



- CM Sarma attends swearing-in of 5thBTC Executive Council
- Tezpur University students reject VC's clarification note
- Intelligence suggests Sept 19 Manipur ambush may have been 'contract killing' to undermine Prez rule
- NHPC reaffirms commitment to sustainable growth through SUMP

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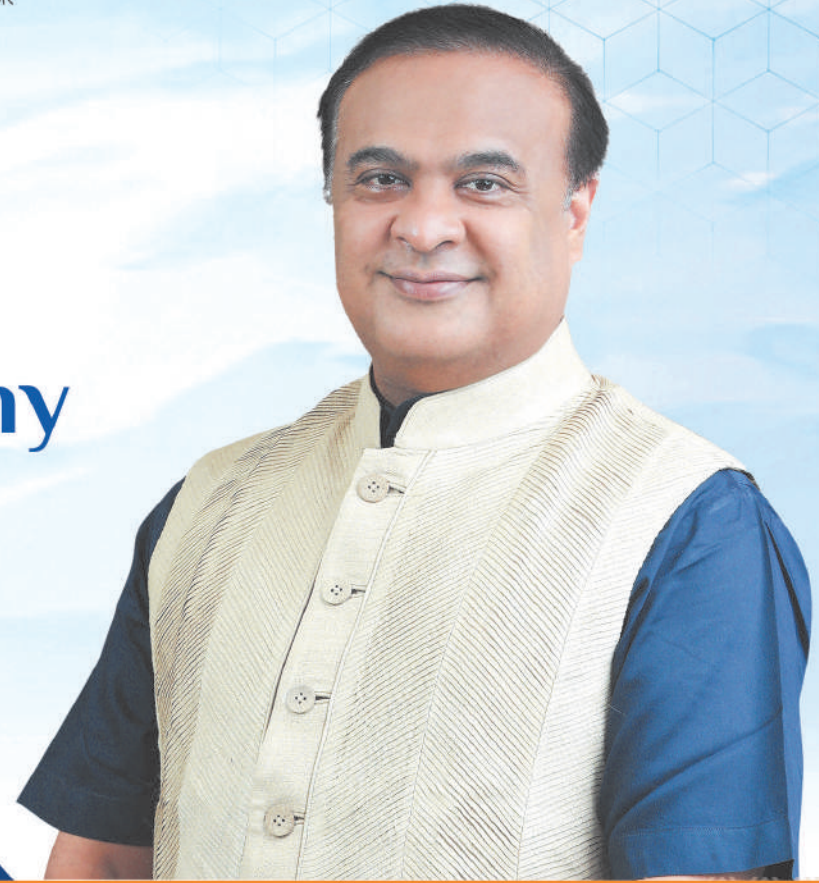
GUWAHATI, MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025

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7 October 2025



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Commercial coal mining begins in Arunachal



NEW DELHI/ITANAGAR, Oct 5: The government will launch commercial coal mining in Arunachal Pradesh on Monday, putting an end to exploitation and wastage of resources. "Arunachal Pradesh is set to witness a historic day on October 6, 2025 with the launch of its first commercial coal mine at the Namchik-Namphuk coal block, marking a new chapter of growth, energy security, and local prosperity," the coal ministry said in a statement.

Union Minister of Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy will perform the Bhoomi Poojan,

to be followed by the handing over of the mining lease to the operator.

The coal block, with estimated reserves of 1.5 crore tonnes, was first allocated in 2003. However, it faced delays due to various challenges. It was revived through an auction process in 2022, which also opened the sector for private players. The mining block is expected to generate a revenue of over ₹ 100 crore annually for the state.

The ministry further said that sources of critical minerals are also being unlocked in Arunachal Pradesh, with two blocks in the

state and five in Assam under auction.

The ministry has also asked for operationalising these blocks early as it would lead to employment generation.

In an official communique, Reddy said the commercial launch of the coal mine in Changlang district marks not merely an industrial milestone, but a symbol of trust, transparency, and transformation for the state and the entire North East.

The minister will jointly launch commercial operations of the mine with Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

Reddy underlined that the initiative fulfills Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of an 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat', integrating the North East into India's larger energy and infrastructure grid through sustainable, scientific, and legal mining practices.

Expressing gratitude to the Centre's consistent support, Khandu remarked that the project will not only enhance state revenues, but also open new avenues in skill development, infrastructure expansion, and youth employment.

"We are proud to be part of India's growth journey," the chief minister said, emphasising the project's long-term benefits for the people of the state.

Mahalaxmi Group chairman Naveen Singhal, one of the project's promoters, said the project will set a national benchmark for blending economic progress with environmental responsibility.

He added that the initiative is a first-of-its-kind model in the history of coal mining in the North East, designed to uphold both economic and ecological priorities. (PTI)

Exports making Indian factories greener by up to 25%: IIM study

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: Exports not only boost business growth but also make Indian factories greener, a study by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Lucknow, has found after analysing two decades of firm-level data.

Described as the first-of-its-kind, the study examined whether export orientation encourages Indian manufacturing companies to adopt greener practices. Led by Chandan Sharma, professor of Economics and Business Environment at IIM-Lucknow, it has been published in the prestigious Energy Economics (Elsevier) journal. While trade is often criticised for raising environmental pressures in developing countries, there is limited causal evidence on whether exporting firms adopt greener practices, especially in terms of energy use.

By applying the Propensity Score Matching-Difference-in-Differences (PSM-DID) methodology,

the researchers addressed this gap and explored several important insights. "Our research shows that exports don't just boost growth, they also make Indian factories greener. Within a few years of entering global markets, companies become more energy efficient, largely by adopting advanced technologies."

"This highlights how trade can be a partner in India's journey toward sustainable and competitive manufacturing, apart from creating jobs," Sharma told PTI.

The findings of this study challenge the general perception that globalisation harms the environment in developing countries. Instead, it shows that international trade can become a driver of green growth to meet India's climate goals under the Paris Agreement.

According to the study, adoption of advanced foreign technologies improves a firm's energy efficiency by 25 per cent within three years,

compared to similar non-exporters.

"We found that exposure of non-exporting firms to export-intensive industries leads to efficiency improvements. The findings also validate the robustness of results across multiple methods, alternative measures, and extended samples," Sharma said. The professor explained that the firms entering the export markets tend to improve their energy efficiency, and these improvements persist over time.

"Mechanism analysis further reveals that these gains are largely driven by access to more advanced foreign technologies. In this way, trade may also serve as a channel for technology diffusion. "By highlighting this connection, our study contributes to policy discussions on aligning trade with environmental objectives, particularly in developing economies facing the dual challenges of economic growth and ecological responsibility," Sharma said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 3...

Electoral roll purified

"Another 3.66 lakh names were removed during the month-long period of claims and objections that followed. Those whose names have been removed were found declared ineligible as they were either not citizens of the country, or were dead, or had migrated elsewhere or had their names registered at more than one place," he said.

A break-up of the persons declared "ineligible" under these categories was, however, not provided. Allegations have surfaced that many people were wrongly declared as "dead", while the presence of "foreign nationals" in voters' list has been disputed by parties opposed to the ruling BJP at the Centre.

"If anybody feels that his or her name has been wrongfully deleted from the electoral roll, an appeal could still be filed before the district election office concerned," Kumar said.

He also showered praise on "243 EROs (electoral registration officers) and 90,207 booth level officers" for completing in time the SIR, which began in July.

Many of the EROs and BLOs were present on the occasion and the CEC asked them to pose with the visiting team, before the media contingent, for photographs. (PTI)

Hagrama Mohilary takes

the BPF. "We made several promises to the people and satisfied with it, they voted for us. Now it is our turn to fulfil these promises", he said.

Referring to the heavy rains during the swearing-in ceremony, Mohilary said that this is a 'blessing from the Gods and we pray that the Gods above help us to fulfil the dreams of the people'.

He urged the Assam government to extend support to the new council so that the people are benefited and there is peace and development in the region.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also thanked the people of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) for ensuring that the elections were held peacefully and a democratically elected council assumed office.

"I take a pledge before the people of BTR that the Assam government will extend full cooperation and help to the council so that the promises made before the elections are fulfilled", Sarma said.

The Assam government has initiated several schemes for the people of the state, and "We are committed to ensure that it reaches all people in the BTR along with the rest of the state".

He said that 26 communities live in the five districts of BTR and appealed that people live in harmony so that development in the region can reach new heights.

Before the oath-taking ceremony, newly elected BPF members paid their tributes to Bodo community leader Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma at Dotma.

Tributes were also paid to singer Zubeen Garg, who died in Singapore last month.

The BPF had emerged as the single largest party in the 2020 polls with 17 seats, but the UPPL formed the Council with the BJP and the Gana Suraksha Party (GSP).

Elections for the 40-member Council were held on September 22. This is the second council poll after a fresh Bodo Accord was signed in New Delhi on January 27, 2020. (PTI)

CM warns of harsh

interrogated', he said. Four persons, including North East India Festival chief organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, singer's manager Siddhartha Sharma, his musician Shekharjyoti Goswami and singer Amritprava Mahanta, have been arrested and remanded to 14 days police custody.

The singer had gone to Singapore to participate in the NEIF. He died due to drowning while swimming off a Singapore island.

More than 60 FIRs were filed across the state against Mahanta, Sharma and several others, following which the CM had directed the DGP to transfer all the FIRs to the CID and to register a consolidated case for a thorough investigation.

Regarding the second post-mortem examination of the singer conducted here being made public, Sarma said, 'We will not make it public, but if anyone wants to see it, I will tell CID about it and they can go and see it'.

The first autopsy was conducted in Singapore and the report has been handed over to the Indian High Commissioner there.

Sarma said Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) President Lurinjyoti Gogoi wants to see it and he can seek an appointment with the official concerned to see the report.

The second report was handed over to the singer's wife, Garima Saikia Garg, on Saturday, but she returned it saying that it is not her "personal document" and the investigators will be the best judge to decide whether it should be made public or not.

Sarma further said the leader of the opposition in the state assembly, Debabrata Saikia, Rajjor Dal president Akhil Gogoi and Shyamkanu Mahanta have demanded a CBI inquiry into the death of the singer.

"Whether they discussed the matter before demanding it or it is just a coincidence, I don't know but the demand is the same and came at the same time", Sarma added. (PTI)

NESt Fest: Northeast's

diversity of the Northeast and aims to bridge communities through dialogue and culture.

"This 'My Home' concept is rooted in the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam -- the world is one family," said the organisation's founder Sunil Deodhar.

"We started with the thought that our country is our home. Now, countries in Africa like Nigeria and Mali are showing interest in starting 'My Home' chapters in their nations. In the coming years, we hope this festival becomes a truly global celebration of unity," he said.

Deodhar said My Home India was founded with the vision of connecting the Northeast with the rest of India and works to promote national integration through cultural exchange and outreach initiatives that highlight the talent and traditions of the region.

As the evening drew to a close, music and laughter echoed across the venue -- a reminder, perhaps, that "home is not just a place, but a feeling shared across borders". (PTI)

Sikkimese filmmaker Tribeny

to be independent, and when they do, they often feel caught between the city and the village", she said.

The filmmaker said that she felt this deeply when she returned to her village, Nandok in East Sikkim, after finishing her studies at the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI).

"The film is, however, more than my own story. It is a layered and nuanced reflection on gender, class and the struggles of ordinary people to live on their own terms", she said.

Rai pointed out that for her, filmmaking is an earnest reflection of life and even in this film, "I have tried to objectively share the experiences of several women, including my own, as truthfully as possible".

"My job as a filmmaker is to be observant. Like any other art form, cinema is a way of getting closer to understanding what life is. I also believe that cinema is not merely a spectacle or an escape; its essence lies in the smaller details that gradually reveal a larger universe", she said.

Rai said that most of her crew members are from film schools such as SRFTI and FTII.

"It was very important for me to work with like-minded people, as it made the entire process deeply collaborative and meaningful. I don't think I would have been able to make this film without Kishlay, who is the co-writer, co-editor and one of the producers of the film", she said.

She said that the filmmaking industry in Sikkim is still at a nascent stage and for an independent filmmaker, the challenges are endless.

"I thought making the film would be the hardest part, but I have since learned that figuring out what to do with the film after making it can be even more difficult", she said.

Besides, working with a limited budget had its own struggles but also some unique advantages, as it certainly forced us to be creative and resourceful, the filmmaker added.

Rai said that she grew up in a household where television viewing was restricted, and until class 10, she mostly watched Doordarshan on TV which she believes nurtured her habit of reading stories.

"The love for storytelling grew naturally and eventually brought me to filmmaking. I cannot pinpoint one single moment that led me here. It was a series of influences and experiences that shaped this path", she said.

Asked about her future film projects, Rai said there were a couple of ideas, but these are yet to be fully developed.

"I, however, know that my next work will continue to explore the nature of human beings, as that is what intrigues me the most at this point in my life", she said. (PTI)

Sugar coop sector benefitted after Modi became PM: Shah

AHILYANAGAR (MAHARASHTRA), Oct 5: India's sugar cooperatives sector has benefitted immensely after Narendra Modi became the prime minister. Union minister Amit Shah said on Sunday.

He was addressing a farmers' rally after inaugurating the expanded capacity of Dr Vitthalrao Vikhe Patil Cooperative Sugar Factory in Ahilyanagar district. Shah also appealed to sugar cooperatives that they should produce multi-feed ethanol in non-crushing season.

"Balance sheets of sugar cooperatives have changed due to ethanol blending," the minister said. The sector has benefitted after Modi became the PM," he said.

"The Central government, under Modi ji's leadership, will render all possible assistance to farmers in Maharashtra, affected by heavy rains recently," Shah said.

He lauded CM Devendra Fadnis, and Deputy CMs Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar for their initiative in seeking Central assistance for the state farmers.

Shah also unveiled statues of Dr Vitthalrao Vikhe Patil, a notable figure in the cooperative movement, and his son and former Union minister Dr Balasaheb Vikhe Patil. (PTI)

Travel, tourism to support 9 crore new jobs by 2035: WTTC

MUMBAI, Oct 5: The international travel and tourism sector will support 9.1 crore new jobs in the next 10 years, accounting for one in every three jobs created globally, according to a report by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

Demographic and structural shifts could create a workforce shortfall of more than 4.3 crore people if left unaddressed, says the report, 'Future of the Travel and Tourism Workforce', which focused on 20 economies.

The Council works with governments on issues of the travel and tourism industry, and is the global authority on the economic and social contribution of the sector.

The report, released at the 25th WTTC Global Summit in Rome recently, is based on extensive global research, including a large-scale survey of business leaders and in-depth interviews with the tourism body's members and other key stakeholders, a release said.

"In 2024, demand for travel and tourism was stronger than it has ever been. The sector's GDP contribution grew 8.5 per cent to reach USD 10.9 trillion, surpassing 2019 levels by 6 per cent. Travel providers created 20.7 million new jobs, bringing the total to 357 million worldwide," the report said.

Over the next decade, the sector is projected to generate 9.1 crore new roles, accounting for one in every three net new jobs created globally, the report said.

By 2035, global demand for workers in travel and tourism will outpace supply by more than 4.3 crore people, leaving labour availability 16 per cent below required levels, it said.

The report said labour challenges will affect all the 20 major economies analysed, with the largest absolute shortfalls forecast in China (1.69 crore), India (1.1 crore), and the European Union (64 lakh).

Europe remains at the forefront of international tourism, with five of the world's top 10 most powerful travel and tourism markets by GDP, it said.

The Middle East remains one of the fastest-growing regions in the sector, with Saudi Arabia continuing to

stand out, with inbound visitor spend surging and infrastructure investment reaching record levels, the report said.

In her keynote at the summit opening ceremony, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni highlighted her government's investment in tourism infrastructure and her conviction that the sector is "an extraordinary generator of wealth and well-being."

Italian Tourism Minister Daniela Santanchè, Saudi Arabia's Tourism Minister Ahmed Al-Khateeb and Malta's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism Ian Borg were present.

Gloria Guevara, WTTC Interim CEO, said "Travel and tourism is set to remain one of the world's biggest job creators, offering opportunities for millions of people worldwide."

At the summit, Manfredi Lefebvre, a global leader in travel and tourism, was named as the new WTTC chair, succeeding Greg O'Hara, who led the organisation since November 2023.

"WTTC has been a cornerstone of our industry, championing resilience and progress. Travel is not just an industry; it is a profound passion that connects people," Lefebvre said.

The summit was hosted in partnership with the Italian Ministry of Tourism, ENIT (the Italian national tourist board), the Municipality of Rome, and the Lazio Region.

Every year, WTTC produces reports on the economic and employment impact of travel and tourism for 184 countries/economies and 28 geographic or economic regions in the world.

The Economic Impact Research reports are a vital tool in helping equip public and private sector bodies understand the significant value travel and tourism brings to the economy, and ensure that policymaking and investment decisions support the sector.

The Council aims to maximise the inclusive and sustainable growth potential of the travel and tourism sector by partnering with governments, destinations, communities, and other stakeholders to drive economic development. (PTI)

Young innovators from rural India shine as Samsung announces top 20 finalists for 'Solve for Tomorrow 2025'

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: Samsung, India's largest consumer electronics brand, has announced the top 20 finalist teams for the fourth edition of its nationwide innovation competition, Samsung Solve for Tomorrow 2025.

The finalists include young innovators from 12 states, with strong participation from rural areas and Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, reflecting the programme's mission to empower young change-makers to address local challenges through technology.

Among the finalists are a 14-year-old student, an all-girls team, and two teams from the Northeast.

Their innovations range from AI tools that help visually impaired individuals play chess to drones equipped with imaging sensors for pollution mapping and AI-enabled border surveillance systems.

The competition received entries under four key themes — AI for a Safer, Smarter and Inclusive Bharat; Future of Health, Hygiene and Well-being in India; Environmental Sustainability via Technology; and Social Change through Sport and Tech: For Education & Better Futures.

SP Chun, Corporate Vice President, Samsung Southwest Asia, said the initiative has grown stronger each year by reaching deeper into rural and remote India. "The Top 20 finalists represent



how technology, when applied with empathy and context, can transform lives, whether in healthcare, sustainability, or inclusive sports," he said.

The 2025 edition received entries from across the country, including Cachar in Assam, Baganapalli in Andhra Pradesh, Bagpat in Uttar Pradesh, Mahabubnagar in Telangana, and Sundargarh in Odisha.

The finalists were selected after a semi-final round that involved 40 shortlisted teams participating in a hands-on prototyping programme at IIT Delhi's state-of-the-art labs.

The programme included an Innovation Bootcamp and a National Pitch Event, where a Samsung jury comprising experts from its R&D divisions and Southwest Asia operations chose the final 20 teams.

The selected finalists will now receive one-on-one online mentoring from Samsung R&D experts, professors from IIT Delhi, and startup mentors from FITT.

Under the theme AI for a Safer, Smarter and Inclusive Bharat, teams such as Chakravayuh, Error 404, Passionate Problem Solver, Percevia, and Sicario are reimagining safety and accessibility.

In the category Future of Health,

Hygiene and Well-being in India, teams including Alchemist, BRHM, HEAR BRIGHT, PARASPEAK, and Pink Brigadiers are pioneering health-focused innovations.

For Environmental Sustainability via Technology, teams such as Prithvi Rakshak, Drop of Hope, Renewable Desalination, Sma-Blu, and VOXMAPS are presenting sustainability-driven solutions.

Under Social Change through Sport and Tech: For Education & Better Futures, teams including Next Play AI, Shatranj Swaya Crew, SPORTS4AUTISM, STATUSCODE200, and Unity are developing inclusive and sports-based tech solutions.

Each of the 20 teams will receive ₹1 lakh, and all 37 participants will be awarded the latest Samsung Galaxy Z Flip smartphones.

The journey will now culminate in the Grand Finale in New Delhi on October 28 and 29.

The finalists will get a dedicated prototyping day at IIT Delhi, followed by the Grand Finale pitch presentation and an investor meet.

The competition will conclude with the announcement of winners on October 29, where four winning teams — one from each theme — will share an incubation grant of ₹1 crore from Samsung to develop their ideas into market-ready solutions.

Electoral roll purified in Bihar after SIR, many new initiatives in store for assembly polls: CEC

PATNA, Oct 5: Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Sunday asserted that the special intensive revision in Bihar "purified" the voters' list after 22 years, and said many new initiatives were being undertaken for the upcoming assembly polls, which would be replicated across the country in due course.

Kumar, who was accompanied by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, addressed a crowded press conference before winding up a two-day tour of the state, where

he received feedback from representatives of political parties and discussed poll preparedness with officials.

"With the successful completion of SIR, the voters' list in Bihar has been purified. It is after a gap of 22 years that such a cleansing has taken place. The exercise will now be conducted across the country," Kumar said.

The CEC also spoke of a number of "initiatives" that were being introduced in polls to the 243-strong Bihar assembly, which had "38 constituen-

cies reserved for Scheduled Castes and another two for Scheduled Tribes".

These initiatives, "which will be replicated across the country in due course", include a new standard operating procedure to ensure that EPIC cards are delivered to voters within 15 days of registration, and a mobile deposit facility at polling booths.

"In order to prevent overcrowding of polling stations, it has been decided that no booth shall have more than 1,200 voters. To make the voting

exercise easier for the electors, mobile deposit facility is being introduced at booths," Kumar said.

"Other new features include 100 per cent web-casting at all polling booths and mandatory verification of VVPAT slips in case of complaints of mismatch in EVM data," he said.

Kumar began his address with a few sentences in local dialects Maithili and Bhojpuri, and noted the submission by most parties that polls be held immediately after 'Chhath', the state's most popular festival, later this month.

He also made it clear that the election process will be completed before November 22, when the term of the current assembly ends.

"We have also been urging political parties to ensure that they appoint polling agents, at all booths, as well as counting agents so that all are satisfied that elections have been held in a transparent manner," the CEC said.

Kumar said the names of 65 lakh voters had been struck off prior to publication of the draft roll in August. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Hagrama Mohilary takes oath as BTC Chief

BPF chief sworn in as CEM for fourth term after party's sweeping win in BTC polls

KOKRAJHAR, Oct 5: BPF president Hagrama Mohilary was sworn in as the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) in Assam's Kokrajhar district on Sunday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Bodoland People's Front (BPF) president Hagrama Mohilary on being sworn in as the CEM of BTC.

"I congratulate Shri Hagrama Mohilary on being sworn in as Bodoland Territorial Council's CEM. My best wishes to him and his team for their tenure", the PM posted on X.

"The Central government and Assam government will continue to support the BTC government as we all collectively work to fulfil the great Bodoifa Upendranath Brahma's vision and ensure all-round development", he said.

Replying to the post, Mohilary



expressed his 'heartfelt gratitude for your blessings, I pray for your continued guidance and support for all round development for the nation especially for the people of Bodoland'.

Former minister Rihon Daimary was also sworn in as the deputy CEM at a function held at the

Bodoland Secretariat Field here amid inclement weather.

Mohilary, who became the CEM for the fourth time, took the oath of office and secrecy, administered by Chief Secretary Ravi Kota, in English, while Daimary took it in the Bodo language.

The Bodoland Peoples' Front

(BPF) swept the BTC polls, winning 28 of the 40 seats. The United Peoples Party Liberal (UPPL) and the BJP, alliance partners in the outgoing BTC, finished with seven and five seats respectively.

BTC is an autonomous council for the Bodoland Territorial Region comprising five districts - Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri and Tamulpur.

Assam Governor Laxman Prasad Acharya, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and several of his cabinet colleagues, along with Tipra Motha chief Pradyot Bikram Manikya Debbarma and heads of all councils, were present on the occasion.

Acharya and Sarma congratulated Mohilary by presenting him with the Bodo scarf 'Armai'.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohilary thanked the people of BTR for giving an overwhelming mandate to (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CM warns of harsh measures if Zubeen Garg's Singapore companions skip SIT probe



GUWAHATI, Oct 5: The return of persons who were with singer Zubeen Garg aboard a yacht in Singapore during his final hours will "depend entirely on them", but harsh measures will be taken if they do not come for the SIT probe within the October 6 deadline, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday.

"Their return will depend completely on them. The Assam government cannot bring them back from Singapore, but we can talk to their parents so that they can ask them to return for the probe", the CM said on the sidelines of a programme in Kokrajhar.

The deadline of October 6 has been already set for all who were in Singapore during Zubeen's last moments in the sea where he died while swimming, he said.

"If they do not come back by Monday, we will have to take harsh steps. We will have to bring them back

through a particular process", Sarma said.

The CM had earlier said inquiry cannot be completed unless people who were with the singer in the yacht do not record their statement before the investigating agency.

Meanwhile, a complaint has been lodged at Latasil police station by a doctor alleging involvement of 11 members of the Assam Association of Singapore in Garg's death. The police are examining the complaint.

The SIT, which is probing the death of the singer, has already issued summons to eight of the 11 members of the Assam Association of Singapore to appear before it by October 6.

Summons have been issued to Tanmoy Phukan, Abhimanyu Talukdar, Debojyoti Hazarika, Rupkamal Kalita, Bhaskar Dutta, Siddhartha Bora, Parikshit Sharma and Wajid Ahmed.

The family members of those summoned said they are not aware whether the individuals are coming to be a part of the investigation.

"We have been in touch with them but not regularly and everyone is very sad at Zubeen's death. If they come, we will definitely know. But they haven't told us anything about it", a family member, who did not want to be named, said.

The CM further said the investigations were 'progressing well' and the people with 'whom I have spoken to are very satisfied with the way the Assam government has taken the investigations forward'.

"We have arrested those who were associated with the incident and that no VIP treatment is being given to them. All are being (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Three GU profs in list of world's top 2 per cent scientists by Stanford

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: Three professors of the Gauhati University have got a place in the list of the world's top 2 per cent scientists compiled by Stanford University, a statement said.

Professor of excellence Bhupendra Nath Goswami, a noted meteorologist, professor Prodeep Phukan of the Department of Chemistry, and professor Bipan Hazarika of the Department of Mathematics were recognised in the career-long impact category, reflecting their sustained research contributions, it said. The comprehensive rankings are curated annually by Stanford University, using rigorous criteria, including citation metrics, h-index, co-authorship-adjusted hm-index, authorship position citations, and a composite indicator known as the c-score, it said.

The 2025 list highlights India's expanding research footprint, featuring 6,239 researchers in the single-year category and 3,372 in the career-long category, it added.

Gauhati University's vice chancellor Nani Gopal Mahanta said, "This recognition is a matter of great pride for the variety and for Assam. It speaks volumes about the dedication, innovation, and global impact of our faculty." (PTI)

India, UK begin mega wargame in Indian Ocean

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: The navies of India and the UK kick-started an eight-day mega wargame in the Western Indian Ocean in line with their focus to boost overall military ties.

The UK's Carrier Strike Group (CSG), led by HMS Prince of Wales aircraft carrier, has been deployed for the Exercise Konkan.

The exercise is a reaffirmation of the shared commitment to ensuring secure, open and free seas and will exemplify the "comprehensive strategic partnership" outlined in the India-UK Vision 2035, the Indian Navy said. The exercise is aimed at increasing combined maritime and air capabilities between the UK and Indian navies on the high seas.

"The UK and India believe in an Indo-Pacific that is free and open. We share an ambition for a modern defence and security partnership, a fundamental pillar of UK-India Vision 2035, agreed by our prime ministers this year," Lindy Cameron, the British High



Commissioner to India, said. "The engagements between the Carrier Strike Groups of our two navies demonstrate our commitment to maintaining the rules-based international order in the region and lay the groundwork for future cooperation," she said.

Commodore Chris Saunders, who is a defence adviser to the British High Commission, said: "Exercise Konkan provides an excellent opportunity for the Royal Navy to train in the delivery of complex multi-domain operations alongside

India as partners in the Indo-Pacific region."

"The UK and India are two carrier operating countries, and the Royal Navy and Indian Navy are in a fairly exclusive club as blue-water, multi-carrier navies," he said.

Saunders said the exercise provides an opportunity for the two maritime powers to enhance combined capability and share best practice.

"The UK is also proud to co-lead the Maritime Security Pillar of India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative," he said. (PTI)

Elephant calf born in Kaziranga named 'Mayabini' after Zubeen Garg's song

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: An elephant calf, born in the Kaziranga National Park in Assam, was named after singer Zubeen Garg's popular number 'Mayabini', which became an anthem for his fans at his last rites.

Environment and Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said the female calf was born to 'Kuwari'.

"Heartening news on #World Animal Day -- Kuwari, the elephant of Kaziranga National

Park and Tiger Reserve, has given birth to a healthy female calf!" he posted on X on Saturday night.

"With immense affection and public goodwill, we've named her 'Mayabini' -- a symbol of new life, hope and harmony in the wild," he said.

"Mayabini ratir buku", which Garg had once said should be sung when he dies, became an anthem for his fans as they sang it throughout his last journey. (PTI)



Sonowal to flag off large gas carrier 'Shivalik' at Vizag Port today

VISAKHAPATNAM, Oct 5: Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal will flag off the large gas carrier vessel 'Shivalik' at Visakhapatnam Port on October 6.

Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) secretary T Venu Gopal said that the vessel, recently acquired and inducted under the Indian flag by the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) on September 10, marks a significant milestone in India's maritime growth and gas logistics.

"Sonowal will officially flag off the Shivalik on its maiden visit to India at Visakhapatnam Port on October 6," said a release from the port on Sunday.

This arrival of 'Shivalik' under the Indian flag is a proud moment for Indian shipping, strengthening Atmanirbhar Bharat in the energy and maritime sectors, said Gopal.

The event will highlight India's growing capability in energy transportation, maritime safety, and global competitiveness, while reaffirming government support for Indian shipping companies.

During his visit, Sonowal is scheduled to attend a public meeting at Saligramapuram, where he will inaugurate several developmental projects undertaken by the VPA.

These projects are part of VPA's ongoing initiatives to enhance port infrastructure, improve operational efficiency, and promote sustainable practices under the Maritime India Vision 2030.

The minister's visit and the induction of 'Shivalik' are expected to boost maritime trade potential on the East Coast and reinforce Visakhapatnam Port's role as a key energy and cargo gateway, the release added. (PTI)

Madhya Pradesh CM visits Kaziranga

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday visited the Kaziranga National Park in Assam, famed for its one-horned rhinoceros.

Yadav, accompanied by his wife and officials, took a jeep safari in the central range of the park.

"The CM witnessed the natural beauty and inquired about the conservation of wildlife in the park," an official said.

He also fed sugarcane to the elephants of the Forest Department in the park.

Yadav is scheduled to meet investors at a hotel in Guwahati later in the day. (PTI)

Movie wins Taipei Film Commission Award and the Songwon Vision Award in BIFF

Sikkimese filmmaker Tribeny Geeta Rai's 'Shape of Momo' wins two awards at Busan film festival

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: Sikkimese filmmaker Tribeny Geeta Rai's debut film 'Shape of Momo', which explores the experiences of women navigating and negotiating social norms across generations, has won two awards at the recently concluded Busan International Film Festival.

"Shape of Momo", A Nepali film, won the Taipei Film Commission Award and the Songwon Vision Award in the Vision Section of the Busan International Film Festival.

"Busan gave credibility to our work. It is special for a film from Sikkim, in Nepali, to be seen at such a platform. It gave visibility and con-



nected us with audiences who share cultural similarities in Asia," Rai told PTI.

She said that she was excited about the film premiering at the international film festival.

"We are over the moon that our film has won two awards at Busan, and I thank our incredible cast and crew for bringing this story to life", she said.

Awards add credibility, but

with or without them, "we would still be the same bunch of filmmakers - searching and persevering", she said.

The 114-minute film is the story of a young woman, Bishnu, returning to her Himalayan village after quitting her job and the family pressures and societal expectations she faces.

Bishnu must choose between tradition and independence with her pregnant sister's arrival and a growing bond with a "suitable" boy, Rai said.

"The film came from a personal need to express myself. Women from rural areas struggle (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NESt Fest: Northeast's music, dance light up Delhi

Sankuraj Konwar pays tribute to Zubeen Garg

NEW DELHI, Oct 5: Delhi's Talkatora Stadium came alive with colours, sounds, and flavours of the Northeast on Saturday as the NESt. Fest 2025, an annual cultural festival, drew crowds from across the city.

The highlight of the final evening of the two-day festival was a performance by Assamese singer Sankuraj Konwar, who dedicated his set to late musician Zubeen Garg, calling it a tribute to the artist who had inspired a generation of musicians in the Northeast.

Garg passed away recently due to drowning while swim-

ming off St. John's Island in Singapore.

Outside the packed stadium, students and visitors sampled cuisines from the region -- Manipuri, Naga and Assamese, among others -- while inside, the crowd sang along to Konwar's hits.

The event, which derives its name from North East Students or NESt, featured a variety of folk dance performances from across the northeastern states, alongside Punjabi Bhangra and Maharashtrian Lavani.

"It's my second time at the event, and the experience has been great each year. It's a culmination of good food, great people and amazing cultural representation from all parts of the Northeast," said Joy, a student of Sri Aurobindo College under the Delhi University.

A participant of a fashion show at the event said, "I've been walking the ramp for this event for the last two years and wanted to do it again this time, especially because one of my favourite artistes from Assam was performing."

"It's not just about the culture of the Northeast; performers from Maharashtra

and Punjab were here too, which makes it feel like all corners of India unite to understand each other better," she added.

Mizo band Lilac and Jack, performing for the first time outside their state, said the festival gave them a valuable platform.

"Last year also some Mizo artistes also performed here. This festival gives us a big enough platform to reach audiences beyond our state," a band member said.

Organised by My Home India, NESt. Fest celebrates the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Live life to the fullest and focus on the positive.
- Matt Cameron

Crisis in Yunus-run Bangladesh

Bangladesh is entering one of the most dangerous phases of its history. At the centre of this looming crisis is the unelected regime of Muhammad Yunus, which is presenting itself abroad as democratic and reformist while systematically dismantling the country's defence and intelligence structure. Behind the veneer of Nobel fame and global endorsements lies a far darker reality: Yunus' growing alignment with Islamist radicals, foreign actors, and transnational networks that aim to transform Bangladesh into a hub for jihadist operations. If successful, this project would not only destroy Bangladesh's sovereignty but also destabilize South Asia and export militancy across the globe. Yunus' image as a global humanitarian has shielded him from meaningful scrutiny. His ties with influential figures in Washington, Brussels, and London — from the Clinton Foundation to George Soros' networks — give him legitimacy abroad. Domestically, however, his administration is empowering Islamist elements, suppressing secular voices, and hollowing out state institutions. The real project is clear: dismantle the secular Bangladesh Army and the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), and replace them with an Iranian-style "Islamic Revolutionary Army" (IRA) controlled by ideologues loyal to jihadist politics. Such a shift would institutionalize extremism inside the state and create a new sanctuary for transnational terrorism.

The Yunus regime is increasingly mirroring Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's authoritarian tactics. Dozens of journalists face fabricated charges, independent media outlets are censored or co-opted, while Islamist propagandists enjoy unchecked freedom. International watchdogs note a troubling trend: secular critics are punished while extremist groups linked to Al Qaeda, ISIS, Hizb ut-Tahrir, and Hamas are expanding their activities — in some cases, under state patronage. Pakistan — a country grappling with acute economic crises — may push the Kingdom toward the fate of Afghanistan, where Pakistan's infiltration ultimately turned the country into a rogue state and epicentre of Islamist terror. Furthermore, this development could mark the beginning of a silent regime change plot that might one day end monarchism and create an atmosphere of anarchy and chaos. With these troubling prospects in mind, Saudi Arabia and its ruling elites may well have committed a historic blunder — one that could spell the beginning of the end of a century of monarchism in the Kingdom.

For Islamabad — crippled by economic crises — mere financial perks from Riyadh will not suffice. Instead, Islamabad is likely to push the Kingdom into an alarming situation by collaborating with Islamists and jihadists, while simultaneously increasing the threats from Iran by secretly providing Tehran with sensitive information about Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Pakistan's military-intelligence establishment thrives on exporting instability. In time, it could push Saudi Arabia towards the fate of Afghanistan — an arena of Islamist chaos where Pakistan was the chief manipulator. The monarchy may have unwittingly paved the way for its own destabilization.

The Tradition of Lakshmi Puja

Lakshmi Puja is a deeply spiritual and culturally significant festival for Hindus. This puja is dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi, the deity of wealth, prosperity, good fortune, knowledge, light, fertility, generosity, courage, and beauty. Devotees believe that on this day, Goddess Lakshmi enters the homes of her devotees, bestowing blessings of happiness, peace, and prosperity. During this puja, homes are thoroughly cleaned, adorned with flower garlands, colorful decorations, and illuminated with lamps. The primary purpose of these preparations is to create a sacred and pure environment for the goddess's arrival. According to the Hindu calendar, this puja is observed on the Amavasya (new moon) tithi of the Kartik month, which is also considered the main ritual of the third day of Deepavali. However, in eastern India, including regions like Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, and Odisha, the tradition of celebrating this puja on the full moon (Purnima) tithi of the Ashwin month prevails, following local calendrical customs.

Goddess Lakshmi is revered not only as the deity of wealth but also as a symbol of good fortune and progress in all aspects of life. She is the consort of Lord Vishnu and one of the three principal goddesses (Tridevi), alongside Parvati and Saraswati, holding a highly revered position. The name 'Lakshmi' originates from the Sanskrit root 'laksh,' meaning to observe, aim, or understand a goal or purpose. This term signifies a clear vision of life's objectives and the path to achieving them. The related word 'lakshana' denotes auspicious signs, good fortune, and prosperity. The profound meaning of Lakshmi's name reflects her multifaceted nature. She is not only a symbol of material prosperity but also a guide to spiritual advancement. It is believed that her blessings dispel scarcity, sorrow, unrest, and inauspiciousness, filling life with wealth, abundance, and peace.

In mythological narratives, the emergence of Goddess Lakshmi is described beautifully. According to ancient texts, she was born during the churning of the cosmic ocean (Samudra Manthan), a significant event in Hindu mythology. When the gods were weakened by the curse of Sage Durvasa and defeated by the demon king Bali, they sought Lord Vishnu's guidance to regain their lost strength. Vishnu advised them to collaborate with the demons to churn the ocean to obtain the nectar of immortality (amrita). Consuming this nectar would restore the gods' strength and grant them immortality. Initially, the demons were reluctant, but the allure of immortality convinced them to participate. The Mandara Mountain was used as the churning rod, and Vasuki, the serpent, served as the rope. Lord Vishnu, taking the form of Kurma (tortoise), prevented the mountain from sinking into the ocean. The churning produced not only the nectar but also several divine treasures, among which was Goddess Lakshmi. After her emergence, Lord Shiva and Brahma advised Vishnu to accept her as his consort, and Vishnu did so. This narrative beautifully illustrates Lakshmi's divine nature and her inseparable bond with Vishnu.



able bond with Vishnu.

The description of Goddess Lakshmi's form in mythological texts is enchanting and sacred. She is depicted seated on a lotus, with a golden complexion, adorned with divine ornaments, and revered as the mother of the three worlds. Of her four hands, the right hands hold a noose and a rosary, while the left hands hold a goad and a lotus. One of her hands is always in the 'varada mudra' (gesture of granting boons), symbolizing her blessings to devotees. Her divine form evokes feelings of peace, devotion, and spirituality in the hearts of her devotees. Her hand holding a golden lotus represents both material and spiritual prosperity. Scriptural descriptions emphasize that her presence radiates not only external beauty but also inner peace and sanctity, guiding devotees toward success and prosperity in all aspects of life. Her four hands symbolize the four primary goals of Hindu life—dharma (righteousness), kama (desire), artha (wealth), and moksha (liberation). Through these attributes, Goddess Lakshmi is regarded as a guide to holistic life advancement.

The various names and forms of Goddess Lakshmi reflect her multifaceted character. She is worshipped as Vishnupriya, Padma, Kamala, Aishwarya, Nandini, Shridevi, Chanchala, Madhavi, Sujata, Haripriya, and more. These names signify her diverse qualities and powers. The name 'Padma' symbolizes her purity and beauty, while 'Aishwarya' denotes her ability to grant prosperity. She is also revered as Mahalakshmi, a universal and expansive form. According to scriptures, Mahalakshmi manifested the three principal gods (Trideva) at the beginning of creation, from whom Mahakali and Saraswati emerged. In this form, she is considered the embodiment of supreme power. Another form, Siddhi Lakshmi, is regarded as the symbol of prosperity, abundance, and all forms of wealth, depicted

with five heads and ten arms, signifying her boundless power and capabilities.

Before Lakshmi Puja, homes are cleaned to create a pure environment for the goddess's arrival. At the main entrance, rangoli designs made with rice flour, symbolizing the goddess's footsteps, are drawn. These rangolis are artistically and culturally significant. Homes are decorated with flower garlands, colorful adornments, and illuminated with lamps. In some regions, a tradition involves placing a water pot decorated with mango leaves, rice stalks, and vermilion tilak, reflecting the goddess's deep connection with nature. During the puja, offerings such as kheer, coconut, flattened rice, and sweets are presented as expressions of devotion. Mantras chanted by priests, such as 'Om Namaste Sarvabhutanam Varodashi Haritriye,' infuse devotees with profound spiritual energy. Reciting the Lakshmi Charita and Panchali is also an integral part of the puja, through which devotees learn about the goddess's glory and divine stories.

In eastern India, particularly in Assam, Lakshmi Puja is observed on the full moon day of the Ashwin month, five days after Durga Puja. On this night, many stay awake, as it is believed that Goddess Lakshmi listens to her devotees' prayers and blesses their homes. Married women draw rangoli with rice flour to guide the goddess's arrival. In rural areas, the tradition involves installing an idol or a sacred pot, performing aarti, scattering rice, and welcoming the goddess. These traditions transform Lakshmi Puja into a collective celebration of joy.

The astrological and spiritual beliefs associated with Lakshmi Puja add to its significance. On the full moon day of Sharad Purnima, the moon is believed to be complete with its sixteen phases, and its rays are said to shower nectar. For this reason, kheer prepared for the puja is placed under the open sky at

The description of Goddess Lakshmi's form in mythological texts is enchanting and sacred. She is depicted seated on a lotus, with a golden complexion, adorned with divine ornaments, and revered as the mother of the three worlds. Of her four hands, the right hands hold a noose and a rosary, while the left hands hold a goad and a lotus. One of her hands is always in the 'varada mudra' (gesture of granting boons), symbolizing her blessings to devotees

night to absorb the moon's rays, believed to enhance its sanctity and medicinal qualities. The next day, this kheer is consumed as prasad, believed to promote physical and mental well-being. This practice reflects the deep connection between Lakshmi Puja and nature. During the puja, women, especially homemakers, observe a fast, abstaining from grains and consuming only fruits until the rituals are complete, expressing their devotion and surrender to the goddess.

The folk traditions associated with Lakshmi Puja lend it a social and cultural dimension. In Assam's upper and lower regions, the puja is celebrated with great enthusiasm and grandeur. In the past, animal sacrifices, such as goats, were practiced in some areas, though this tradition has diminished in modern times. Post-puja cultural events unite people from all sections of society. At the main entrance, rice stalks and gooseberry leaves are used to invite the goddess. Lighting lamps in fields after the puja reflects the goddess's connection with agriculture and nature. These traditions make Lakshmi Puja both a religious and social festival. Special emphasis is placed on cleanliness, as it is believed that Goddess Lakshmi favors a clean and peaceful environment. Homes are cleaned with salt-mixed water to dispel negative energies. Red and yellow decorations and clothing are used, considered the goddess's favorite colors, believed to please her. Offerings such as betel nut, durva grass, marigold flowers, lotus, tulsi, vermilion, banana, and bel leaves enhance the sanctity and solemnity of the puja.

In conclusion, Lakshmi Puja is not merely a festival of praying for wealth but a symbol of prosperity, peace, and good fortune in all aspects of life. Through this puja, devotees seek the goddess's blessings to make their lives more beautiful and sacred. Lakshmi Puja beautifully blends the profound spiritual principles of Hinduism with its rich cultural heritage, occupying a special place in Indian society's way of life.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Zubeen Garg: The voice that united Assam's heartbeat

By: Dipak Kurmi

From the tranquil flow of the Brahmaputra to the distant echoes of Bihu drums across the valleys and hills, Assam's cultural soul has always sung its own melodies — distinct, defiant, and deeply rooted in its history. Across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, three towering figures have carried this song forward — Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Bhupen Hazarika, and Zubeen Garg. Each of them, in his own time, transformed music and art into a form of public conscience. Their lives and works tell the story of how art in Assam became not merely a celebration of heritage, but an act of social and political awakening. Together, they shaped a legacy that turned melody into movement, and culture into citizenship.

The Renaissance Dreamer: Jyoti Prasad Agarwala

Jyoti Prasad Agarwala (1903–1951), honored as Rupkonwar or "Precious Prince" of Assam, was the pioneer who lit the first lamp of modern Assamese cultural consciousness. In the 1930s, when colonial rule had drained the essence of Assamese traditions and language, Agarwala envisioned a renaissance that united literature, music, theatre, and nationalist pride. His contributions cannot be measured merely by artistic output, but by the awakening of identity that followed.

In 1935, Agarwala made Joymoti, the first Assamese feature film — a revolutionary act of linguistic and cultural defiance. The film dramatized the story of Princess Joymoti, an Ahom heroine who endured torture and death to protect her husband's life and kingdom. Beyond its cinematic merit, Joymoti became a symbol of Assamese pride, proof that regional cinema could thrive and carry historical consciousness to the masses. It was a statement that Assam's stories, spoken in its own tongue, deserved a place on the Indian screen.

But Agarwala's genius extended far beyond film. He created an entire musical tradition — Jyoti Sangeet — blending the structure of classical ragas with the pulse of Assamese folk melodies. Songs like "Luitore Pani Jabi O Boi" and "Biswa Bijoy Najawan" combined lyrical elegance with social message. They were not just songs of beauty; they were songs of purpose. They carried hope, unity, and patriotism to both the educated elite and the rural poor, urging the people to awaken and reclaim their sense of belonging.

His plays, such as Karengor Ligiri, Rupalim, and Lobhita, dramatized the spirit of Assamese folklore while confronting social hierarchies, gender inequality, and moral decay. In Agarwala's eyes, culture was both mirror and weapon — a means to reflect the soul of a society and to fight against its oppression. Reviving Assamese identity under colonial rule was, for him, a political mission equal to the freedom struggle itself. Through his pen, the region's history became popular art, inviting people to look back at their roots and embrace their heritage with pride.

As one cultural historian noted, Jyoti Prasad's art "was not nostalgia, but resistance." He inau-



gurated a tradition in which music, cinema, and literature served as instruments of empowerment — a tradition that would echo powerfully in the decades to come.

The Bard of the Brahmaputra: Bhupen Hazarika

If Jyoti Prasad built the foundation of modern Assamese culture, Bhupen Hazarika (1926–2011) carried its voice across India and the world. Known affectionately as the "Bard of the Brahmaputra," Hazarika's deep baritone became the river's own voice — flowing through boundaries, connecting hearts, and speaking for the voiceless.

As a singer, composer, poet, and filmmaker, Hazarika's work transcended genres and languages. He sang of love and humanity, of rivers and revolutions. His songs reflected the rhythms of Assam's folk traditions but were enriched by the influence of global music. While studying in the United States, Hazarika met Paul Robeson, the African-American singer and activist, who inspired him to see music as a tool for justice. His Assamese adaptation of Robeson's "Ol' Man River" became "Bistiro Parore," a haunting reflection on human struggle along the Brahmaputra's banks.

From his teenage years, Hazarika's art was tied to India's national movements. During the Quit India movement, his song "Agnijugor Firingotimoi" ("I am a spark in the age of fire") became a cry for freedom and nation-building. Later, his compositions chronicled the social, political, and emotional journey of Assam — from the optimism of post-independence India to the turbulence of the Assam Agitation in the 1970s and 1980s. When communal tensions darkened the region, his song "Meghegir Gir Kore" ("The clouds are rumbling") captured the anxiety and yearning

of a divided land.

Yet Bhupen Hazarika was not only a chronicler of conflict. He was a celebrant of harmony. His famous anthem "Maanuhe Maanusher Jonno" ("Humans for Humanity") became a moral commandment — urging empathy, compassion, and unity across religions and ethnicities. In Bangladesh, where his songs are still revered, this particular composition was once ranked second only to the national anthem in a national poll. Hazarika's versatility was unmatched. He composed award-winning music for films in Assamese, Bengali, and Hindi — including the acclaimed Hindi film "Rudaali" (1993). His oeuvre earned him India's highest honors: the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the Padma Bhushan, and the Padma Vibhushan, and posthumously, the Bharat Ratna in 2019.

But beyond the medals and accolades, his legacy lies in how he humanized art. Through his songs, he turned the struggles of ordinary people into poetry. Through his voice, he gave Assam's rivers, forests, and festivals a national resonance. As one admirer remarked, "Bhupen Hazarika was more than a musical genius — he was a conscience of India who sang of humanity in every note."

The Modern Kanchenjunga: Zubeen Garg
When Zubeen Garg (1972–2025) arrived on the scene, he inherited this grand tradition of musical activism — but he gave it a contemporary rhythm. A singer, composer, lyricist, and actor, Zubeen was Assam's modern icon, a figure who blended the roots of folk with the energy of rock and pop. His 2006 Bollywood hit "Ya Ali" catapulted him to national fame, making him one of the few Assamese artists to achieve success in Hindi cinema. Yet fame never detached him from his soil. "I belong to the land of mountains and

rivers," he once said, proudly rejecting the lure of a permanent Bollywood career.

In Assam and across the Northeast, Zubeen's voice was everywhere — in love songs, protest anthems, and devotional hymns. His multilingual artistry, spanning Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, and other regional tongues, reflected the diversity of the region itself. He was not just a performer; he was a phenomenon.

More significantly, Zubeen used his stardom for activism. He organized charity concerts, flood relief campaigns, and youth outreach programs. During the 2019 protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), he became the face of Assam's resistance. Standing shoulder to shoulder with the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), he sang, marched, and spoke out against divisive politics. His open declaration — "I have no caste, I have no religion, I am free" — echoed the universalism once preached by Bhupen Hazarika and Bishnu Prasad Rabha.

Zubeen's courage lay in his refusal to conform. He resisted censorship from militant groups and refused to let communalism dictate art. Critics have called him the "Modern Kanchenjunga" — tall, unbound, and free. His music spoke to a generation weary of conflict but unwilling to lose hope. Whether in soulful tracks like "Mayabini" or the charged anthem "Ei Axom, Ei Manuh," his songs carried the heartbeat of a restless people.

His untimely death on September 19, 2025, during a planned performance tour in Singapore, was met with an outpouring of grief across Assam. The official cause — accidental drowning — has not silenced public suspicion and sorrow. The state declared a mourning period, and thousands gathered to bid farewell. As one observer wrote, "The silence on the streets that day was not just for a singer's death; it was for the loss of a unifying spirit."

In his passing, Zubeen joined the pantheon of cultural heroes like Jyoti Prasad and Bhupen — artists who turned Assam's struggles into song. Assam's Chief Minister described him as "a national treasure whose voice defined a generation." Even national leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, paid tribute, acknowledging his power to bridge hearts through music.

The Continuum of Cultural Nationalism
Across time, these three artists formed a continuum — each building on the other's legacy while responding to the unique challenges of his era. Agarwala's Jyoti Sangeet embodied a cultural nationalism born of anti-colonial struggle. Hazarika's compositions expanded that nationalism into universal humanism, transcending borders and languages. Zubeen's music, in turn, translated it for the globalized, media-saturated India of the twenty-first century.

What unites them are three enduring threads. First, cultural nationalism — the belief that art can awaken pride and consciousness. For Agarwala, reclaiming Assamese language and heritage was inseparable from political freedom. For Hazarika, songs like "Agnijugor Firingotimoi" and "Bistiro Parore" captured the human cost of that freedom and the need for solidarity. For Zubeen,

defying the CAA or calling for unity across divides was a continuation of the same tradition — that music could still move mountains.

Second, folk-modern synthesis — each artist blended the rural with the urban, the traditional with the new. Agarwala wove folk idioms into classical forms. Hazarika married Western harmonies with Indian ragas. Zubeen mixed rock riffs with Bihu beats, bringing Assamese identity into modern pop culture. Through this fusion, Assamese music evolved without losing its roots.

Third, political engagement — art as activism. Agarwala's plays were subversive commentaries under colonial rule. Hazarika reported from war fronts, wrote about refugees, and sang against injustice. Zubeen took to the streets, turning his concerts into protest rallies. Their art was inseparable from their citizenship.

Underlying all this was an inclusive vision of unity. None of them preached narrow nationalism; their idea of Assam was open, plural, and human. Hazarika sang in Bengali, Hindi, and Nepali; Zubeen crossed linguistic and cultural lines; and Agarwala drew inspiration from diverse Indian traditions. They all believed that Assam's strength lay in its ability to include, not exclude.

Legacy and Reflection

Today, their legacy shapes not only Assam's identity but also India's cultural conscience. Jyoti Prasad's Joymoti is studied in film schools across the country as a pioneering work of regional cinema. Bhupen Hazarika's face adorns stamps and statues, his songs sung in schools from Guwahati to Dhaka. Zubeen Garg's tracks continue to echo across radio waves and protest marches, his unfinished dreams stirring new musicians to find their own voices.

In a nation as diverse as India, their stories remind us that regional pride and national unity are not opposites — they are complementary. Assam's art has always flowed like the Brahmaputra: winding, wide, and inclusive. Its musicians have not merely entertained; they have educated, mobilized, and healed.

Zubeen Garg's death, though tragic, has reignited this truth. It has reminded people that in times of political fracture and social anxiety, cultural figures often hold society together more powerfully than political leaders. As one cultural commentator wrote, "In Assam, we do not only elect our leaders; we sing them."

In the final reckoning, the journeys of Jyoti Prasad, Bhupen Hazarika, and Zubeen Garg reveal the same spiritual chord — the belief that art is not a luxury but a necessity. It is the soul's dialogue with the world. They showed that through music, cinema, and poetry, a small state in India's farthest corner could speak to humanity at large.

And as the Brahmaputra continues to flow, carrying whispers of their songs along its banks, the message remains clear: art endures, even when artists fade. The voices of Assam — Rupkonwar, the Bard, and the Kanchenjunga — still rise together, reminding India that culture, at its purest, is both memory and movement, history and hope. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

Goddess Lakshmi's relevance and Lakshmi Puja in Hinduism

By: Diganta Barooah

Goddess Lakshmi is one of the most beloved and widely worshipped deities in Hinduism. Maa Lakshmi is the goddess of fortune, wealth, beauty, prosperity, and Maya (illusion). From her role in Diwali celebrations to her deep symbolism in Hindu scriptures, Lakshmi continues to inspire devotion across cultures and generations. In Hindu thought, she represents both material abundance (gold, harvests, fortune) and spiritual fulfillment (wisdom, compassion, liberation). This dual role makes her one of the most worshipped and enduring deities across India and beyond. Her influence has spread to religions across the continent, beginning in Hinduism and entering Jainism and Buddhism. But it is the Hindu version of Lakshmi that has made the most lasting and important impression on the spiritual development of humanity. According to the Bhagavata Purana, Goddess Lakshmi was born during the churning of the milky ocean or Samudra Manthan, mount Mandara was used as a churning rod and Vasuki, the king of serpents, as the rope, gods (Devas) and demons (Asuras) churned the ocean in order to get Amrita, the elixir of immortality. Goddess Lakshmi was among the divine treasures and beings that surfaced during the churning. She was shining and beautiful, when she first appeared, carrying a lotus, which is a symbol of auspiciousness, prosperity, and fortune. Everyone embraced her as a gift from God, and her presence filled the universe with serenity and plenty.

Goddess Lakshmi as the divine mother:

Across Hindu scriptures and traditions, Lakshmi is described as the Divine Mother nurturing feminine energy that sustains creation. She is often compared to Mother Earth, symbolizing fertility, protection, and unconditional care. Just as a mother nourishes her children, Lakshmi is believed to provide the wealth, stability, and wisdom needed for human growth and balance. The goddess acts as an infinite source of tenderness, pleasure, and all the fecundity of the natural world. Just as she creates, however, she can (and sometimes will) take it away. It is here that she becomes the Devouring Mother — alas, to be an image of the infinite, you must contain all. The primordial creative spark and maker of existence, Lakshmi is often referred to as the Divine Mother, sometimes explicitly. This framing helps us

understand the many realms that she is said to control across all the different versions of her that appear in the various denominations of Hinduism and religions beyond. But they all connect to this view of Lakshmi as a Divine Mother.

Symbolism of Wealth, Wisdom, and Prosperity: Lakshmi's attributes extend beyond material riches: *Wealth & Fortune — gold coins and harvests symbolize prosperity. *Wisdom & Truth — guiding devotees toward right living and spiritual insight. *Beauty & Harmony — reflected in her lotus seat, symbolizing purity in a flawed world. *Protection & Power — through her many forms, Lakshmi grants stability and courage. Her imagery and stories remind devotees that true prosperity combines outer abundance with inner wisdom, helping individuals live a life of both success and purpose. Goddess Lakshmi holds a central place in Hindu worship. She is honored the giver of material prosperity and also as the bestower of spiritual wisdom. Across India, her pujas and festivals reflect the belief that true abundance comes from balancing outer wealth with inner growth. Lakshmi Puja during Diwali, the festival of lights, is the most important celebration dedicated to her. Diwali marks the victory of light over darkness both literally and spiritually. Devotees light lamps, decorate homes, and perform Lakshmi Puja to invite her blessings for prosperity, health, and wisdom in the coming year. Shopping for gold, clothes, and gifts during Diwali is also seen as a way of invoking her grace. Lakshmi is also worshipped during several other Hindu festivals: *Gaja Lakshmi Puja — Celebrated at the end of the monsoon, honoring Lakshmi as the goddess of harvests and fertility. *Varalakshmi Vratam — Popular in South India, this fast is observed by women seeking family well-being and prosperity. *New Year Rituals — Many communities invoke Lakshmi at the start of the new year to bless homes and businesses with fortune. Countless temples across India are dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi, where devotees offer flowers, sweets, and prayers throughout the year. Daily chanting of the Sri Sukta (a hymn from the Rig Veda) and recitation of her 108 names are traditional practices for inviting her blessings. Families often keep Lakshmi idols or images at home, performing pujas on Fridays — a day especially associated with the goddess.

Mantras of Goddess Lakshmi:

1. Om Shreem Maha Laksh-



miye Namaha..!!

2. Om Hreem Shreem Lakshmi

miye Namaha..!!

Lakshmi's role in different Hindu traditions:

Lakshmi's significance extends across multiple streams of Hinduism, where her role is understood in different but complementary ways. She is worshipped as the goddess of wealth and beauty, and also as the cosmic force of preservation and balance. The tradition of Shaktism in India helped to develop the esoteric, occult practices and doctrines of Tantra one of the most profound spiritual disciplines ever created on earth. That legacy has enshrined Lakshmi as a central deity for many Tantric practitioners. Due to the historic importance of the denomination, and its continued popularity around the world, Lakshmi's prominent role in Shaktism is critical for understanding how this goddess rose to such auspicious heights in Hinduism.

Lakshmi in Shaktism (Tridevi and Shakti worship):

In Shaktism, the supreme reality is worshipped as Shakti, the divine feminine energy that creates, sustains, and transforms the universe. Lakshmi is considered one of the most vital manifestations of Shakti. *She is part of the Tridevi — Saraswati (knowledge), Lakshmi (prosperity), and Parvati (power). *Unlike other traditions where the Tridevi is seen as consorts of the Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva), in Shaktism they are understood as independent supreme deities, with Lakshmi embodying the role of sustainer and preserver of the cosmos. *Shakta texts such

as the Devi Mahatmya describe her as a powerful goddess who blesses devotees with both material fortune and spiritual liberation. The Tridevi is the central force of creation. Here we can see the infinite variation inside Hinduism. There is no "one" set of beliefs, there is instead a vast kaleidoscope of perspectives, everyone adding to the whole and helping us see, with our mortal eyes, how endlessly magnificent reality is.

Lakshmi in Vaishnavism (Consort of Vishnu):

In Vaishnavism, the largest sect of Hinduism, Lakshmi is worshipped as the eternal consort of Vishnu, the preserver of the universe. *She is inseparable from Vishnu, embodying the energy (Shakti) that empowers him to create, preserve, and destroy the cosmos. *Scriptures such as the Vishnu Purana and Bhagavata Purana portray Lakshmi as both a compassionate intercessor for devotees and a divine force who ensures cosmic order. *Together, Vishnu and Lakshmi symbolize the balance of masculine and feminine energies, working in harmony to maintain creation. Through these traditions, Lakshmi is seen not just as a goddess of wealth but as a cosmic principle of sustenance, ensuring continuity and harmony in the universe.

Depiction of Goddess Lakshmi in Hindu iconography:

Goddess Lakshmi's imagery is full of symbolism, each element reflecting her divine qualities and blessings. Artists, sculptors, and temple traditions depict her in ways that highlight her role as the bestower of wealth, prosperity, and purity.

General depiction:

Lakshmi is usually portrayed as a radiant woman with a golden complexion, standing or seated on a fully bloomed lotus flower. This symbolizes purity, beauty, and spiritual awakening, reminding devotees that true prosperity arises from dharma (righteous living). Lakshmi is robed in a red dress with gold thread, signs of the wealth that pours from her being.

Animal associations:

*Elephants (Gaja Lakshmi) — Often shown flanking her, elephants represent power, fertility, and royal authority. They are depicted pouring water over her, symbolizing the ceaseless flow of blessings. *Owl (Ulooka Vahana) — Her vehicle is an owl, symbolizing wisdom and the ability to see through deception, even in darkness. It reminds devotees to use wealth responsibly and wisely.

Number of Arms and attributes:

Most common depictions show Lakshmi with four arms, representing the four goals of human life (Purusharthas):

- ◊ Dharma (righteousness)
 - ◊ Artha (material prosperity)
 - ◊ Kama (desires, love, harmony)
 - ◊ Moksha (liberation)
- *In her hands, she holds lotus flowers and showers streams of gold coins, signifying material and spiritual wealth. She is often depicted with eighteen (18) hands that hold several items, including: Lotus | Discus | Noose | Trident | Wine-cup | Ball | Conch | Shield | Sword | Sakti | Rod | Pitcher | Thunderbolt | Arrow | Mace | Axe | Rosary

Iconographic Variations : Lakshmi is worshipped in

multiple forms across India: *Gaja Lakshmi — Bestower of abundance and fertility. *Dhana Lakshmi — Goddess of material wealth. *Vidya Lakshmi — Patron of wisdom and learning. *Santana Lakshmi — Blessor of children and family prosperity. *Veera Lakshmi — Protector in battles and struggles. *Adi Lakshmi — The primal form, representing eternal sustenance. Each form highlights a unique aspect of prosperity showing that her blessings go beyond money, encompassing health, family, knowledge, and courage. Goddess Lakshmi is a sign of moksha or liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth. In the grand Tantric tradition, Lakshmi's is used as an image of karma, true reality, and consciousness as a force in the universe. This iconography has developed since at least the first millennium BCE, based on archaeological evidence. That makes her one of the oldest gods or goddesses still worshipped today. That long legacy of devotion has carefully crafted the image of Lakshmi that we have.

Legends about Goddess Lakshmi:

Lakshmi's stories reveal her as more than a goddess of wealth they present her as a divine force guiding cosmic balance and human prosperity. These myths, told in the Puranas and epics, illustrate her power, compassion, and eternal connection with Vishnu.

1. Birth of Goddess Lakshmi (Samudra Manthan):

One of the most famous legends describes how Lakshmi emerged during the churning of the cosmic ocean (Samudra Manthan). Gods (devas) and demons (asuras) churned the ocean to obtain amrita (nectar of immortality), and from the depths arose Lakshmi, radiant and holding lotuses. She chose Vishnu as her eternal consort, symbolizing her alignment with preservation and balance.

2. Lakshmi as Vishnu's consort in avatars :

In Hindu epics, Lakshmi accompanies Vishnu whenever he descends to earth: *As Sita, she was the consort of Rama in the Ramayana. *As Rukmini, she married Krishna in the Mahabharata. These stories show her inseparability from Vishnu, embodying compassion, loyalty, and divine grace.

3. Lakshmi and Alakshmi (her shadow sister):

Some traditions speak of Alakshmi, the shadow or opposite of Lakshmi, who brings poverty, discord, and strife. The legend teaches that prosperity should be honored with gratitude and re-

sponsibility, or else greed and misfortune (Alakshmi) will follow.

4. Lakshmi's tests of devotion :

Folklore often describes Lakshmi testing her devotees blessing those who live with integrity, generosity, and humility, while withdrawing from the greedy and unjust. These stories emphasize that true wealth lies in virtue as much as in possessions.

Teachings of Maa Lakshmi:

Goddess Lakshmi's teachings remain highly relevant in contemporary life, guiding devotees to balance material success with spiritual wisdom. She embodies the principle that prosperity is not just wealth, but also harmony, knowledge, and ethical living.

Balancing material wealth and spiritual growth:

Lakshmi teaches that while wealth and abundance are blessings, greed and attachment can lead to suffering. Through her stories, devotees learn to practice responsible living, charity, and gratitude, ensuring that material prosperity supports personal growth rather than domination or ego.

Maa Lakshmi as a guide for daily life:

*Financial Prudence — Respecting resources and using them wisely. *Generosity and Charity — Sharing wealth and helping others is central to her teachings. *Wisdom and Self-Discipline — Pursuing knowledge and ethical choices alongside material success. *Mindfulness and Gratitude — Recognizing the divine in daily life and appreciating abundance in all forms.

Modern worship practices:

Even today, millions honor Lakshmi through: *Diwali and Gaja Lakshmi Puja — inviting blessings at home and in workplaces. *Daily prayers and chanting of Sri Sukta or Lakshmi mantras — for spiritual and financial harmony. *Meditation on Lakshmi — connecting to abundance consciousness and inner peace. Through these practices, Lakshmi continues to bridge the spiritual and material worlds, helping devotees cultivate prosperity, insight, and moral balance in modern life.

Conclusion:

Maa Lakshmi might appear as a goddess of wealth and prosperity. But, if one explores the depth, She is conveying the message to go beyond the material pursuits and start searching for the real wealth that lies within us. Because, in the end, that is the wealth that really matters. Once that wealth has been found, life becomes a song, a dance, a celebration of the divine.

Lakshmi Puja: Illuminating prosperity with purity and purpose

The worship of Lakshmi finds its roots in the Vedas and Puranas, where she is described as the goddess who emerged during the cosmic churning of the ocean, the Samudra Manthan, seated on a lotus and bearing the pot of nectar. Her association with Vishnu underscores her role in sustaining cosmic order; as prosperity and preservation are inseparable in the sustenance of life. Texts like the Vishnu Purana and Padma Purana detail her significance as a beneficent goddess whose blessings ensure harmony in households and kingdoms alike

By: Dipak Kurmi

Among the countless festivals that illuminate the Indian subcontinent with light, devotion, and celebration, Lakshmi Puja stands apart for its profound association with prosperity, harmony, and spiritual well-being. This annual occasion, dedicated to the veneration of Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu and the divine embodiment of wealth and fortune, is observed with an intensity that transcends geography, language, and custom. While Diwali as a whole embodies the victory of light over darkness, Lakshmi Puja, performed on the new moon night of Ashvin or Kartika, according to different calendrical traditions, symbolizes the invocation of the goddess's blessings for material abundance and inner harmony.

The puja is celebrated on amavasya, the new moon day, when the sky is devoid of natural light, thereby magnifying the glow of lamps, diyas, and candles lit by devotees to welcome the goddess into their homes. In the amanta tradition, Lakshmi Puja falls in the Hindu month of Ashvin, while in the purimanta tradition, it is observed in Kartika. In either reckoning, the day occupies the third night of the grand festival of Deepavali in most parts of India and coincides with the celebrations of Tihar in Nepal. The synchrony of lights, rituals, and prayers performed during this time has etched the occasion as one of the most significant observances in the Hindu religious calendar.

The Divine Goddess of Prosperity
Lakshmi is not only worshipped as the goddess of wealth but also as the eternal principle of auspiciousness, purity, and well-being. Iconographically, she is depicted seated on a blooming lotus, a flower that grows amidst the mud yet retains its untainted beauty, symbolizing spiritual and material affluence achieved without moral compromise. Her four hands represent the four goals of human life prescribed in Hindu thought: dharma (righteousness), artha (prosperity), kama (desire), and moksha (liberation). While coins flow from her palms, signifying abundance, she is surrounded by elephants that shower water, representing fertility, royal authority, and the sustenance of life.

The puja, therefore, is not a mere plea for monetary gain but a symbolic invocation of prosperity rooted in ethical living. Households clean and adorn their living spaces not only to welcome the goddess but also to signify purity of heart and conduct. The spiritual message is unmistakable: true wealth lies not just in gold and silver but in clarity, compassion, and collective well-being.

Rituals and Customs

The preparations for Lakshmi Puja begin days in advance, with homes and marketplaces scrubbed, painted, and decorated. The belief persists that the goddess resides only in spaces of cleanliness and order. Rangoli patterns, often known as alpna or kolam depending on the region, are drawn at thresholds to guide the goddess inside. Diyas are placed strategically in corners of the house, on rooftops, and in courtyards, symbolizing the banishment of darkness and ignorance.

On the evening of the puja, families assemble to perform the ritual with incense, lamps, flowers, fruits, and sweets. The idol or image of Lakshmi is placed beside that of Lord Ganesha, who is worshipped as the remover of obstacles. Together, their veneration signifies the intertwined need for wisdom and prosperity. The puja rituals include the recitation of Lakshmi mantras, offerings of prasada, and the lighting of rows of oil lamps that brighten not only homes but also the wider community. After the rituals, families burst firecrackers, exchange sweets, and extend greetings, reaffirming social bonds along with spiritual faith.

Regional Variations and Cultural Nuances

Although Lakshmi Puja is celebrated widely across India, its expression differs from region to region, adding cultural richness to the occasion. In North India, the puja is the centerpiece of Diwali celebrations. Markets bustle with shoppers purchasing gold, silver, and utensils, as it is considered auspicious to make new acquisitions on this day. In Maharashtra and Gujarat, the rituals are particularly grand, with the business community closing annual account books and starting fresh ledgers in the name of the goddess, a tradition known as Chopda Puja.

In West Bengal, Odisha, and Assam, Lakshmi Puja takes on a slightly different character, as it is celebrated separately on the full moon night of

Ashvin, following Durga Puja. In this form, the goddess is worshipped as Kojagori Lakshmi, with devotees staying awake throughout the night, performing songs and rituals, under the belief that the goddess descends to bless the wakeful and the devout. This variant of the festival underscores the diverse ways in which the goddess is revered, each expression rooted in the cultural soil of the region.

In Nepal, Lakshmi Puja coincides with Tihar, the festival of lights, where not only humans but also animals like cows, dogs, and crows are honored for their roles in society and mythology. On the night of Lakshmi Puja, households in Nepal light oil lamps and candles at every window, doorway, and rooftop, believing that the goddess wanders from house to house bestowing wealth and harmony.

Philosophical and Spiritual Dimensions

While the external rituals of Lakshmi Puja may appear to focus on material prosperity, the deeper philosophy of the occasion transcends mere economic gain. Wealth, in Hindu philosophy, is not an end in itself but a means to sustain dharma and achieve moksha. Lakshmi's blessings are sought not only for the expansion of trade, household fortunes, or agricultural bounty but also for the cultivation of generosity, hospitality, and ethical stewardship of resources.

The choice of amavasya as the day of her worship is particularly telling. In the absence of natural lunar illumination, the reliance on man-made lights symbolizes humanity's quest to dispel the darkness of ignorance with the light of wisdom and devotion. The flickering diyas, fragile yet luminous, serve as a metaphor for human life itself—brief, delicate, yet radiant when aligned with divine grace.

Historical and Scriptural Context

The worship of Lakshmi finds its roots in the Vedas and Puranas, where she is described as the goddess who emerged during the cosmic churning of the ocean, the Samudra Manthan, seated on a lotus and bearing the pot of nectar. Her association with Vishnu underscores her role in sustaining cosmic order, as prosperity and preservation are inseparable in the sustenance of life. Texts like the Vishnu Purana and Padma Purana detail her significance as a beneficent goddess whose blessings ensure har-



mony in households and kingdoms alike.

Lakshmi Puja, in its contemporary form, likely developed as an extension of agrarian cycles, coinciding with the harvest season. The new moon of Ashvin or Kartika marked the end of monsoon rains and the beginning of winter, a period when agricultural societies looked forward to abundance in the form of crops, trade, and cattle. Thus, invoking the goddess was both a spiritual practice and a socio-economic necessity, harmonizing cosmic belief with earthly survival.

Modern Relevance

In contemporary times, Lakshmi Puja continues to be celebrated with as much fervor as in antiquity, but its meanings have expanded. In an age of globalization, urbanization, and shifting values, the occasion provides a bridge between tradition and modernity. Families dispersed across cities or even countries reunite for the festival, reinforcing kinship ties. Businesses inaugurate new ventures, not only in small towns but also in global financial hubs, invoking Lakshmi's grace in boardrooms as much as in living rooms.

Yet, the festival also faces challenges in the modern age. The excessive use of firecrackers has raised environmental concerns, and many communities now emphasize eco-friendly celebrations. The philosophical dimension of the festival—ethical prosperity—serves as a reminder to modern society that wealth unmoored from responsibility leads to imbalance. In this sense, Lakshmi Puja retains its moral relevance, urging people to align their pursuit of fortune with ecological awareness, social justice, and compassion.

The Enduring Symbol of Light and Fortune

Ultimately, Lakshmi Puja endures because it addresses a universal human longing—the desire for security, prosperity, and peace. But unlike secular festivals that celebrate wealth for its own sake, Lakshmi Puja situates prosperity within a sacred framework. The goddess does not merely shower gold and grain; she blesses homes where order, purity, and reverence prevail. The lamps lit on the darkest night of the year are symbolic acts of defiance against despair, testifying to the eternal resilience of human faith.

As millions of families in India, Nepal, and across the diaspora continue to gather each year to worship Lakshmi, they reaffirm not only their hope for material well-being but also their devotion to an order that balances wealth with virtue, abundance with gratitude, and progress with tradition. The ritual, therefore, is both ancient and timeless, local and universal. It reminds humanity that prosperity, to be meaningful, must be luminous with wisdom, shared with others, and grounded in the eternal values of harmony and righteousness.

Lakshmi Puja, then, is more than a festival of lights. It is a luminous philosophy embodied in ritual, a vision of prosperity that embraces both the outer world of wealth and the inner world of values. On the amavasya night of Ashvin or Kartika, when the earth glitters with the glow of countless lamps, humanity symbolically kindles its own higher light, seeking not just fortune but fulfillment. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmi@gmail.com)

State government to fully support new BTC leadership under Hagrama Mohilary

CM Sarma attends swearing-in of 5th BTC Executive Council

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, in the presence of Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya, attended the swearing-in ceremony of the Chief Executive Member (CEM) and Deputy Chief Executive Member of the 5th Executive Council of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) at the BTC Secretariat premises in Kokrajhar on Sunday.

The newly elected council is led by Hagrama Mohilary of the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), who returned to power following a successful electoral outcome. Rihon Daimari took oath as the Deputy CEM, with Chief Secretary Ravi Kota administering the oath of office.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister congratulated the BPF and its chief Hagrama Mohilary on the victory and expressed gratitude to the people of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) for maintaining peace and harmony during the election

NF Railway records 9.63% growth in freight unloading

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: The North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) has reported a 9.63% increase in freight unloading activities for the month of September 2025. A total of 1,059 freight-carrying rakes were unloaded during the month, compared to 966 rakes in the same period last year.

The transported goods included essential commodities such as FCI rice, sugar, salt, edible oil, food grains, fertilizers, cement, coal, vegetables, automobiles, and tankers. These were unloaded across various goods sheds within the NFR jurisdiction, playing a vital role in supporting the supply chain, particularly in the northeastern states. In Assam alone, 595 rakes were unloaded, including 291 carrying essential items. Other states recorded the following: 83 rakes in Tripura, 21 in Nagaland, 7 in Arunachal Pradesh, 20 in Manipur, 2 in Meghalaya, and 19 in Mizoram. Additionally, 179 rakes were unloaded in West Bengal and 133 in Bihar.

The steady movement and unloading of essential and other commodities have contributed significantly to meeting the daily needs of the population and bolstering economic activity in the region. NFR officials noted that close monitoring at various operational levels has helped reduce turnaround time and improve unloading efficiency.



process.

CM Sarma paid tribute to Guredev Kalicharan Brahma, recalling his role in guiding the Bodo community through non-violence, peace, and spirituality during the colonial period. He also honoured Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma, acknowledging his leadership in advancing the socio-economic rights

of the Bodo people through democratic means. Additionally, the Chief Minister remembered former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the visionary behind the BTC Accord.

Calling the swearing-in of the new council a significant democratic milestone, CM expressed confidence in Hagrama Mohilary's

leadership to sustain peace and steer the BTR toward a new phase of development.

He assured that the State Government would provide full cooperation to the new BTC administration in all areas and highlighted ongoing welfare initiatives already implemented in the region.

Emphasising the multi-ethnic fabric of Bodoland, home to 26 communities, CM Sarma said that unity and inclusive participation are key to the region's future progress. He expressed hope that through collective efforts, the BTR would scale new heights of development.

The ceremony was attended by newly elected council members, several Assam Cabinet Ministers, Pradyot Bikram Manikya Deb Barma (Head of the Royal House of Tripura), representatives from other autonomous councils, senior officials of the Assam Government and BTC, and various dignitaries.

Jiten Bey appointed Vice President of BJYM Assam Pradesh

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Oct 5: Jiten Bey, the lone representative from Karbi Anglong, has been appointed as one of the vice presidents of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), Assam Pradesh. He is currently serving as the president of BJYM, Karbi Anglong District Committee.

The appointment was announced through a letter dated October 4, 2025, which listed eight individuals named as vice presidents of BJYM Assam Pradesh. The list includes Ganesh Das (Guwahati), Nayan Hazarika (Jorhat), Parishmita Parajuli (Sonitpur), Pijush Boruah (Lakhimpur), Dr Milan Das (Hailakandi), Bidyut Gogoi (Dibrugarh), Sanjay Rai (Bongaigaon), and Jiten Bey (Karbi Anglong). The appointments were made with the consent of BJP Assam Pradesh President, Dilip Saikia.

Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) Chief Executive Member Dr Tuliram Ronghang congratulated Bey via Facebook, writing, "Heartiest congratulations to Shri Jiten Bey on being appointed as new Vice President of @BJYM Assam! May his leadership and dedication inspire the youth and contribute to the growth of the organisation."

Hailing from Udharjan, Ramsing Tisso Gaon under Loringtheipi Post Office and Howraghat Police Station, Jiten Bey is the son of Kania Bey and Basa Entipi. He currently resides in Matipung, Diphu.

Active in student politics from his college days, Bey was involved in various youth clubs and later became associated with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of RSS. Through ABVP, he worked for the educational upliftment of tribal students. He held several roles in ABVP, including Secretary of the Diphu Town Unit, District Convener, Vibhag Convener of Karbi Anglong, and was also a State Executive Member and Working Committee Member at the Assam Pradesh level.



In addition to his involvement with ABVP, Bey served as a National Youth Volunteer under Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and later joined BJYM. Recognizing his leadership qualities, the party appointed him as vice president of BJYM, Karbi Anglong (East), and eventually as the district president, a role he continues to hold.

Beyond politics, Bey is actively involved in community service and youth welfare. He has served as president of the Chesong Youth Club and was an anchor at the Karbi Youth Festival (KYF). He currently serves as an adviser to several youth organisations, including Chesong Youth Club, Udhorlangso Youth Club, and Phuloni Youth Assembly.

Thanking the State BJP and BJYM for entrusting him with greater responsibility, Bey pledged to work with dedication for the interests of the party and its youth wing.

11-foot statue of Zubeen Garg under construction

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Oct 5: An impressive 11-foot-tall full body statue of iconic singer Zubeen Garg is currently under construction at Puranigudam in Nagaon district. The statue is being crafted from fiberglass by local artist Jayna Jyoti Bora at his workshop in Kashari-gaon village.

Designed to endure harsh weather conditions for over 200 years, the statue is a tribute to Zubeen Garg's enduring legacy in Assamese music. Over Rs 10 lakh has reportedly been spent on the project so far.

Once completed, the statue will be installed at Kaki No 2 village, the birthplace of the artist. Jayna Jyoti Bora, known for his artistic work with housing companies, took up the project as a personal homage to the celebrated singer.

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Oct 5: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Sivasagar Nagar Samity, observed the centenary celebration of the organisation with a day-long programme held at Boarding Field on Sunday.

The event began with dhvajutolan (flag-hoisting), followed by a brief speech from the chief guest, Satyendra Neog, a veteran sportsperson from Dikhowmukh, who spoke on the RSS's commitment to nation-building.

Ullash Kulkarni, a national executive member of the RSS, delivered the keynote address, tracing the 100-year journey of the organisation since its founding by Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in Nagpur in 1925. He highlighted that RSS, which began with a focus on the regeneration of Hindu society, is now active in 42 countries where there is a significant Hindu diaspora.

Kulkarni described Hedgewar as

Tezpur University students reject VC's clarification note

Students accuse administration of dishonesty, insensitivity over response to Zubeen Garg's death

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: In a strong and detailed rebuttal, the student community of Tezpur University has issued a press note rejecting the recent 'Clarification Note' issued by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, over the controversy surrounding the University's response to the demise of Assamese cultural icon, Late Zubeen Garg.

The students alleged that the clarification issued by the administration was misleading, insincere, and filled with factual inaccuracies. They claimed it failed to address the real concerns raised by the student body, and instead, attempted to divert attention through half-truths, superficial gestures, and administrative technicalities.

The controversy began when the University administration delayed conducting an official condolence for Zubeen Garg after his passing on September 19, 2025. According to the students, despite early initiatives taken by them, the administration showed no urgency or sincerity in commemorating the late singer, who held immense emotional and cultural significance for the people of Assam. A tribute held on September 22 was termed by the students as a "forced" move prompted by widespread student outrage.

The administration's claim, as per the clarification note, that a condolence was conducted earlier on September 21, was rejected by the students, who labeled it a "fabricated lie." They also accused the authorities of manipulating the University website and planting misleading reports in the media to cover up administrative failures.

One of the central points of contention was a comment allegedly made by the Vice-Chancellor during a video call with students. The VC reportedly said, "It's a Central University, don't make things funny," in a tone that students found dismissive and disrespectful. The students asserted that the comment was not misunderstood, as claimed in the clarification note, but was clearly heard by dozens



present at the time.

Further criticism was directed at the University's decision to go ahead with the Tezpur University Students' Council (TUSC) elections on September 20, during the official three-day state mourning declared by the Assam Government. The students viewed this move as a mark of gross insensitivity and accused the administration of disregarding public sentiment and state protocol.

Another issue raised was a spelling error in an official circular related to Zubeen Garg's condolence meeting. Students claimed that instead of taking responsibility, the VC responded dismissively during a meeting, saying, "Chup Raho Yaar and Apology for what?" They saw this not as a mere clerical error, but as symbolic of the administration's careless and disrespectful attitude.

The clarification further attempts to justify the delay in notifying class suspension by citing a "wrongly typed email ID." The students claim that the truth is plain to everyone that the University only scrambled to send that belated notification after social media backlash exposing the continuation of classes went viral. The students also questioned the legitimacy of an official press release issued by the Public Relations Office of the University, which reportedly attributed false quotes to

the Vice-Chancellor and was released before any actual tribute was conducted on campus. They called this an attempt to mislead the public and undermine genuine expressions of grief.

Serious allegations were also raised concerning the misuse of university funds and questionable administrative priorities. The students accused the administration of focusing on non-essential beautification projects while basic infrastructure in hostels, laboratories, and classrooms remained neglected. They pointed out that essential amenities were lacking across departments, even as large sums were spent on tiling, fencing, and the VC's bungalow. The issue of non-renewal of guest faculty contracts was also highlighted, which, according to the students, has resulted in research scholars being forced to take on teaching responsibilities without compensation.

In response to the Vice-Chancellor's claim that the Tezpur University Teachers' Association (TUTA) is not a recognised body, the students cited Board of Management records to prove otherwise, stating that such a claim reveals the VC's ignorance of the University's own structures.

Calling for the immediate resignation of Vice-Chancellor Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, the student body stated that he had lost the trust of students, faculty, and non-teaching staff. They appealed for a leadership that reflects the values of integrity, empathy, and accountability.

In their concluding remarks, the students clarified that their movement was not influenced by external forces or personal vendettas, but rooted in a genuine demand for transparency, respect, and justice. They urged all stakeholders of the University to stand united in upholding truth and dignity.

The press note ends with a call for introspection and collective responsibility, stating that the University's future lies in reclaiming its moral compass and restoring the faith of its community.

Veteran AGP leader Abdul Jabbar passes away at 94

HT Correspondent

DALGAON, Oct 5: Veteran Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) leader and former Cabinet Minister Abdul Jabbar passed away at the age of 94 on Sunday evening, following a fall at his residence in Dalgaon. The end of his life marks the conclusion of a long and impactful career in public service.



Jabbar, who had been bed ridden due to age-related ailments, slipped while heading to the bathroom and sustained a severe head injury. He was first taken to Dew Care Hospital in Dalgaon and later shifted to GNRC Hospital in Guwahati, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Born in 1931 into a humble family, Jabbar overcame early struggles to become an advocate. He entered politics during the

Assam Agitation and was elected to the Assam Legislative Assembly three times from Dalgaon—first as an independent in 1985 and later on AGP tickets in 1996 and 2001.

He served as a Cabinet Minister in the Prafulla Kumar Mahanta-led government, where he held key portfolios and worked for the upliftment of rural and underprivileged communities. Widely respected for his commitment to social justice, Jabbar was known as a strong voice for the marginalised and played a vital role in expanding education and healthcare access in backward areas.

Dalgaon MLA Mazibur Rahman called Jabbar "a pillar of strength for the marginalised," while former MLA Ilias Ali described him as "a true statesman." Several political leaders, local AGP units, and social organisations have expressed condolences.

Even in retirement, Jabbar remained a guiding figure for younger leaders, offering counsel on regionalism and equity.

Funeral arrangements are expected to be held in Dalgaon, with leaders from across Assam likely to attend and pay their respects.

RSS Sivasagar Nagar Samity marks centenary celebration

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Oct 5: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Sivasagar Nagar Samity, observed the centenary celebration of the organisation with a day-long programme held at Boarding Field on Sunday.

The event began with dhvajutolan (flag-hoisting), followed by a brief speech from the chief guest, Satyendra Neog, a veteran sportsperson from Dikhowmukh, who spoke on the RSS's commitment to nation-building.

Ullash Kulkarni, a national executive member of the RSS, delivered the keynote address, tracing the 100-year journey of the organisation since its founding by Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in Nagpur in 1925. He highlighted that RSS, which began with a focus on the regeneration of Hindu society, is now active in 42 countries where there is a significant Hindu diaspora.

Kulkarni described Hedgewar as



a revolutionary thinker who initially organised the National Volunteer Corps under the Congress but later founded RSS on the day of Bijayadashami, inspired by the thoughts of Vinayak Damodar

Savarkar, Aurobindo, and others. He further spoke about the contribution of the second Sarsangchalak, Madhav Sadashivrao Golwalkar, under whose leadership the organisation became

deeply rooted in Hindu society. Kulkarni noted Golwalkar's influence in shaping the idea of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat and referred to a Blitz magazine article that described him as "great in life but greater in death."

Kulkarni emphasised the RSS's guiding philosophy of Sanatan Dharma and the inclusive vision of "Sarve Sukhina Santu, Sarve Santu Niramoya." He also recalled how Dr Shyam Prasad Mukherjee sought Golwalkar's help in forming a political wing. Though Golwalkar declined the proposal, he supported Mukherjee with RSS workers like Deendayal Upadhyay and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, which led to the formation of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

Reiterating the apolitical nature of the RSS, Kulkarni stated that it remains the largest socio-cultural organisation in the world.

Jila Sangha Chalak Kamaleswar Saikia also shared the dais with the speakers.

Guwahati branch of ICAI organises seminar on Tax Audit

Experts discuss key amendments and compliance aspects of form 3CD for AY 2025-26



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: The Guwahati Branch of the Eastern India Regional Council (EIRC) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) organised a seminar on "Tax Audit" on October 4, 2025, at ICAI Bhawan, Guwahati. The event was held under the aegis of the Direct Taxes Committee of ICAI, drawing enthusiastic participation from members across the region.

The seminar focused on critical aspects of tax audit, especially in light of significant amendments to Form 3CD for the current Assessment Year. Tax Audit, introduced through the Finance Act, 1984 under Section 44AB of the Income Tax Act, 1961, mandates audit reports in specified formats such

as Forms 3CA, 3CB, and 3CD for businesses and professionals crossing prescribed turnover or gross receipt limits. Over the years, Forms 3CD has undergone major revisions, notably in 1999, 2004, 2006, and 2013. For AY 2025-26, 12 clauses of the form have been amended.

The inaugural session featured dignitaries from the Direct Taxes Committee — CA Piyush Chhajed (Chairman), CA Vishnu Kumar Agarwal (Vice Chairman), and CA Ravi Kumar Patwa (Program Director, CCM Eastern Region) who shared their messages and extended best wishes for the seminar's success. Branch Chairperson CA Raginee Goyal delivered the welcome address, providing context for the discussions ahead.

The technical sessions were conducted by renowned speakers. CA Manoj Kumar presented on "Important Check Points for Finalisation of Tax Audit Report," highlighting key reporting areas and practical challenges. CA Ajay Kumar Agarwal led a session on "Important Clauses of Form 3CD for AY 2025-26," offering detailed insights into the latest amendments and their implications for compliance.

The programme was successfully coordinated under the leadership of CA Raginee Goyal (Chairperson), CA Jay Prakash Gupta (Secretary), and CA Nitika Bagaria (CPE Chairperson). The seminar concluded with a vote of thanks, acknowledging the efforts of the organising team and the active participation of members.

Security sweep arrests key suspects in Nambol ambush; questions raised over political patronage

Intelligence suggests Sept 19 Manipur ambush may have been 'contract killing' to undermine Prez rule

IMPHAL, Oct 5: Security forces have launched a major crackdown on the banned People's Liberation Army (PLA), a prominent Manipur valley-based insurgent group, arresting a total of 15 cadres including two key suspects directly involved in last month's deadly ambush on an Assam Rifles convoy that killed two soldiers.

The two main accused were identified as Thoungram Sadananda Singh alias Purakpa (18) and Khomdrum Ojit Singh alias Keikal (47).

Their arrest came within 72 hours of the Nambol incident where two Assam Rifles soldiers were gunned down, officials said.

Security agencies are also reportedly investigating whether the PLA has been operating with any political patronage and this scrutiny comes in the wake of another dominant insurgent group, the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), recently announcing a ceasefire and agreeing to participate in the Suspension of Operations (SOO) agreement already signed by 24 Kuki insurgent groups with the Union Home Ministry.

Officials indicated that certain vested interests were attempting to undermine President's rule — a measure that has led

to a cessation of the severe ethnic violence in the state.

These groups are pushing the narrative that the current administration is ineffective and that the suspended state assembly should be immediately restored, they said.

The Assam Rifles convoy ambush took place on September 19 in Nambol Sabal Leikai, a denotified tract where the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) Does not hold ground and the CRPF is usually in charge of road security.

Two men of the Assam Rifles, Naib Subedar Shyam Gurung and Rifleman Ranjit Singh Kashyap, died after the 407 Tata vehicle they were in was ambushed along the road from Patsoi to Nambol base.

This was the first attack against central security forces deployed in Manipur since ethnic violence broke out between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei people in May 2023.

Of the weapons recovered during the ongoing operations, officials indicated that six are likely looted from a police armoury during the earlier phase of ethnic clashes in 2023, suggesting that weapons originally intended for the communal



conflict are now making their way into the hands of insurgent groups and being used against security forces.

A van, suspected to have been used in the Nambol ambush, was also recovered from Mutum Yangbi, about 12 km from the site.

Thoungram Sadananda Singh, one of the accused arrested by the security forces, was a member of UNLF and had recently moved to the PLA after his pre-

vious group decided to lay down the arms, the officials said.

In an unusual turn, the PLA did not claim responsibility for the Nambol incident, despite a history of publicly owning all actions over its 48 years of existence. Reliable intelligence inputs suggest the PLA central leadership was not aware of or did not authorise the attack.

This has prompted the intelligence agencies to examine the possibilities that

the Nambol incident might have been a political contract killing, directed at tainting the state's brittle atmosphere, discrediting President's rule, or forestalling the revival of a popular regime, the officials added.

After the attack, an emergency high-level meeting presided over by Governor Ajay Bhalla was held to emphasise the importance of collective action from all security agencies to quickly identify the attackers and enhance security in soft spots, such as major highways and routes of transportation.

While the arrests are on, observers are sounding alarms over the revival of old banned outfits such as the aggrieved cadres of UNLF, PLA, Kanglei Yawol Kanba Lup (KYKL), and People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK).

The authorities have warned that the declaration of a truce may allow these groups, who have been labeled "heroes" by some, to redirect their arms against the same people that they purport to defend.

The UNLF, with an estimated disgruntled 250 cadres, is notorious for high-level extortion from contractors and businesspeople. The PLA, originally known as 'Polei,' seeks to liberate Ma-

nipur and establish an independent Meitei homeland in the Imphal Valley.

The KYKL, which is financed largely by extortion, is described as a mercenary organisation without a unified ideology, whereas the PREPAK finances itself by extorting commercial establishments, especially pharmacies, and has close associations with drug-trafficking operations.

Intelligence inputs suggest that Valley-Based Insurgent Groups (VBIGs) continue to maintain significant strength in the Imphal Valley and along the India-Myanmar border.

The PLA is estimated to have around 500 cadres, while PREPAK (both factions), KYKL-OKEN, UNLF-K, and KCP-NOYON have a combined strength of around 550. The Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) is believed to have around 900 cadres, and the National Revolutionary Front of Manipur (NRFM) approximately 200.

Manipur has been gripped by ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kukis since May 2023, rooted in disputes over land rights and political representation. The unrest has claimed over 260 lives and displaced nearly 50,000 people internally. (PTI)

Active NSCN(IM) cadre surrendered at Khonsa in Arunachal Pradesh



HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Oct 5: In a significant step towards peace and rehabilitation, a female cadre of the NSCN (IM) surrendered before Assam Rifles in Khonsa Town, Tirap District, Arunachal Pradesh.

The cadre has been identified as Shikngam Wangpan.

The surrender is the outcome of sustained and patient efforts by Assam Rifles troops, who maintained continuous engagement with the individual over several months.

Through consistent counselling, motivation, and moral support, the troops helped the cadre realize the futility of violence and guided

her towards a peaceful and dignified life.

Their humane approach and persistent persuasion ultimately convinced her to give up insurgency and embrace the mainstream.

The surrender reflects Assam Rifles' commitment to its dual role of maintaining security and fostering peace through dialogue and compassion. The Force continues to encourage misguided youth to shun violence and contribute positively to society.

Assam Rifles, true to its motto "Friends of the Hill People," remains dedicated to ensuring lasting peace, harmony, and development in the North East.

NHPC reaffirms commitment to sustainable growth through SUMP

ITANAGAR, Oct 5: The National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Ltd has reaffirmed its commitment to developing the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP) as a transformative initiative for Arunachal Pradesh, promising to balance hydropower generation with environmental preservation and community welfare, a statement said on Sunday.

NHPC officials gave the assurance during a consultative meeting held with representatives of the Adi Baane Kebang (ABK) and the Siang Indigenous Farmers' Forum (SIF) at the NHPC office at Pasighat in East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh on Saturday, it said.

The meeting, attended by leaders from community-based organisations and district officials, sought to address concerns and foster greater understanding of the SUMP, a national project declared by the Centre, the company statement said.

The project is envisioned as a major step toward ensuring flood moderation, water security, and renewable energy generation for the Siang basin, while promoting local development and long-term ecological stability.

Briefing the gathering, NHPC's general manager and head of Siang Lower Project Amar Nath Jha, underlined the project's far-reaching benefits.



"The SUMP is not just about generating power; it's about securing the future of Siang valley. Through open dialogue and collaboration with local communities, we aim to create a project that strengthens regional development while preserving the unique cultural and environmental heritage of Arunachal Pradesh," Jha said.

During the interaction, ABK President Tanon Tatak, SIFF President Amok Padung, and Secretary Likeng Libang raised several queries regarding project components, environmental impact, and rehabilitation measures.

Jha and his team provided detailed clarifications, stressing NHPC's readiness to work transparently with all stakeholders.

Tatak proposed further consultations with project affected families (PAFs) and later, a joint meeting involving the state government and NHPC officials to ensure a participatory decision-making process.

During the meeting, NHPC officials appealed to the ABK to support the pre-feasibility report (PFR) and help spread awareness among local communities about the project's importance.

RPP accused Nagaland govt of disregarding meritocracy in public service

HT Correspondent

DIMA PUR, Oct 5: The Rising Peoples Party (RPP) slammed the Nagaland government for allegedly disregarding the foundational principles of meritocracy and fair play in public service.

Accusing the NDPP-BJP coalition state government of persistent and brazen disregard to meritocracy and fair play, the RPP, in a release, said the recent deeply controversial move to induct non-cadre officers into the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is not merely an administrative misstep but a calculated and treacherous subversion of 'our governance architecture'.

It said time and again, the gov-

ernment service associations such as CANSSEA, FONSESA, NSSA, NIDA, and NF&ASA have voiced their resentment, only to be met with an arrogant and dismissive "damn care" attitude from the ruling People's Democratic Alliance government.

The party stated that this opposition-less government is now operating with an alarming sense of impunity.

"It has cast the rule book into the dustbin, replacing it with a culture of manipulation and favouritism that rewards political patronage over proven competence," it alleged.

The RPP said it had earlier appealed to the coalition's con-

science to spare the prestigious IAS from such backdoor entries. "Our pleas, like those of the service associations, have been ignored," it lamented.

According to the party, this opposition-less government is now offering a cascade of problems and misfortunes, calling it the 'demoralisation of our dedicated civil servants and the devaluation of our administrative fabric'.

Demanding immediate transparency, the RPP said the name of the non-Nagaland Civil Service officers shortlisted for this privileged induction, the process of their original entry into government service — circumventing the Nagaland Public Service Commission — and

the identity of their political patrons must be revealed in the public domain.

It said the people of Nagaland have a right to know the 'architects of this decay'.

The RPP asserted that it stands resolutely with CANSSEA, FONSESA, NSSA, NIDA, and NF&ASA in their fight for integrity.

It also called upon every citizen who believes in justice and good governance to reject this manipulative regime.

"Together, we shall restore a merit-based system, free from corrupt practices, and return power to the people, where it rightfully belongs," the party added.

IMD forecasts widespread rain, thunderstorms in Arunachal from today

ITANAGAR, Oct 5: The IMD has forecast widespread rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms across several districts of Arunachal Pradesh from Monday, with Tawang and West Kameng likely to experience very heavy precipitation.

According to a bulletin issued by the Meteorological Centre here, thunderstorms and very heavy rainfall ranging between 12-20 cm are likely to occur at isolated places in Tawang over the next 24 hours, while West Kameng is expected to experience heavy rainfall between 6-11 cm.

The IMD cautioned that the downpour could lead to temporary traffic disruption, poor visibility, and possible landslides or flash floods in hilly and low-lying areas.

The forecast for Monday indicates that rainfall activity will persist, with scattered to fairly widespread

rain likely in central and eastern districts, including Papum Pare, East Kameng, Kurung Kumey, Lower Subansiri and East Siang.

On Tuesday, rainfall is expected to remain moderate, confined mainly to parts of Papum Pare, East Kameng, and Changlang, while the western and central districts may see scattered rain and thundershowers, the bulletin said. The intensity of rain could increase slightly on Wednesday over East Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, and West Kameng, where thunderstorms with lightning are forecast.

Heavy rain lashed several parts of the northeastern state on Sunday, including West Siang, East Siang, Dibang Valley, and Papum Pare.

The IMD has urged farmers to postpone sowing activities, and use mulching materials to reduce soil erosion and seed displacement. (PTI)



RSS Namsai marks Vijayadashami with route march and public gathering

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, Oct 5: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Namsai, celebrated Vijayadashami Utsav, which also marks the foundation day of the organisation, with a route march and a public gathering on Sunday.

The event began with a ceremonial march from Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS), Namsai, to the Poi Pee Mau Heritage Site, followed by a public meeting held at Hochayan within the heritage complex.

According to an official statement, the occasion was graced by Arunachal Pradesh Prant Pracharak Kamlesh Kaurav, who addressed the gathering and elaborated on the objectives of the Sangh and its ongoing centenary missions.

He underscored the significance of Vijayadashami as a symbol of victory of good over evil and as a day that inspires service, unity, and dedication to national ideals.

Highlighting the Sangh's long-term vision, Kaurav spoke extensively about the five missions or Panch Parivartan undertaken by the RSS during its centenary year.

These include Sva-Bodh (self-awareness), Samajik Samrasta (social harmony), Kutumb Prabodhan (family enlightenment), Nagrik Shishtachar (civic sense), and Paryavaran (environmental protection).

Explaining Sva-Bodh, he said the mission focuses on promoting pride in India's rich cultural heritage while freeing the national consciousness from colonial-era mindsets.

It also emphasizes the principle of Swadeshi and the need for self-reliance to strengthen the nation from within.

On Samajik Samrasta, the RSS pracharak highlighted the organisation's commitment to fostering unity across all sections of society, particularly by reaching out to marginalized communities and co-



ordinating with other groups already working toward social equity.

The third mission, Kutumb Prabodhan, seeks to reinforce traditional family values and intergenerational bonding, which

the Sangh considers to be the bedrock of Indian social structure and cultural continuity.

Nagrik Shishtachar, or civic sense, is aimed at inspiring citizens to take responsibility for their surroundings and act with discipline

and social awareness in everyday life, he noted.

The final mission, Paryavaran, focuses on environmental protection and sustainable living.

Kaurav urged participants to adopt an eco-conscious lifestyle and to move away from excessive consumerism, advocating for a development model that balances progress with environmental care.

The route march and gathering witnessed participation from swayamsevaks, students, and members of the local community who reaffirmed their commitment to the Sangh's ideals of unity, service, and national rejuvenation.

The Vijayadashami celebration concluded with a pledge to continue promoting social harmony, self-reliance, and collective responsibility in line with the five transformation goals set forth by the RSS during its centenary observance, the official statement added.

Woman's decomposed body found in sack in Tripura's Khowai

AGARTALA, Oct 5: The decomposed body of a 37-year-old woman was found in a plastic sack in her house in Tripura's Khowai district, police said on Sunday.

After being alerted by villagers about a foul smell emanating from the house, a police team rushed to Maiganga, five km from Teliamura police station on Saturday night and recovered the decomposed body stuffed in a plastic sack.

"Circumstantial evidence suggests it was not a suicide case. It might be a murder, we have started an investigation to know the actual cause of death. A forensic team also visited the spot".

Officer in Charge (OC), Teliamura police station, Jayanta Dey told reporters.

He said the woman identified as Sharmista Modak (37) used to live in Dasda in North Tripura area after her marriage.

"After getting divorce from her husband, she had developed a relationship with a close relative, to which the woman's family had strong objection. Thereafter, the family did not maintain any relation with her", he said. The woman constructed a house at Maiganga and used to live alone, Dey said. (PTI)

No handshake policy followed by India Women at toss as Pakistan opt to bowl in World Cup tie



COLOMBO, Oct 5: On expected lines, India captain Harmanpreet Kaur did not shake hands with her Pakistan counterpart Fatima Sana during the toss for the Women's World Cup fixture, maintaining the trend set by the men's team in Asia Cup.

The BCCI had conveyed the players to avoid customary handshake with members of the Pakistani team. Mel Jones conducted the toss and both the captains maintained their distance during the ceremony. Pakistan won the toss and elected to field.

India, who enjoy an 11-0 record over Pakistan in the ODI format, made a forced change to their playing eleven with Renuka Singh replacing an injured Amanjot Kaur.

Pakistan replaced Omaira Sohali with Sadaf Shamas.

In the recently concluded men's Asia Cup, all three games between India and Pakistan took place in a hostile environment. India players did not shake hands before or after the game with the opposition.

Champions India also refused to

take the Asia Cup trophy from ACC president Mohsin Naqvi, who happens to be Pakistan Cricket Board chief and an interior minister in the government with a pronounced anti-India political position. The hostilities between the two neighbours are at an all-time high after the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 Indian tourists were gunned down by Pakistan-backed terrorists.

India had subsequently launched a military action under 'Operation Sindoor' to dismantle terror infrastructure across the border.

Teams:

Pakistan Women: Muneeba Ali, Sadaf Shamas, Sidra Amin, Rameen Shamim, Aliya Riaz, Sidra Nawaz (wk), Fatima Sana(c), Natalia Pervaiz, Diana Baig, Nashra Sandhu, Sadia Iqbal.

India Women: Pratika Rawal, Smriti Mandhana, Harleen Deol, Harmanpreet Kaur(c), Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh (wk), Sneha Rana, Renuka Singh Thakur, Kranti Gaud, Shree Charani. (PTI)

ICC WOMEN'S WORLD CUP Deol, Ghosh lift India to 247 against Pakistan

COLOMBO, Oct 5: Harleen Deol's composed 46-run knock and Richa Ghosh's spirited late cameo of 35 lifted India to a respectable 247 after Indian batters struggled to get going on a slow track in their World Cup clash against Pakistan here Sunday.

Deol's 65-ball knock provided some stability in the middle overs, while Ghosh's quickfire 20-ball effort pushed India near the 250-run mark.

Sent in to bat after the match referee erroneously ruled the toss in Pakistan's favour, India's top order faltered on a sluggish surface in a stop-start game that even saw interruptions for fumigation.

Captain Harmanpreet Kaur did not shake hands with her Pakistan counterpart Fatima Sana during the toss, continuing the trend set by the Indian men's team during their victorious Asia Cup campaign.

There were also several close calls and mix-ups in the middle that further disrupted momentum.

Opener Pratika Rawal (31) gave India a brisk start, smashing Diana Baig for three consecutive fours, but star batter Smriti Mandhana (23) once again fell inside the powerplay, putting the top order under early pressure.

After surviving an unsuccessful leg-before appeal off Baig, Mandhana was bowled in the 10th over by skipper Fatima Sana, who found the gap to rattle the leg stump.

The disciplined Pakistan bowlers kept the batters on a leash with tight lines and clever variations in pace, denying them any rhythm



and chipping away at regular intervals.

Pacers Baig (4/69) and Sana (2/38) did the maximum damage, sharing six wickets between them.

Rawal was next to go, her attempted cut shot brushing the top of the off stump.

Deol showed composure, stitching together a 39-run stand with skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (19) and then added 45 with Jemimah Rodrigues (32).

However, Harmanpreet fell to an inside edge just when she looked set, while Harleen, after doing the hard work by playing herself in, squandered the chance to push on in an attempt to hit a boundary.

Jemimah, who had an early reprieve on two after being caught off a no-ball, was the next to depart for 32 as Pakistan maintained relentless pressure.

Towards the end, the experienced pair of Deepti Sharma (25) and Sneha Rana (20) steadied the innings with a 42-run partnership.

But just as India looked poised for a late flourish, Sana and Baig returned in the death overs to dismiss both and snuff out any hopes of a strong finish.

Pakistan choked India in the death overs by picking five wickets but Richa broke the shackles, hitting three fours, including an audacious sweep, and a couple of sixes. (PTI)

Match referee goofs up at India-Pakistan toss



COLOMBO, Oct 5: In what looked like a mix up during the toss proceedings for India's Women's World Cup contest here on Sunday, match referee Shandre Fritz mistakenly declared Pakistan skipper Fatima Sana the winner.

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur flipped the coin, and Sana called "tails," but Fritz misheard it as "heads," a cue that presenter Mel Jones also followed.

The coin landed heads up, and the result went Pakistan's way, allowing the Women in Green to opt for bowling first under overcast conditions.

Harmanpreet, who didn't shake hands with Sana, also didn't react and approached Jones for a chat after the Pakistan skipper. (PTI)

Bhullar falters as Ormsby turns season around with play-off win

JAKARTA, Oct 5: Gaganjeet Bhullar's hopes of a sixth win in Indonesia were dashed on the final day as Australian Wade Ormsby defeated Scott Vincent from Zimbabwe on the first hole of a sudden-death play-off to claim the Jakarta International Championship here Sunday.

The 45-year-old Ormsby had gone into the final round tied on -11 with Vincent, the International Series Morocco victor, and 2023 BNI Indonesian Masters champion Bhullar.

Although Bhullar and Vincent both picked up a birdie on the first, the Indian dropped three shots on the front nine to fall away. Two early birdies after the turn gave the Indian hope, but two costly doubles on 15 and 18 dashed any hope he had.

That left Vincent and Ormsby in a play-off, and the man from Down Under triumphed after making a routine par on the par-four 18th, where Vincent found water with his second shot.

Both had finished on -12 with



one-under rounds as the nerves kicked in, one ahead of a packed bunch including Scott's younger

brother Kieran Vincent, Doyeob Mun of Korea and the Thai trio of Pavit Tangkamolprasert, Poom

Mpetshi Perricard upsets Fritz at Shanghai Masters

SHANGHAI, Oct 5: Big-serving Frenchman Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard upset fourth-ranked Taylor Fritz 6-4, 7-5 and advanced to the fourth round of the Shanghai Masters on Sunday.

Mpetshi Perricard sent down 12 aces, to Fritz's nine, and took a break in each set as he clinched his first tour victory against the American in one hour and 25 minutes to set up a last-16 meeting with 10th-seeded Holger Rune.

In other early matches Sunday, Rune beat 21st-seeded Ugo Humbert 6-4, 6-4, Zizou Bergs upset 19th-seeded Francisco Cerundolo 7-6 (1), 6-3 and the 31st-seeded Gabriel Diallo advanced by walkover after David Goffin retired early in the first set.

Jannik Sinner, who won the China Open in Beijing, was scheduled to play Tallon Griekspoor later Sunday in the third round.

Novak Djokovic was also on court later Sunday in his third-round match against Yannick Hanfmann. Djokovic is bidding for a record-extending fifth title at the Shanghai Masters.

Top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz, who won the Japan Open last week, is not in Shanghai due to minor ailments. (AP)

Valishetty secure maiden BWF super 100 title at Al Ain Masters

AL AIN (UAE), Oct 5: Young Indian shuttler Shriyanshi Valishetty clinched her maiden BWF Super 100 title in the women's singles category at the USD 120,000 Al Ain Masters, defeating compatriot Tasnim Mir in a pulsating three-game final here on Sunday.

The 18-year-old from Telangana, who trains at the Pullela Gopichand Academy, showed remarkable composure to fight back from a game down and prevail 15-21, 22-20, 21-7 in a 49-minute summit clash.

Valishetty squandered a four-point lead in the opening game as Tasnim rallied from 4-8 to 14-9, eventually pocketing the first game.

The second game turned into a neck-and-neck battle. Valishetty erased an early 1-4 deficit to go up 8-5 and later 17-14. Tasnim fought hard to stay in contention, but Valishetty held her nerve to take the contest into a decider. (PTI)

BWF World Juniors: Second seeds India begin campaign against Nepal, eye home glory

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: Bolstered by a formidable line-up featuring current and former junior world No.1s, second seeds India will begin their campaign against Nepal in the mixed team event of the BWF World Junior Badminton Championships, beginning at the National Centre of Excellence here on Monday.

Returning to India after a 17-year gap, the championships will be held in two phases from October 6 to 19 — the mixed team event for the Suhadinata Cup followed by the individual competition for the Eye-Level Cup.

Led by experienced campaigners Unnati Hooda and Rakshitha Sree, the Indian squad carries high hopes of a historic home performance, having secured the second seeding in the tournament.

India, placed in Group H alongside UAE, Sri

Lanka and Nepal, are favourites to top their group in the newly introduced best-of-three relay-scoring format, where each set will be played up to 45 points.

"We have been performing quite well in the junior events over the last few years with BAI giving enough exposure to the players as part of the preparation for the World Junior Championships in Guwahati.

"We are again expecting multiple medals this time around as most of the team members have been training at this very venue for the last year or so," said BAI general secretary Sanjay Mishra in a release.

India, who open against Nepal on Monday before facing Sri Lanka and UAE, could run into former champions South Korea in the knockout stage — a clash that could determine their medal

prospects. Fourteen-time winners China, holders Indonesia, Japan, Thailand and South Korea are expected to be the other strong contenders. Indonesia enter the event as the in-form team, having clinched the Asian Mixed Team title by defeating China in February. India had narrowly lost to Japan in the quarterfinals of that tournament.

India has so far won 11 individual medals at the World Juniors, their best showing coming in Pune 2008 with a gold and a bronze. The current contingent, however, has the potential to surpass that tally.

The country's best medal hopes lie in girls' singles, which features junior world No.1 and Asian U-19 bronze medalist Tanvi Sharma, Venalika K, China Open quarterfinalist Unnati Hooda, and Rakshitha Sree. (PTI)

Tanmay and Ajitesh: Once Kohli's U-19 lieutenants are on-field umpires for Australia A series

KANPUR, Oct 5: They were Virat Kohli's 'go to' boys 17 summers back when an India U-19 team became the toast of the nation by winning the World Cup in Kuala Lumpur.

Tanmay Srivastava now 35, and Ajitesh Argal, 37, might not have thought that they will be reunited on a cricket field again in an "international game" albeit as on-field umpires.

Argal, a medium pacer, was player of the final against South Africa in the U-19 World Cup while left-handed opener Srivastava had scored 262 runs in that tournament.

While Kohli continues to keep himself relevant on the 22 yards with his eyes trained on India's ODI series in Australia, his U-19 World Cup winning teammates Argal and Srivastava officiated the three India A games versus Australia A in Kanpur.

Srivastava had officiated during the last edition of IPL and prior to that he also worked as a talent

scout with the Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Both had passed their BCCI Umpiring Exam in 2023 and have already officiated in Ranji Trophy, Vijay Hazare, Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy and the Australia A series is their biggest assignment so far.

While Argal didn't have a great senior level career with only 10 first-class games. Srivastava though was a regular member of a very strong Uttar Pradesh team close to a decade playing 90 first-class games although he was never close to an India cap.

The level of domestic umpires hasn't exactly been great over the years with only Nitin Menon being a part of ICC's Elite Panel of umpires.

Although these are nascent days, both Argal and Srivastava would hope to perform consistently with an aim to first make it to the ICC Emirates Panel and then the Elite Panel. (PTI)

Akash bowled 29 overs (19 and 10) across both innings and took three wickets Dubey, Thakur shine as Vidarbha beat Rest of India by 93 runs to win Irani Cup

NAGPUR, Oct 5: Yash Dhull smashed his way to 92 but Vidarbha bowling unit proved too good for Rest of India as they comfortably won the Irani Cup by 93 runs here on Sunday.

Chasing a target of 361, Rest of India were all out for 267 in the second session of the fifth day with left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey (4/73) and pacer Yash Thakur (2/47) doing bulk of the damage.

Vidarbha now have played three Irani Cup games and won all three. Credit would go to Dubey and Thakur -- both of whom had a match-haul of six wickets and did well enough to get majority of the 20 Rest of India wickets across two innings.

Rest had slumped to 133 for six during the first session on the final morning but it was Dhull and Manav Suthar (56), who got Rest of India back in the game with a 104-run stand for the seventh wicket stand.

However it was Thakur who put paid to Rest's hopes of an improbable win when Dhull tried to slash him but Atharva Taide at deep third man boundary took a well-judged catch inches inside the boundary ropes.

The dismissal was followed by an ugly incident where bowler Thakur and Delhi man Dhull nearly came to exchanging blows after the former had given the batter a rather rude send off. The two umpires and Vidarbha



fielders came between them to calm things but both will get some sort of sanction from the match referee.

Off the very next ball, Thakur cleaned up Akash Deep and before Dubey, last year's highest wicket-taker in Ranji Trophy, ended the game in style.

"Vidarbha played well and were deserving winners. If we had applied ourselves in a better way, after assessing the conditions, I

think we could have come close to the total," Rest of India skipper Rajat Patidar said after the end of the match.

For Vidarbha, Atharva Taide, who scored 143 in their first essay and took a timely catch to dismiss danger man Dhull was adjudged player of the match.

"Last couple of seasons weren't great for me. But this season, I prepared very well. I wanted to make an impact for my team and

starting the season with the Irani Cup had been better than this.

"So all this evening is for VCA. Everybody, my coach, selector, everybody who's back me throughout the season is for them," said Taide.

The national selectors, who are looking at the overall picture, also would be happy that Akash Deep looked fully fit having recovered from his shoulder injury suffered during the Oval Test against England in August.

Akash bowled 29 overs (19 and 10) across both innings and took three wickets. He looked sharp during his first spell.

On the batting front, Abhimanyu Easwaran's poor track record of not being able to win crucial knock-out games for his team continued despite scoring a half-century in the first innings.

Easwaran was dismissed in identical fashion across both innings.

An arm ball from a left-arm spinner -- Parth Rekhade in the first essay and Harsh Dubey in the second dig ended his stay.

Both times he went on the backfoot and was caught plumb in-front.

Brief Scores: Vidarbha: 342 and 232.

Rest of India: 214 and (target 361): 267 all out in 73.5 overs (Yash Dhull 92, Manav Suthar 56, Harsh Dubey 4/73 and Yash Thakur 2/47). (PTI)

USA rout India 5-0 in Checkmate event



NEW DELHI, Oct 5: Hikaru Nakamura stunned world champion D Gukesh as India were whitewashed 0-5 by USA in the first Checkmate, an evening of chess presented as a live arena spectacle in Arlington, USA.

While the match had many tense moments and players from both teams created winning chances, USA rose up to the occasion and scored several clutch wins. Playing with black pieces, the Indians suffered a rough loss and would look to bounce back with white pieces in the return match in the second leg in India. While Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi lost to Fabiano Caruana, Grandmaster Divya Deshmukh suffered shock defeat at the hands of International Master Carissa Yip.

International master Levy Rozman then defeated Sagor Shah before chess prodigy Ethan Vaz lost to International master Tami Adewumi. (PTI)