakers recalled Anil Borah's leadership and sacrifice during the Medium Movement. He was

serving as the General Secretary of the All Nagaon District Students' Union and Assistant General Secretary of the All Assam Students' Union when he was killed on October 7, 1972, in Hojai while leading the agitation.

The All Nagaon District Students' Union also observed the day at Shahid Smriti Soudh in Nagaon town. Tributes were paid to Anil Borah and to late singer Zubeen Garg in a simple yet heartfelt ceremony attended by leaders and former student activists including Gouri Sankar Saikia, Simanta Bora, and Kankan Jyoti Baruah. The observance served as a tribute to the sacrifices of student leaders during the Medium Movement and their lasting contributions to Assam's socio-political history.

Demand grows for Zubeen Garg's wax statue at London

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 7: A push to honor renowned singer, musician, and social activist Zubeen Garg with a wax statue at Madame Tussauds Museum in London is gaining traction. Ratan Sharma, President of the Rajasthan Foundation (Assam Chapter), has formally submitted a proposal to the museum's London office, highlighting Zubeen's immense contribution to music, social causes, and the global promotion of Assamese and Northeast Indian culture.

In the proposal, Sharma described Zubeen Garg as the "cultural soul of Assam," whose music has reshaped the identity of regional language and inspired youth awareness and social consciousness. He emphasised that installing his statue would be a moment of pride not only for Assam but for the entire Northeast.

The initiative also aims to bring international recognition to the rich cultural diversity of the region. The Rajasthan Foundation plans to launch an online and social media campaign to mobilize public support and expand the reach of this movement. If successful, this would mark a historic cultural milestone for Northeast India.

Sahitya Sabha demands high-level inquiry into Zubeen Garg's death

HT Correspondent

SIVSAGAR, Oct 7: The Sivasagar Jila Sahitya Sabha has called for a high-level inquiry into the death of iconic artist Zubeen Garg, who reportedly passed away under mysterious circumstances in the Singapore sea on September 19.

In a memorandum submitted to the Chief Minister through District Commissioner Ayush Garg, the Sabha demanded the immediate constitution of an Inquiry Commission to thoroughly investigate the incident. The delegation was led by Dr Jibon Kalita, Vice

President, and Manoj Gogoi, Secretary of the Sivasagar Jila Sahitya Sabha.

Describing Zubeen Garg as the immortal voice of Luit-Paria culture — a singer, songwriter, actor, filmmaker, philanthropist, and nature lover, the Sabha stated that his sudden and unclear death has left millions of fans around the world in shock and grief. Given the widespread impact and public sentiment, they urged that the investigation be carried out on a fast-track basis to bring clarity and justice to the circumstances surrounding his demise.

Massive erosion by river Brahmaputra

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Oct 7: Asudden and massive erosion by the River Brahmaputra occurred on Tuesday afternoon near the old SP office in Dibrugarh.

The erosion, which happened along the Joggers Park, was so severe that it completely swallowed a yoga centre and a playground, leaving them submerged under deep water. Power Minister and Dibrugarh MLA Prasanta Phukan, along with DC Bikram Kairi and other officials, rushed to the site. Men and machinery have been deployed at the site to stop the erosion. The river is now less than 30 metres from touching the Dibrugarh Town Protection (DTP) Dyke.

Three dead, several injured as mini truck overturns

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Oct 7: Three people lost their lives and many others were injured in a tragic road accident at Ulukunchi in West Karbi Anglong on Monday evening. A Mahindra Bolero Maxx Pick-Up carrying 38 passengers, including men, women, youth, and a five-month-old baby from Kanrong Bey Village, Jirinkindeng, overturned at a sharp curve in the Ulukunchi area.

The deceased have been identified as Bharat Kumar Bey, son of Saret Bey, Kasang Teronpi, wife of Rensing Pator and Kati Killingpi, wife of Kat Bey, all residents of Kanrong Bey village. Remarkably,

a six-month-old baby girl traveling with her parents escaped unhurt. However, the baby's mother is currently in the Intensive Care Unit at Diphu Medical College & Hospital. One critically injured person has been shifted to Guwahati Medical College & Hospital, while the rest are undergoing treatment at DMC&H.

The accident occurred around 2:30 pm under the jurisdiction of Ulukunchi Police Outpost of Baithalango Police Station, approximately 213 kilometers from Diphu. The driver reportedly intoxicated—a fact confirmed by the baby's father—lost control at the

sharp curve, causing the vehicle to overturn and eject all passengers.

Among the injured is Nima Timungpi, wife of Mohori Bey, who was traveling with the group to Ulukunchi for an initial marriage ceremony as per Karbi tradition. The group had started their journey early that morning from Jirinkindeng. Eyewitnesses described a terrifying scene as passengers were thrown from the vehicle, suffering injuries ranging from fractures to head and spinal trauma.

Passersby in following vehicles rushed to assist, transporting the injured to nearby hospitals for urgent care.

Three-day district process lab under Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Oct 7: A three-day District Process Lab under the Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan – Responsive Governance Programme commenced on 7 October at the Conference Hall of the Election Office in Kokrajhar. The initiative marks another step toward fostering a values-driven and citizen-centric administration.

The programme aims to build capacity through experiential and participatory learning, where District Master Trainers (DMTs) are facilitating training for Block Master Trainers (BMTs). The first day began with the symbolic Candle Light Activity, signifying leadership and collective inspiration, where one participant lit a candle (representing the "Adi Karmayogi") and passed the flame to others in a circle. Other key activities included the Muttran (Safe Space/Aangan) session promoting trust and teamwork, the Fish Bowl discussion encouraging peer learning and reflective conversations on governance challenges, and the Break the Comfort Zone exercise inspiring adaptability and openness to change.

The I Am Proud / I Am Not Proud activity allowed participants to introspect and identify areas of personal and institutional improvement. The Change Agent Network (CAN) Model – I, We, Us Rope Exercise encouraged connection between theory and administrative experience, emphasising that lasting transformation starts from within.

The day concluded with a Village Scenario Roleplay and a Human Knot team-building activity—both designed to reinforce collaboration, convergence, and bottom-up approaches to governance. The District Process Lab will continue until October 9, with further sessions focusing on innovation, empathy, and transforming service delivery as part of the Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan.

NFR takes several green initiatives across the zone

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 7: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has embarked on a series of pioneering initiatives across its network to promote environmental sustainability and achieve the objectives of Indian Railways' Green Mission 2030. Among these efforts, the transformation of Guwahati Railway Station, on the way to becoming India's first 100% plastic recyclable station is a significant initiative in sustainable railway operations.

This initiative is being planned through a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NFR, Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA) and a local authorised recycler with technical support from IIT Guwahati. The initiative combines scientific innovation, regulatory compliance and practical execution to create a replicable model for effective plastic waste management across the region. Under this programme, NFR has implemented a comprehensive plastic waste management system that includes colour-coded dustbins for segregation, bottle crushing machines, composting units and QR code-based monitoring for real time efficiency tracking.

Eco friendly compostable bags, developed by IIT Guwahati have replaced single use plastics in trains, significantly reducing plastic waste generation. To further promote awareness and encourage public participation, NFR has organised numerous "Waste-to-Art" exhibitions, Nukkad Nataks, Scouts and Guides awareness drives and digital campaigns at various stations. These efforts have fostered environmental consciousness among passengers, vendors and railway staff. As a result, vendor compliance has reached 100%, passenger cleanliness complaints have dropped by 60% and the overall station ambience has markedly improved.

BJP condemns attack on MP Khagen Murmu, accuses TMC

The party demanded swift action against the attackers and accountability from the state administration

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Oct 7: The BJP East Karbi Anglong District Committee has strongly condemned the violent attack on Malda North Lok Sabha MP Khagen Murmu, allegedly carried out by Trinamool Congress (TMC) goons in West Bengal.

Murmu, who was involved in relief efforts for flood-affected families, was reportedly targeted for supporting the victims. The BJP called the incident a direct attack on democracy, stating that public service is being met with violence.

"Democracy bleeds in Bengal," BJP leaders said, pointing to the attack on an elected representative as evidence of law and order failure

under Mamata Banerjee's government. They claimed West Bengal has descended into a "Jungle Raj," where fear suppresses freedom and opposition voices are silenced.

The party demanded swift action against the attackers and accountability from the state administration. "An MP being attacked for aiding flood victims shows governance has given way to retribution. Bengal's democratic spirit is suffocating under TMC's rule," the statement said.

BJP leaders also urged the Election Commission and central agencies to address the rising political violence in the state, reaffirming their commitment to protect opposition workers and restore democracy in Bengal.



Zubeen death: Gaurav alleges Himanta protecting accused, CM hits back

GUWAHATI, Oct 7: Assam Pradesh Congress President Gaurav Gogoi on Tuesday alleged that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is trying to divert attention from singer Zubeen Garg's death and is on a "mission" to save North East India Federation (NEIF) organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, an accused arrested in the case.

The CM hit back, asserting that cases will be filed against those making statements to investigate people over the singer's death and the Congress leader's name will feature on that list.

Garg died by drowning while swimming in the sea on September 19 in Singapore where he had gone to perform in the NEIF.

The people of Assam want justice for Garg but the chief minister does not want it, Gogoi claimed while talking to mediapersons here.

"The CM's recent statements give an indication that instead of ensuring justice, he is more interested in protecting Mahanta," he said.

The chief minister retaliated by saying that Zubeen Garg is an Assamese Indian, but "what justice is Gogoi talking about when both his children are foreigners. How will he understand the mind of Indians?"

Sarma also claimed that Gogoi had commented that if an artiste like Zubeen Garg had died in any other state, there would have been violence with shops and business establishments burnt.

"These are provocative statements and we will file an omnibus case against those who are making statements to investigate the people and Gaurav Gogoi's name will be there in it," the CM said on the sidelines of a programme here. Gogoi said that people want to know what led to the singer's death in Singapore and they want to hear it from Mahanta and his manager Siddhartha Sharma, both of whom are now in the custody of the SIT, probing into the death. "They do not want to know from the SIT about someone's character or integrity; we want to know how his death happened," the Deputy leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha said.

The SIT has not taken any step to go to Singapore and take the statements of the members of the Assamese community there who were with the singer during his last moments on the yacht, he alleged.

The Congress leader said people expect answers to whether the singer had taken his medicines, why he was allowed to go into the sea without a life jacket, whether he really wanted to go in the yacht trip or not, and there are many other doubts. "The CM is alleging that others are doing politics (over Garg's death), but it is he who is doing so to divert the attention to a different direction. He has a good relationship with Mahanta's family for a long time and has started the "Mission Save Shyamkanu Mahanta," Gogoi alleged. Regarding the second postmortem examination report of the singer, the chief minister has made a "misleading statement" that the government will not make it public but has no problem if anyone gets a certified copy from the court, he said.

"This statement was given to weaken the inquiry as questions will be raised on the investigations and this will help Mahanta," Gogoi claimed.

The kind of statements being given by Sarma in connection with the singer's death is "not expected from a person holding the CM's office and the chair has lost its gravity due to him," Gogoi asserted.

"He will be forced to leave his chair before the next assembly polls if he continues with his mission to protect Mahanta," the Jorhat MP said.

"The BJP's central IT cell has started doing politics over the singer's death, but it is indeed a matter of appreciation that many fans of the singer, who are also BJP supporters, have said that there should be no politics in his death. But they also want justice," he claimed. (PTI)

Lakshmi Puja celebrated with devotion

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, Oct 7: Lakshmi Puja was celebrated with religious fervour and devotion in Demow and its surrounding areas on Monday. Homes were cleaned, adorned with rangoli, and symbolic footprints of Goddess Lakshmi were drawn to welcome the deity.

Preparations began early in the morning, and by evening, homes were lit with earthen lamps, candles, and decorative electric lights. The Puja was performed with traditional rituals, followed by naam prasanga (devotional singing). After the rituals, Prasad was distributed among the devotees.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

All good things which exist are the fruits of originality. — John Stuart Mill

Ayodhya and Kashi issues

It is bizarre that the Ayodhya and Kashi issues have again started unravelling. These questions remained in suspended animation with orders from the highest judiciary. For many, the Ayodhya verdict was an enigma with the apex court order that those who criminally destroyed Babri Mosque were in fact, to be rewarded with ownership, and facilitated in construction of the Ram Temple. Significantly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi underlined this judicial validation while inaugurating the Ram Mandir. Obviously, in contrast, we had to clearly state that the Supreme Court had 'delivered a verdict, but not justice'. But now, former Chief Justice Chandrachud has reopened the entire question. In an interview, Chandrachud said, "There was adequate evidence from the archaeological excavation. Now, what the evidentiary value of an archaeological excavation is what a separate issue altogether. All that I want to say really is this, there is evidence in the form of an archaeological report." Judicial pronouncements, particularly those from the higher judiciary are crafted with subtle nuance to conceal the rough edges acting as a 'smokescreen'. Unless they are voluntarily disclosed by the authors they would never be known, let alone understood. This is particularly so, given the exact text of the Ayodhya judgement.

What Justice Chandrachud had to say in the interview was completely at variance with what the text of the judgement has to say with respect to the archaeological findings "The report concludes on the basis of the architectural fragments found at the site and the nature of the structure that it was of a Hindu religious origin. The report rejects the possibility (urged by the Sunni Central Waqf Board) of the underlying structure being of Islamic origin. But the ASI report has left unanswered a critical part of the remit which was made to it, namely, a determination of whether a Hindu temple had been demolished to pave way for the construction of the mosque. ASI's inability to render a specific finding on this facet is certainly a significant evidentiary circumstance which must be borne in mind when the cumulative impact of the entire evidence is considered in the final analysis".

It is clear that the State is not confined to the Executive and Legislature; but includes the Judiciary, as well. Therefore, while there is a concerted effort to do away with the Constitution per se, simultaneously, Judiciary is sought to be brought in alignment with the Hindutva juggernaut as well. Notwithstanding some shining examples of judicial commitment towards principles of Republican jurisprudence and constitutionalism there is a drift. Unfortunately, neither the Ayodhya nor the Gyanvapi verdicts uphold such constitutional principles and laws of the land premised on such basis.

ORUNODOI 3.0: A new dawn for Assam's economic Empowerment

The launch of Orunodoi 3.0 on October 7, 2025, marks a significant milestone in Assam's journey toward inclusive economic development and social welfare. This flagship initiative by the Government of Assam represents more than just a financial assistance program; it embodies a comprehensive vision for empowering vulnerable households, particularly women, and fostering grassroots economic resilience across the state. As the third iteration of this transformative scheme, Orunodoi 3.0 builds upon the foundations of its predecessors while introducing enhanced digital infrastructure, expanded coverage, and a more holistic approach to addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by economically disadvantaged families.

The grand launch ceremony, held at the Veterinary Science College Ground in Khanapara, Guwahati, was graced by Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, who presided over the event as the chief guest. However, the true scale of this initiative became evident through its unprecedented reach, with simultaneous events conducted across more than 25,000 polling station areas throughout Assam. This widespread implementation strategy, involving public representatives and social workers from every corner of the state, demonstrates the government's commitment to ensuring that the benefits of this scheme permeate to the most remote and underserved communities. The collaborative approach adopted for the launch reflects a broader philosophy of participatory governance, where local representatives play a crucial role in identifying and supporting eligible beneficiaries.

Orunodoi, which translates to "Ray of Light" in Assamese, was first conceptualized and announced by the then Finance Minister in the Budget Speech of 2020-21. Described poetically as the foremost bead among the Ashtadash Mukutar Unnoyonee Maala, or the eighteen-bead development garland, the scheme was envisioned as a cornerstone initiative for women's empowerment and poverty alleviation. The fundamental premise of Orunodoi has always been to provide sustained financial assistance to economically vulnerable women, ensuring they have access to a minimum monthly cash flow that can help them meet basic needs and gradually move toward economic independence. This focus on women as primary beneficiaries reflects an understanding of their pivotal role in household management and their potential as agents of broader social transformation.

The evolution from Orunodoi 1.0 and 2.0 to the current version represents a deliberate effort to learn from past experiences and implement improved standards and procedures. The transition to Orunodoi 3.0 involved a complete phasing out of the previous iterations without transferring legacy data, allow-

ing for a fresh start with enhanced systems and protocols. However, the government has taken careful measures to ensure that this technological and administrative overhaul does not inadvertently exclude deserving beneficiaries. District administrations have been explicitly instructed to exercise utmost care in the selection process, ensuring that eligible beneficiaries from earlier versions are not arbitrarily removed unless they no longer conform to the updated guidelines. This balance between innovation and continuity demonstrates a compassionate approach to welfare administration.

At the heart of Orunodoi 3.0 lies a commitment to supporting over 38 lakh families across Assam, with a staggering monthly disbursement of 410 crore rupees. Each eligible family receives 1,250 rupees per month, deposited directly into their bank accounts on the first day of every month through the Direct Benefit Transfer mechanism. This consistent and predictable income stream provides families with the financial stability needed to plan their household expenses more effectively. For Antyodaya families, representing the most economically vulnerable segment of society, this monthly assistance can make the difference between mere survival and the opportunity to invest in better nutrition, healthcare, and education for their children.

The eligibility criteria for Orunodoi 3.0 are intentionally designed to be inclusive yet well-targeted. The basic precondition for becoming a beneficiary is enrollment under the National Food Security Act as a beneficiary. This linkage with NFSA ensures that the scheme reaches those who are already recognized as requiring food security support, creating a comprehensive safety net. Importantly, families with valid ration cards are eligible for the scheme, and no income certificate is required, thereby reducing bureaucratic hurdles that often prevent the most vulnerable from accessing welfare programs. The definitions of household, family, and income criteria follow the established NFSA guidelines, providing clarity and consistency in implementation across different districts and administrative units.

One of the most significant innovations in Orunodoi 3.0 is its embrace of digitalization as a tool for enhanced transparency, efficiency, and accountability. The scheme incorporates automatic Aadhaar seeding of beneficiaries, leveraging the biometric identification system that has proven effective in various welfare programs across India. In Assam, where nearly every NFSA beneficiary is already Aadhaar-seeded, this technological integration enables seamless verification and fund disbursement while minimizing the possibilities of duplication or fraudulent claims. The digitization extends to application forms

as well, with a focus on quality control and monitoring throughout the implementation process. This digital governance approach not only reduces opportunities for corruption and leakage but also enables real-time tracking of program performance and beneficiary satisfaction. The monthly assistance of 1,250 rupees provided under Orunodoi 3.0 is not merely an arbitrary figure but represents a carefully calculated composite amount designed to address multiple dimensions of household need. The breakdown reveals the scheme's comprehensive approach to family welfare. An allocation of 400 rupees per family is designated for medicines and healthcare needs, recognizing that medical expenses often push poor families into debt cycles. For nutritional support, the scheme provides 200 rupees per family as a 50 percent subsidy for four kilograms of pulses, ensuring access to essential protein sources. Similarly, 80 rupees are allocated as a 50 percent subsidy for four kilograms of sugar, helping families afford this basic dietary requirement.

Beyond basic food items, Orunodoi 3.0 acknowledges the importance of fresh produce by allocating 150 rupees for fruits and vegetables, thereby promoting better nutrition and dietary diversity. Another 150 rupees are provided for essential household needs, giving families flexibility to address their specific circumstances. In recognition of the ongoing health challenges and precautionary measures related to Covid-19, 170 rupees are earmarked for pandemic-related expenses. Perhaps most notably, the scheme includes 250 rupees as a subsidy for 50 units of electricity consumption, acknowledging that access to reliable electricity is fundamental to modern living and can support productive activities, education, and improved quality of life. This multifaceted approach to support distinguishes Orunodoi 3.0 from simple cash transfer programs, as it reflects a nuanced understanding of the various pressures on household budgets.

The Direct Benefit Transfer mechanism employed by Orunodoi 3.0 represents a significant advancement in welfare delivery. By transferring funds directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts, the scheme eliminates intermediaries who might have previously siphoned off portions of the assistance. This direct transfer approach empowers women recipients by giving them control over household financial resources and reducing their dependence on others for accessing their entitlements. The predictability of receiving funds on the first day of each month enables better household financial planning and reduces the anxiety associated with uncertain income flows.

The emphasis on nutritional support within Orunodoi 3.0 addresses a critical dimension

of poverty that extends beyond mere income. By providing subsidies for essential food items like pulses, sugar, fruits, and vegetables, the scheme recognizes that food security involves not just adequate calories but also nutritional quality. This focus on nutrition is particularly important for children's development and for preventing the intergenerational transmission of poverty through malnutrition-related health and cognitive impacts. The subsidized access to protein-rich pulses and vitamin-rich fruits and vegetables can significantly improve dietary diversity in households that might otherwise subsist primarily on rice and other staples.

The timing of Orunodoi 3.0's launch is particularly significant as Assam, like much of India, continues to navigate the economic disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and faces the challenges of inflation and global economic uncertainty. For families living on the margins, the assured monthly income of 1,250 rupees provides a vital buffer against economic shocks and helps maintain consumption levels during difficult times. This counter-cyclical support can prevent vulnerable families from falling into deeper poverty or resorting to distress sales of assets during emergencies.

The success of Orunodoi 3.0 will ultimately be measured not just by the number of beneficiaries reached or the amount of money disbursed, but by its impact on tangible outcomes such as improved nutrition indicators, reduced distress borrowing, increased school attendance among children from beneficiary households, and enhanced agency and decision-making power for women recipients. The scheme's integration with digital systems should enable more rigorous monitoring and evaluation, allowing policymakers to assess impact and make evidence-based adjustments as needed.

As Assam embarks on this ambitious phase of the Orunodoi journey, the program stands as a testament to the state's commitment to leaving no family behind in its development trajectory. By combining financial assistance with nutritional support, leveraging technology for transparency, and focusing on women's empowerment, Orunodoi 3.0 represents a holistic and forward-thinking approach to social welfare. The scheme's success could offer valuable lessons for other states grappling with similar challenges of poverty and inequality, potentially serving as a model for inclusive growth that prioritizes dignity, equity, and opportunity for all citizens. As the benefits begin flowing to over 38 lakh families across Assam, Orunodoi 3.0 truly lives up to its name as a ray of light, illuminating pathways out of poverty and toward a more prosperous and equitable future for the state. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

Bihar Elections: A battle for change and development

By: Lalit Garg

The political war drums have begun to beat in Bihar. With the announcement of the polling dates, the grand festival of democracy has commenced — a festival in which millions of voters will, through the power of their ballots on November 6 and 11, determine not just the government, but the direction and destiny of the state. This election is not merely about a change of power; it is about a transformation of thought, governance, and morality. For decades, Bihar has been shackled by backwardness, unemployment, corruption, and lawlessness. Now comes a rare opportunity for liberation — to reshape its destiny. The counting of votes on November 14 will reveal the political picture, but until then, Bihar's political landscape is likely to witness many twists and turns.

Once the land of Buddha's compassion and Chanakya's wisdom, Bihar today struggles under the weight of law-and-order failures, caste divisions, and developmental stagnation. Roads are broken, the education system is crumbling, healthcare is weak, and every year thousands of young men and women are forced to migrate in search of livelihood. Hence, this election is more than a political contest — it is a social awakening, where voters must choose not just faces, but character and conviction. Every political party has entered the arena with lofty manifestos and grand promises. Some talk of a "New Bihar," others of a "Developed Bihar." But the real question is — can mere declarations change Bihar's fate? Or will this election again be reduced to traditional slogans and caste arithmetic? This is the moment for the people of Bihar to rise above alliances and slogans, and instead, align with direction,

ethics, and integrity.

For two decades, Nitish Kumar has remained the central figure of Bihar politics, and this election is no exception. The key question remains — will the people of Bihar grant him yet another chance? Backed by the NDA, Nitish faces a formidable challenge from the Mahagathbandhan. Since 2005, barring brief interruptions, Nitish Kumar has held power, sworn in nine times, and changed allies several times, yet managing to remain at the helm — a testament to his "Sushasan Babu" image. But now, that very image stands tested. For the first time, his government faces direct criticism over corruption and crumbling law and order. Recent incidents — from the murder of businessman Gopal Khemka in Patna to a gangster being killed inside a hospital — have raised serious questions. The same Nitish-BJP alliance that once projected the Lalu-Rabri regime as a "jungle raj" now finds itself under similar scrutiny.

Despite Bihar's developmental strides, caste remains a decisive factor. Every party's strategy hinges on community-based mobilization. The NDA and Mahagathbandhan are still wrestling with seat-sharing disputes among the 243 Assembly seats. Adding to the mix is Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj, a new entrant promising to confront corruption and migration, along with several other fledgling parties testing their strength for the first time. Bihar's biggest challenge remains the restoration of law and order. Frequent crimes and administrative failures have tarnished the state's image. Bihar needs a government that ensures fear-free governance, swift justice, and genuine safety for its citizens — for only in an atmosphere of trust can development truly flourish.

This election also witnesses the emer-

gence of new political formations — Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj, Tej Pratap Yadav's Jan Shakti Janata Dal, Upendra Kushwaha's Rashtriya Lok Morcha, and Pashupati Paras's Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party. All are set to test their mettle. The real curiosity lies in whether Kishor's promises will translate into performance, and how much impact Tej Pratap's new outfit will have on his brother Tejashwi Yadav's political base. Ultimately, Bihar stands at a defining moment. Its people today seek not just roti, kapda, aur makaan (food, clothing, and shelter), but also education, employment, healthcare, and dignity. This election is the voice of that aspiration. Whichever party understands this pulse will shape Bihar's future.

The modern Bihar voter is more aware and discerning than ever before. They know that true transformation lies not just in changing governments, but in changing culture, ensuring political integrity and administrative accountability. This election will decide whether Bihar can finally emerge from the shadows of its past into the light of progress. Though the state has seen significant improvement in recent decades, challenges of poverty, corruption, and unemployment persist. The Nitish government's new welfare promises — especially for women, senior citizens, and the differently-abled — suggest a different tone this time, but opposition parties question the financial feasibility of these announcements. Whether people will trust these promises or vote for real change will soon be clear.

Bihar elections have always held national significance. For nearly two decades, they have followed a predictable cycle — held a year after the Lok Sabha polls, and fiercely contested by both ruling and opposition alliances. Despite fatigue after two decades in power, Nitish Kumar and the JD(U) cannot be written off. The BJP stands firmly by his side, while the RJD-led Mahagathbandhan is treating this as a now-or-never battle. In this great test of democracy, Bihar may well script a new chapter — a state that is educated, organized, and awakened. A Bihar where politics becomes a medium of service, not struggle; where power speaks the language of sensitivity, not selfishness. If the people of Bihar this time choose justice over caste, trust over promises, and good governance over gimmicks, then this election could indeed become the key to Bihar's transformation — a new dawn for a state long waiting for its rightful place in India's progress story.

Rising student suicides: There are laws, but where is the compassion?

By: Dr Satyavan Saurabh

It's a shameful truth for a young country like India that thousands of students take their own lives every year under the pressure of studies, competition, and social pressure. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), more than 13,000 student suicides were recorded in 2023—that's one student taking their own life every 40 minutes. This isn't just a statistic, but evidence of the failure of a system that abandons children instead of protecting them.

The government has enacted several laws and policies in the area of mental health—such as the Mental Healthcare Act 2017 and the National Suicide Prevention Policy 2021. But the question is, are these laws on paper actually saving any children on the ground?

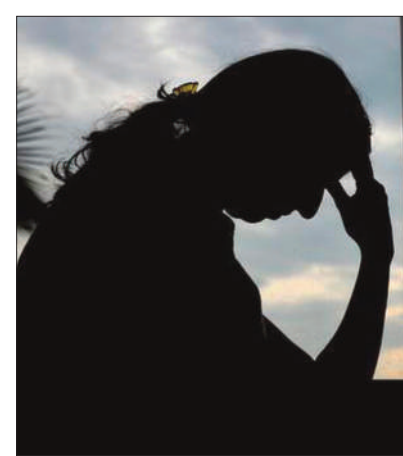
The Mental Healthcare Act 2017 aimed to ensure that attempted suicide would no longer be considered a crime, but rather a form of mental distress. This meant that if a child attempted suicide, they would be supported, not punished. This was a significant initiative, as previously, such cases involved police action, which further devastated both the victim and the family. The law also stated that every citizen would have the right to mental health services, meaning counseling and support would be made available in schools, colleges, and workplaces.

But the reality remains that most schools and colleges in the country lack trained counselors. A 2023 survey by AIIMS found that 70 percent of colleges lacked a mental health specialist. The situation is even worse in rural areas. This means the law was passed, but the necessary infrastructure was never developed.

In 2021, the government released the National Suicide Prevention Policy. This policy stated that suicide is a public health crisis and that the departments of education, health, and social welfare should work together. It called for identifying "high-risk groups" such as students, farmers, and migrant workers and creating prevention mechanisms for them.

Some states took it seriously. For example, in Kerala and Maharashtra, school teachers were trained to recognize signs of depression or hopelessness in students. School counseling cells were even established in some places. However, looking at the overall picture, 40 percent of districts still don't have a suicide prevention cell. No separate budget was allocated for this policy. As a result, this policy remained just another document in government files.

We must go beyond the boundaries of



Rising student suicides in India are a sign of a deeper social and mental health crisis. The Mental Health Act (2017) and the Suicide Prevention Policy (2021) provide a legal framework, but their impact has been limited. Lack of awareness, a lack of counseling infrastructure, and parental expectations are pushing students toward depression. What's needed now is emotional education, trained counselors, digital support, and family empathy. Until society understands that every child's path to success is different, even laws will be ineffective

lives could be saved. Initiatives like the "Kiran Helpline" need to be strengthened. The media must also understand its role. Instead of sensationalizing suicide news, it should highlight how to seek help. Films and social media must also break the "succeed or die" mindset. The government should maintain district-by-district reports on how many schools have counselors, how many suicides have occurred, and what steps have been taken. No policy is successful without accountability.

Laws and policies can provide direction, but they cannot awaken empathy. Society must do that itself. We must recognize that a child is not a "rank," but a "human." They have dreams, not just degrees—and those dreams can be sustained not by failure, but by love and support.

Kota, Delhi, Patna, or Hyderabad—news of suicides from every city shocks us, but we forget them after a few days. Yet, every child who passed away was a mirror of our society—they left saying, "You didn't hear me."

In India, initiatives like the Mental Healthcare Act 2017 and the National Suicide Prevention Policy 2021 are steps in the right direction, but they will remain incomplete unless society, families, and educational institutions collectively prioritize mental health. Every suicide is not a story of failed policy, but of failed empathy. The solution lies not in new laws, but in the understanding that failure is not an end, but a new beginning.



Alternatives to fossil fuels: New pathways in Science

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuvan

The role of fossil fuels has been immensely significant in the history of human civilization's progress. Energy sources such as coal, petroleum, and natural gas have served as key drivers of economic, social, and technological development since the Industrial Revolution. The easy availability, high energy output, and simplicity of use of these fuels have improved the quality of human life. Their contribution to powering industrial machinery, expanding transportation systems, and simplifying household tasks is unparalleled. However, the excessive use of these fuels has led to severe environmental impacts, the consequences of which are now evident globally. The abnormal increase in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere has caused a steady rise in global temperatures, resulting in intensified climate change. This has led to an increase in the frequency and severity of natural disasters across various regions of the world. Events such as the rising number of cyclones, prolonged periods of severe drought, floods caused by excessive rainfall, and rising sea levels have become commonplace. These disasters not only affect the environment but also cause profound damage to human life, agricultural production, and economies. The production and use of fossil fuels have led to reduced soil fertility, water source pollution, and deterioration of air quality, adversely impacting biodiversity. The rate of extinction of plant and animal species is steadily increasing, posing a serious threat to the balance of ecosystems. Furthermore, fossil fuel reserves are finite. These resources are non-renewable, and according to scientists, they may be depleted in the near future. In this context, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and seeking clean, sustainable, and environmentally friendly energy sources has become an urgent necessity. Scientists are exploring new pathways to meet humanity's energy needs while ensuring environmental protection. Among these pathways, renewable energy sources such as solar energy, wind energy, hydropower, geothermal energy, and bioenergy have gained significant importance. This essay provides a comprehensive analysis of these new

scientific pathways as alternatives to fossil fuels, discussing their potential, challenges, and future prospects. These pathways not only ensure energy sustainability but also have the potential to bring revolutionary changes in environmental protection. By utilizing these energy sources, it is possible to meet human energy demands while preserving the balance of the Earth's ecosystems.

Reflecting deeply on the adverse environmental impacts of fossil fuel use, it becomes clear that reducing our dependence on these energy sources is now imperative. The combustion of fossil fuels increases carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, leading to a continuous rise in global temperatures. As a consequence, the intensity of climate change has escalated, resulting in an increased frequency and severity of natural disasters across various regions. The growing number of cyclones, extended periods of severe drought, floods due to excessive rainfall, and rising sea levels have become common occurrences. These disasters not only impact the environment but also cause significant harm to human safety, agricultural productivity, and economic stability. The production of fossil fuels reduces soil fertility, pollutes water sources, and degrades air quality. This pollution adversely affects biodiversity, with the extinction rate of plant and animal species steadily rising, posing a serious threat to ecosystem balance. Moreover, fossil fuel reserves are limited and non-renewable, with scientists warning that they may soon be exhausted. In this scenario, finding clean and sustainable energy alternatives is of utmost importance. New scientific pathways offer promising solutions to this problem. Through these pathways, it is possible to meet energy demands while taking significant steps toward environmental protection. Among these alternative energy sources, solar energy holds the brightest potential. The sun's energy is an inexhaustible resource capable of meeting the world's energy needs. By utilizing solar energy, it is possible to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and prevent environmental damage. The clean nature and universal availability of solar energy establish it as a powerful alternative to fossil fuels. Through its potential, we can



move toward a sustainable future.

Solar energy is one of science's most significant discoveries. The process of generating energy from sunlight is entirely clean and has no adverse environmental impact. No carbon dioxide or other harmful gases are emitted during its production, making it a powerful tool in combating climate change. The source of solar energy, the sun, is available in nearly all regions of the world, making it a universal energy source. Its potential is particularly high in tropical regions. Solar panels convert sunlight into electricity, and continuous advancements in this technology have increased their efficiency. Compared to earlier times, the cost of producing solar panels has significantly decreased, making solar energy widely used from households to large-scale industries. Solar energy meets household electricity needs, powers industrial machinery, and supports transportation systems. It is used for household lighting, heating water, and powering other electrical appliances. In the industrial sector, solar energy has reduced production costs, accelerating economic development. However, there are challenges in using solar energy. Its production depends on the availability of sufficient sunlight, which varies across regions. Solar energy cannot be generated at night or on cloudy days, creating challenges in ensuring a continuous energy supply. To address this, research is ongoing to develop advanced energy storage systems. Improved battery technologies allow energy produced during the day to be stored for use at night or in

adverse conditions, making solar energy more reliable. Additionally, the limited availability of some materials required for solar panel production and the need for environmentally friendly manufacturing processes pose challenges. Research is also being conducted on the environmental impact of solar panel recycling and disposal. Nevertheless, continuous scientific research and technological innovations are overcoming these challenges. Through the potential of solar energy, it is possible to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and take significant steps toward environmental protection, paving the way for a sustainable and clean energy future.

Wind energy is another promising alternative to fossil fuels. The process of generating electricity using the kinetic energy of wind is entirely clean and has no harmful environmental impact. Wind turbines convert wind energy into electricity, and ongoing technological advancements have increased their efficiency. The advantage of wind energy is that it is a renewable resource that will never be depleted. Its potential is particularly high in coastal areas, open plains, and hilly regions. Wind turbines enable large-scale electricity production, used in various sectors from industry to households. Wind energy powers industrial machinery, meets household electricity needs, and supports other electrical devices. However, there are challenges in utilizing wind energy. Wind speeds are not consistent, and some regions may experience low wind speeds, leading to difficulties in ensuring a continuous energy

supply. Additionally, the infrastructure required for wind turbine installation is costly. Wind turbines may also have some impact on local ecosystems, with noise and rotation potentially affecting birds and other wildlife. To overcome these challenges, scientists are working on designing more efficient turbines, developing advanced energy storage systems, and creating technologies with minimal environmental impact. Advanced storage systems address the issue of inconsistent wind energy production. Offshore wind turbines in open sea areas have increased the potential for energy production. These technological advancements have made wind energy more cost-effective and reliable. Through its potential, wind energy can reduce dependence on fossil fuels while contributing significantly to environmental protection, paving the way for a clean and sustainable energy future.

Hydropower is another important alternative to fossil fuels. The process of generating electricity using the kinetic energy of water has been in use for a long time. Turbines powered by river water flow produce electricity in a completely clean process with no harmful environmental impact. The advantage of hydropower is its reliability and stability. It is particularly effective in hilly regions with strong river flows. Hydropower projects enable large-scale electricity production for use in industries and households. They power industrial machinery, meet household electricity demands, and support other electrical devices. However, establishing hydropower projects requires significant infrastructure, which is costly. These projects may also impact local ecosystems, with dam construction altering natural river flows, damaging fish breeding grounds, and affecting local communities' livelihoods. To address these challenges, scientists are developing new technologies to generate energy from lower water flows. Small-scale hydropower projects can produce energy with minimal environmental impact. Through its potential, hydropower can reduce dependence on fossil fuels and provide a sustainable energy source.

Geothermal energy is another promising alternative to fossil fuels. The process of generating electricity using the Earth's internal heat is entirely clean and has no

harmful environmental impact. Geothermal energy sources are particularly abundant in volcanic regions. The advantage of this energy is its reliability and ability to produce power continuously, as it does not depend on external environmental factors like solar or wind energy. However, challenges exist in utilizing geothermal energy. The infrastructure required for its production is costly, and its sources are not available in all regions. Additionally, geothermal energy production may cause minor geological instability, such as small earthquakes. To overcome these challenges, scientists are working on new technologies, including advanced drilling techniques to access deeper heat sources. Through its potential, geothermal energy can reduce dependence on fossil fuels and contribute significantly to environmental protection.

Bioenergy is another important alternative to fossil fuels. The process of generating energy from organic materials is clean and renewable. Bioenergy is produced from agricultural residues, organic waste, and other biological materials. Its advantage lies in the local availability of its sources, and its production helps address waste management issues. Bioenergy can supply energy for households and industries. However, challenges exist in its production, including the limited availability of raw materials and the need for new technologies to improve efficiency. Scientists are working on developing new technologies to overcome these challenges. Through its potential, bioenergy can reduce dependence on fossil fuels and contribute significantly to environmental protection.

The search for new scientific pathways as alternatives to fossil fuels has opened new possibilities for our society and environment. Through these alternative energy sources, we can meet energy demands while taking significant steps toward environmental protection. However, realizing their full potential requires technological advancements, infrastructure expansion, and policy support. Continuous scientific research and technological improvements will make these energy sources more cost-effective and reliable. Through these new pathways, we can move toward a sustainable and environmentally friendly future.

In the forest of the steel city Ethanol's Promise and Peril in India

By: Kanchan Basu

The Howrah-Bokaro Express reached Bokaro station on time. Vivek was waiting for us with the forest department car outside Bokaro station. When we say 'Bokaro', we usually mean the famous steel city of in Jharkhand. We had also come to that steel city. But for a completely different reason. To travel to the forests around Bokaro city. I did not know that there was a forest in Bokaro city, but I came to know after receiving an invitation from the Divisional Forest Officer. The Divisional Forest Officer's office is 15 kilometres away from the railway station and the forest rest house is nearby. The forest rest house is surrounded by big trees like shal, teak, mahua, palash etc. The forest rest house has two rooms with modern facilities, a veranda and a dining room. Three more rooms are being built at the back. It is expected that the three rooms with modern facilities will be ready for use by March, 2026.

We went up to a double-bedded room in the forest rest house. The caretaker immediately served us tea. After tea, we took a bath and ate breakfast. The caretaker, Subodh Babu, started preparing lunch. At around 12 noon, we received news that a herd of elephant had come out about 60 kilometers from our forest rest house. I told Subodh Babu to give us what was cooked. We will eat immediately and go out to see the elephants. Subodh Babu served us rice, dal and fried fish.

We ate and set off. After an hour and a half, we reached Petya Beit at 2:30 p.m. I heard from the forest workers there that elephants had destroyed the crop fields and entered the forest an hour ago. I saw that several villagers had already come to the Petya Beit office and told the forest workers how much money the herd of elephants had destroyed their crops. The forest workers listened to the villagers and handed them a form, for fill up this form how much destroy of every family.

He gave me the form and said, fill this form properly. Also write down how much money was lost. We will see on the ground tomorrow. The villagers returned to their villages from the beat office. The beat officer of Petya walked with us, towards the forest along the path where the elephant had gone into the forest. After going 5 kilometers from the beat office, we all got down from the car because there was no road for cars, so we started walking on foot. The road is full of Shawl, teak, mahua.

We walked up and down the hills through the forest of Palash, Karanjia and other trees. Sometimes, in some flat areas, tribals are cultivating rice with the help of spring water. The forest is getting thicker. After walking 3 kilometers through the forest, I saw two elephants standing on a hill, quite a distance away, in the forest of another hill. The forest workers said that there were at least 8-10 elephants there. We should slowly go back. Because if an elephant sees us and comes this way, we will not find any way to escape. Anyway, we slowly returned to the car. We took the car to the village where the herd of elephants had destroyed the crops. We got out of the car and went to the crop fields and saw that the herd of elephants had completely destroyed the fields of cabbage, radish, tomato, potato, and brinjal. Almost nothing was left. The villagers asked the forest workers to pay financial compensation as soon as possible. The forest workers also assured the villagers that they would send the compensation file to their superiors very soon. After bidding farewell to the villagers, we reached Petya Forest Bungalow.

The location of Petya Forest Bungalow is excellent. The forest bungalow is located in a forest of huge shal, teak, mahogany, mahua, palash,



shishu, and jarul trees. There is a meeting house opposite the bungalow. Two more houses are being built. It is expected that the two new houses will be completed by March 2026.

The caretaker of the forest bungalow gave us tea. The birds were returning to their homes in those big trees. The call of the chital deer was heard in the distance. All in all, an unearthly atmosphere. I said goodbye to Petya and returned to the Bokaro forest rest house. At night, I ate bread and chicken. Subodh Babu's cooking is excellent.

The next morning, I woke up, had tea, bathed and had some snacks and left for the Garga Dam. Garga Dam in Bokaro city is located near the Bokaro railway station, about 12 kilometers from the city center. This dam was built for the steel factories and the residents of the city. 'Garga' is a tributary of the Damodar River that flows in the southern part of Bokaro city. In the 1950s, a dam was built on the 'Gaga' River, which was identified as India's first river valley project. The electricity generated from the dam's water and the stored water. Bokaro is used for industrial and civil purposes. However, its attraction is the greenery surrounding the Garga Dam and a beautiful river which makes this place a picnic spot for the people of Bokaro. The view of sunrise and sunset from the Garga Dam is very beautiful.

After seeing the Garga Dam, we set off for Tenughat Dam. Tenughat Dam is located 50 kilometers from Bokaro city. We reached Tenughat Dam within an hour and a half. Tenughat Dam is a huge dam built on the Damodar River, which gives a unique experience of the green and serene environment of Jharkhand. The green and serene environment around the huge reservoir of Tenughat Dam located on the Damodar River has made it a unique tourist destination in Jharkhand. Tenughat Dam is a popular picnic spot. The water of the reservoir of Tenughat Dam is used for irrigation in the surrounding areas and for power generation. The construction of Tenughat Dam started in 1972 and was completed in 1985 and power generation started. After seeing Tenughat Dam, we reached Lalpania, 21 kilometers away.

Upon reaching Lalpania, the first thing I saw was Lalpania Jharna, also known as Dhobi Jharna. Lalpania waterfall falls from a height of about 50 feet. The waterfall is surrounded by dense greenery and stones. There are steps leading up to the waterfall. We descended the steps and reached the waterfall. The water in the waterfall was very cold. Several Santal men and women were bathing in the water of the waterfall. All in all, a beautiful sight.

Look at the Lugu Buru Ghanabari next to the Lalpania Jharna. Lugu Buru Ghanabari Dham has been an important center of faith of the Santal tribals for centuries and is associated with the glorious past and cultural religious beliefs of the Santal tribals. The Santals living in the country and abroad worship 'Lugu Baba' as their deity and re-

ligious guru. Our current Honorable President of India Smt. Draupadi Murmu has also come here to worship. Historical 'Luguburu Ghanabari Dham Garh Dorbar Rock' is located at the foot of the hill. Centuries ago, on this rock, the ancestors of the Santals, under the chairmanship of Lunda Baba, held a continuous discussion for 12 years and wrote the social customs and rituals of the Santal society (from birth to death) and made a constitution, which is still held today on the occasion of Kartik Purnima, a two-day religious conference, which has earned the distinction of being a state festival of the state of Jharkhand. In this religious conference, discussions are held for the development of the social development, language, literature, culture, religion and education of the Santals. Lakhs of Santal devotees from the country and abroad come to participate in this great conference and have the darshan of Lugu Baba. The historical cave (Ghiri Dolan) is located at the high peak of the hill. Lugu Baba sits inside this cave. To reach here, one has to cross a difficult path of 7 kilometers from the Dorbar Chattani. We did not, however, climb 7 kilometers to reach Lunda Baba's cave. In 2001, Luguburu officially started the International 'Sarna' Mahadharma Conference of the Santals at Ghanabari. The word 'Luguburu' is taken from the language of the Santal tribe and its meaning carries deep significance in their culture and tradition. In Santali, the word 'Lund' means 'revered deity' and the word 'Buru' means 'mountain.' Therefore, the word 'Luguburu' literally means 'mountain of the revered deity'.

The place 'Luguburu Ghanta Bari' is surrounded by green hills and dense forests. Its peaceful atmosphere and spiritual seriousness attract all people. After seeing the 'Luguburu Ghanta Bari', we reached 'Konar Dam', 22 kilometers away. The Konar Dam is built on the Konar River, a tributary of the Damodar River. This dam was established in 1980, the function of the Konar Dam is water supply, irrigation, flood control and power generation. The Konar Dam is 14,879 feet long and 160 feet high. Boating in the huge reservoir of the dam, speed boat travel enjoyable. The surrounding environment is very pleasant. As we were in a hurry to return, we could not travel by speed boat. We returned to Bokaro forest rest house, 79 kilometers away, at 5 p.m. Subodh Babu served us tea and started making our dinner, we will catch the train to Howrah tonight. Subodh Babu packed our dinner. At 6 p.m., we bid farewell to all the forest department staff and left for Bokaro Steel City railway station. Vivek took us to the railway station. Bokaro-Howrah express will leave from here at 7:25 p.m.

If you are feeling stressed out due to the pressure of corporate culture, take the Howrah-Bokaro Express at 11:30 p.m. on Friday night and reach Bokaro station at 7 a.m. on Saturday. From there, take a day and a half rest at the forest rest house. Take the Bokaro-Howrah Express from Bokaro station at 7:25 p.m. on Sunday and reach Howrah at 5:30 a.m. on Monday and start your career anew. You will see that you will not feel stressed out again for a while.

How to go? Howrah-Bokaro Express departs from Howrah every day at 11:30 p.m. It reaches Bokaro the next day at 7 a.m. Again, Bokaro-Howrah Express departs from Bokaro every day at 7:25 p.m. and reaches Howrah the next day at 5:30 a.m. Apart from this; there are also Howrah-Bokaro Jan Shatabdi Express and other trains.

Where will you stay? There are forest rest houses in Bokaro and forest bungalows in Petwa for accommodation.

By: Satyabrata Borah

India's drive toward ethanol-blended fuels is a bold attempt to balance energy independence with environmental goals, but it creates a complex paradox. Petrol mixed with 20 percent ethanol, known as E20, aims to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels and cut carbon emissions. Yet, it risks damaging vehicles, reducing mileage, and straining the nation's already depleted groundwater reserves. The government's rapid push to implement E20, without giving vehicle manufacturers, service networks, or consumers enough time to adapt, feels like a policy misstep that could undermine its own ambitions.

The Ethanol Blended Petrol programme, launched in the early 2000s, gained momentum after policy shifts a decade ago. The government fast-tracked its rollout, achieving nationwide E20 availability well ahead of the original timeline. This move is driven by the need to shield India from volatile global oil markets, exacerbated by conflicts that have disrupted supply chains. Ethanol, derived from sugarcane molasses, surplus grains, and other biomass, is produced domestically, reducing the need for costly oil imports. This strengthens the economy by conserving foreign exchange and supports rural communities by channeling payments to farmers for their crops. The environmental case is equally strong: ethanol burns cleaner than petrol, reducing harmful emissions like carbon monoxide and particulate matter, which choke urban centers. By promoting biofuels, India positions itself as a leader in sustainable energy, aligning with global climate commitments.

However, this accelerated transition has sparked significant challenges. Most vehicles on India's roads, particularly older models, were designed for lower ethanol blends. E20's higher ethanol content can corrode fuel systems, as ethanol absorbs moisture, causing rubber seals, hoses, and metal components like fuel lines to degrade. Owners of older motorcycles and cars report issues like rough idling, fuel leaks, and the need for frequent repairs. Carbureted engines, common in pre-2018 two-wheelers, are especially vulnerable, lacking the technology to adjust to ethanol's properties. These mechanical failures translate into higher maintenance costs, burdening consumers already stretched by rising living expenses.

Mileage is another casualty. Ethanol contains less energy per liter than petrol, meaning vehicles burn more fuel to cover the same distance. For the average commuter, this translates to noticeable increases in fuel expenses, particularly in urban areas with stop-and-go traffic. Surveys reflect widespread frustration, with many drivers opposing the E20 mandate due to efficiency losses and the financial strain of repairs. Vehicle manufacturers have begun producing E20-compatible models, but the transition period has been too short for the majority of India's vehicle fleet to catch up. Service centers are also under pressure, facing a surge in complaints about corroded parts, with many owners unaware that their vehicles are not suited for the new fuel blend.

The environmental paradox is equally troubling. While ethanol reduces tailpipe emissions, its production places immense pressure on India's water resources. Sugarcane, the primary feedstock, is a water-intensive crop grown in regions already grappling with groundwater depletion. Farmers rely heavily on irrigation, often using tubewells that draw from over-stressed aquifers. This has led to significant declines in water tables in key agricultural states, threatening long-term sustainability. Efforts to diversify feedstocks to grains like maize and rice have introduced new complications, including competition with food production. Diverting surplus crops to ethanol has driven up prices for animal feed, impacting sectors like poultry farming. Scaling up ethanol production further could exacerbate land degradation and intensify water scarcity, pitting biofuel ambitions against the needs of agriculture and food security.

The root of these issues lies in the rushed implementation. Unlike countries with decades-long transitions to ethanol, India's aggressive timeline has left little room for preparation. Vehicle owners have few options: retrofitting older models to handle E20 is expensive and not widely promoted, and there are no clear provisions for accessing non-blended fuel at pumps. Manufacturers have called for incentives, such as tax breaks on E20 to offset mileage losses, but these remain absent. Meanwhile, the supply chain struggles to ensure consistent ethanol quality and availability, particularly in rural areas where infrastructure lags.

The government's intentions are laudable, but the execution lacks balance. To make ethanol blending sustainable, policymakers must address these gaps. First, consumer education is critical. Clear labeling at fuel pumps and public campaigns can inform drivers about E20's effects and compatibility with their vehicles. Subsidies for retrofitting older models could ease the financial burden on owners, while stricter standards for new vehicles would ensure future compatibility. On the production side, investing in less water-intensive feedstocks, such as agricultural waste, could reduce environmental strain. Improved irrigation practices and support for sustainable farming would further mitigate the impact on groundwater.

India's ethanol programme is a microcosm of the broader challenge of balancing economic, environmental, and social priorities. The promise of reduced emissions and energy independence is real, but it cannot come at the expense of vehicle reliability, consumer wallets, or natural resources. As the government eyes even higher blending targets in the future, it must adopt a more inclusive approach. This means engaging stakeholders like farmers, manufacturers, and consumers in a dialogue to address concerns and build resilience. Ethanol can be a cornerstone of India's energy transition, but only if the road to implementation is paved with foresight rather than haste. Without careful navigation, the fuel's benefits risk being overshadowed by its unintended consequences, leaving the nation to grapple with a policy that solves one problem while creating others.

Trump administration sees shutdown as opening to wield greater power over budget Trump says he's open to health care deal but government must reopen first

WASHINGTON, Oct 7: President Donald Trump cracked the door slightly to negotiations with Democrats on the health care subsidies they've made central to the shutdown fight, then abruptly closed it Monday, leaving the two sides once again at a seemingly intractable impasse.

Democrats are conditioning their support for a short-term funding patch on extending the health subsidies that lessen the cost of plans offered under the Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as Obamacare.

"We have a negotiation going on right now with the Democrats that could lead to very good things," Trump told reporters. "And I'm talking about good things with regard to health care."

The comments were one of the few hopeful signs Monday as the government shutdown hit its sixth day. Negotiations between the two parties have been virtually nonexistent since the start of the shutdown despite the impact on federal services.

But Trump later followed up those comments on his social media site to reinforce what GOP leaders in Congress have been saying: The shutdown must end. And work on extending the enhanced tax credits for health insurance would take place separately.

"I am happy to work with the Democrats on their Failed Healthcare Policies, or anything else, but first they must allow our Government to re-open. In fact, they should open our Government tonight!" Trump wrote.

Before Trump walked back his remarks,



the two Democratic leaders in Congress, Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, has both denied there were any negotiations with Trump. Jeffries said the White House "has gone radio silent" since a meeting in the Oval Office last week.

"Trump's claim isn't true, but if he's finally ready to work with Democrats, we'll be at the table," Schumer said.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune told reporters "there may be a path forward" on ACA subsidies, but stressed, "I think a lot of it would come down to where the White House lands on that."

More doomed Senate votes

The president's comments came as the Senate took another doomed pair of votes Monday on funding the federal government.

Neither the Republican measure nor the Democratic proposal came close to gaining the 60 votes needed to advance.

Both parties used much of the day to ramp up the pressure on the other to end the impasse.

Thune said a critical food aid programme for women, infants and children was starting to run low on funds, blaming Democrats and saying "now it's the American people who are suffering the consequences."

Schumer said his side was ready to work with Republicans to "reopen the government and end the health care crisis that faces tens of millions of Americans."

"But it takes two sides to have a negotiation," Schumer said.

Earlier in the day, the two sides dug in. House Speaker Mike Johnson said "there's nothing for us to negotiate" while Jeffries declared the "time is now" to work out a deal on health care.

Johnson, R-La., told reporters they could stop asking why he wasn't negotiating an end to the impasse. It was up to a handful of Democrats to "stop the madness" and pass a stopgap spending bill that had earlier passed the House, he said.

"We did the job to keep the government open, and now it's on the Senate Democrats," Johnson said.

The House is not expected to be in session this week, focusing attention on the Senate to take the lead on any deal in the Republican-led Congress. Yet even with House lawmakers away, the Republican and Democratic leaders have been holding al-

most daily briefings as they frame their arguments and seek to shift blame for the shutdown.

Turmoil for the economy

The stalemate comes at a moment of troubling economic uncertainty. While the US economy has continued to grow this year, hiring has slowed and inflation remains elevated as the Republican president's import taxes have created a series of disruptions for businesses and hurt confidence in his leadership. At the same time, there is a recognition that the nearly USD 2 trillion annual budget deficit is financially unsustainable.

The Trump administration sees the shutdown as an opening to wield greater power over the budget, with multiple officials saying they will save money as workers are furloughed by imposing permanent job cuts on thousands of government workers, a tactic that has never been used before.

Trump had seemingly suggested Sunday night that layoffs were already taking place, but White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Trump was talking about furloughs. Under a furlough, workers cannot report to work, but they will return to their job and get paid retroactively after the shutdown ends. She said layoffs were still planned if the shutdown continues.

The talk of layoffs has escalated an already tense situation in which Washington lawmakers have struggled to find common ground and build mutual trust. Leaders in both parties are betting that public sentiment has swung their way, putting pressure on the other side to cave. (AP)

Pak, China, Russia and Iran reaffirm commitment to 'stable and peaceful' Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, Oct 7: Pakistan, China, Russia and Iran on Tuesday reaffirmed their joint commitment to a "stable and peaceful" Afghanistan, while also voicing concern over the presence of terrorists in the country.

The Quadrilateral Meeting of Special Representatives for Afghanistan, comprising the four nations, was convened in Moscow to deliberate on matters of regional peace and security, according to a statement by Pakistan's special envoy to Afghanistan, Mohammad Sadiq.

Sadiq, who is currently in Russia, said on X that they held detailed discussions that took place during the quadrilateral meeting.

"The participating states unanimously reaffirmed their steadfast commitment to a stable, sovereign, and peaceful Afghanistan, underscoring the necessity of a country free from the scourge of terrorism and external intervention," he said.

"A particular point of concern was the continued presence of designated terrorist organisations, such as TTP, BLA, ETIM, Jaish-ul-Adl, ISIL, and Al-Qaeda. In light of this shared threat, the nations emphasised the critical importance of enhanced coordination and collaborative action to combat terrorism in all its manifestations," he added.

The meeting was held ahead of the 7th meeting of the Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan later on Tuesday, where countries including India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are set to participate to discuss matters related to Afghanistan, as per the Russian Foreign Ministry's website.

Sadiq said in separate posts on X that on the sidelines of the meeting, he held separate meetings with his counterparts from Russia, China and Iran.

Sadiq also said that he had a productive meeting with Ambassador Yue Xiaoyong of China. "We discussed regional security, counter-terrorism cooperation, and humanitarian concerns in Afghanistan, highlighting the importance of a coordinated approach to promote lasting peace and stability in the region," he said.

The meeting underscored the strong partnership between Pakistan and China in addressing shared challenges and advancing regional development, he said.

Sadiq also met with his Russian counterpart Zamir Kabulov. "The discussions were focused on measures to promote regional cooperation on Afghanistan," he said on X. He said that he had a great meeting with Iran's Muhammad Reza Bahrani in Moscow. (PTI)

UN refugee agency chief suggests that US deportation practices violate law



GENEVA, Oct 7: The head of the UN refugee agency suggested Monday that President Donald Trump's America has carried out deportation practices that violate international law, and criticized a wider "backlash" in some countries against migrants and refugees.

Filippo Grandi, the UN high commissioner for refugees, used a speech to lament that drastic funding cuts and shortages have forced his agency, UNHCR, to slash nearly 5,000 jobs this year, or nearly a quarter of its workforce. The cuts may not be finished, he said.

"This was certainly not an easy year for any of us," Grandi told the opening of UNHCR's executive committee. "But remember, please: There has never been an easy year to be a refugee — and there never will be."

He did cite some bright spots and praised the Trump administration-led peace efforts in Congo, where conflict has displaced millions of people.

At the UN General Assembly last month, the Trump administration — which has slashed support this year for international humanitarian aid — pitched other countries on its view that the global system of seeking asylum has been abused and needs to be revamped, in part by cracking down on migration.

Other traditional donors have cut

back their aid outlays for UNHCR this year.

In recent years, the agency has received roughly USD 5 billion a year — or half its budgetary requirements — even as conflict and repression in places like Afghanistan, Myanmar, Sudan, Venezuela and Ukraine have led the number of people fleeing their homes to roughly double over the last decade — to 122 million.

In the politically charged environment of today, Grandi said, "putting the (UN) Refugee Convention and the principle of asylum on the table would be a catastrophic error." He insisted that "national sovereignty and the right to seek asylum" are not incompatible. They are complementary.

Grandi, whose term is up at the end of this year, decried an erosion of respect for international law in certain developed countries and noted that most refugees are taken in by poorer ones.

"I am worried that the current debate — in Europe, for example — and some current deportation practices — such as in the United States — address real challenges in manners not consistent with international law," he said.

The Trump administration has said it has an obligation to remove the "worst of the worst."

Grandi also cited some optimistic developments: More than 1 million refugees from Syria have now returned home. A "glimmer of hope" has emerged in the eastern Congo conflict between Rwanda-backed forces and Congo's armed forces.

"Thanks to peace efforts spearheaded by the United States, instead of speaking only of more bloodshed, or more refugees, we can start to think — cautiously, but a little bit more optimistically — of stability and returns," he said. (AP)

Snowstorms strand hikers in China, a South Korean climber dies in Nepal

BELING, Oct 7: Early-season snowfalls have stranded hikers in two mountainous areas in western China, including several hundred at the base of Mount Everest, and forced the closing of trails in a third.

In neighbouring Nepal, a South Korean climber died after getting caught in a storm while ascending a Himalayan peak just south of Everest.

The severe weather struck in the middle of a weeklong national holiday in China, when many flock to national parks and other tourist sites. One person died, and more than 200 others were evacuated after hiking into a remote part of Qinghai province.

Western China is dominated by the Tibetan plateau, a vast elevated area stretching from the Himalayas on the border with Nepal to Qinghai province and the Xinjiang region in the north. It is known for its scenic, snow-capped mountains and crystal-clear lakes and is the source of the Yangtze,

Mekong and other major rivers that flow down to nearby countries and other parts of China.

Snow and lightning on the slope of Mount Everest

What a hiker described as an intense snow and rainstorm stranded tourists on Mount Everest over the weekend. As of late Monday, 350 people had managed to descend, and more than 200 others were gradually being guided and helped to a meeting point, state broadcaster CCTV said in an online report.

The hikers were staying overnight in tents at an altitude of more than 4,900 metres (16,076 feet). Mount Everest, standing 8,850 metres (29,000 feet) tall, straddles China and Nepal. The Chinese side is at the southern edge of Tibet.

A hiker identified only by the surname Dong told a Chinese newspaper that he had never encountered such a severe storm with heavy snow and lightning flashes. The precipitation started

on Saturday afternoon and intensified dramatically during the night, Dong said in an online article from the Xiaoxiang Morning Herald in Hunan province.

In Nepal, the South Korean climber was initially reported missing over the weekend near the summit of Mera Peak, a 6,476-metre (21,250-foot) mountain in the northern Himalayan range. The Nepal Mountaineering Association confirmed his death on Tuesday and said other climbers have been reported safe on the mountain, which is popular during the autumn climbing season.

Risky hike inspired by social media

Searchers were looking on Tuesday for any remaining hikers in the Qilian Mountains in Qinghai province, where one died of hypothermia and altitude sickness and 213 others had been evacuated since Sunday.

Many people undertook the hike into the rugged and unde-

veloped area after learning about it on social media, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

Search efforts that included drones were launched on Sunday after some hikers reported being trapped in Laohugou, a valley in Menyuan County. The search in an area with an average altitude of more than 4,000 metres (13,100 feet) was complicated by the terrain, unpredictable weather and continuous snowfall, state media said.

As the situation unfolded, the Menyuan county government issued a notice prohibiting hiking in the area, saying the hikers had entered illegally.

North of the Tibetan plateau, the Kanas scenic area in the northwest corner of China closed on Tuesday after a snowstorm on Sunday that stranded motorists on a nearby highway, state media said.

The road in the Xinjiang region, near the border with Kazakhstan, had been cleared by Monday. (AP)

President Maduro asks Pope Leo XIV to help maintain peace in Venezuela

CARACAS (VENEZUELA), Oct 7: Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro on Monday said he has asked Pope Leo XIV to help maintain peace in the South American country.

Maduro's comments come as the United States military continues to strike alleged drug-carrying boats in the waters off Venezuela in what President Donald Trump has declared an "armed conflict" with cartels. Maduro said he sought Leo's help in a letter.

"I have great faith that Pope Leo, as I stated in the letter I sent him, will help Venezuela preserve and achieve peace and stability," Maduro said during his weekly show on state television.

Maduro did not provide details of the letter. His government's press office did not immediately respond to a request for a copy of the document. (AP)

World Bank says Sri Lanka's economic recovery remains incomplete, calls for urgent reforms

COLOMBO, Oct 7: Sri Lanka's recent economic performance has been strong, but the recovery remains incomplete, the World Bank said on Tuesday.

"With growth still below pre-crisis levels and poverty significantly elevated, strengthening the recovery will require continued macroeconomic stability, urgent structural reforms, and more efficient, better-targeted public spending," it said.

Sri Lanka's economy crashed in 2022 due to a forex crisis stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and other flawed political and economic management reasons since 2019. The current turnaround was aided by the four-year IMF bailout of nearly 3 billion USD pinned to a stringent reform regime.

"While Sri Lanka's recent economic progress is encouraging, the recovery is uneven and incomplete," said David Srisen, World Bank Division Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

The World Bank projects Sri Lanka's economy to grow by 4.6 per cent in 2025 — supported by a modest rebound in industry and steady growth in services — before slowing to 3.5 per cent in 2026.

"To build a stronger, fairer economy that benefits all households, in a fiscally constrained environment, Sri Lanka needs the private sector to invest and create jobs and ensure that every rupee of public money is well-spent," Srisen said. Despite strong recent growth, low inflation, and robust external inflows, food prices remain high, and reserve accumulation has slowed.

Sri Lanka's economic output is still below 2018 levels, and although poverty is declining, it remains twice as high as in 2019.

To support long-term growth and reduce poverty amid fiscal constraints, the bank calls for a broad package of reforms aimed at enabling private sector-led growth. Key priorities include easing barriers to trade and investment, improving the business environment, and modernising tax administration and regulations related to land and labour markets.

More than 80 per cent of government spending is exhausted in public sector salaries, welfare programs, and interest payments, leaving little scope for growth-oriented investments in infrastructure, education, and health. (PTI)

Houthi detain 9 more UN staff as part of Yemen crackdown

CAIRO, Oct 7: Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen have detained nine employees of the United Nations as part of a long-running crackdown on the organisation, the UN said.

The detentions bring the number of detained UN workers in Houthi-held territories in Yemen to 53 since 2021, UN spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said in a statement late Monday.

No details about the circumstances or timing of the latest detentions were given.

Dujarric said the crackdown has impeded "the UN's ability to operate in Yemen and to deliver critical assistance" to the local population in the Arab world's poorest country.

He called for "the immediate and unconditional release" of all UN staff as well as workers from other international organi-

sations and diplomatic missions who have been detained by the rebels.

"They must be respected and protected in accordance with applicable international law," Dujarric said. A spokesman for the rebels did not respond to calls and messages seeking comment.

The rebels have previously said that their crackdown on the UN and other international groups is linked to suspected members of an alleged espionage network.

In August, the rebels raided UN offices in the capital, Sanaa, and detained 19 employees, according to the UN. They later released Lana Shukri Kataw, the deputy director of UNICEF in the country.

The raids were the latest in a long-running Houthi crackdown against the UN and other international organisations working in rebel-held areas in Yemen. (AP)

'UK-India corridor stands as one of the most promising economic relationships globally'

British PM Keir Starmer's visit to India to focus on trade, investment, tech ties

LONDON, Oct 7: Keir Starmer will begin his first official visit to India as British prime minister on Wednesday, with talks between both countries set to cover the entire gamut of the bilateral partnership, including trade and investment and technology ties.

The two-day visit, at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will see both leaders take stock of the progress made across all aspects of the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in line with "Vision 2035" — a 10-year roadmap agreed alongside the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in July to build on the key pillars of the partnership. The focus of the Modi-Starmer bilateral talks will be on the opportunities presented by the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), as the FTA is known, which is set to remove tariffs on over 90 per cent of goods once it is ratified by the UK Parliament.

"The UK prime minister's visit to India comes at a pivotal moment in the evolution of our bilateral relationship, defined increasingly by partnership,



shared prosperity, and mutual respect," said Richard Heald, who is part of the prime ministerial delegation.

"The UK-India corridor stands as one of the most promising economic relationships globally, and we look forward to supporting its continued growth — grounded in innovation, opportunity, and mutual ambition," said Heald, Chair of the UK India Business Council (UKIBC), who is also set to

address a session on Indian entry strategies for UK small and medium enterprises.

The British PM will be accompanied by a delegation made up of over 100 business leaders, university vice-chancellors and cultural chiefs, reflecting a mission to boost trade and investment, technology and education ties. Lord Karan Bilimoria, Chair of the International Chamber of Com-

merce (ICC) UK, said he is "absolutely delighted" at such a substantial PM delegation after a gap of nearly nine years because it conveys an unequivocal message that "Britain means business when it comes to India".

"The timing is excellent because it is literally within three months of signing the FTA at Chequers at the end of July that both prime ministers will be meeting face to face in each other's countries again, which is almost unprecedented," said Bilimoria.

The visit coinciding with both navies undertaking their joint Exercise Konkan in the Arabian Sea is symbolic of the opportunity for the delivery of significant defence technological and industrial partnerships between Indian and UK companies, including on naval electric propulsion, said Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, Senior Fellow for South Asia at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London. He believes Starmer's first official visit to India takes place at a strategically significant moment for both countries. (PTI)

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN, STATE LEVEL POLICE RECRUITMENT BOARD, ASSAM REHABARI, GUWAHATI

No. SLPRB/REC/SI (UB)/646/2023/181

NOTICE

The final Results of the below mentioned Recruitments will be uploaded on 10/10/2025 at 11:30 A.M on the website of SLPRB (www.slprbassam.in) and concerned Departments.

- (i) 144 posts of Sub Inspector (UB) in Assam Police,
(ii) 7 posts of Sub Inspector of Police (Communication) in APRO,
(iii) 51 posts of Sub Inspector (AB) for Assam Commando Battalions &
(iv) 1 post of Assistant Deputy Controller, Civil Defence (Jr.) under DGCD & CGHG, Assam.
- (i) 164 posts of Constable (AB) for Assam Commando Battalions.
- (i) Cook-26, Barber - 12, Water Carrier - 3, Dhobi - 11 & Cobbler-2 in Assam Police, Cook-7, Water Carrier- 24, Dhobi-13, Barber-2, Electrician-2, Plumber-1, Mason-1 & Tailor-3 for Assam Commando Battalions, and Cook-44, Water Carrier-12, Dhobi- 23, Barber-10 & Cobbler-15 under DGCD & CGHG, Assam.
(ii) 30 posts of Safai Karmachari in Assam Police, 2 posts of Safai Karmachari in Assam Commando Battalions, 2 posts of Safai Karmachari under Prison Department & 3 posts of Sweeper under Directorate of Forensic Science.
(iii) 10 posts of Cook (SDRF) under Fire & Emergency Services, Assam.

The date of announcement of final results of Constable (AB & UB) and equivalent posts in Assam Police and other departments will be intimated shortly.

Sd/-
Inspector General of Police (A), Assam
&
Member Convenor, SLPRB, Assam
Ulubari, Guwahati

DIPR /D/ HLT 191 8-Oct-25

Motorcycle expedition flagged off from Tawang to commemorate 63rd Walong Day

The eight-day, 1,000-kilometre expedition from Tawang to Walong aims to honour the courage and sacrifice of Indian soldiers



HT Correspondent

TAWANG, Oct 7: In a moving tribute to the heroes of the 1962 Indo-Sino War, a motorcycle expedition commemorating the 63rd Walong Day was flagged off from the Tawang Parade Ground on Tuesday morning.

The eight-day, 1,000-kilometre expedition from Tawang to Walong aims to honour the courage and sacrifice of Indian soldiers who fought valiantly in one of the most challenging theatres of the war.

The expedition, comprising 20 bikers, was jointly flagged off by Namgye Tsering, MLA Tawang,

Colonel M Upadhyay, Deputy Commander of the Tawang Brigade, and the Commanding Officer of the 10 Mahar Regiment.

The ceremony began with the screening of a documentary on the 1962 Battle of Walong, depicting the extraordinary bravery and determination of Indian troops who, despite being heavily outnumbered, mounted a spirited defence with the support of local villagers.

Addressing the gathering, Colonel M Upadhyay reaffirmed the Indian Army's enduring preparedness and commitment to

national security.

"We are prepared for any contingency imposed upon us. We will defend our nation and ensure the safety and security of every citizen — for a Viksit Bharat, a proud India," he said.

He also encouraged the participants to carry the message of peace, prosperity, and adventure, symbolising the strength and optimism of India's youth.

MLA Namgye Tsering paid heartfelt tributes to the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during the 1962 war at Walong, Bumla, Kenzamani, Dzela, and other battlefronts.

"This ride is not just an expedition — it's a journey of remembrance, pride, and patriotism," he said, commending the organisers for dedicating the initiative as a living homage to the nation's war heroes.

The event also featured a vibrant cultural programme presented by students of Higher Secondary School Tawang and youths of Ketchengha, who performed traditional songs and dances, adding a patriotic fervour to the occasion.

Following the flag-off, the riders paid floral tributes at the Tawang War Memorial in memory of the martyrs of the 1962 conflict.

Their 1,000-kilometre route will take them through Tenga, Itanagar, Likabali, Roing, and Hayuliang before reaching Walong.

Along the way, they will engage with local communities, honour war memorials, and spread awareness about the courage and resilience of the people of Arunachal Pradesh during the war.

The expedition serves as a reminder of the unyielding spirit of India's soldiers and citizens who stood shoulder to shoulder in defence of the nation's sovereignty, and as an enduring message of unity, sacrifice, and national pride.

Governor inaugurates New Age Learning Centre in Pasighat

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Oct 7: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt General KT Parnaik, (Retd) on Tuesday inaugurated the New Age Learning Centre (NALC) at the District Library in Pasighat, East Siang district.

The initiative marks a significant step towards fostering a culture of reading, writing, and creativity among the youth of the state.

To commemorate the occasion, the Pasighat Chapter of the Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society organised a poetry recital featuring performances by young writers and poets from the region.

The event showcased the literary potential of the district's youth and highlighted the growing enthusiasm for creative expression.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that the concept of New Age Learning Centres is steadily gaining momentum across the state, drawing increasing interest from young learners and literary enthusiasts.

He expressed confidence that the

success of the Pasighat centre would serve as an inspiration for similar learning hubs to be established in every district and town, thereby promoting a wider culture of knowledge-sharing and intellectual development.

Emphasising the need to nurture reading and writing habits among the younger generation, Lt Gen Parnaik said that reading enhances vocabulary and articulation, while writing refines the ability to communicate one's thoughts effectively.

"Developing these habits is essential for building confident, articulate, and thoughtful individuals who can contribute meaningfully to society," he remarked.

The Governor urged officials to make the NALC a true hub of intellectual and literary excellence by organising regular literary events, book readings, workshops, and creative writing sessions to nurture young thinkers and writers.

He commended the Deputy Commissioner and Library Department officials for their vision and

efforts in setting up the centre, noting that such initiatives strengthen the state's educational and cultural foundation.

As a gesture of encouragement, the Governor presented the 'Governor's Pen' to the poetry recital participants — Ayang Doley, Otul Jerang, Yang Megu, and Nana Toyang Taloh — recognising their contribution to the day's literary programme.

Local MLA Tapi Darang, Deputy Commissioner of East Siang District Sonalika Jiwani, and Deputy Director of Public Libraries Yayum Riba were also present at the inauguration, along with members of the Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society, Pasighat Chapter.

The Governor's call to transform the New Age Learning Centre into a vibrant platform for knowledge, creativity, and community engagement resonated strongly with attendees, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the promotion of literary and intellectual pursuits in East Siang district.

Governor inaugurates Ane's Home at Pasighat

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Oct 7: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt. General KT Parnaik, (Retd) on Tuesday inaugurated Ane's Home — A Centre for Child Safety and Healing at the Women Police Station in Pasighat, East Siang district.

The facility is designed to provide a comprehensive support system for children and victims of abuse through legal aid, psychological and trauma counselling, child-safe spaces, menstrual hygiene support, and community engagement programmes.

Describing the initiative as a compassionate step towards strengthening child protection mechanisms, the Governor commended the East Siang Police for their proactive efforts in creating a dedicated centre that focuses on healing, safety, and empowerment.

"Ane's Home reflects the district's deep commitment to protecting its youngest citizens. It embodies the values of care, compassion, and accountability that should guide all our actions in society," he said.

The Governor emphasised the need to build a nurturing and secure environment where every child can grow free from fear and harm.

He urged all stakeholders to work in unison to make the district completely crime-free and to ensure that the centre becomes a symbol of hope and resilience.

Highlighting the importance of outreach and awareness, Lt Gen Parnaik called on officials to inform students and youth about the existence of Ane's Home so that

they may seek help or assist others in distress.

He also underscored the need to educate children on personal safety, particularly the concept of 'Good Touch and Bad Touch', to help them recognise and respond to unsafe situations.

"Awareness at the family level is equally vital. Parents must also be counselled and empowered with knowledge to prevent abuse and respond effectively when needed," he said.

Encouraging police personnel to take an active role beyond enforcement, the Governor said they must act as agents of social reform.

"Police officers of Ane's Home must lead by example in spreading awareness and empathy within the community. Every effort should contribute to building a safer and kinder society for children," he added.

Officer-in-Charge of the Women Police Station, Inspector Amum Payeng, briefed the Governor that Ane's Home — meaning Mother's Home — is a transformative centre that integrates legal aid, psycho-social counselling, medical support, and child-friendly spaces under one roof to promote recovery and resilience among victims of sexual and domestic abuse.

Later, the Governor visited the Pasighat Police Station and interacted with officers and personnel.

He shared his vision of Smart Policing, an approach rooted in technology, professionalism, and community partnership to ensure efficient and transparent law enforcement.

Calling the drug menace a grave

threat to society, especially the youth, the Governor urged the police to adopt a mission-oriented strategy to eradicate it.

"The fight against drugs requires proactive policing, community participation, and sustained awareness drives. Only through a united approach can we safeguard the future of our youth," he asserted.

He also suggested the establishment of small libraries and online knowledge hubs in police stations to encourage continuous learning among police personnel.

Such initiatives, he said, would help officers stay updated on laws, modern policing techniques, and technological tools, fostering a culture of professional excellence.

Superintendent of Police, East Siang, Pankaj Lamba, informed the Governor about ongoing district initiatives, including collaborations with NGOs and Self-Help Groups to address social issues and build stronger community relations.

The Governor appreciated these efforts and urged the police to continue engaging closely with citizens to promote a harmonious and secure society.

Local MLA Er Tapi Darang, IGP (Central) Hibu Tamang, Deputy Commissioner Sonalika Jiwani, Commandant 5th IRBn Garima, and officials from Rashtriya Raksha University — Dr Jasbirkaur Thadhani and Dr Moirangmayum Sanjeev Singh, Director of RRU Pasighat Campus — were also present.

The RRU team collaborated with the district police in setting up the centre's psychological and trauma counselling facilities.

IRBn head constable apprehended for peddling drugs

ITANAGAR, Oct 7: Arunachal Pradesh Police have apprehended a head constable of the 1st India Reserve Battalion (IRBn) and seized 66.28 gm of narcotic and psychotropic substances worth around Rs 1.50 lakh from his possession, an officer said.

A police team apprehended 49-year-old Tashi Babu, a resident of Miji Colony, Bomdila, on October 3, on charges of using and peddling drugs, Bomdila Police Station officer-in-charge sub-inspector HB Tator, who led the team, said on Tuesday.

The police team recovered 50 vials weighing 66.28 gm of heroin and cash of ₹ 13,500 from his possession. Police said Babu is a habitual drug peddler and was involved in several NDPS cases.

A case has been registered against Babu at Bomdila Police Station and further investigation is on to trace the supply network, police said. (PTI)



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Oct 7: Chief Minister Pema Khandu and his team are on a three-day tour of Changlang district, during which they have inaugurated multiple infrastructure projects, conducted inspections, and engaged with local communities to assess development and welfare initiatives. On October 6, the Chief Minister led the Bhoomi Pujan and launch of the first commercial coal project of Northeast India and Arunachal Pradesh—the Namchik-Namphuk coal mine—at Longtom village near Kharsang Sub-Division town.

Union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy attended as the chief guest, along with lawmakers, officers, public leaders, and local residents.

The ceremony also included the flagging off of several machinery and equipment units for the mine.

Later, the chief minister held a meeting with officials of Geo Enpro Petroleum Ltd at Kharsang to discuss enhancing petroleum operations and maximising state revenue. The discussions focused on leveraging natural resources for sustained growth, employment, and prosperity.

The CM also visited ITI Balinong to inspect flood damage caused by recent monsoon rains, which affected nearly 18 acres of the campus.

He held detailed discussions with WRD engineers on-site and directed immediate protective measures

along with a long-term flood mitigation and structural safety plan.

During the visit, Khandu inaugurated 'Project Lit Phat', a smart study centre initiated by the Balinong Youth Association under ADC Miao Rinchin Dorjee Thungon, offering online and offline learning resources for competitive exam preparation.

Several ministers and senior officials, including Commissioner to CM Sonam Chombey and DGP Anand Mohan, attended the inauguration.

In the afternoon, the chief minister visited the Tibetan Settlement Camp at Miao, interacting with elderly residents and skilled artisans at the Choephelling Cooperative Society, witnessing traditional handmade carpet weaving.

On October 7, the CM inaugurated infrastructure projects across the district, including facilities at Government Secondary School Kovin and Namphai-I Jaimapur, a Material Recovery Facility for waste management at Miao, the Lit Phat Smart Study Centre at Balinong, the Choephelling carpet weaving centre, and the office of the Superintending Engineer, Arunachal Pradesh Electrical Circle-III (APEC-III).

He also laid the foundation stone for the Namdapha Degree College new campus at Namchik Charali, aimed at enhancing educational infrastructure and opportunities in the region. The tour also included a state cabinet meeting under the initiative 'Cabinet Aapke Dwar', held in Miao to directly engage with local citizens. Key decisions were taken to improve infrastructure, education, public services, and overall development in Changlang district and across Arunachal Pradesh. A district-level review meeting followed, with senior officers, HoDs, local MLAs, ministers, and Arunachal East MP Tapir Gao discussing ongoing and upcoming projects.

On the final day of the tour, the CM and his team will participate in "Sewa Aapke Dwar", an outreach programme where departments will interact with the public, provide on-the-spot services including health check-ups, educational support, and issue certificates, ensuring responsive governance and citizen-centric administration.

Guv lauds Project Brahmanck and its significant contribution to Arunachal Pradesh's development

Governor participates in plantation programme at Project Brahmanck complex



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Oct 7: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt General KT Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd) on Tuesday participated in a plantation programme at the Border Roads Organisation's Project Brahmanck Complex in Pasighat, East Siang district.

The event was held as part of the Governor's ongoing initiative 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam',

which promotes environmental conservation and community-driven afforestation.

On the occasion, the Governor planted a Bottle Palm sapling in the presence of Project Brahmanck Chief Engineer SC Looniya, Superintendent Engineers RK Shrivastava, Rajendra Kumar, and BK Shrivastava, along with Colonel GR Vasisht and other BRO officials.

Interacting with the officers and personnel,

Lt Gen Parnaik lauded the dedicated service of Project Brahmanck and its significant contribution to Arunachal Pradesh's development.

He praised the team's commitment to constructing and maintaining vital road infrastructure across some of the most challenging terrains in the country, describing their work as both inspiring and nation-building in spirit.

"The efforts of the Border Roads Organisation have not only improved connectivity but also opened up new avenues for economic growth, enhanced accessibility to remote regions, and strengthened the sense of unity and integration among our people," the Governor said.

He noted that the organisation's projects have been instrumental in transforming the socio-economic landscape of Arunachal Pradesh by linking isolated communities and enabling smoother movement of goods and services.

Commending the professionalism and dedication of the BRO personnel, the Governor said their service exemplifies the spirit of perseverance and national commitment.

"Your work demonstrates how infrastructure development can transform lives, foster inclusivity, and drive holistic growth," he added.

Lt. Gen Parnaik expressed confidence that Project Brahmanck would continue to lead from the front in the state's infrastructure development, adopting innovation and sustainability to further strengthen connectivity in the border regions.

Officials informed the Governor that Project Brahmanck has planted around 10,000 trees within its operational areas over the past year under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, reinforcing its commitment to environmental conservation alongside infrastructural advancement.

The Governor appreciated these green initiatives and encouraged the BRO to continue integrating eco-friendly practices in its projects, ensuring that progress and preservation go hand in hand for a sustainable future.

GOVT. OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS :: KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT CIRCLE, DIPHU

No. E-1/Apptt./IS/2024/10281

Dated Diphu the 07/10/2025

NOTICE

In continuation of this office letter no. E-1/Apptt./IS/2024/8885 Dated 02-09-2025, I have the honour to inform that all the candidates who have applied for the post of Planning Assistant (Grade-II) which have been postponed the Written Test Examination is hereby re-schedule on 12th October, 2025 at Diphu Govt. Girls' Higher Secondary School, Diphu from 11.00 AM onwards.

Therefore, all candidates are informed to collect their calling letters for appearing the said Written Test Examination for the post of Planning Assistant (Grade-II) from the Office of the Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong District Circle, Diphu during office hours w.e.f., 08th October, 2025.

Sd/-

Inspector of Schools,
Karbi Anglong District Circle,
Diphu.

Armed forces demonstrated strength of jointness, strategic foresight during Operation Sindoor: Prez

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said that the country's armed forces demonstrated the strength of jointness and strategic foresight during Operation Sindoor, which also resulted in dismantling of terror infrastructure across the Line of Control (LoC).

In response to the Pahalgam terror attack, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terrorist infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan. The strikes triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with an understanding on stopping the military actions on May 10.

Addressing the faculty and course members of the 65th National Defence College course, who had called on the president at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here, Murmu said the changing geo-political environment and security contexts call for dynamic responses.

India is engaged in transforming the armed forces into a technologically advanced combat-ready force capable of multi-domain integrated operations, she said.

"Our armed forces demonstrated the strength of jointness and strategic foresight during Operation Sindoor. The calibrated, tri-service response resulted in effective synergy. This synergy was behind the successful campaign to dismantle the terror infrastructure across the line-of-control and deeper inside the territories across the border," Murmu said, and expressed effusive appreciation for the leadership of the armed forces.

The president said that the process of promoting jointness started with the creation of the Department of Military Affairs with the Chief of Defence



Staff as its secretary.

"I am happy to note that efforts are underway to restructure forces through the establishment of Integrated Theatre Commands and Integrated Bat-

tle Groups," she said. Murmu said universal values are at the core of defining our national interests and the Indian tradition has always looked at the entire humanity as one family.

"This rich sentiment of the entire world being one family is expressed in our ancient saying 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. Universal brotherhood and peace have been our articles of faith. But we have also given importance to being battle-ready to defeat the forces that are harmful to humanity and our nation," she said.

Citing the 'Mahabharata', the epic on the great war which is said to have been fought centuries ago, the president said it finds expressions of the values we cherish.

"Every attempt was made to avoid the war and arrive at an amicable solution. Efforts for peace

were led by Krishna, the principal character, who is regarded by us as a divine entity. When the war became unavoidable, Krishna told Arjuna, one of the most important warriors, to get rid of all doubts and fight bravely. Thus, the holistic Indian approach to war and peace, gives the highest importance to the values of peace and non-violence," she said. But it also strongly inspires to fight with utmost resolve when a battle becomes unavoidable, Murmu added.

"An interesting physical reflection of the holistic Indian value-system can be seen in the premises of 'Gandhi Smriti' and the 'National Defence College' facing each other, more out of co-incident than design. It is as if nature placed the two institutions close together to remind us of our integrated values," the president said. (PTI)

NMIA to be the first airport in India to be connected by Water Taxi PM to inaugurate Navi Mumbai airport, Mumbai Metro-3

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Wednesday inaugurate the Navi Mumbai International Airport and a portion of the Mumbai Metro Line, considered as significant milestones in easing transportation in the financial capital.

Built at a cost of ₹ 19,650 crore, the phase 1 of Navi Mumbai International Airport is India's largest Greenfield airport project, developed under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

As the second international airport for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, NMIA will work in tandem with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) to ease congestion and elevate Mumbai into the league of global multi-airport systems.

The airport, designed to be among the most efficient in the world with 1160 Ha area, will eventually handle 90 million passengers annually (MPPA) and 3.25 million metric tonnes of cargo.

Among its unique offerings is an Automated People Mover (APM), a transit system planned to connect all four passenger terminals for smooth inter-terminal transfers, as well as a landside APM linking the city-side infrastructure.

In line with sustainable practices, the airport will feature dedicated storage for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), solar power generation of approximately 47 MW, and EV bus services for public connectivity across the city. NMIA will also be the first airport in the country to be connected by Water Taxi.



The prime minister will also inaugurate phase 2B of the Mumbai Metro Line-3, stretching from Acharya Atré Chowk to Cuffe Parade, constructed at an estimated cost of around ₹ 12,200 crore.

With the inauguration of Phase 2B, Modi will dedicate the entire Mumbai Metro Line 3 (Aqua Line) – to the nation with a total cost of over ₹ 37,270 crore, marking a major milestone in the city's urban transport transformation.

As Mumbai's first and only fully underground metro line, this project is set to redefine commuting across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), offering a faster, more efficient, and modern transit solution for millions of residents.

The Mumbai Metro Line-3, spanning 33.5 km from Cuffe Parade to Aarey JVLR with 27 stations, will cater to 13 lakh passengers daily. The final Phase 2B of the project will provide seamless connectivity to South Mumbai's heritage and

cultural districts such as Fort, Kala Ghoda, and Marine Drive, along with direct access to key administrative and financial hubs, including the Bombay High Court, Mantralaya, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), and Nariman Point.

The Metro Line-3 has been designed to ensure efficient integration with other modes of transport, including railways, airports, other metro lines, and monorail services, thereby enhancing last-mile connectivity and reducing congestion across the metropolitan region.

The prime minister will also launch 'Mumbai One' – Integrated Common Mobility App for 11 Public transport Operators (PTO) across Metro, Monorail, Suburban railways and Bus PTOs.

These include Mumbai Metro Line 2A and 7, Mumbai Metro Line 3, Mumbai Metro Line 1, Mumbai Monorail, Navi Mumbai Metro, Mumbai Suburban Rail-

way, Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST), Thane Municipal Transport, Mira Bhayander Municipal Transport, Kalyan Dombivali Municipal Transport and Navi Mumbai Municipal Transport. Mumbai One App offers commuters a range of benefits, including integrated mobile ticketing across multiple Public Transport Operators, elimination of queuing by promoting digital transactions, and seamless multi-modal connectivity through a single dynamic ticket for trips involving multiple transport modes.

It also provides real-time journey updates on delays, alternative routes, and estimated arrival times, along with map-based information on nearby stations, attractions, and points of interest, and an SOS feature to ensure commuter safety.

The prime minister will also inaugurate the Short-Term Employment Program (STEP), a pioneering initiative by the Department of Skill, Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation in Maharashtra. The program will be rolled out across 400 government ITIs and 150 government technical high schools, marking a major step in aligning skill development with industry requirements to enhance employability.

STEP will establish 2,500 new training batches, including 364 exclusive batches for women and 408 batches in emerging technology courses such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Electric Vehicles (EV), Solar, and Additive Manufacturing. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Election Commission to provide it with the details of 3.66 lakh excluded voters from the final electoral roll prepared after Bihar's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise.

The Election Commission informed the apex court that most of the names added are of new voters and that no complaint or appeal has been filed till now by any excluded voter.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said the poll panel will submit whatever information it gets on excluded voters by Thursday (October 9), when it will conduct further hearing on the pleas challenging the SIR exercise.

The top court said everyone has the draft electoral roll and the final list has also been published on September 30, so the required data can be furnished through a comparative analysis.

Justice Bagchi told senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the poll panel, that court orders have resulted in more transparency and access to the electoral process.

The bench said that since it appears from the number of electors in the final list that there is an appreciation of numbers from the draft rolls, therefore, to avoid any confusion, the identity of add-ons should be disclosed.

"You'd agree with us that the degree of transparency and access has improved in the electoral process. It appears from the data that there was a 65 lakh deletion in the draft list which you published,



and we said whoever is dead or moved is alright, but if you are deleting someone, please follow Rule 21 and the SOP.

"We also said that whoever is deleted, please put up their data in your electoral offices. Now the final list appears to be an appreciation of numbers and there is confusion in the general democratic process -- what is the identity of the add-ons, are they of deleted names or new names," Justice Bagchi said.

Dwivedi replied that most additions of names are of new voters and there were a few old voters, whose names were added after the draft roll was published.

"No complaint or appeal filed till now by any excluded voters," Dwivedi said.

On September 30, the EC, while publishing the final electoral list of the poll-bound Bihar, said that the total number of electors has come down by nearly 47 lakh to 7.42

crore in the final electoral roll from 7.89 crore before the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter list carried out by the Election Commission.

The final figure has, however, increased by 17.87 lakh from 7.24 crore electors named in the draft list issued on August 1, which had removed 65 lakh voters from the original list on various accounts, including deaths, migration and duplication of voters.

While 21.53 lakh new electors have been added to the draft list, 3.66 lakh names have been removed, resulting in a net increase of 17.87 lakh.

On October 6, announcing the poll schedule, the EC said elections will be held in 121 seats of the 243-member Assembly on November 6, while the remaining 122 constituencies will go to polls on November 11. The counting of votes will be held on November 14. (PTI)

Cabinet approves 4 railway projects covering 18 districts in four states

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved four multi-tracking railway projects covering 18 districts in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh with a cost of approximately ₹ 24,634 crore. The projects will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 894 km and help in providing seamless connectivity for the movement of people, goods and services, an official statement said.

These projects are 3rd and 4th line between Wardha and Bhusawal covering 314 km in Maharashtra; an 84 km 4th line between Gondia and Dongargarh in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh; 259 km 3rd and 4th line between Vadodara - Ratlam in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh; and 4th line covering 84 km distance of Itarsi-Bhopal- Bina in Madhya Pradesh.

"The approved multi-tracking project will enhance connectivity to approximately 3,633 villages, which have a population of about 85.84 lakh and two Aspirational Districts (Vidisha and Rajnandgaon)," the statement said.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, while briefing the media persons, said that the increased line capacity will significantly enhance mobility, resulting in improved operational efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways.

He said that these multi-tracking proposals are poised to streamline operations and alleviate congestion.

"The projects are in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's vision of a New India which will make the people of the region 'Aatmanirbhar' by way of comprehensive development in the area that will enhance their employment/self-employment opportunities," the statement said. (PTI)

Lit fest to be held at the Doon International School, Dehradun DY Chandrachud, Imtiaz Ali, Shobhaa De among speakers at Dehradun Literature Festival 2025

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: Former CJI DY Chandrachud, filmmaker Imtiaz Ali, writer-columnist Shobhaa De and singer Usha Uthup are among the celebrated names featured in the eclectic lineup for the upcoming seventh edition of the Dehradun Literature Festival, starting November 14.

With the theme "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Voices of Unity", this four-day literary festival seeks to foster dialogue around a wide range of topics, celebrating the unifying power of words that connect people across cultures and generations.

It will be held at the Doon International School, Dehradun.

"As we plan another exciting edition this November, it will bring together distinguished authors, artists, thought leaders, cultural icons, creative voices and more.

"Furthermore, we are proud that

our festival continues to be a non-ticketed, open-to-all celebration – rooted in the belief that literary social gatherings should be accessible to everyone, free of charge – especially to students who represent our next generation of future readers, authors, and creative visionaries," said Samraant Virmani, founder of Dehradun Literature Festival, during the recently held curtain raiser event at Sahitya Akademi. Other speakers participating in the festival include the likes of actor Shefali Shah, director Nandita Das, historian Vikram Sampath, film critic Bhawana Somaaya, singer Malini Awasthi, nutritionist Rujuta Diwekar and bestselling "The Hidden Hindu" series author Akshat Gupta Swaroop.

While Chandrachud, who recently made his debut as an author with "Why the Constitution Matters", will headline two sessions --



one with school students titled "We the Students: Dialogue on Democracy" and another on "Justice, Democracy and the Idea of India" -- a dynamic women directors' roundtable featuring Nandita Das and Leena Yadav will delve

into changing narratives in Indian cinema. Chef Suvir Saran's insights on food as storytelling and heritage, along with engaging conversations by Shobhaa De and Usha Uthup, are among the other highlights of

the multidisciplinary festival celebrating literature, arts, culture, cinema, music, and more.

It will also celebrate folk traditions with Awasthi discussing her memoir "Chandan Kiwaad" and a performance titled "Sound of Women – Folk Rhythms from Uttarakhnad", while indie music artists like Osho Jain, Veda Sinha (Aahvaan Project), and Buland Himalaya take the stage, enlivening the evenings with poetry, performances, and conversations that reflect India's cultural heartbeat.

Additionally, three prestigious awards -- "Ruskin Bond Literary Award", "Shivani: Iron Lady of the Hills Award", and the "Guardians of Himalayas Award" -- recognizing literary excellence, resilience, and regional stewardship will also be launched at the festival. The literary extravaganza will come to a close on November 16. (PTI)

BJP MLA Manoj Oraon attacked while distributing flood relief materials

ALIPURDUAR (WB), Oct 7: BJP MLA Manoj Kumar Oraon was on Tuesday allegedly attacked by Trinamool Congress (TMC) workers while distributing flood relief materials in Alipurduar, a day after two senior BJP leaders were assaulted by a mob in adjoining Jalpaiguri district.

Oraon, who sustained injuries in the incident, claimed that a group of TMC workers attacked him and his supporters when they were distributing relief items among flood-affected villagers in his constituency Kumargram. He was later taken to a hospital for treatment. "While trying to help flood-hit people, I was suddenly surrounded and attacked. This is the state of democracy under the TMC," Oraon reportedly said from the hospital. The TMC, however, denied the charges and dubbed them as "baseless".

"The charges are baseless. It was Manoj Oraon who had assaulted an aged man in his area first," a local TMC leader said. The West Bengal unit of the BJP strongly condemned the incident, accusing the ruling TMC of "terror politics" in the state.

"Whenever we stand beside flood-hit people in north Bengal, the TMC unleashes its rampage! In Mamata Banerjee's rule, even showing solidarity with people in distress has become a crime! BJP MLA Manoj Kumar Oraon, party workers, and central

forces were attacked," the party posted on X along with a video of the attack.

PTI, however, could not independently verify the authenticity of the video. "The TMC does not understand the language of humanity, it only understands the politics of terror. While the people of north Bengal await help amid the devastation caused by floods, the TMC remains busy spreading fear and violence. Trinamool's politics means nothing but hooliganism, lies, and hatred," the BJP said in a post on X.

The BJP also shared visuals on social media showing the injured MLA being taken to the hospital and several damaged vehicles in the area.

This latest attack comes barely a day after BJP MP Khagen Murmu and Siliguri MLA Sankar Ghosh were injured in an assault during relief distribution in Jalpaiguri district's Nagrakata area on Monday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on Monday criticised the TMC regime for its "pathetic" law and order situation, while Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee hit back, accusing him of "politicising a natural disaster".

Large parts of north Bengal, including Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, and Darjeeling, have been reeling under severe floods and landslides following torrential rains over the past week, which have left at least 30 people dead and many missing. (PTI)

Cough-syrup deaths Congress demands judicial probe, compensation for deceased's families

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: In the wake of reported deaths of children in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan allegedly due to the consumption of a cough syrup, the Congress on Tuesday demanded a judicial probe into the matter, strict action against those responsible and compensation for the families of the deceased.

The opposition party also accused the governments in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan of giving a "clean chit" to the companies that had manufactured the cough syrup that was allegedly responsible for the deaths of the children. It also sought an apology from Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue.

At a joint press briefing here with Congress Legislature Party leader in the Rajasthan Assembly Tika Ram Jolly, the party's legislature party leader in Madhya Pradesh, Umang Singhar, claimed that 16 children have died in Chhindwara and that the local Congress MLA had warned the government several times, but no action was taken.

"When the matter escalated, the body of a girl child was exhumed from the grave and a postmortem conducted. Children kept dying in the state and the chief minister kept roaming in Assam's Kaziranga National Park," Singhar alleged.

"The deputy chief minister of Madhya Pradesh (Rajendra Shukla) says no death has occurred due to cough syrup and he kept giving a clean chit to the company that makes the cough syrup. After all, what kind of an insensitive government is this? What is the link of the deputy chief minister with the medicine company?" he asked.

Tests are conducted even for minor illnesses but no tests were ever conducted while children's kidneys were failing in Madhya Pradesh, the Congress leader said.

"The pharmaceutical company chose a tribal area like Parasia. It knew that Dalits, tribals and poor people live there, and their voices could be suppressed. If such companies are doing business in small districts in collaboration with the government, are ministers taking a share from these companies?" he asked.

Singhar alleged that both Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have "puppet" chief ministers.

"These people cannot take decisions and decisions come directly from Delhi. We want to know, there are about 25,000 children in Parasia, so has the government launched any campaign to identify who all have been affected? The BJP government is giving only Rs 4 lakh as compensation to the families of the deceased. Is the price of a mother's empty lap just Rs 4 lakh?" he asked. Is there any humanity left in the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh, Singhar asked.

He demanded a judicial inquiry into the cases of the children's deaths and a government job for a member of each of the affected families.

"The families of the deceased children should receive compensation equal to the amount spent on their treatment. There should be no politics in this," Singhar said. Jolly said while the prime minister claims that he has been serving the country for 25 years in different positions, all this is happening under his regime. He "should apologise to the country" over this issue, the Congress leader said.

"In Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, several children have died after consuming a cough syrup and many children are seriously ill. Despite this, the BJP government in Rajasthan is not ready to accept that the children's deaths were caused by consuming cough syrup," Jolly said.

"My question to the Rajasthan government is, what is the compulsion to procure drug supplies from those pharmaceutical companies that are blacklisted and notorious?" he said.

Several states have ramped up actions to halt the consumption and supply of the Coldrif cough syrup following 14 deaths of children linked to the medicine in Madhya Pradesh, where the government has suspended three officials and transferred the drug controller. (PTI)

Nagaland halts posts reserved for Garos, Kacharis, Mikirs, and Kukis pending verification of their pre-1963 settlement status amid ongoing court case

Nagaland puts police recruitment for four non-Naga tribes on hold

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Oct 7: The Nagaland government has put on hold the recruitment process for police constable posts earmarked for the four non-Naga tribes - Garos, Kacharis, Mikirs (Karbhis) and Kukis - until the completion of an enumeration exercise meant to determine the eligibility of members of these tribes as indigenous inhabitants of the state.

According to the state home department on Tuesday, the Constitution (Nagaland) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1970, recognises that apart from the Naga tribes, these four non-Naga communities are also Scheduled Tribes of Nagaland, provided they are residents of the state.

The order acknowledges the presence of these tribes, who had been inhabiting Nagaland prior to its creation on December 1, 1963.

The home department pointed out that since these tribes also reside in other northeastern states, many of which share borders with Nagaland, cases of migration into Nagaland after statehood cannot



be ruled out. It noted that some individuals may have been wrongly issued ST and indigenous inhabitant certificates, making it necessary to identify and verify those who had genuinely settled in the state before 1963, along with their direct descendants.

To address this, the government, after detailed consultations

and examination of the findings of the Register Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland Commission, decided to conduct an enumeration exercise of the Kuki, Kachari, Garo and Mikhir tribes who had settled in Nagaland prior to December 1, 1963.

The decision was notified via home department order No. CON/RIIN/50/2020 dated Sep-

tember 20, 2024.

However, a writ petition was subsequently filed in the Gauhati High Court by the tribal organisations and bodies representing the four non-Naga tribes.

Following this, a stay order was issued on the conduct of the enumeration exercise, rendering the matter sub judice.

The department stated that the proposed exercise is crucial for identifying the genuine indigenous inhabitants among the four non-Naga tribes who are entitled to indigenous inhabitant certificates and other associated rights, particularly for state government employment.

With the legal case pending, the government has decided that the ongoing police constable recruitment, which is open to all indigenous inhabitants of Nagaland, will for now proceed only with the 1,176 posts allotted to the indigenous Naga tribes.

The 24 posts reserved for the four non-Naga tribes will be taken up after the enumeration-related issues are resolved, the government clarified.

Nagaland deputy CM calls for financial reforms in NE healthcare sector

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Oct 7: Nagaland deputy chief minister TR Zeliang on Tuesday underscored the importance of financial reforms in ensuring accessible and equitable healthcare across the Northeast region. He stated that effective health financing was not only about mobilizing resources but also about using them efficiently to reach the last mile.

Addressing the inaugural function of the Health Financing Forum for Cross-State Learning in the Northeast Region at Chumoukiedima as the special guest, Zeliang said the forum served as a vital platform for policymakers, health professionals, and experts to exchange ideas and experiences that could help the region move towards universal health coverage.

He stated that health, being one of the most crucial components of human development, required a holistic approach that connected infrastructure, manpower, financing, and governance.

The Nagaland government and the World Bank are jointly organising the two-day event.

Zeliang acknowledged the World

Bank's long-standing partnership with Nagaland in strengthening the health sector through the Nagaland Health Project, which introduced the result-based financing (RBF) model. He said such initiatives had contributed significantly to improving accountability and performance in service delivery.

Zeliang noted that through RBF, healthcare facilities are now being incentivised for achieving measurable outcomes, which has enhanced transparency and efficiency in financial management.

Highlighting the state government's vision, Zeliang said Nagaland is committed to creating a robust and resilient healthcare system capable of meeting emerging challenges such as demographic shifts, disease transitions, and the growing impacts of climate change.

He urged all participating states to embrace innovation and to develop collaborative strategies that respond to the specific needs and realities of the northeastern region.

He further pointed out that the Nagaland government is placing strong emphasis on preventive and primary

healthcare while also strengthening referral systems and hospital management to ensure that no citizen is left behind.

Zeliang called upon all stakeholders to work collectively in developing mechanisms that would reduce out-of-pocket expenditure, improve healthcare access, and build financial protection for vulnerable populations.

During the event, he released the Fin-Health Assessment report, which provides a detailed analysis of the health financing landscape and recommendations for reform in the region.

Outlining the objectives of the forum, Marion Cros, senior health specialist, World Bank, lauded the northeastern states for their resilience and innovation in addressing healthcare challenges despite difficult terrain, limited resources, and low per capita spending.

She also highlighted that several states, including Nagaland and Mizoram, had initiated universal health insurance schemes to reduce financial hardship in accessing healthcare services, while others such as Assam and Meghalaya were piloting result-based payment systems in primary healthcare.

Meghalaya's voter base grows by 9 lakhs in 20 years

SHILLONG, Oct 7: Meghalaya's voter base has swelled by over 9 lakhs in the past 20 years, according to Chief Electoral Officer BDR Tiwari.

He revealed this significant growth while comparing the 2025 electoral rolls with the previous intensive revision conducted in 2005. The earlier electoral roll was published on April 15, 2005.

The total number of electors in September 2025 stands at 23,06,384 as compared to 13,35,816 in 2005, marking a significant increase by 9 lakh. Tiwari said today while addressing the media on the preparation for the pre-activities of the upcoming Special Intensive Revision, which was recently undertaken in the state of Bihar, and the Election Commission of India is in the process of announcing across the country.

The breakdown for September 2025 shows 11,37,316 male electors and 11,69,062 female electors. In contrast, the numbers for 2005 were 6,64,306 male electors and 6,71,510 female electors. Notably, there are six third-gender electors as of September 2025, whereas there were none in 2005.

He said four categories of electors have been mapped according to the Special Intensive Revision. These include category

A electors whose names are registered in the 2005 voter list are required to upload or submit only the relevant part of the extract of the 2005 voter list along with the enumeration form. Category B electors whose names are not found in the 2005 voter list and who were born in India before July 1, 1987, are required to upload or submit only self-document along with the enumeration form. Category C electors who were born between July 1, 1987, and December 2, 2004, and whose mother or father's name is not registered in the 2005 voter list are required to upload or submit two documents - self document and a document of either mother or father. Category D - electors who were born after December 2, 2004, and whose mother and father's name are not registered in the 2005 voter list are required to submit or upload three documents - self document, mother's document and father's document.

Tiwari also informed that the Election Commission of India has announced that Aadhaar cards will be accepted as valid identity proof for voter registration, in addition to the existing 11 documents. This decision comes after the Supreme Court's directive to include Aadhaar as a proof of identity. (NNN)

Delay in Tripura VC elections one of the longest in democratic India, says Pradyot Kishore

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Oct 7: Tipra Motha Party founder and royal scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on Tuesday criticised the prolonged delay in conducting the village committee (VC) elections in Tripura, calling it one of the longest in the history of democratic India.

In a Facebook post, Pradyot stated that the Chief Justice of India had taken note of their mention in the Supreme Court, and the hearing regarding the VC elections has been scheduled for the 27th or 28th of this month. "The delay in holding the VC election must be one of the longest delays in the history of democratic India," Pradyot wrote.

He further emphasized that the indigenous people of Tripura have faced continued hardship, alleging that their fate has been controlled through power, money, and systemic manipulation.

"The Hon'ble Supreme Court has delayed the listing of the VC hearing. We will get a fresh date. The indigenous people have suffered and continue to suffer because some people want to control our fate through power, money, and the system. Let's not forget that frustration is growing among the youth and Gen Z," he added.

The Tipra Motha chief has consistently voiced concerns over the delay in holding local self-government elections, asserting that it undermines the democratic rights of the tribal population in the state.

TMC alleges its Tripura headquarters attacked

AGARTALA, Oct 7: The TMC on Tuesday alleged that the headquarters of its Tripura unit in Agartala was vandalised by members of the ruling BJP's youth wing.

The incident happened a day after an attack on BJP MP Khagen Murmu and MLA Sankar Ghosh in a flood-hit area in northern West Bengal. State TMC president Santanu Saha alleged that a large group of BJP Yuva Morcha activists attacked the party office at the Motor Stand area.

"They damaged some furniture and the signboard of the party office. The attackers also raised slogans, condemning the Trinamool Congress," he said. (PTT)

Manipur MP fires salvo at state BJP legislators

IMPHAL, Oct 7: Lok Sabha MP from Manipur, Dr Angomcha Bimol Akojiam has lashed out at the BJP legislators of Manipur, accusing them of being more devoted to their central leaders in Delhi than to the people of Manipur.

Addressing the media at his residence in Keishamthong on Tuesday, the Congress MP mocked the BJP MLAs' repeated visits to the national capital amid the ongoing political crisis. "They are doing Parikrama as true devotees of their central leaders. Their Bhagwan is in Delhi, and they must wait for their Bhagwan to decide what to do," Akojiam quipped.

Calling the situation "an embarrassment to federal democracy," Bimol said it was unfortunate that elected representatives in Manipur could not form a government without direction from the central leadership. "In a democracy, legislators should decide their own leaders. But in Manipur, everything is dictated by Delhi," he said.

Contrasting the Congress and BJP styles of governance, Akojiam noted that during Congress rule, central leaders only offered guidance to ensure inclusivity without meddling in state leadership deci-



sions.

The MP then said the present crisis revealed the "collapse" of the state administration. "Manipur is functioning without a real government".

Raising another concern, Akojiam criticised the Special Summary Revision (SSR) of electoral rolls, saying it was being conducted in haste and with flawed intentions.

"The revision seems focused on deleting names rather than including eligible citizens," he said, calling the move contrary to

democratic principles.

Invoking a legal comparison, Bimol remarked, "Just as the law prefers releasing nine guilty persons over convicting one innocent, the electoral process should prioritise inclusion even if errors occur. But here, the focus is on deletion, not inclusion."

He cautioned that such a rushed revision — reportedly completed before the Bihar elections — could disenfranchise genuine voters in Manipur and urged the Election Commission to uphold fairness and transparency in the process. (NNN)

Tripura ex-CM accuses TMC of undermining democracy

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Oct 7: Former Tripura Chief Minister and Lok Sabha MP Biplob Kumar Deb on Tuesday alleged that democratic values are being undermined in West Bengal under the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government.

Deb, who currently serves as the BJP's election co-incharge for West Bengal, made the remarks after meeting BJP MP Khagen Murmu and MLA Shankar Ghosh, who were reportedly attacked while assisting flood-affected residents in North Bengal. In a Facebook post, Deb stated that the two leaders were "attacked by Trinamool-backed miscreants" and that he had visited them to inquire about their condition.

He further alleged that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's administration had "turned the government system into a party-driven system" and was "using fear and violence as political tools."

According to Deb, "every day, new incidents are taking place that undermine democratic values" in the state. He claimed that "realizing a decline in public support, the ruling party is resorting to intimidation through its supporters."

Sikkim announces DA hike

GANGTOK, Oct 7: The Sikkim government on Tuesday announced a hike in the dearness allowance (DA) for its employees and pensioners.

Employees and pensioners drawing pay in the pre-revised basic pay structure will get an additional 6 per cent DA and DR (dearness relief), respectively, according to a notification issued by the Finance Department.

With this hike, their DA and DR will rise to 252 per cent, it said.

Employees and pensioners drawing pay in the revised basic pay structure will get an additional 2 per cent DA and DR. With this, their DA and DR will rise to 55 per cent, it added. The hike will be effective from January 1, 2025.

Employees appointed on a contract basis and by work-charged establishments drawing revised pay in the regular scales will also get the benefit, the notification said. (PTI)

Composite solar panels to be installed in 50 tribal hostels in Tripura: Official

Tripura to ensure uninterrupted power and water supply in interior areas

AGARTALA, Oct 7: The Tripura government has decided to install composite solar panels in 50 rural tribal hostels in the state, an official said on Tuesday.

The composite solar panel will illuminate not only hostels but also have a solar-powered pump to lift water to overhead tanks, he said.

In interior areas, conventional power supply is always a challenge for various reasons.

"To solve the problem, the government has decided to install composite solar power unit in 50 tribal hostels located in interior areas to supply steady power. Each unit will cost ₹ 48 to ₹ 50 lakh", Director of Tribal Welfare department, Subhasish Das told PTI.

He said the fund has been given to Tripura Renewable Energy Development Authority (TREDA) to undertake the project - illumination of tribal hostels by solar power.

"The TREDA is expected to complete the plan for 50 hostels in the next six months in the first phase", he said, adding that the plan, once exe-



cuted, will ensure a steady power supply to the hostels located in interior tribal areas.

Das said the department plans to implement the solar power project in two Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) at the earliest.

"Since cost involvement is around ₹ 1.50 crore for each EMRS, the depart-

ment plans to shortlist two institutions one at Padmabil in Khowai district and another at Dumburnagar in Dhalai district", he said.

According to Das, Tribal Welfare minister Bikash Debbarma has been visiting the EMRS and tribal hostels to check the facilities and interact with the students. (PTI)

অসম লোকসেৱা আয়োগ ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022.									
No. 136PSC/CON/Exam-17/2024-2025									
RESULT									
The Assam Public Service Commission hereby declares today, the 7 th October, 2025, the result of the recruitment for the post of Assistant Accounts Officer (AAO) (Class-III post) of Assam Electricity Grid Corporation Limited (AEGCL) (Advt. No.12/2024 dated 07/06/2024), Screening Test (OMR + Written) of which was conducted by the Commission on 06/04/2025 and document verification on 25/09/2025. The Commission completed the process of selection and recommended the following candidates for the said post on the basis of merit:									
No. of Posts: 61 Nos. (RFW: 18 Nos.) [PwBD: 3; (VI: 1+III: 1+OI: 1) (Ex-Servicemen: 1)]									
Break-up: OC: 31 (RFW: 9), OBC/MOBC: 14 (RFW: 4), TT & Adivasi: 3 (RFW: 1), SC: 4 (RFW: 1), ST(P): 6 (RFW:2), ST(H): 3 (RFW: 1)									
Position	Roll No.	Name of Candidate	Category	Gender	Ex-Servicemen	PwBD	Recommended against vacancy		
1.	29912	SAMAR JYOTI CHOUDHURY	SC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
2.	27864	NILUTPAL NR. KONWAR	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
3.	20266	SUBHAM SONAR	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
4.	16576	SONTOSH SAHU	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
5.	22852	BASU MANDAL	SC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
6.	18227	PUJA AGARWALA	GEN	F			OPEN CATEGORY		
7.	16767	SUNNY NEOG	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
8.	16297	SATYAJIT DUTTA	GEN	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
9.	14508	NAYAN JYOTI BORDOLOI	GEN	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
10.	23062	BHASWATI BARMAN	GEN	F			OPEN CATEGORY		
11.	28315	PARTHA PROTOM GOGOI	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
12.	27559	NAYAN JYOTI MAZUMDAR	GEN	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
13.	23640	CHANDRIKA SINHA	GEN	F			OPEN CATEGORY		
14.	30627	SUBHALAKSHI CHIANGMAI	OBC	F			OPEN CATEGORY		
15.	20345	TOM KUMAR NEWAR	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
16.	22868	BEDANTA CHOUDHURY	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
17.	17700	HIROK JYOTI SAIKIA	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
18.	26187	KAUSHIK PRATIM DUTTA	GEN	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
19.	29176	RAJIB MORAN	MOBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
20.	30428	SIKHASHREE BARMAN	GEN	F			OPEN CATEGORY		
21.	21315	RAHUL DEBNATH	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
22.	24511	DIPU CHETRI	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
23.	19988	RAJ CHAKRABORTY	GEN	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
24.	24106	DHARITREE DAS	GEN	F			OPEN CATEGORY		
25.	25117	HIRAKJYOTI BORDOLOI	GEN	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
26.	21793	ABHISHEK MAHANTA	GEN	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
27.	20233	SIDHARTHA PAUL	OBC	M			OPEN CATEGORY		
28.	20415	ROYAL DAS	GEN	F		OH	OPEN CATEGORY		
29.	29917	SAMARJIT DAS	OBC	M			RESERVED		
30.	25909	KABYASHREE BORA	OBC	F			OPEN CATEGORY		
31.	17699	HIRANMOYEE BORDOLOI	OBC	F			OPEN CATEGORY		
32.	10001	A MAHESH CHANDRA SINGHA	OBC	M			RESERVED		
33.	20210	SEWALI TAMULI	OBC	F			RESERVED		
34.	27745	NIKITA MALI	SC	F			RESERVED		
35.	11022	SUMMITA SINGHA	OBC	F			RESERVED		
36.	18911	BIJOY MAJHI	TT & ADI	M			RESERVED		
37.	10428	KARNENDU PAUL	OBC	M			RESERVED		
38.	23874	DEBANUJ GOGOI	OBC	M			RESERVED		
39.	26080	KANTHI GOVINDA RAO	SC	M			RESERVED		
40.	23492	BITOPAN TALUKDAR	OBC	M			RESERVED		
41.	17418	BHASKAR DAS	SC	M			RESERVED		
42.	16582	SORMISTHA DEVI	OBC	F			RESERVED		
43.	13657	KESHAB KONWAR	OBC	M			RESERVED		
44.	21040	MANAB CHETRY	OBC	M			RESERVED		
45.	27537	NASRIN AKHTAR	MOBC	F			RESERVED		
46.	12930	GAUTAM SAIKIA	OBC	M			RESERVED		
47.	10964	SUBHAM DEY	OBC	M			RESERVED		
48.	31300	UMAKANTA SONOWAL	STP	M			RESERVED		
49.	20421	SANKET DAS	SC	M		VI	RESERVED		
50.	25686	JOYSHREE DAS	STP	F			RESERVED		
51.	10183	BENJAMIN SONA	TT & ADI	M			RESERVED		
52.	14199	MOMI DAWO	STP	F			RESERVED		
53.	28066	PADUM SAIKIA	STP	M			RESERVED		
54.	12260	BORNALI RAJAWAR	TT & ADI	F			RESERVED		
55.	20153	SAMUJAL DEORI	STP	M			RESERVED		
56.	20638	BINAPANI GANGA BASUMATARY	STP	F			RESERVED		
57.	15954	ROBINSON TIMUNG	STH	M			RESERVED		
58.	25665	JOSIAH DOUGIN GAMLHOU	STH	M			RESERVED		
59.	24050	DESMALDI KEMPRAI	STH	F			RESERVED		
60.	21117	MONOJ KUMAR NATH	OBC	M	YES		RESERVED		
61.	31476	MONOTPAL DEKA	GEN	M		HI	OPEN CATEGORY		

* Results may be accessed through the APSC's website www.apsc.nic.in

Sd/-
Principal Controller of Examinations,
Assam Public Service Commission,
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22

DIPR /D/HLT/190/8-Oct-25

DY CHANDRACHUD, IMTIAZ ALI, SHOBHAA DE AMONG SPEAKERS AT DEHRADUN LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2025



NEW DELHI, Oct 7: Former CJI DY Chandrachud, filmmaker Imtiaz Ali, writer-columnist Shobhaa De and singer Usha Uthup are among the celebrated names featured in the eclectic lineup for the upcoming seventh edition of the Dehradun Literature Festival, starting November 14. With the theme "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Voices of Unity", this four-day literary festival seeks to foster dialogue around a wide range of topics, celebrating the unifying power of words that connect people across cultures and generations. It will be held at the Doon International School, Dehradun.

"As we plan another exciting edition this November, it will bring together distinguished authors, artists, thought leaders,

cultural icons, creative voices and more.

"Furthermore, we are proud that our festival continues to be a non-ticketed, open-to-all celebration – rooted in the belief that literary social gatherings should be accessible to everyone, free of charge – especially to students who represent our next generation of future readers, authors, and creative visionaries," said Samrat Virmani, founder of Dehradun Literature Festival, during the recently held curtain raiser event at Sahitya Akademi.

Other speakers participating in the festival include the likes of actor Shefali Shah, director Nandita Das, historian Vikram Sampath, film critic Bhawana Somaaya, singer Malini Awasthi, nutritionist Rujuta Diwekar and bestselling "The Hidden

Hindu" series author Akshat Gupta Swaroop. While Chandrachud, who recently made his debut as an author with "Why the Constitution Matters", will headline two sessions – one with school students titled "We the Students: Dialogue on Democracy" and another on "Justice, Democracy and the Idea of India" – a dynamic women directors' roundtable featuring Nandita Das and Leena Yadav will delve into changing narratives in Indian cinema.

Chef Suvir Saran's insights on food as storytelling and heritage, along with engaging conversations by Shobhaa De and Usha Uthup, are among the other highlights of the multidisciplinary festival celebrating literature, arts, culture, cinema, music, and more. (PTI)

RIDLEY SCOTT CALLS CONTEMPORARY FILMS 'MEDIocre': HAVE STARTED WATCHING OWN MOVIES



LONDON, Oct 7: Filmmaker Ridley Scott, known for film like "Alien", "Gladiator" and "Blade Runner", says he finds present films mediocre despite the high quantity in which they are being released.

The 87-year-old director explained he watches many new films in order to find new talent, but lately it has become a challenge.

"Well, right now I'm finding mediocrity, we're drowning in mediocrity...The quantity of movies that are made today, literally globally, millions. There's not thousands, there's millions, and most of it is shit - 80-60 percent 'eh,' 40 percent is the rest, and 25 percent of that 40 is not bad, and 10 percent is pretty good, and the top 5 percent is great," he said at BFI Southbank, according to the news outlet UK Yahoo News.

Scott explained that many movies are too similar and extremely expensive.

"I'm not sure about the portion of what I've just said... But in the 1940s, when there were perhaps 300 movies made, 70 percent of them were similar, for example. I think a lot of films today are saved, and made more expensive by digital effects. Because what they haven't got is a great (script) on paper first. Get it on paper," he added.

Scott admitted that he re-watches his own films and also finds good work once in a while.

"So what I do — and it's a horrible thing — but I've started to watch my own movies, and actually they're really good," Scott said. "And also, they don't age... I watched Black Hawk Down the other night and I thought, 'How the hell did I do that?' But I think that occasionally there's a good one that will happen, it's like a relief that there's somebody out there who's doing a good movie," he said. (PTI)

Acclaimed film 'Santosh' to stream on Lionsgate Play from October 17



NEW DELHI, Oct 7: Filmmaker Sandhya Suri's "Santosh", a police procedural thriller that ran into trouble with the censor board and missed its theatrical release in January, will finally reach Indian audiences with its digital premiere on Lionsgate Play on October 17.

Starring Shahana Goswami in the titular role alongside Sunita Rajwar of "Panchayat" fame, the Indo-British production had its world premiere at Cannes Film Festival in 2024 under the Un Certain Regard category and earned critical praise for its unflinching portrayal of caste, gender and power dynamics. The film was later chosen as the United Kingdom's official entry for the Best International Feature Film category at the 2025 Oscars.

"Santosh" traces the journey of Santosh, a young widow who inherits her late husband's job in the police department through compassionate appointment.

"What begins as a symbolic placement quickly turns into a reckoning when she is assigned to the investigation of a Dalit teenager's rape and murder. Partnered with Inspector Sharma (Rajwar), Santosh is forced to navigate a landscape where evidence is buried under prejudice, power shields perpetrators, and the law bends in the direction of those who write it," reads the official plotline.

Produced by Good Chaos, Cinefrance Studios and MetFilm Production, "Santosh" was initially slated for a release in Indian theatres on January 10. However, the plan was stalled following a standoff with the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). Reports suggested that disagreements between the filmmakers and the CBFC over proposed edits delayed the release. At the time, a CBFC member told PTI it was "a classic case of gross disagreement", with the producers insisting on no cuts while the board sought certain modifications. Suri, a British-Indian filmmaker, told The Guardian newspaper in an interview that the censor board had demanded radical cuts so lengthy and wide-ranging that they would be impossible to implement.

Goswami, known for her performances in movies and shows such as "Rock On!!", "Gali Guleiyan" and "Bombay Begums", called "Santosh" a film that is close to her heart.

"A beautifully written story, depicted truthfully, holding up a mirror to us of the world we live in, that we have all helped create. Sandhya Suri, the writer and director, has crafted something so meaningful and touching. The film has been shown all over the world, starting its journey at the Cannes Film Festival in 2024, and has been greatly appreciated by critics and the public alike," the actor said in a statement.

All the actors in "Santosh" are brilliant, she added, while particularly praising Rajwar for delivering an outstanding performance in a deeply complex role. "It was a joy working with her and watching her become Geeta Sharma. You will see her in a completely new avatar. I cannot wait for everyone in India to finally be able to watch the film," Goswami added. (PTI)

SHWETA TRIPATHI BEGINS SHOOTING FOR 'MIRZAPUR: THE FILM'

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: Actor Shweta Tripathi has started filming for "Mirzapur: The Film", returning to her fan-favourite role as Gajgami "Golu" Gupta from the hit web series.

The movie, which will be released in 2026, is the cinematic extension of the "Mirzapur" series and will delve more into fan-favourite characters like Kaleen Bhaiya, Guddu Pandit, and Munna Tripathi.

The actor started filming for the project, which also brings back Pankaj Tripathi, Ali Fazal and Divyenndu, in Varanasi.

"Golu is not just a character for me, she has been a companion, a part of my life for so many years. To see her journey unfold on the big screen is overwhelming and surreal," Shweta said in a statement.

Calling Varanasi her "second home", the actor said several projects from her career are connected to the city -- from Neeraj Ghaywan's "Masaan" to shows like "Escapade Live" and "Kalkoot".

"Every project here has given me something unforgettable. My trainer Trivedi Pandey, who is like a brother to me, is also from Benaras, which makes it even more personal. This beautiful city of worship keeps calling me back, and I keep returning for its people, its food, and the love it has always given me," she said.

Actor Abhishek Banerjee, who played the character Compounder in the series, will also be back for the film.

The project is directed by Gurmmeet Singh and produced by Excel Entertainment. (PTI)



Akshay Kumar requests Maha CM Devendra Fadnavis to revamp Mumbai's Film City

MUMBAI, Oct 7: Superstar Akshay Kumar on Tuesday urged Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to transform the Film City, the iconic place in Mumbai that has been a hub for Bollywood film and television production.

Kumar was in a free-wheeling conversation with Fadnavis at the 25th edition of FICCI Frames here where the two discussed a range of things, from important topical subjects like how can government help popularise Marathi cinema, to lighter, and more personal ones such as the CM's favourite Hindi film and even his preferred way of eating oranges.

Lauding the city's infrastructure, Kumar requested Fadnavis to give a full-fledged makeover to the Film City, also known as Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranaagari, in suburban Goregaon. It was established by the Maharashtra state government in 1977.

To this, Fadnavis said, "I've a regret that during my tenure between 2014 and 2019, it was my wish to develop the Film City into a vibrant international ecosystem."

"We did a lot of planning, designing, and also spoke to a lot of people from the film fraternity, but we couldn't execute it due to various reasons. There are two-three projects that I couldn't execute it (then) and this is one of

them," he added.

Fadnavis said he is focused on transforming the Film City into a world-class film ecosystem.

"Filmmaking is changing a lot due to VFX, we've seen massive changes in terms of post-production and editing, we've seen how locations are recreated anywhere with the help of green screen. We've to make an ecosystem for all this. Within a year we will start the transformation and in four years we will transform it," he said.

"All the old classic films were being shot here but today films are shot at various locations. We want to transform the Film City completely and in a year's time we will start (work)," he added. Kumar said he has been a fan of Marathi cinema and inquired about the Maharashtra government's plans to further promote it, to which Fadnavis replied that his government will make efforts to attract the attention of the Gen Z audience to Marathi films.

"Marathi films are powerful because of Marathi theatre, which has been so innovative. The Marathi speaking audience is vibrant and the Marathi plays often run housefull, and we see all of that reflecting in Marathi films. For instance, movies like 'Natsamrat', 'Dashavatar', and even Gen Z are liking all of these (films) and they are connected to Marathi films.



"As a government, we will do whatever we can to boost the Marathi industry and it's a good suggestion to foster a strong connection with the Gen Z audience," the minister said.

This marks the second time Kumar has interviewed a political leader, the first being Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019, ahead of the general elections.

At the time, the actor was trolled for asking PM Modi on how he likes to eat mangoes.

Recalling the incident, Akshay said, "Sir, maine unse (Modi) ek question kiya tha ke 'aap aam kaise khante

hain?' Toh logon ne mazak udaya tha. Lekin sir main nahi sudhrunga. (Sir, I had once asked him (PM Modi) a question — 'How do you eat a mango?' People made fun of me for that. But sir, I'm not going to change.")

He then asked Fadnavis if he liked oranges, to which the Maharashtra Chief Minister replied in the affirmative. The Bollywood superstar then asked if he likes to peel them or drink orange juice.

Fadnavis said he enjoys eating oranges by cutting them in half, sprinkling a bit of salt, and savouring them much like one would eat a mango.

Akshay also about Fadnavis' favourite film and the Maha CM said it was the Anil Kapoor-starrer "Nayak: The Real Hero" (2001).

"Wherever I go, people tell me, 'Do work like 'Nayak' film, look how much work he did in just one day as a Chief Minister... How he changed the world in one day.' Once, I met Anil Kapoor ji and I asked him, 'Why did you make 'Nayak'? People feel, 'You are Nayak and we are incompetent'. How did you do so many things in one day in that film?' It set a benchmark," the minister said. During the conversation, Fadnavis even suggested a film on the topic of cyber crime due to the growing instances of it in real life. (PTI)

Patel duo Henil and Khilan shine with ball and bat as India U19 take 9-run lead over Aus U19

MACKAY (AUSTRALIA), Oct 7: A disciplined bowling attack, led by the Patel duo of Henil and Khilan, helped India U19 bowl Australia U19 out for 135 runs and take a slender nine-run first-innings lead on the opening day of the second Youth Test here on Tuesday. Right-arm pacer Henil Patel and left-arm spinner Khilan Patel scalped three Australian wickets each for 21 and 23 runs respectively to trigger a batting collapse of the home side, who were all out in 43.3 overs. Wicketkeeper Alex Lee Young

top-scored for Australia U19 with a 66 off 108 balls, while captain Will Malajczuk and Yash Deshmukh made 10 and 22 respectively. All the other batters were out in single-digit figures.

The Australians were reduced to 32 for 5 in the 10th over midway into the morning session before Young and Deshmukh stitched 59 runs for the sixth wicket to stage a brief resistance.

But Deshmukh's dismissal off the bowling of Khilan in the 28th over triggered another collapse around Young who was the last

batter out. Australia lost the last five wickets for the addition of just 44 runs. Pace bowler Udhav Mohan got two wickets while Deepesh Devendran took one.

In reply, India were 144 for 7 from 40 overs at the draw of stumps with Henil and Deepesh batting on 22 and 6 respectively.

Indian batters also struggled to get runs as the visitors were reduced to 41 for 3 in the seventh over with prodigy Vaibhav Suryavanshi dismissed for 20 off the bowling of Charles Lachmund.

Suryavanshi, who had struck a



rapid 113 off just 86 balls in India's innings and 58-run win in the first match, hit two fours and a six from the 14 balls he faced this time.

Vedant Trivedi, another centurion with 140 in the first match, made 25 off 44 balls on Tuesday with the help of four boundaries.

After a brief revival due to a 39-run stand for the fourth wicket between Trivedi and Rahul Kumar (9), India lost three wickets for the addition of just two runs.

The Patel duo of Khilan and Henil then stitched 48 runs for the seventh wicket before the former

became the last Indian batter to get dismissed on the day.

After his three wickets in the morning, Khilan also was the highest Indian scorer on the day with 26 off 60 balls.

Brief Scores:

Australia U19 1st innings: 135 all out in 43.3 overs (Alex Lee Young 66; Henil Patel 3/21, Khilan Patel 3/23).

India U19 1st innings: 144 for 7 in 40 overs (Khilan Patel 26, Vedant Trivedi 25, Henil Patel 22 batting; Kasey Barton 3/39, Will Byrom 2/33). (PTI)

Kane cools interest in Premier League return and is 'fully all in' on Bayern

LONDON, Oct 7: England captain Harry Kane says his interest in returning to the Premier League has cooled because he is "fully all in" on Bayern Munich.

The 32-year-old Kane joined Bayern from Tottenham in the summer of 2023 and is under contract there until the summer of 2027. The striker said that when leaving Spurs, he expected "for sure" that would one day return to English soccer. He's no longer certain about that. "In terms of staying longer (at Bayern), I could definitely see that," said Kane, who has reported for England duty ahead of a friendly with Wales on Thursday and a World Cup qualifier in Latvia on Oct. 14. "I spoke openly a couple of weeks ago that I have not had those conversations with Bayern yet, but if they were to arise I would be willing to talk and have an honest conversation.

"Obviously it depends on how the next year or so goes and what we achieve together. Right now, I would say we are in a fantastic moment and I am not thinking about anything else. In terms of the Premier League, I don't know — if you had asked me when I first left to go to Bayern, I would have said for sure I would come back. Now I have been there a couple of years I would probably say that has gone down a little bit, but I wouldn't say I would never go back." Kane has scored 11 goals in his first six games in the Bundesliga, with Bayern taking a maximum 18 points. Bayern sporting director Christoph Freund recently said the team is "probably witnessing the best version of Harry Kane there has ever been."

"What I have learnt in my career is that different opportunities and different timings happen and things fall in place," Kane said. "Going back to my first point with Bayern right now I am fully all in with Bayern." Kane won his first major trophy at club level last season when Bayern won the league and he said that's "given me more motivation to do more and be better." "I think I've shown that this year," he said. "I was interested in how I would feel after winning a trophy. Obviously, there's still a lot more I want to achieve in terms of other trophies and bigger trophies for sure. "But I think it was always just, in my head, what I was going to feel like after I did achieve winning my first one? But for sure, I pushed myself the other way, in terms of being even better, eating even cleaner, doing more gym. Just trying to get the most out of what I've got right now." (AP)

Australia favourites against struggling Pakistan in Women's World Cup match



COLOMBO, Oct 7: Australia's near-flawless start to the campaign will make them firm favourites against a Pakistan side still searching for a settled look when the two mismatched teams face off in an ICC Women's World Cup match here on Wednesday.

Australia's sublime form has stood in contrast to the performances of other teams in the global showpiece event with the Alyssa

Healy-led side being the only one so far to score a 300-plus total.

Another big score could be in the offing against a weak Pakistan side that has looked clueless against Bangladesh and India in the two previous matches. Australia's massive 89-run win over Trans-Tasmanian rivals New Zealand after setting a 300-plus total showed how motivated the Southern Stars are as defending champions who are eyeing

a record-extending eighth World Cup title. Even though the likes of opener Alyssa Healy, Beth Mooney and Annabel Sutherland have faltered, Ashleigh Gardner came up with a match-winning century against New Zealand in Indore to make it a one-sided contest in the end. Backed by the pace of Annabel Sutherland and spin of Sophie Moloney, who has shaped up well for the slow sub-continent

wickets, Australia will take the match against Pakistan to further streamline their strategy before taking on tougher teams like England, India and South Africa in the competition. Their three-match ODI series against India has prepared them well for the grind on subcontinental wickets and it's unlikely that Pakistan, who have lost to Bangladesh and India and are currently placed last in the eight-

Ajaya Babu finishes 16th in men's 79kg in World Weightlifting C'ships

FORDE (NORWAY), Oct 7: Commonwealth champion weightlifter Ajaya Babu Valluri finished 16th in the men's 79kg class as Indians failed to impress at the World Championships after Mirabai Chanu's 48kg silver medal here. The 20-year-old Ajaya lifted a total of 323kg (146kg snatch + 177kg clean and jerk) to finish 16th overall among 39 competitors on Monday.

His performance was 12kg short of his gold medal-winning total of 335kg (152kg + 183kg) at the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships in Ahmedabad in August. He had sealed his qualification for next year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow by virtue of the win in Ahmedabad.

Indonesia's Rizki Juniansyah logged a clean and jerk world

record of 204kg after his 162kg in snatch for a total of 361kg. He had won gold in the 2024 Paris Olympics in 73kg.

North Korea's Ri Chong-song won the silver with a total lift of 360kg (163kg + 197kg) while Egypt's Mohamed Younes took the bronze on countback after matching the same total of 360kg (162kg + 198kg).

On Sunday, India's Ajith Narayana and Seram Nirupama Devi finished identical ninth in the men's 71kg and women's 63kg categories respectively.

The 26-year-old Narayana lifted a total of 320kg -- 145kg in snatch and 175kg in clean and jerk to finish ninth among 26 competitors on Monday. He had won gold at the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships in Ahmedabad in August with a



total of 317kg (145kg + 172kg), sealing qualification for next year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. Paris Olympics gold medalist Weeraphon Wichuma of Thailand won the gold with a world record total lift of 346kg (152kg + 194kg), while the silver went to Miyamoto Masanori of Japan who lifted 345kg (152kg + 193kg).

He Yueji of China took the bronze with 344kg total lift

which included a world record snatch of 160kg, and clean and jerk of 184kg.

The 25-year-old Devi finished ninth in the women's 63kg field of 35 as she lifted a total of 216kg (93kg + 123kg). She had won a silver at the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships in Ahmedabad.

The gold was won by Ri Suk of North Korea with a total lift of 253kg (111kg + 142kg). Charron Maude of Canada took the silver with 236kg (103kg + 133kg), and Sinisterra Torres Yenny of Colombia the bronze with 231kg (103kg + 128kg).

Former champion Mirabai Chanu had won a silver on the opening day with a total lift of 199kg (84kg in snatch + 115kg in clean and jerk) in women's 48kg category. (PTI)

Archery in Korea is like cricket in India: Brady Ellison

KOLKATA, Oct 7: American great Brady Ellison says South Korea's unmatched dominance in archery is rooted in a professional ecosystem where it enjoys the same status as cricket in India, which also remains "in hunt" for its elusive Olympic medal in the precision sport.

At 2024 Paris Olympics, Korea extended their dominance with their women's team clinching a 10th straight gold medal to continue the country's unbeaten streak since the event's introduction at Seoul 1988.

In the men's section, Kim Woo-jin grabbed his fifth Olympic gold -- the most by any archer in history. "Korea is the only country in the world with a truly professional setup. Every one of their archers makes a living just to shoot their bow, even if they're not in the national team," the five-time Olympian Ellison told PTI in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of the inaugural Archery Premier League.

"Archery there is like cricket in India or American football in the US. Kids grow up dreaming of being professional archers. Their 50th-ranked archer probably earns more than I do back home."

He added that archers are treated as full-time professionals in Korea rather than just Olympic aspirants.

The 36-year-old, who holds the record for staying as world number one for the longest time in men's recurve archery, from August 2011 to April 2013, further said the structure in Korea paves the way for an enormous talent pool and depth that others simply can't match.

"The difference is their system... It lets kids start dreaming of being archers from the age of five or six. They grow up with that drive and discipline."

"Elsewhere, people pick up a bow mainly to make an Olympic team once or twice, not to make a living. For Koreans, it's a career,

that's what makes them so consistent."

Having won five Olympic medals and a record World Cup podiums (60-plus) across stages and finals, Ellison knows a thing or two about winning at the highest levels, and the American feels India are always "in hunt" for that elusive Olympic medal.

"India are always in the hunt. You have a ton of medals at World Cups and Championships. If you put your best two recurve shooters together in the mixed team, they'll be extremely hard to beat," he said.

At LA 2028, compound section will make its debut in the mixed team event.

"I think India would have a great shot at medals -- not just in compound, but in recurve too. You've got some archers shooting incredibly well right now."

"Put two of those together in a mixed team and they'll be hard to beat. LA is still three years away, but India's definitely on the upswing."

The American also welcomed the news of celebrated Korean coach Kisik Lee's appointment as India's new recurve head coach, which is awaiting final clearance from the Sports Ministry.

"If he's not the best coach in the world, he's one of them. He's produced Olympic medals and world champions everywhere he's gone. It'll be a huge benefit for India," said Ellison, who trained under Lee early in his career.

"But coaches can only do as much. Athletes must be willing to listen, change, and work hard. I think India have those kinds of people." Ellison also spoke about how media hype and expectations can weigh heavily on athletes before the Olympics.

"I think the biggest pressure comes from the media and the country itself. When only a handful of athletes are in medal contention, the spotlight becomes overwhelming," he said. (PTI)

Atherton demands end to 'neatly arranged' Indo-Pak clashes in ICC events

LONDON, Oct 7: Alleging that draws have been "neatly arranged" to ensure India-Pakistan clashes in ICC tournaments for "economic needs", former England captain Michael Atherton has called for a complete halt to cricket between the two bitter rivals as sport has become a "proxy for broader tensions and propaganda". In a scathing column for "The Times", Atherton cited the recent "antics" at the Asia Cup where the Indian team refused to shake hands with Pakistani players and the Asian Cricket Council's Pakistani head Mohsin Naqvi walked away with the winner's trophy after the Indians refused to accept it from him.

"India and Pakistan have played each other in the group stage of every ICC event since 2013, which includes three 50-over World Cups, five T20 World Cups and three Champions Trophy," Atherton said.

"That is regardless of whether



the initial stage has been a single round robin -- part of the motivation for which is the inevitability of an India versus Pakistan fixture -- or multi-group, when the draws have been neatly arranged to ensure the fixture goes ahead," he added. The tensions between the two countries are at an all-time high after the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 Indians were gunned down by Pakistan-backed

terrorists leading to military action by India in May.

"Despite its scarcity (maybe, in part, because of its scarcity) it is a fixture that carries huge economic clout, one of the main reasons why the broadcast rights for ICC tournaments are worth so much -- roughly USD 3 billion for the most recent rights cycle 2023-27," Atherton wrote in "The Times", London.

"Due to the relative decline in the value of bilateral matches, ICC events have grown in frequency and importance, and so the India and Pakistan fixture is crucial to the balance sheets of those who would not otherwise have any skin in the game," he said. Atherton said time is now right to end the "tacitly supported arrangement" of ensuring that the two arch-foes clash at least once in ICC events. At the recent Asia Cup, the draw and schedule was such that the two sides faced each other every Sunday of the three-week tournament.

"If cricket was once the vehicle for diplomacy, it is now, clearly, a proxy for broader tensions and for propaganda. There is little justification, in any case, for a serious sport to arrange tournament fixtures to suit its economic needs and now that the rivalry is being exploited in other ways, there is even less justification for it."

"For the next broadcast rights

cycle, the fixture draw before ICC events should be transparent and if the two teams do not meet every time, so be it," Atherton said. India and Pakistan do not engage bilaterally since the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. The Indian government, days before Asia Cup, came out with a policy to place a blanket ban on bilateral sports between the two countries even at neutral venues but exempted multi-lateral events to ensure that the country adheres to the Olympic Charter.

Atherton said the two countries are being deliberately drawn with each other to cash in on the tension that pulls in the crowd and viewership numbers crucial for good advertising revenue.

"This 'arrangement' has been tacitly supported within the game for a number of reasons. The most obvious is the inability of both teams, because of political tensions, to meet outside ICC events. (PTI)

Starc returns for ODI series against India; Marsh to continue as captain



MELBOURNE, Oct 7: Fast bowler Mitchell Starc returned to the Australian ODI squad for the three-match home series against India starting on October 19 where Mitchell Marsh will continue to captain in the absence of Pat Cummins, who is recuperating from a back injury.

Starc, who retired from T20 internationals last month, sat out the home ODI series against South Africa in August after returning from the West Indies Test tour. With his workload being carefully managed ahead of the Ashes, Starc last played an ODI in November 2024 in Adelaide against Pakistan.

The selectors also named a 14-member team under Marsh for the first two T20Is that follow the ODIs against India as the side continue their build-up to next year's T20 World Cup.

Women's WC: Balanced Vizag pitch likely to offer relief to struggling Indian batters

VISAKHAPATNAM, Oct 7: A balanced pitch which offers considerable assistance to the batters will greet the Indians, who have been struggling to hit a higher note in the ongoing Women's World Cup, here for their two crucial games against Australia and South Africa.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side will face South Africa on

Thursday and the defending champions Australia on October 12 at the ACA-VDCA stadium here.

The venue is hosting a women's ODI after a gap of 11 years, after India's match against Sri Lanka on January 23, 2014.



"The pitch will offer good help to batters, if you look at the last few matches, including the IPL, here. The bowlers, especially spinners if there is no dew, will have some help as the match goes on," an Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) official told PTI.

The T20Is here have generally seen high scores, as both India and Delhi Capitals (in the IPL) were able to chase down 200-plus targets.

In the men's ODIs, India's 387/5 against the West Indies in 2019 is the highest total at this stadium, which also has seen their two crucial games against Australia and South Africa.

The Indian women's side will welcome those stats wholeheartedly after being forced to grind their way to 269 for eight (vs Sri Lanka) and 247 (vs Pakistan) at Guwahati and Colombo respectively in the ICC showpiece.

Former Indian captain Mithali Raj and wicket-keeper Ravi Kalpana will have stands named after them at the ACA-VDCA stadium on October 12 ahead of India's match against Australia.

The decision was taken after India opener Smriti Mandhana made the suggestion to Andhra Pradesh IT minister Nara Lokesh during the "Breaking the Boundaries" fireside chat in August.

"The ACA's tribute to Mithali Raj and Ravi Kalpana reflects a deep commitment to honouring the trailblazers who have redefined women's cricket in India while inspiring the next generation to dream bigger," the ACA said in a statement.

Mithali made 7805 runs from 232 ODIs at an average of 50.68 with seven centuries, while her 89 T20Is yielded 2364 runs with 17 fifties. (PTI)

Naomi Osaka rallies to beat Leylah Fernandez at Wuhan Open

WUHAN (CHINA), Oct 7: Naomi Osaka dropped the first set before rallying to beat Leylah Fernandez 4-6, 7-5, 6-3 on Tuesday to advance to the second round of the WTA's 1,000-level Wuhan Open.

Osaka was back in the central Chinese city for the first time since 2017 and, in the day's first match on center court, facing the player who produced a major upset to beat her at the 2021 U.S. Open. Fernandez converted one of her two first-set breakpoint chances and served consistently. But Osaka stepped up pressure on the service returns in the second set, which featured five service breaks, and finished over the top of the 2021 U.S. Open finalist, Emma Raducanu, who beat Fernandez to win the U.S. Open title four years ago, was trailing Ann Li 6-1, 4-1 when she retired from their first-round match due to dizziness.

In other early matches, Sofia Kenin edged Anastasia Zakharenko 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-3 to set up a second-round meeting against No. 16 Liudmila Samsonova, who beat Emiliana Arango 6-1, 7-5. No. 2 Iga Swiatek was scheduled to make her Wuhan tournament debut in a second-round match against Marie Bouzkova in the night session.

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka and No. 3 Coco Gauff were due to open Wednesday. No. 4 Amanda Anisimova, the runner-up at both the U.S. Open and Wimbledon this year, withdrew from the Wuhan Open citing a left calf muscle injury after winning the China Open title. (AP)

WORLD JUNIOR C'SHIPS India beat SL for second win; Philippines stun Hong Kong

GUWAHATI, Oct 7: India produced another clinical performance against Sri Lanka in their Group H clash to inch closer to the knock-out stages of the mixed team event of the BWF World Junior Badminton Championships for the Suhandinata Cup here on Tuesday.

India, the second seeds and firm favourites to top Group H, lived up to expectations with a 45-27, 45-21 victory over Sri Lanka, who had edged the United Arab Emirates in a close tie on Monday.

Among the other top nations, 14-time champions China and former champions South Korea registered their second wins in their respective group, while Philippines upset Hong Kong 42-45, 45-28, 45-43.

China playing in Group D defeated England 45-22, 45-19, while South Korea hammered debutant Bhutan 45-5, 45-17 in Group G.

Playing on the adjacent court to the Koreans, the Indian team hardly broke any sweat despite the team management fielding a fresh bunch of players who didn't get a chance to play in the match against Nepal.

Lalthazuala Hmar gave the team a confident start, beating Keneth Aruggoda 9-2 in the boy's singles and Bhavya Chhabra and Mithileish P Krishnan extending the lead to 18-6 against Sanuda Ariyasinghe and Thisath Rupathunga.

It was only girl's singles player Rakshitha Sree, who was playing the team relay-scoring format for the first time, struggled to get going

against Ranithma Liyanage and was trailing 3-8 before winning six of the next seven points to take the score to 36-21.

C Lalramsanga and Taarini Suri, Junior Grand Prix finalist in Pune, then wrapped up the set 45-27, beating Aruggoda and Liyanage 9-6.

Rounak Chouhan started the proceedings for India in the second set and though the hosts played a completely fresh line up in the set, the outcome was on similar lines as they wrapped up the tie with a 45-21 win in the second set.

Results (Until session 2):
Group A: Japan bt Ireland 2-0 (45-22, 45-16); Thailand bt Portugal 2-0 (45-16, 45-23)

Group B: France bt Egypt 2-0 (45-25, 45-34); USA vs Norway 2-0 (45-18, 45-21)

Group D: China bt England 2-0 (45-22, 45-19), Turkiye bt Ghana 2-0 (45-11, 45-27)

Group E: Denmark bt Brazil 2-0 (45-43, 45-35)
Group F: Philippines bt Hong Kong China 2-1 (42-45, 45-28, 45-43)

Group G: Korea bt Bhutan 2-0 (45-5, 45-17), Romania bt Poland 2-1 (42-45, 45-39, 45-41)
Group H: India bt Sri Lanka 2-0 (45-27, 45-21); UAE bt Nepal 2-0 (45-29, 45-18). (PTI)

Nathan Ellis who attended the birth of his first child. Glenn Maxwell is still unavailable due to the fracture he suffered to his wrist on the tour to New Zealand.

Cameron Green will continue his preparation for the Test summer with Western Australia following the ODI leg of the Indian series.

Chair of Selectors George Bailey said: "We have named a squad for the ODI series and first two games of the T20 series as there will be some management through the back end of the series as individuals prepare for the summer through Sheffield Shield cricket.

"The majority of the T20 squad will remain together as it's an important period in the build towards the World Cup next year, however we are trying to strike a balance to ensure we simultaneously prepare certain individuals for the Test series ahead."

The first ODI will be played in Perth on October 19 while the second and third matches will be held on October 23 (Adelaide) and October 25 (Sydney).

After that, the five matches of the T20I series will be played on October 29 (Canberra), October 31 (Melbourne), November 2 (Hobart), November 6 (Gold Coast) and November 8 (Brisbane).

Australian ODI Squad: Mitchell Marsh (c), Xavier Bartlett, Alex Carey, Cooper Connolly, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Mitchell Owen, Matthew Renshaw, Matthew Short, Mitchell Starc, Adam Zampa.

Australian T20 Squad (first two games): Mitchell Marsh (c), Sean Abbott, Xavier Bartlett, Tim David, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhnemann, Mitchell Owen, Matthew Short, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa. (PTI)

NTPC Bongaigaon extends support to budding footballer from Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Oct 7: NTPC Bongaigaon has extended financial and material support to a budding footballer, Sandeep Narzary, a resident of Bangalpara village, Kokrajhar, who has been selected under the Under-13 Football Training Programme at Sudeva Delhi FC.

Coming from a financially challenged background, Sandeep's journey, from participating in the Bodofa Mission for Sustainable Change - Summer Coaching Camp 2024, supported by NTPC Bongaigaon, to his present selection marks a proud moment for the region. He is among the few players from the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) to earn a spot at a reputed football academy.

As part of its ongoing commitment to nurture sports and youth talent from the local community, NTPC Bongaigaon has provided financial assistance of ₹25,000 to support Sandeep's travel, accommodation, and sustenance during his training period under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. In addition, the station will provide sports essentials, including a suitcase bag, water bottle, sports boots, shoes, a T-shirt bearing the NTPC Bongaigaon logo, and a tracksuit amounting to ₹7,500.

Amit Asthana, Head of HR; Ajay Ram Baro, general secretary, NBEU; Pinchu Daimary, president, NBEU;



along with officials from the HR Department, were present to extend their support and best wishes to young Narzary.

Sandeep's father, Bilifang Narzary, works as contractual manpower in the IT Department of NTPC Bongaigaon. The station's gesture reflects its sustained efforts

to encourage local talent and empower youth through sports and community engagement initiatives.

Through such endeavours, NTPC Bongaigaon continues to uphold its vision of promoting holistic development and fostering a culture of excellence among the youth of the region.

Rivalry reignited as Anand, Kasparov face off after 30 years

ST. LOUIS (USA), Oct 7: Former world champions Viswanathan Anand and Garry Kasparov will reignite their once fierce rivalry after 30 years when they face off in the Clutch Chess: The Legends tournament here from Wednesday.

The 12-game Chess 960 match will carry a total prize pool of USD 144000 and will be held in the upgraded St. Louis Chess Club.

Having played a Classical World Championship match in 1995 on the 107th floor of the World Trade Centre in New York, the two legends of the game will battle it out again in the famous rapid and blitz format that was recently christened Freestyle Chess.

Kasparov dominated that match against Anand and won the 20-games contest 10.5-7.5. After retiring in 2004 Kasparov has played only in exhibitions or blitz events while Anand is semi-retired and plays occasionally in higher events.

While Kasparov runs a worldwide training program under his name, Anand has limited himself to mentoring the young generation



of Indian players and has been the inspiration behind WACA - Westbridge Anand Chess Academy - that has already produced one world champion in D Gukesh.

The format here is interesting and the stakes will go up each day. There will be four games everyday in the three-day contest with two rapid and two blitz games. While there will be four points at stake on the first day, on the second day it will double as each win will be worth two points and on the third day, each game will fetch three

points for a win. The winner will take home USD 70000 (approximately ₹ 62 lakh) while USD 50000 (approximately ₹ 44 lakh) is reserved for the one ending on the losing side of this match.

If the match is tied after 12 games, the prize will be split 50-50, where each player receives USD 60,000 (approximately ₹ 53 lakh). There will be bonus money of USD 24,000 (approximately ₹ 21 lakh) for 12 games. (PTI)

Services boxers dominate men's finals at inaugural BFI Cup

CHENNAI, Oct 7: Services boxers reaffirmed their supremacy on the national circuit as the men's competition of the inaugural BFI Cup concluded here on Tuesday, with notable wins for Vishwanath, Husamuddin, Vanshaj, Sachin and Ankush in the finals.

Asian U-22 champion S Vishwanath (Services) set the tone with a commanding 5-0 win over Ashish (Haryana) in the 47-50kg category, while Ashish (Services) edged Navraj (AIP) 3-2 in a closely fought 50-55kg final.

World Championships bronze medallist Mohammad Husamuddin (Services) continued his fine run, defeating Sagar Jakhar (SAI) 5-0 in the 55-60kg bout. In the 60-65kg category, Services' Vanshaj prevailed over teammate Preet Malik in a close 3-2 contest, while Sumit Kumar (SAI) displayed complete control in the 65-70kg final with a 5-0 win over Rajat from Services.

Sachin, also from Services, maintained the team's dominance with a 5-0 victory against Haryana's Neeraj in the 70-75kg bout, before Ankush (Services) recorded another one-sided 5-0 win over Chandigarh's Aman in the 75-80kg final.

Among the heavier divisions, Naveen Boora (Services) overcame Vinit (Railways) 3-0 in the 80-85kg category, while Daksh (SAI) edged Vishal Gupta (Services) 3-2 to claim the 85-90kg title.

The competition concluded with Sawan Gill (Chandigarh) defeating Lakshya Rathi (SAI) 3-2 in the 90-90+kg super heavyweight final. With seven gold medals, Services emerged as the



top-performing unit, followed by Haryana and Railways, who finished second and third respectively as per total medals tally.

In the individual awards, Maharashtra's Khushi Jadhav, winner of the 54kg category, was named the best boxer among women, while Parthavi Grehwal of Rajasthan (65kg) was adjudged the best challenger and Tamil Nadu's G. Resika (80+kg) was recognised as the most promising pugilist.

In the men's section, Services' Ashish (55kg) earned the best boxer title, Lakshya Rathi of SAI (90+kg) was named best challenger, and Tamil Nadu's Lukkas (50kg) received the most promising boxer award. (PTI)

Kaustubh, Taanish make winning starts in Fenesta Open

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: Top seed Kaustubh Singh of Uttar Pradesh and fourth seed Taanish Nanda of Chandigarh advanced to the second round of the Fenesta Open National Tennis Championship in the Boys' U-14 Singles category here on Tuesday.

Kaustubh showed his quality by defeating Hariharan Mahamuni 9-2 in just under an hour. The Uttar Pradesh player won straight eight games after Hariharan won the first game and dropped only two games in the entire contest, and sealed victory with consistent baseline control and sharp serves.

Taanish also delivered an excellent performance, blanking Rishav Prasad 9-0. He did not lose a single game, breaking his opponent's serve at every opportunity while maintaining a flawless rhythm on his own delivery.

Meanwhile, sixth seed Monodip Dey of West Bengal also impressed with a resounding 9-1 win against Ansh Jalota. Dey broke his opponent's serve repeatedly and conceded just a single game in a dominant display. (PTI)