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Educated people can be extremists too: Himanta

Only Assamese people will keep Zubeen Garg's legacy alive'

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said that it has been proved by the Delhi blast that educated people can be extremists too.

Several doctors have been suspected of being involved in the explosion that ripped through a slow-moving car near Delhi's Red Fort area, killing 12 people and injuring several others, on Monday.

'It is no longer true that educated people cannot be extremists. But if they get involved in such activities, they can be more dangerous and if they become doctors, they can be even more dangerous,' the chief minister said on the sidelines of a programme here.

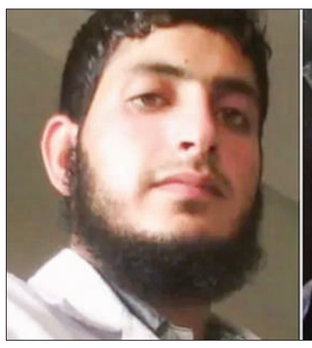
Apparently referring to Muslims, Sarma said that it was often discussed in the assembly that people from certain communities did not receive education, and so they were drawn into or used for such subversive activities.

But it has been now proved wrong that education cannot be a guarantee against such activities, the CM said.

'The Delhi blast has proved that it is not the illiterate but the educated who have carried out jihad, and a section in Assam, instead of condemning the incident, have posted emojis or posts welcoming the incident to make the situation worse in the state,' he asserted. This shows that *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Delhi blast: Arrested doctor recced Red Fort many times in Jan

Key suspects went to Turkiye: Sources



NEW DELHI, Nov 12: An analysis of dump data retrieved from the mobile phone of Dr Muzammil Ganaie, who was arrested after police busted a white-collar terror module recently, showed that he conducted multiple reconnaissances of the Red Fort area in January this year, officials said.

Police said they suspect these recesses were part of a larger conspiracy to target the historic monument on Republic Day, but were foiled due to intensified patrolling in the area at the time.

During investigation, it was found that two of the key suspects, Dr Umar, who was driving the Hyundai i20 car that exploded, and Muzammil, had travelled to Turkey. Sources said the investigators have found Turkish immigration stamps in their passports and are examining whether the two met any foreign based handler during their trip.

Delhi Police also sounded an alert across all police stations, posts, and border checkpoints in the city to trace a red Ford EcoSport car suspected to be linked to the Red Fort blast case, sources said.

The alert was issued after the investigation revealed that other suspects, already connected to the Hyundai i20 used in the explosion, were also in possession of another red-coloured car.

Hours after police busted the terror module with links to proscribed Jaish-e-Mohammed and Ansar *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Five held in Assam for spreading 'inflammatory' content online

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: Five people have been arrested in Assam for allegedly spreading "offensive and inflammatory" content online in connection with the recent Delhi blast, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Wednesday.

He said the state police would continue to act "swiftly and firmly against anyone misusing social media to spread hatred or glorify terror".

"In connection with the recent Delhi blast, Assam Police has arrested five individuals for spreading offensive and inflammatory content online," the chief minister posted on X. The arrested persons are Mattiur Rahman *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

CM distributes cheques under Zero Cost Employee Insurance Scheme

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: In a bid to strengthen the social security net for state government employees, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday presented insurance benefit cheques to seven families under the Zero Cost Employee Insurance Scheme.

The Assam government has introduced the Zero Cost Employee Insurance Scheme which is aimed at providing comprehensive insurance coverage to all permanent regular government employees without any financial burden on them.

The scheme covers air accidental insurance of ₹ 2 crore, personal accidental insurance of ₹ 1 crore, permanent total disability coverage up to ₹ 1 crore, permanent partial disability coverage up to ₹ 80 lakh and term life insurance of ₹ 10 lakh. The CM presented cheques to four families of ₹ 1 crore each under personal accidental insurance, two *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

AGP calls for immediate implementation of Clause 6 of Assam Accord & ST status of 6 ethnic groups

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 12: The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) has renewed its demand for the immediate implementation of Clause 6 of the historic Assam Accord, emphasizing the need to protect the political, cultural, and constitutional rights of the indigenous people of Assam.

In a meeting held on October 24 and 25, 2025, under the leadership of Asom Gana Parishad President and Cabinet Minister Atul Bora, senior party members, MLAs, and district representatives discussed several key issues concerning the people of Assam.

One of the main resolutions passed during the meeting was to urge the Central Government to take prompt action toward implementing Clause 6 in its true spirit.

The Asom Gana Parishad leadership stated that despite multiple assurances, the recommendations made by the High-Level Committee on Clause 6 have not yet been executed, creating widespread resentment among the people. The party called upon the Government of India to fulfill its commitment at the earliest.

"The committee formed by the Asom Gana Parishad with the indigenous Matak community has contacted the President of All Assam Matak Sammelan, the frontline organization of the Matak community, an exchange meeting was held today at the Gymkhana Club in Dibrugarh to decide and strengthen coordination among the party's various wings, including the Asom Gana Parishad Youth, Women, and Students' wings, to intensify the movement for indigenous rights," stated AGP press release.

Expressing strong concern, AGP leaders reiterated that the party, born out of the Assam Movement, would continue to stand firm on its founding principles and ensure justice for the people of Assam as envisioned in the Assam Accord.

The AGP also announced that they fully support the demand for tribalization of the six ethnic groups of Assam.

The meeting also charged the party MPs and MLAs to exchange views with the six ethnic groups and reiterate their support.

A committee comprising the MPs and MLAs was formed with the six ethnic groups for consultation meetings in this regard.

Rajya Sabha MP, former Union Minister Birendra Prasad Baishya; MP from Barpeta Lok Sabha constituency Phanibhushan Chowdhury; AGP MLA Poonakan Baruah, former

MLA Bhaben Borah, MLA Prithiraj Rabha and other top leadership of the Asom Gana Parishad party along with President / General Secretary of All Assam Matak Sanmilan, All Assam Matak Yuva-Satra Sanmilan, All Assam Matak Mahila Parishad, All Assam Matak Yuva-Satra Parishad and All Assam Matak Students Union were present in the meeting.

AGP hope that the meeting will definitely move the demand for tribalization of indigenous Matak community in the right direction.

New military station in Assam to boost border security, intelligence: Experts

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: Amid apprehensions of increased cross-border crimes, activities by fundamentalist groups and alleged attempts by the Bangladesh caretaker government to create "pressure" on the 'chicken's neck' corridor that connects the North East with the rest of India, the upcoming army base in Assam has assumed special significance, experts said.

Such a facility will boost border security and help the authorities concerned enhance intelligence, they said.

Barely 40 km from the international border with Bangladesh, the Lachit Borphukan Military Station is being set up by the Indian Army at Bamunigaon in Assam's Dhubri district – the first one in the western sector of the state.

Lieutenant General RC Tiwari, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command, laid the foundation stone for the facility last week during a visit to forward areas.

"The decision to set up the camp is a welcome one due to the prevailing situation in Bangladesh," Brigadier (retd) Ranjit Kumar Borthakur told PTI.

The closest military camps were previously in Cooch Behar in West Bengal and Tamulpur in Assam.

"The one in Dhubri will help the Army in strengthening its intelligence network, be it human or signal intelligence," he said.

Defence spokesperson Lt Col. Mahendra Rawat underscored the importance of the camp and said that it will enhance operational capabilities and infrastructure of the Indian Army in the region.

"It will help monitor activities in the area and also lend an additional sense of security to the locals," he said.

The new military station under the Tezpur-based 4 Corps will be able to house 1,200-1,500 personnel, and pre-fabricated huts are being installed for early completion of the facility, another Army official said.

"The land was handed over by the Assam government within one or two months, and work is on to operationalise the facility at the earliest. A para-commando unit will also be stationed there," he added.

"The Lachit Borphukan Military Station stands as a testament to the synergy between the armed forces and the state administration, reflecting the shared vision of national security and regional development," Lt Col. Rawat emphasised.*(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

CM urges GMC to prioritise women SHGs in trade licence policy

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday launched the distribution of cheques to 17,680 members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the Mukhyamantrir Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan at a programme held at the Veterinary College playground, Khanapara, Guwahati.

The beneficiaries include 7,625 women from Dispur, 5,933 from Guwahati Central, and 4,122 from New Guwahati constituencies.

On the occasion, the chief minister also launched the distribution of cheques under the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jati Abhyuday Yojana (PM–AJAY), under which Scheduled Caste women SHGs will receive ₹50,000 each to promote skill development and entrepreneurship.

The scheme is expected to benefit 12,000 Scheduled Caste families and SHGs across the state.

In his address, Sarma said Assam has made remarkable progress in the field of women empowerment, emerging as a model state through initiatives such as Orunodoi, Mukhyamantrir Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan, and Nijut Moina.

He said the government has also taken firm measures to curb child marriage and crimes against women and is moving ahead with the process of enacting a law to prohibit polygamy in the state.

"These initiatives reflect the government's deep sense of gratitude towards the women of Assam and our commitment to ensuring dignity, education, and opportunity for all," the chief minister said. "When women are empowered, society undergoes positive transformation," he added.

Sarma said that along with infrastructure projects like bridges over the Brahmaputra and flyovers across the state, welfare schemes have transformed the lives of poor and underprivileged communities.

He said the Orunodoi scheme has brought dignity and financial inclusion to nearly 40 lakh women, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to their families.

Referring to the Mukhyamantrir Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan, Sarma said the initiative aims to help SHG members become Lakhpati Baideus.

Citing the example of Pushpa Das from the Chandraprabha SHG under Chandrapur Development Block, who expanded her tea stall into a restaurant, he said her story represents the spirit of women's entrepreneurship the scheme seeks to promote.

He informed that women who effectively use the initial seed capital of ₹10,000 would be eligible to receive ₹25,000 and subsequently ₹50,000 in the next phases.

The chief minister also advised beneficiaries to maintain a balanced family size for better care and education of their children.

Sarma urged the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) to frame a policy *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Heroin worth around ₹1.3 cr seized, 2 women held

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: In two operations of drug haul, heroin worth nearly ₹ 1.3 crore was seized and two women were arrested from the capital city of Assam, police said on Wednesday.

Acting on a tip-off, a raid was conducted at Khanapara in the Basistha Police Station limits this morning, and a woman was apprehended, Guwahati Police said in a post on X.

The 47-year-old woman hails from Churachandpur in Manipur, it added.

"Recovered: 12 soap boxes containing heroin weighing 138 grams (without soap boxes) and one mobile phone. Legal action initiated," the police said.

In another operation in the jurisdiction of *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Woman ward member disqualified for child marriage

NAGAON, Nov 12: A woman ward member in Nagaon district of Assam was disqualified and removed from her office for her marriage 14 years ago when she was allegedly a minor, according to an official order on Wednesday.

The Chief Executive Officer of Nagaon Zilla Parishad carried out an enquiry, which found that Mahguri Gaon Panchayat Ward Member Farida Yeasmin married at the age of 15 years, Nagaon District Commissioner said in its order. She was born on October 30, 1995, and got married on September 10, 2011, in accordance with Islamic rituals.

A court order in a domestic violence case involving the woman also stated that she was married when she was a minor, the official order said.

It said that the act constituted a violation of the Assam Panchayat Act, 1994 and the Assam Panchayat (Constitution) Rules, 1995.

"Farida Yeasmin, elected member of Ward No. 1, Mahguri Gaon Panchayat under Juria Development Block, is hereby disqualified and removed from the office of the Ward Member with immediate effect," Nagaon DC said in his order.

During his Independence Day speech this year, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said that his government is on the path to eradicate child marriage completely from the state by 2026.

He had said that because of operations against child marriage since 2021, more than 6,500 cases were registered and charge-sheets have been filed in 95 per cent of the cases. *(PTI)*

Zubeen's pictures were absent during Muslim congregation : Himanta

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: In the wake of singer Zubeen Garg's death and the recent blast in Delhi, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has urged the people of Assam to take collective responsibility in preserving the late artist's legacy, calling it a moral and cultural duty of every Assamese.

Sarma said that many citizens had reminded him that the task of keeping the cultural icon's memory alive rests solely with the Assamese community. He noted how, during Durga Puja, Raas and Lakshmi Puja celebrations, several Hindu households across the state displayed Zubeen Garg's photographs at pandals as a mark of respect. However, he pointed out that such *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Sikkim to host 13th edition of Int'l Tourism Mart from Nov 13-16

NEW DELHI, Nov 12: The thirteenth edition of the International Tourism Mart (ITM), seeking to showcase the tourism potential of the northeast region, will be held from November 13 to 16 in Sikkim's Gangtok, officials said on Wednesday.

Hosted by the Ministry of Tourism, the mart will be inaugurated by the Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, in the presence of Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, and Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu, along with tourism ministers of the northeastern states and senior officials from the Ministry of Tourism and state governments, officials added.

The ITM is an annual flagship event of the Centre, designed to showcase the tourism potential of the northeastern region - the 'Ashta Lakshmi' of India - to both domestic and international audiences, the ministry said.

The event seeks to highlight the region's rich natural beauty, cultural diversity, and adventure tourism opportunities, while promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism development.

The choice of the location for the latest edition reaffirms the ministry's commitment to positioning the northeast as a preferred destination for eco-tourism, wellness, culture, and adventure, the officials said.

Hosting the event in Gangtok holds special significance, as Sikkim has earned national and international acclaim as a model of sustainable and responsible tourism.

With its pristine landscapes, organic farming practices, spiritual heritage, and vibrant local culture, Sikkim represents the ideals of community-led and environmentally conscious tourism that the ministry seeks to promote across the country, the ministry said in a statement.

The mart is being organised in alignment with the ministry's Travel for Life initiative.

The ITM will witness participation from across the globe, with representatives from approximately 19 countries, including Spain, *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

Ruddy Shelducks and Seagulls sighted for the first time in Dima Hasao

Migratory Amur Falcons arrive in Umrongso

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Nov 12: The arrival of migratory Amur Falcons has been reported from the New Tumbung area under the Garampani Forest Range of Umrongso in Dima Hasao district, marking the start of their seasonal migration through the region.

In view of the birds' arrival, the District Magistrate has imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023 (erstwhile Section 144 CrPC) in the roosting area, banning the capture, killing, or disturbance of Amur Falcons by humans or predators. The order warns that violators will face strict legal action.

In a first for the district, a flock of Ruddy Shelducks and Seagulls has also been sighted at the NEEPCO

water reservoir near the Amur Falcon roosting site, creating excitement among bird watchers and wildlife enthusiasts.

Meanwhile, forest personnel have intensified round-the-clock patrolling to ensure the safety of the migratory birds. Bird lovers and ornithologists have begun visiting the area to witness the seasonal spectacle.

On Tuesday evening, a team from the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, led by CEM Debolal Gorlosa, ceremonially welcomed the "winged guests" and held an awareness meeting on the protection of migratory species.

Officials recalled that in the past, the birds were hunted for sport and meat due to a lack of awareness. However, sustained campaigns by the Forest Department, NGOs, and social activists have successfully curbed the killings, ensuring safe passage for the birds through Dima Hasao.

The Amur Falcon, a small raptor of the falcon family, breeds in south-eastern Siberia and northern China and migrates annually across India and the Arabian Sea to South Africa. The species is known to stop in Umrongso during this long migratory *(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)*

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Stock markets end higher for 3rd day on strong global cues

MUMBAI, Nov 12: Stock market benchmarks Sensex and Nifty stayed firm for the third consecutive day and ended with sharp gains on Wednesday, buoyed by massive buying in IT and consumer durables shares amid a rally in global equities markets.

Traders said optimism over the anticipated resolution of the US government shutdown and growing expectations of interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve also bolstered the sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 595.19 points, or 0.71 per cent, to settle at 84,466.51. It gained up to 780.69 points or 0.93 per cent to hit an intraday high of 84,652.01.

The broader NSE Nifty climbed 180.85 points, or 0.70 per cent, to close at 25,875.80. During the session, it jumped 239.6 points or 0.93 per cent to hit a high of 25,934.55.

"The Nifty extended its winning streak for the third consecutive session, rising 180 points to close at 25,875, supported by optimism over a potential trade deal with the United States. The index opened with a robust 140-point gap and sustained its upward momentum throughout the day.

"Additionally, exit polls indicating that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is poised to retain power in Bihar further lifted investor sentiment," Nandish Shah - Deputy Vice President, HDFC Securities, said.

From the Sensex pack, Asian Paints, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finserv, Adani Ports, HCL Technologies, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, Trent, Reliance Industries, UltraTech Cement, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Eternal, Titan and Bajaj Finance were the gainers.

On the other hand, Tata Steel, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, Tata Motors Commercial Vehicles, Bharat Electronics, Kotak Mahindra Bank and PowerGrid were the laggards.

"Global equities rallied on renewed risk appetite, driven by optimism over the anticipated resolution of the US government shutdown and growing expectations of early Fed cuts amid signs of a cooling US labour market," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

Nair noted that emerging markets outperformed, reflecting the improvement in global sentiment.

"Indian indices mirrored this strength, with large-cap stocks leading gains, particularly in the auto, IT, and pharma sectors. Supportive domestic macro fundamentals -- including easing CPI and WPI inflation, a strong GDP outlook, and healthy H2 earnings expectations -- continue to underpin positive market momentum," he said.

The BSE largecap soared 0.63 per cent. Midcap gauge went up by 0.44 per cent while smallcap closed 0.76 per cent higher.

Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking, said: "The rally was fuelled by optimism over improving trade dialogue prospects between India and the US, coupled with encouraging Q2 earnings from key corporates that further lifted investor sentiment".

Among sectoral indices, Focused IT climbed by 1.97 per cent, IT by 1.95 per cent, Services by 1.13 per cent, Teck 1.77 per cent, Consumer Durables by 1.86 per cent, Auto by 1.15 per cent, Telecommunication by 1.23 per cent, Consumer Discretionary by 1.09 per cent, Energy by 0.85 per cent, and Healthcare by 0.76 per cent.

On the other hand, Realty and Utilities closed lower while Metal ended on a flat note.

A total of 2,509 stocks advanced while 1,701 declined and 163 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Hong Kong's Hang Seng, Japan's Nikkei 225 benchmark ended higher while Shanghai's SSE Composite Index closed in the negative zone.

Markets in Europe were trading largely higher. The US markets closed higher on Tuesday.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.84 per cent to USD 64.61 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FII) offloaded equities worth ₹ 803.22 crore on Tuesday while Domestic Institutional Investors bought stocks worth ₹ 2,188.47 crore, according to the exchange data.

On Tuesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 335.97 points to settle at 83,871.32, while the NSE Nifty climbed 120.60 points to close at 25,694.95.

Meanwhile, the latest government data released on Wednesday showed retail inflation in the country slipped to a multi-year low of 0.25 per cent in October, driven by the impact of the GST rate cut and subdued prices of vegetables and fruits.

The consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation was 1.44 per cent in September and 6.21 per cent in October 2024.

According to the data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO), the food inflation declined to (-) 5.02 per cent in October.

The decline in headline inflation and food inflation during October 2025 was mainly attributed to the whole month's impact of GST rate cut, favourable base effect, and a drop in inflation of oils and fats, vegetables, fruits, egg, footwear, cereals and products, transport and communication, the NSO said. (PTI)

Canon unveils next-generation imageFORCE series

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: Canon India, a leader in digital imaging solutions on Wednesday announced the launch of the imageFORCE C5100 colour seriesand 6100 mono series, a groundbreaking line of multi-function devices (MFDs) meticulously designed to meet the everevolving needs of the modern workplace.

This next generation of MFDs seeks to make business move with enhanced capabilities across four key pillars: Security, Reliability, Connectivity, and Sustainability.

From intelligent automation that simplifies your workflow to advanced security features that protect your valuable data, the imageFORCE series consisting of the C5100 colourseries, 6100 mono series deliver a powerful and intuitive experience that helps businesses accomplish more effortlessly.

Speaking on the launch, Toshiaki Nomura, President & CEO, Canon India said, "Office automation in India is undergoing a transformative shift as organizations increasingly seek smarter, connected, and secure solutions to elevate efficiency in today's dynamic and digitally driven work environments. At Canon India, our commitment has always been to empower customers with technology that not only drives productivity but also champions data security and sustainability. The new imageFORCE series is a testament to this vision, infused with AI-driven intelligence that intuitively learns user behaviours, anticipates needs, and ensures seamless operationsto accelerate service responsiveness. With this launch, we are set to further reinforce our pioneering role in the MFD category, strengthen our position in the information technology ecosystem, and enable businesses to unlock higher efficiency, agility, and long-term value in their digital transformation journey."

ASSOCIATE SIGNALLING WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH BG THROUGH TURNOUT RENEWAL

E-Tender No. SNT-29-LMG-2025-26; Dated: 10-11-2025. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work. **Name of work & its Location:** Associate signalling works in connection with BG Through turnout renewal (without sleepers) (Total-137 sets) in Guwahati - Lumding and BG Through turnout renewal (with sleepers) (Total- 32 sets) in Lumding - Jamguri section (Grand Total- 169 sets) under the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN/I/Lumding. **Tender Value:** ₹52,14,408.14; **Bid Security:** ₹1,04,300.00; E-tender will be **Closed** at 15:00 hrs. on 03-12-2025 and **Opened** at 15:30 hrs. on 03-12-2025. For details visit: www.ireps.gov.in.

Sr. DSTE, Lumding

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

"Serving Customers with a smile"

Restaurant owners' association piloting new commission model with food aggregators to grow business

KOLKATA, Nov 12: An association of restaurant owners has taken up a pilot project for a new partnership with food aggregators to create an "equitable financial structure" for restaurateurs and address issues like long-distance delivery charges, an official said.

National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) Kolkata chapter head Piyush Kankaria told PTI that the new initiative is designed to ensure that delivery commissions and long-distance fees do not unfairly burden restaurant operators.

"We are piloting a new commission structure in which long-distance fees will not impact restaurant owners. Ultimately, both aggregators and restaurants need to coexist. We may not like certain aspects of dealing with aggregators, but we can't do without them. They are unavoidable partners in today's restaurant business," Kankaria explained.

He said the ongoing pilot project reflects a "broader attempt to rebalance the economics of online food delivery and foster a healthier business relationship between restaurants and aggregators".

"The relationship is challenging but essential for the industry's functioning," he said.

Speaking about the ongoing conflict with aggregators, Kankaria stressed the importance of maintaining an open and transparent communication channel between restaurant owners and aggregators.

"We need to ensure that all issues are resolved amicably. The goal is a win-win for both of us — that's very crucial," he said. Referring to progress made through dialogues, the NRAI official cited a recent breakthrough with Zomato.

"For the first time, Zomato has introduced an option in its app asking customers if they are willing to share their data with restaurants. Earlier, no customer data was shared. This small step shows how collaboration can bring positive change," he said.

Describing aggregators as "a vital part of the ecosystem", Kankaria said their role in convenience and reach cannot be overlooked.

"It's impossible to live without them. They are solving real problems, and we have to grow together. If they grow, we grow — it has to be a mutual relationship," he added.

Highlighting the inclusive approach of the association, he said the NRAI gives equal importance to both new and established businesses.

"Inclusivity is very important. Even a small restaurant owner or a single-outlet operator is as important to us as a legacy brand. If new entrants don't get the right support system, how will the industry grow?" he asked.

He underscored the food and beverage sector's contribution to employment and revenue generation.

"Our industry is the second-largest employer in the country and contributes significantly to GDP and GST revenues. That's why we are pushing for industry status for the F&B sector nationally," he said. Kankaria noted that while "industry status" may not directly impact GST input benefits, it would enhance visibility, ease access to capital, and ensure more industry-friendly policymaking.

"When we are recognised at the policy level, governments will also think for us — for the betterment of our industry," he said.

Kankaria said NRAI continues to act as a bridge between restaurants and platforms, ensuring the voices of small and large operators alike are heard at the national level.

"We are co-piloting solutions and advocating fairness and sustainability. That's how the industry can truly thrive," he said. (PTI)

NTPC inks two pacts in Assam; to build burn ICU at KMCH, support TB patients

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: State-run power major NTPC on Wednesday inked two agreements in the healthcare sector in Assam to build a burn ICU at Kokrajhar Medical College and Hospital, and provide nutritional support to TB patients.

To improve public healthcare facilities and community well-being in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), NTPC Bongaigaon has signed two Memorandums of Agreement (MoAs) with the Kokrajhar district administration under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

In a statement, the country's largest power producer said that it will construct a six-bed Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in the burn unit at Kokrajhar Medical College and Hospital (KMCH).

The other project is nutritional support for 200 TB patients under the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan in the district.

"The first MoA, a tripartite agreement between NTPC, the district administration and KMCH, envisages the creation of a modern six-bedded burn ICU with advanced life-support systems, infection-control facilities and essential medical equipment at a project cost of ₹ 1.47 crore," the statement said.

The facility will enhance KMCH's capacity to handle critical burn injury cases and provide tertiary care for patients across BTR and adjoining districts.

"The project, to be completed within 12 months, includes procurement and installation of specialised medical equipment, HVAC and oxygen pipeline systems, and state-of-the-art patient monitoring infrastructure," it added.

The second MoA focuses on providing nutritional support to 200 TB patients across the district for a period of six months.

"With a total project cost of ₹ 13.44 lakh, the initiative will supply monthly food and protein supplements to registered TB patients under the PM TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan, supporting faster recovery and treatment adherence for a period of six months," NTPC said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Migratory Amur Falcons

journey. Males are dark grey with reddish-brown thighs, under-tail coverts, and orange eye-rings, while females are paler with scaly white underparts and an orange eye-ring. The birds primarily feed on termites and other insects, and are believed to prey on migrating dragonflies during their trans-oceanic flight.

Sikkim to host

Thailand, France, Russia, Germany, Vietnam and others, it said.

The event will bring together 39 international tour operators, 50 domestic buyers, and 91 domestic sellers, among others, they said.

The mart will feature a series of technical sessions, panel discussions, product presentations, and business-to-business meetings aimed at fostering collaboration between domestic and international tourism stakeholders.

Discussions with state tourism departments' officials will focus on cinematic tourism, homestays, youth entrepreneurship, digital innovation, sustainability, and adventure tourism, the officials said.

The event will also include cultural performances along with technical visits to significant sites in and around Gangtok, such as the Rumtek Monastery, Do Drul Chorten, and Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, they said.

Product presentations will highlight the region's potential across diverse segments such as wildlife and river cruise tourism, festivals and celebrations, heritage and crafts, culinary traditions, and adventure experiences.

With its serene landscapes, vibrant communities, and exemplary commitment to sustainability, Sikkim provides the perfect backdrop for this landmark event, symbolising the spirit of unity in diversity and the promise of responsible tourism-driven development, it said. (PTI)

CM urges GMC

giving priority to women SHGs in granting trade licences in suitable commercial areas.

Observing that despite 3–4 lakh women living in Guwahati, no constituency has yet covered more than 10,000 beneficiaries under the scheme, he directed the GMC to expand its coverage to reach more women.

The event was attended by Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Water Resources Minister Pijush Hazarika, PHE Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah, MP Bijuli Kalita Medhi, MLAs Atul Bora and Siddhartha Bhattacharyya, GMC Mayor Mrigen Sarania, Additional Chief Secretary B. Kalyan Chakravarthy, GMC Commissioner M.S. Lakshmipriya, and ASRLM Mission Director Kuntalmoni Sharma Bordoloi, among others.

Heroin worth around

he same police station, a raid was conducted at a rented house in Khanapara locality on the basis of an intelligence input, the police said.

A woman was arrested and the police recovered two tobacco boxes containing 22 grams of heroin, three stolen mobile phones and ₹ 13,000 in cash, a senior officer said.

The total value of the seized drugs will be around ₹ 1.28 crore as per the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) standards, he added. (PTI)

Zubeen's pictures were

gestures were absent during Muslim congregations like Ijtema, which are also considered religious assemblies or "Dharma Sabhas."

"This clearly shows that only the Assamese people — those who feel an emotional bond with Zubeen Garg's art and his ideals — can truly keep his legacy alive," Sarma said, adding that individuals driven by suspicion or sectarian views cannot honour the artist's spirit.

The Chief Minister reiterated his appeal for peace and unity, urging citizens to reject divisive ideologies and reaffirm their cultural roots. "Zubeen Garg symbolised the emotions and aspirations of every Assamese. Preserving his legacy means preserving the soul of Assam," Sarma said.

New military station

Stressing its significance from a security aspect, Brig. (retd) Borthakur said, "Since the caretaker government has come into power in Bangladesh, their attitude has tremendously hardened against India. And there is the nexus with Pakistan. The frequent high-level visits of politicians as well as defence ministry personnel from Pakistan are of great concern."

He also mentioned statements by Bangladesh caretaker government's chief Muhammad Yunus regarding India, especially his comments on the Siliguri corridor or 'chicken's neck', and allowing China to activate Lalmonirhat airfield in the neighbouring country, which is close to this 22-km corridor that serves as the link between the North East and the rest of India.

"The Siliguri corridor is always important to us, and we are fully prepared for any situation. However, we can be more active in this regard," the retired brigadier added.

He said that while border management is being done "adequately by BSF and other agencies, the Army has to develop intelligence abilities, including signal and human intelligence, and the new Dhubri camp will be helpful".

Smuggling, illegal migration, cattle smuggling and increased threat of fundamentalists' activities are longstanding concerns from Bangladesh for India, Borthakur added.

"The new camp is a good step in ensuring more preparedness by the security forces," he emphasised.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had, in June, said that the state government was exploring an option to set up a permanent base of the Army to strengthen the security apparatus in the 'sensitive' Dhubri district, following communal tension in the aftermath of Eid-ul-Zuha festival. (PTI)

CM distributes cheques

families of ₹ 10 lakh each under group term life insurance, while one family received insurance amount under permanent partial disability coverage.

Building on the success of the scheme, the state government extended the same benefits to contractual and PSU employees and a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed with the Axis Bank Ltd, formalising the inclusion of these employee categories under the Zero-Cost Employee Insurance Scheme, with benefits identical to those of regular employees.

The chief minister said that the insurance scheme underscores the state government's continued commitment to ensuring financial security and dignity for its employees and their families.

The scheme has so far enrolled over four lakh government employees across the state and a total of 238 claims have been reported, out of which 203 claims have been settled, bringing timely financial support to bereaved families, he said.

Out of the total settlement, 193 families have received ₹ 10 lakh each under group term life insurance and 10 families have received Rs 1 crore each under personal accidental insurance.

'The Zero-Cost Employee Insurance Scheme was envisaged to provide comprehensive insurance coverage free of cost to all permanent and regular government employees with the facility now extended to the contractual and PSU employees,' the chief minister added.

The initiative is being implemented by the Finance Department in coordination with all departments, with treasury officers designated as Nodal Officers for effective rollout and monitoring of the scheme.

He said that the scheme is operated through agreements with five major banks namely State Bank of India, Union Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Axis Bank, and Indian Bank, which provide exclusive salary package accounts to the employees offering extensive insurance benefits. (PTI)

Five held in Assam for

from Darrang, Hassam Ali from Goalpara, Abdul Latif from Chirang, Wajhul Kamal from Kamrup and Nur Amin Ahmed from Bongaigaon, Sarma said. A retired school principal was detained on Tuesday in Assam's Cachar \district for allegedly posting objectionable comments on social media to 'politicise' the Delhi blast.

A high-intensity explosion ripped through a slow-moving car at a traffic signal near the Red Fort metro station in Delhi on Monday evening, killing 12 people and injuring several others. (PTI)

Educated people can

people do not change with education and 'those who do not sing Vande Mataram can never be Indians and cannot consider the nation as their mother,' Sarma claimed. Muslims refrain from singing 'Vande Mataram' as it deifies the motherland as a Hindu goddess, which is seen as a violation of the Islamic principle of monotheism.

'If their intent is bad, then even if they are educated, they will make better bombs and try to divide the nation,' Sarma said.

In Assam, the situation is very difficult as the percentage of people from these communities is very high and they enter the state to carry out subversive activities, the CM alleged.

'Assam has to be constantly alert for a long time, and if it (blasts) happen here, it will be big,' he added.

The chief minister said that he had issued instructions to the police to arrest those who have welcomed blasts in their social media posts. He said that 35 people from various districts of the state have been identified in this connection.

'We will investigate their links and if we find that anyone has links with Bangladesh or anyone outside the country who is involved in such activities, then we will take very tough action against them,' the CM said.

If there are any minors or those who were unaware that their devices were used to make such posts will not be arrested but those who are responsible for such activities will be punished and not spared, Sarma said.

He said that many are deleting their posts now but 'we have taken the screenshots and will be tough in this regard'.

Sarma alleged that it was the same set of people who held protests at the 'Zubeen Kshetra', where popular singer Zubeen Garg was cremated, against the government were now putting up social media posts welcoming the Delhi blast.

'It is the people with the same intent who were involved in the blast near the Red Fort, the killings at Pahalgam and those creating disturbances at Zubeen Kshetra. They want to divide the nation with the use of bombs, guns, land or protests', he said.

'The Assamese people need to understand that it is not the suspicious persons who will keep Zubeen Garg's legacy alive but it is they (the Assamese) who will have to do it,' Sarma added. (PTI)

Key suspects went

Ghazwat-ul-Hind, and arrested eight people including three doctors, a high-intensity blast ripped through a slow-moving car near Delhi's Red Fort area, killing 12 people and injuring several others.

Around 2,500 kilograms of ammonium nitrate, potassium chlorate and sulphur were seized after police busted the terror module, which spanned across Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday visited the LNJP Hospital and met the survivors, saying the perpetrators will be brought to justice. "Went to LNJP Hospital and met those injured during the blast in Delhi. Praying for everyone's quick recovery. Those behind the conspiracy will be brought to justice!" Modi said in a post on X. Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) teams collected around 40 samples from the blast site, said preliminary analysis suggested that one of the explosive samples is likely to be ammonium nitrate.

A senior police officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that analysis of the dump data showed Dr Muzammil's repeated presence in and around the Red Fort area in the first week of January.

The agencies are also analysing mobile dump data from the Red Fort area between 3 pm and 6.30 pm on the day of the blast to track Dr Umar's movement and communication.

Dr Muzammil visited the Red Fort multiple times to study the security arrangements and crowd density patterns along with Dr Umar Nabi, an assistant professor at the Al-Falah University who is said to have been driving the car that exploded on Monday, officials said. (PTI)

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Opposition parties to contest Assam Assembly polls unitedly: Gaurav

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: Making a pitch for a tough battle ahead against the ruling BJP-led alliance, Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi on Wednesday announced that at least eight opposition parties have decided to unitedly contest the state assembly elections due next year.

The elections to the 126-member assembly are likely to take place in March-April of next year.

"We (opposition parties) had a threadbare discussion on various topics. To free the people of Assam from the BJP's torture and CM Himanta Biswa Sarma's injustice, we all are united. We will contest the 2026 assembly elections together. This was the main decision of today's meeting," Gogoi told reporters.

There are other issues, which will be informed to the public gradually in the coming days, he added. In the meeting convened by Congress, CPI(M), Raijor Dal, Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP), CPI, CPI(ML), Jatiya Dal-Asom (JDA) and Karbi Anglong-based All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) joined hands to fight the assembly elections from a common platform.

Commenting on the meeting, Raijor Dar MLA Akhil Gogoi told PTI that going forward, all the opposition parties will have a coordinated approach on all major issues.

"In the coming Winter Session of the Assembly, all the opposition parties will raise their voice unitedly. We will be together on every platform," he added.

It was decided in the meeting all individual parties to finalise their agenda in the coming few days and meet again within this month to start deliberations on the common manifesto of the opposition parties, Gogoi said.

"In this opposition unity, AIUDF will not be a part at all. It is equally a communal party like the BJP. This opposition alliance is strictly against any form of communalism," he added. AJP president Lurinjyoti Gogoi said the meeting was a success and there will be a unified fight against the BJP in the upcoming Assembly elections. "We will move forward and fight strongly against the BJP. We are looking for the love and blessings of the people of Assam," he said in a post on Facebook.

Presently, the ruling BJP's strength in the 126-member Assam Assembly is 64, while its allies AGP has nine MLAs, UPPL has seven and BPF has three members. In the opposition camp, the Congress' strength is 26, AIUDF has 15 members and CPI(M) has one MLA. There is one Independent legislator also. (PTI)

KAAC signs MoU with ERDE Agro for Hills Agro Development Corporation

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 12: The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ERDE Agro Ecosystems Pvt Ltd. to form a joint venture company — Hills Agro Development Corporation Limited.

The agreement was signed between the company representative and Principal Secretary, KAAC, Mukul Kumar Saikia, in the presence of Chief Executive Member (CEM) Tuliram Ronghang, MP Amarsing Tisso, Executive Members, Members of the Autonomous Council, and officials from both sides on Tuesday.

The joint venture aims to collaborate with Farmers Producer Companies (FPCs) across the two districts to promote contract farming and ensure better market prices for key crops such as ginger, turmeric, black pepper, and bird's eye chillies.

Processing and packaging centres for these crops will be established in both districts, adding value to local produce and empowering the farming community.

According to projections, over 10,000 farmers are expected to benefit from assured market linkages. KAAC anticipates an earning of Rs 6 crore in the first year, rising to Rs 17 crore annually within two years. Additionally, around 200 people will gain direct employment in the first year, with 1,500 or more jobs expected to be created subsequently.

Officials said the initiative marks a major step towards rural prosperity, agri-based employment generation, and economic self-reliance in the region.

Karbi Anglong to celebrate Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas on Nov 15

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 12: The Karbi Anglong district administration will celebrate Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas 2025 on November 15 at Parokhowa Higher Secondary School, Parokhowa campus.

The day commemorates the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda, the revered tribal leader, freedom fighter, and symbol of India's indigenous pride.

Born on November 15, 1875, at Ulihatu village in present-day Jharkhand, Birsa Munda led the Munda rebellion against British oppression.

Witnessing the exploitation of tribals through harsh taxes and forest restrictions, he mobilised his community against colonial rule and became known as Dharti Baba. He first rose against the British in 1894 demanding tax remission and was subsequently imprisoned. Despite repeated arrests, Birsa continued to inspire tribal unity and resistance.

His movement culminated in several clashes with the British forces, including the battles along the Tanga River in 1898 and at Dombari Hill in 1900, where he was captured.

He died in Ranchi jail on June 9, 1900, at the age of 25. The Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas celebration, organised under the Department of Tribal Affairs (Plain), Government of Assam, aims to honour the contributions and sacrifices of tribal heroes while promoting awareness of tribal heritage, culture, and welfare across the state.

KAAC holds 23rd EC meeting; reviews key development projects

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 12: The 23rd Executive Committee (EC) meeting of the 13th Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) was held on Tuesday at the Conference Hall of the CEM Block, Old Secretariat Building, under the chairmanship of Chief Executive Member (CEM) Tuliram Ronghang.

The meeting was attended by Executive Members, senior officials, and heads of departments.

The committee reviewed the progress of ongoing administrative and developmental projects, ensuring that flagship initiatives align with the council's vision of inclusive growth and efficient governance.

New proposals focusing on tribal welfare, improved public services, and sustainable regional development were also discussed.

According to the KAAC's official updates, the meeting underscored the importance of transparency, accountability, and people-centric administration as core principles of governance. In his address, Ronghang reaffirmed the council's commitment to accelerating development across Karbi Anglong through strategic planning and coordinated implementation.

He stressed the need for inter-departmental cooperation to ensure that all welfare and infrastructure schemes effectively reach the grassroots.

The session concluded with a collective resolve to strengthen tribal self-governance and transform Karbi Anglong into a model of sustainable and inclusive development under the council's leadership.

Tribute paid to CRPF martyr Mahendra Laskar

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 12: Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Jnanendra Pratap Singh paid tribute to martyr Mahendra Laskar, a constable of the 60th Battalion, who laid down his life in the line of duty on Monday.

Laskar, a resident of Kunwaraiti village, Kampur, in Nagaon district, was part of an 11-member CRPF team that came under an IED blast triggered by extremists in the Jaraikela area of Jharkhand last week. The CRPF chief visited Laskar's residence and met his bereaved family members to offer condolences.

5th Acharya PC Ray memorial lecture held at Science College, Kokrajhar

HT Correapondent

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 12: The Chemical Society, Department of Chemistry, Science College, Kokrajhar, organised the 5th Acharya PC Ray Memorial Annual Lecture for 2025 at the college premises on Wednesday.

This year's memorial lecture was delivered by Dr Suresh Kumar Nath, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, Kokrajhar University, on the theme "Scientists are Entrepreneurs: Science for Mankind."

Dr Nath highlighted the transformative role of scientists in driving societal development and underscored the importance of innovation-led research for human welfare.

He stated that scientific knowledge, combined with curiosity and a problem-solving mindset, leads to new technologies, medicines, and materials that advance society when channelled through entrepreneurship.

Referring to Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, known as the Father of Indian Chemistry, he said Ray was a pioneering chemist and industrialist who exemplified how science can serve humanity.

The programme began with an inaugural speech by Dr Sharmistha Chakraborty, Vice-Principal of Science College, followed by a welcome address by Dr Biswajit Nath, President of the Chemical Society.

A brief introduction to the life and contributions of Acharya PC Ray was presented by Miss Nijara Basumatary, a B.Sc. fifth-semester student, while Subhamita Mukherjee of third semester introduced the resource person. An inaugural dance was performed by Bitu Roy and Nijara Basumatary, adding grace to the occasion.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Raktim Probal Gogoi, Secretary of the Chemical Society.

The lecture witnessed enthusiastic participation from both students and faculty members, with a total of 94 participants.

The programme ended with a message encouraging young minds to think creatively, take initiative, and use science responsibly for human welfare and sustainable development.

NEADS represents Assam at UN Climate Change Conference in Brazil

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Nov 12: The North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS), a grassroots development organisation based in Jorhat, has joined the global community at the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP-30), which began on November 10 in Belém, Brazil, and will continue till November 21.

The two-week summit brings together world leaders, scientists, civil society groups, and community organisations to deliberate on urgent measures to combat the escalating climate crisis. NEADS' participation marks a significant milestone for North-East India, one of the most climate-vulnerable regions of the world.

Representing NEADS at COP-30 as an Observer of the Start Network, Tirtha Prasad Saikia, Director of NEADS, said, "It is an honour to bring the voices of Assam's flood-affected and climate-vulnerable communities to a global platform. Our participation is a step toward ensuring that their experiences, losses, and resilience are recognised in the global climate agenda."

Saikia added that with climate justice, adaptation, loss and damage, and community inclusion at the heart of this year's COP, NEADS seeks to share its grassroots experience in promoting climate-resilient farming, disaster preparedness, and community-led adaptation.

The organisation also advocates for integrating Local, Indigenous, and Traditional Knowledge (LITK) into climate action in risk-prone regions like Assam.

Over the years, NEADS has collaborated with government agencies and local, national, and international partners to strengthen climate resilience, sustainable agriculture, and adaptive livelihoods.

Through these initiatives, it has promoted community-based innovations and traditional ecological knowledge among Indigenous and rural communities affected by floods and erosion.

At COP-30, NEADS will take part in discussions, side events, and policy dialogues focusing on the intersection of climate change, human development, and justice in India's North-East. Hosting the summit in Belém, in the heart of the Amazon, symbolises the shared struggles and solidarity of communities across the Global South—from the floodplains of Assam to the forests of the Amazon.

"Our message is clear—adaptation must begin at the grassroots, and communities on the frontline must be at the centre of all climate action. Recognising Loss and Damage and valuing Indigenous knowledge systems are essential for achieving true climate justice," Saikia emphasised.

Infighting splits Morigaon District Kabadi Association

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, Nov 12: Internal disputes have led to a split within the Morigaon District Kabadi Association, raising concerns that the conflict may hinder the growth of emerging kabadi talents in the district.

Addressing a press meet at the Morigaon Press Club on Wednesday, association president Ramen Nath and secretary Ramesh Kakati alleged that a dissident group has illegally formed a parallel committee in violation of the organisation's constitution. They stated that the move was an attempt to challenge the authority of the existing district committee.

"The newly formed group is unrecognised and unconstitutional. We appeal to the All Assam Kabadi Association (AAKA) to initiate an investigation and take administrative action against those involved," the duo said.

In a letter sent to the state committee, the district body alleged that the dissident group held an unauthorised meeting three days ago at Morigaon HS & MP School, electing Azgar Ali as president, Ibadul Ali as acting president, and Siraj Uddin Ahmed as general secretary.

The legitimate district committee, Nath and Kakati clarified, was constituted through a full-fledged annual conference held on August 31, attended by 116 delegates from various kabadi clubs and observed by Swaban Bhatia, a central representative. In that conference, Ramen Nath was unanimously elected as president and authorised to form the new committee, which later submitted all required documents to AAKA president Bhubaneswar Kalita for approval. While the approval is pending, the AAKA, through a directive issued on October 8, instructed the old committee to continue functioning until official ratification.

Following this, the district body sent teams to participate in the Sub-Junior Inter-District Kabadi Tournaments—the girls' event in Bilasipara (Oct 25–26) and the boys' event in Nalbari (Nov 1–2)—where both teams finished as second-best performers. Nath and Kakati alleged that the newly formed parallel committee is disrupting the sporting environment and demotivating young kabadi players. The press meet was also attended by association advisors Krishnanda Nath and Mahes Hazarika.

BJP to hold statewide blood donation drive in memory of Zubeen Garg

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 12: In a heartfelt tribute to Assam's cultural icon Zubeen Garg, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced a statewide blood donation drive on November 18, marking what would have been his 53rd birth anniversary, party sources said.

The initiative aims to honour Zubeen Garg's immense contribution to Assamese music, culture, and social causes, while promoting awareness about the importance of voluntary blood donation.

Party leaders have urged citizens, especially the youth, to participate in the drive and make the day a symbol of life, unity, and compassion—values that Zubeen embodied throughout his life. District committees across Assam are making arrangements to hold the drive at hospitals and public venues to ensure maximum public participation. Zubeen Garg, whose music continues to inspire generations, remains an enduring symbol of art, humanity, and the Assamese spirit.

The BJP's initiative serves not only as a tribute to the late artist but also as a message of social responsibility and collective goodwill.

Assam Panchayat contractual workers begin indefinite strike over long-pending demands

HT Correspondent

DALGAON, Nov 12: Contractual employees of the Assam Panchayat and Rural Development Department have launched an indefinite strike, demanding fair wages, job security, and parity with regular staff — a move that has brought rural governance to a halt across several parts of the state. The agitation, led by the Assam Panchayat and Rural Development Department Contractual Employees' Council, began on Monday, disrupting operations in villages and development blocks as workers pressed for immediate government intervention.

In the Dalgaon–Bechimari Development Block, protests were marked by emotional scenes as hundreds of employees, including Assistant Engineers, Junior Engineers, Gram Panchayat Coordinators, and Gram Rozgar Sahayaks, staged peaceful sit-ins and submitted a memorandum to authorities outlining their grievances.

Many of the agitating workers, who have served for over a decade on contractual terms, alleged exploitation and irregular payments despite handling crucial assignments under the department such as infrastructure projects, MGNREGA, and sanitation drives.

Their demands centre on achieving equal pay for equal work, a one-time salary hike of ₹30,000, an annual increment of at least 10 percent, recognition of three years of prior service with job security up to the age of 60, and the formulation of an eight-point Human Resources Policy to ensure fair treatment and regularisation. "Our work is the same, so our salary must be the same," said a senior Gram Rozgar Sahayak, reflecting the frustration of thousands across Assam's 26,000 Gram Panchayats.

Union leaders have urged the government to respond swiftly, warning that prolonged inaction could escalate the movement.

Snake scare at Kokrajhar Press Club

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 12: A brief moment of panic gripped the Kokrajhar Mini Press Club on Wednesday after a large venomous snake was spotted inside the premises.

Members of the club immediately alerted local authorities, following which noted snake expert Anup Sarkar arrived at the scene and safely rescued the reptile.

Exhibiting calm professionalism, Sarkar captured and removed the snake without causing harm to anyone or the animal, preventing a potential mishap and restoring normalcy at the site. A resident of Santinagar Ward No 1, Sarkar has been working as a snake rescue specialist for the past 12 years. He has rescued hundreds of snakes—many of them highly venomous—from Kokrajhar town and nearby areas.

ACMS Margherita Branch distributes educational grants to 163 students

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, Nov 12: In a heartwarming celebration of perseverance and academic excellence, the Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha (ACMS) Margherita Branch distributed educational grants to 163 students from tea worker families who successfully cleared the Higher Secondary (HS) and High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examinations for the 2024–25 academic year.

Held at the ACMS Margherita Branch office on Monday, the event reflected the union's unwavering commitment to empowering the next generation of tea garden communities.

The programme was organised under the leadership of Gautam Dhanowar, President of ACMS Margherita Branch, and was attended by key office-bearers and members from all 38 tea gardens under the branch.

Secretary Harinanda Gorh moderated the proceedings, which were also attended by Vice-President Jiten Gorh, Treasurer Shivcharan Paik, Mahila Samity Secretary Anamika Ekka, Hemanti Mura, and several unit committee members.

GU signs MoU with OKD Institute for academic collaboration

MoU to boost joint research and academic exchange in Assam

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: Gauhati University and the Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development (OKDISCD), Guwahati, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate in research, teaching, and academic development.

The agreement focuses on joint research initiatives, sharing of academic resources, and organisation of training programmes, seminars, and workshops. It will cover diverse disciplines including Economics, Education, History, Political Science, Geography, Sociology, Social Work, Philosophy, Anthropology, and Environmental Science.

The signing ceremony was attended by senior representatives from both institutions.

From Gauhati University, vice-chancellor Prof Nani Gopal Mahanta, registrar Prof Utpal Sarma, academic registrar Prof Rajib Handique, and law officer Dipak Talukdar were present.

Representing OKDISCD were Acting Director Prof. Saswati Choudhury, Administrative Officer Diganta Ranjan Patgiri, and faculty members Rajdeep Singha and Arunima Deka.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Nani Gopal Mahanta said the MoU would facilitate knowledge sharing and enhance research opportunities for both students and faculty.

"This partnership will help us work together on issues that matter to society and the region," he said. Prof Saswati Choudhury, acting director of OKDISCD, noted that the collaboration would strengthen institutional ties and promote joint academic activities.

"We look forward to working closely with Gauhati University on research and learning that support social and regional development," she said. The two institutions will also explore faculty exchange, joint supervision of research scholars, and collaborative projects related to intellectual property.

Both sides expressed confidence that the partnership will boost higher education and quality research in Assam and the North East.

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

Fortune and love favor the brave.
- Ovid

Drive against illegal immigrants

Even before the Intensive review of the electoral rolls (SIR) has really started in West Bengal, the state is witnessing a phenomenon that would have been inconceivable earlier: scores of self-confessed Bangladeshis going back to their former homeland with bag and baggage, from North as well as South Bengal districts. The reason: they fear major harassment, fines and jail sentences if Indian police and other authorities catch them without proper documentation about their identity/citizenship. As neither the state police nor Border Security authorities provide details relating to such a totally unanticipated mass movement of people, accurate estimates regarding the number of people actually moving out are not available. However, according to projections from official circles connected with the identification and subsequent deportation of illegal Bangladeshi settlers, over 9000 people should have left India during the last three/four months. As for West Bengal, where the number of illegal settlers is thought to be higher than in Assam, at least 1000 people , mostly in family groups, must have crossed over into Bangladesh already. A typical crossing usually involves mixed groups of about 25/30 people approaching the nearest checkposts or more informal points of entry, around midday or earlier. There are women and children as well as a few old timers. Guards or policemen on both sides keep watch but allow them to cross the border unhindered.

Both Delhi and Dhaka have shown commendable restraint over the sensitive issue of illegal Bangladeshi infiltration into different Indian states in recent years. But Bangladesh media as expected criticised the manner of procedure adopted in India during the recent 'pushout' of alien illegals. Dhaka-based officials strongly assert that according to due process pursued in official bilateral dealings, representatives meet first to decide how the transfer of undocumented citizens from one country to the other would be carried out. Bangladesh, while allowing the 'illegal settlers' from India to enter its territory, would carry out its own strict checks on these people There have been several instances of Dhaka authorities notifying Indians officially about the people pushed back, pointing out that some of them really were Muslim Bengalis settled in West Bengal. 'Mostly, GOI authorities allow them to return to India, accepting the final Bangladeshi version about their identities.

Police and Border Guard authorities in Bangladesh reported that so far, they had sent back to India around 25% or well over 200 people, -- i.e., Indian citizens who had been pushed out of India. Further, they stressed that this was the usual procedure that both Governments had pursued, until two major developments effectively torpedoed the earlier conventions governing bilateral relations. Such developments were bound to disturb the hitherto comfortable contours of a smooth bilateral relationship between the two countries.

Neglect of Parents in Old Age and 'Matri - Pitri Bandana'

DEGREE OF THOUGHT
By: Himanshu Ranjan Bhuyan

In the eternal history of human society, the relationship between parents and children is the most sacred and fundamental foundation. This relationship is not merely a biological necessity to preserve the lineage, but rather an unspoken bond of love, trust, sacrifice, and selfless service. Parents dedicate all their hopes, dreams, and struggles to the bright future of their children. They ignore their own personal joys and sorrows and tirelessly work so that their children can find a suitable place in this world. From the tender days of childhood to the establishment in youth, the proximity and guidance of parents serve as a secure shelter and a pathfinder in the child's life journey. The sacrifices they make for their children cannot be measured by any financial standard; it is a profound feeling that can only be felt with the heart. Every word and every effort of theirs is dedicated to the welfare of the child; but it is regrettable that when these loving parents step into the twilight of life or the threshold of old age, the ugly and heartless face of modern society gradually reveals itself. In the flow of time and the changing social landscape, those children who achieve high positions and establishment due to the endless sacrifices of their parents, in some cases, neglect their birth-givers in old age, which stands as a tragic and complex problem in contemporary social life. This neglect is not limited to failing to meet physical needs, but it takes on more terrifying forms such as mental torture, emotional indifference, and social exclusion, which create deep pain and injury in the hearts of the elderly.

This sacred relationship, which shares all the joys and sorrows of the world, is gradually fading in the current consumerist social system. Increased work busyness, the impact of urbanization, the increasing division of joint family systems, and a self-centered consumerist mentality have eroded the foundation of society's traditional values. In the rapid flow of modernity, people are engaged only in the pursuit of their personal interests, financial success, and fleeting comforts. In such an environment, the responsibility towards parents and their role gradually become secondary. Elderly parents are often considered by children as obstacles or unwanted burdens in their path of progress. Their old thoughts, physical weakness, and natural dependency are seen as unwanted interference in the children's ambitious lifestyle. Especially since both men and women focus on careers, no family member is ready to give time or care to the elderly at home. As a result, the elderly are sidelined, their feelings and experiences are not given importance, and gradually they become unwanted guests in the home. They never dreamed that the child who brightened every moment of their lives would one day push them into the deep abyss of loneliness. By ignoring the emotional and mental needs of old age, they become victims of profound mental suffering. This mental pain is more agonizing than physical pain because it strikes the deepest part of the soul. Often, out of greed for property or for their own worldly happiness, children do not hesitate to send elderly parents to ashrams or other desolate homes. This is a social disease that not only isolates the elderly but also gradually weakens the moral and familial foundation of the entire human society. As a result, it has a negative impact on the minds of other family members, especially children who grow up learning to imitate this behavior, which strengthens the cycle of social decay.

This neglect of parents in old age is not just a personal or familial problem, but it gives birth to a serious mental, social, and familial discord. In the very home where they dedicated their precious time, spent all their blood and sweat, they are forced to feel unnecessary and insecure. This neglect casts a negative influence on society, where the new generation learns to abstain from the traditional respect and responsibility towards elders. As a result, over time, the sincerity of the family decreases, and social relationships turn merely into formalities. However, realizing the depth of this problem and with the great objective of re-establishing eternal human values, the Assam government has taken a revolutionary and thoughtful step, named the 'Matri - Pitri Bandana' scheme. This scheme is not just a government program or regulation, but a profound heartfelt effort to revive the ancient traditions, ethics, and cultural values of Assamese society. Through this system, the government wants to make it clear that no work or busyness can be more important than familial and moral responsibilities.

The main objective of the Assam government's 'Matri - Pitri Bandana' scheme is to provide special casual leave to the state's government employees for two days in a year to spend quality time with their own parents or in-laws. This arrangement is not limited to providing leave; it has deep social, mental, and moral significance. Through this leave, the government wants to remind employees that no matter how busy the work life is, paying attention to those most important people in life is their primary duty. Through this special holiday, employees can give full attention to their elderly parents, look after their daily lives, share their joys and sorrows, and provide them emotional security. This leave is not just a rest, but an opportunity to fulfill a sacred duty. It is a kind of reminder that awakens the moral sense of responsibility that children forget in the complexities of modern life and connects them with their roots. Through this scheme, the government wants to send the message that the blessings and proximity of elders are essential for those who build the nation's future. Without the blessings and mental peace of parents, no employee can work with full concentration and efficiency in their workplace. This system helps awaken a sense of mental peace and self-satisfaction in the employees' minds.

The social and mental impact of the 'Matri - Pitri Bandana' scheme is extremely far-reaching. When a government employee takes leave under this scheme, comes home, and sincerely spends time with their parents, an unprecedented joy is infused in the minds of the elderly. They feel that they are still important to the home and that their place in their child's life remains intact. This small step greatly alleviates their feelings of loneliness, neglect, and despair towards life. An important aspect of this scheme is that employees have to formally apply on the portal for it, through which this action is given official recognition as a bond of duty. This system has elevated the matter of respect and care for the elderly from mere personal desire to a socially and politically important issue. It sets an ideal not only for government employees but for the entire society. Through this, other working people in society are also inspired and encouraged to follow this ideal in their personal lives. It can be deeply hoped that it will help remove the attitude of neglect from society and build a loving, responsible, and compassionate culture. On the other hand, it will also help reduce to some extent the prevalence of mental illnesses, depression, and physical weakness that can occur in old age.

However, although systems like the 'Matri - Pitri Bandana' scheme have taken a strong initial step towards solving this social problem, it is not the only or complete solution. The root causes of neglect of parents in old age are extremely deep and extensive. Due to financial interests, the increasing decay of education and values, and moving away from spiritual life, people's hearts are gradually becoming hardened. Children now often give importance only to the property and financial aspects of parents, remaining indifferent to their emotional needs and well-being. Therefore, in addition to government schemes, a thoughtful and moral awakening is needed from every level of society. It is extremely essential to provide education on human values, empathy, the greatness of sacrifice, and respect for elders in educational institutions from childhood. It should be the primary duty to give children the correct knowledge about the endless sacrifices and hardships of parents from a young age at home. Children can receive moral education by directly witnessing their parents caring for their own parents with respect and love.

Another important legal measure taken by the Assam government is the 'Pranam' law, which arranges for a portion of the salary of government employees to be given to neglected parents. Such strict legal measures are also needed so that children are compelled to fulfill their duties not only for moral responsibility but also due to legal obligation. Through the successful implementation and promotion of these laws, a new kind of responsibility can be created in society. In addition, it is extremely essential to arrange government-provided improved healthcare and better infrastructure for old age homes for the elderly, so that in any unavoidable situation, they can live with minimum human dignity. But all these arrangements are not just legal or formal efforts, but symbols of society's spiritual transformation.

In conclusion, it can be said that neglect of parents in old age is a shameful and painful chapter for human society. Since life is impossible without parents, showing respect, service, and sincere care towards them is the fundamental duty and moral responsibility of every individual. Systems like the Assam government's 'Matri - Pitri Bandana' have shown a ray of hope to strengthen this sacred bond anew. It is a government effort that dares to change the mindset of society and is determined to re-establish moral values. The success of this scheme depends not only on the government but on the sincerity, responsibility, and moral awakening of every individual in society. We all must together build such a society where no parent has to be neglected by their children in old age, where they can truly receive a secure, respectful, and loving life. Only such a society can identify itself as healthy, morally advanced, and truly humane. This responsibility should not be limited to two days of leave but must live in every moment of every day of life; only then will the objective of this scheme be fully successful. If every member of society realizes the importance of this moral duty, the future generation will also be able to receive the same love and respect.

JOB CRISIS: India's IT sector faces a wave of layoffs

By: Dr Priyanka Saurabh

India's information technology (IT) sector has long been a key pillar of the country's economic growth. It is not only the largest source of service exports but also provides high-paying employment to millions of educated youth. However, in recent years, it has been experiencing a profound upheaval. Tata Consultancy Services' (TCS) planned cut of approximately 20,000 jobs in 2024–25 has shaken the entire industry. This is not just a single company's administrative decision, but a sign of a broader structural transformation underway in the Indian IT sector.

This change is being driven by the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and automated systems. Tasks that once required hundreds of employees are now being accomplished in minutes by automated technology. Tasks like software development, testing, and customer service are now being performed more efficiently by "agentive AI" systems. This has increased company productivity but reduced the need for human labor—and this is the primary reason for these silent layoffs.

Companies like TCS, Infosys, Wipro, and Cognizant are now moving away from the old "outsourcing" model and toward a "value-based digital services" model. This shift is directly impacting middle-level employees, whose skills are limited to traditional technologies. They are unable to adapt to new AI-based systems. This skill mismatch is the root cause of this crisis.

AI-based tools have rendered middle management and support roles in the software industry virtually irrelevant. Where large teams were once required for "ERP management" or "system maintenance," these tasks are now handled by a few programs and cloud automation systems. For companies, this is a cost-cutting tool, but for millions of employees, it has become a source of insecurity.

This trend isn't limited to India. Technology industries in the US and Europe are also undergoing significant changes due to budget cuts and trade protectionism. Foreign clients now seek technology-based solutions rather than human labor-intensive services. Furthermore, H-1B visa fee hikes and local hiring policies in the US have made it difficult for Indian companies to hire employees abroad. All of this is forcing companies to reduce their domestic workforce as well.

· India's top five IT companies are projecting approximately 50,000 job losses between 2023 and 2025. Companies attribute this to "improved work efficiency," but the reality is that human resources are being reduced. This is not only an economic challenge but also a social concern, as the IT sector employs the country's most educated and organized segment.

Still, this change can't be entirely negative. Every technological revolution brings with it opportunities. Artificial intelligence has opened up new fields—such as data science, cloud engineering, cybersecurity, and AI model building. The question isn't that jobs are disappearing, but that old skills are becoming irrelevant and new skills are becoming increasingly in demand.

Now there is a need for the government, industry and education sector to make coordinated efforts together.

First, a nationwide "digital retraining campaign" must be launched. TCS itself has provided basic AI training to 550,000 employees and enrolled 100,000 in advanced training. If this model is replicated in other companies and government schemes, a large number of professionals could be reskilled.

Secondly, technical education institutions must fundamentally change their curriculum. No longer just programming or networking, but topics like AI ethics, product thinking, data analytics, and creative problem-solving must be part of education. By incorporating these subjects under the New Education Policy (NEP), youth can be prepared for the technologies of the future.

Third, social security structures must be strengthened. Employees facing layoffs should be provided with severance packages, retraining subsidies, and mental health support. Most private sector employees in India are outside any formal protection system. Therefore, the government should launch initiatives such as the "Digital Employment Security Fund" or the "Techno-Employee Insurance Scheme."

Fourth, large-scale skill training centers should be established through a public-private partnership (PPP) model. Ed-tech companies, NASSCOM, and state governments should jointly launch regional training missions to teach new skills to unemployed technical professionals.

Fifth, innovation and the start-up culture must be further encouraged. Promoting AI-based product development and deep-tech entrepreneurship can create new jobs. The government should better coordinate the "Start-up India" and "Digital India" initiatives. If India can transform its youth into "job creators" rather than "job seekers," this crisis can be turned into an opportunity.

Additionally, companies must inject sensitivity into their human resources policies. Practices like "silent layoffs" or "forced terminations" undermine employee morale. Technological advancement is meaningful only when it maintains a balance with human values.

India currently has a unique opportunity. We have the world's largest young technical workforce. If this workforce is trained with the right direction and skills, India will not only remain a hub for IT services but can also play a leading role in the global era of artificial intelligence. To this end, a long-term "National Digital Skills Mission 2030" should be outlined.

Events like the TCS layoffs remind us that sustainability in the technological age is only possible through continuous learning and adaptation. In the coming decade, only those companies that value human skills—such as judgment, creativity, and ethical thinking—in addition to technical proficiency will succeed.

India's IT sector has built its global reputation on quality, innovation, and trust. This trust can only be maintained if the industry views its employees as partners, not just "resources." It's time for the government to formulate a "Technology Employment Policy" that balances both innovation and security.

Technological revolutions always present societies with two choices—either to evolve with them or be crushed under them. It's time for India to adapt to this change. If the country can handle this challenge with vision and policy coordination, this period of retrenchment can become a new opportunity for the future.

Delhi Blast underscores transnational threats

By: Dipak Kurmi

The evening of that fateful Monday began like any other in the bustling heart of India's capital. As the clock approached 6:52 PM, the Subash Marg Red Light intersection near the Red Fort Metro Station thrummed with its usual cacophony of urban life—commuters hurrying home, street vendors calling out to customers, auto-rickshaws weaving through traffic. Within moments, this ordinary tableau of Delhi's vibrant street life transformed into a scene of unimaginable horror, as a high-intensity explosion ripped through a parked Hyundai i20, claiming thirteen innocent lives and leaving twenty-four others wounded in what would become one of the capital's most devastating terror attacks in recent memory.

The sheer ferocity of the blast speaks volumes about the calculated malevolence behind it. Eyewitnesses recount scenes that will haunt them forever—mangled bodies strewn across vehicles and roads, severed limbs scattered on streets still warm from the day's heat, flames leaping skyward as red smoke engulfed the evening air. Amit Mudgal, a thirty-six-year-old bystander, found himself standing mere inches from where a dismembered hand, still clad in its owner's shirt, fell to the ground. His testimony, along with those of dozens of others who witnessed the carnage, paints a picture of chaos and terror that transcended the physical destruction. The psychological scars left on survivors and witnesses alike represent an often-overlooked dimension of such attacks—the invisible wounds that continue bleeding long after the flames are extinguished.

The explosion's impact rippled far beyond its immediate vicinity. Located at one of Delhi's most congested intersections, the blast gutted at least twenty-five four-wheelers parked nearby and shattered windows several meters away. The sound reverberated kilometers away to ITO, creating panic across the city. Manoj, a street vendor near Jama Masjid over a kilometer from the epicenter, described feeling the blast in his chest—a visceral reminder that terror's reach extends far beyond its immediate casualties. Sanjay Bhargaw, president of the Chandni Chowk Traders Association, reported that his building, located 800 meters away, shook violently, sending shoppers and traders running in panic through narrow market lanes.

What makes this attack particularly chilling is the emerging evidence of a sophisticated transnational terror network operating with disturbing efficiency within India's borders. The blast occurred mere hours after Haryana police recovered approximately 360 kilograms of suspected ammonium nitrate along with a cache of arms and ammunition from the rented accommodation of Dr. Muzammil Ahmad Ganai, a Kashmiri doctor working at Al Falah Hospital in Faridabad's Dhauj village. This was no coincidence. Top police sources in Jammu and Kashmir have indicated that the explosion was orchestrated by the same "transnational and interstate" module busted in Faridabad, revealing a web of radicalization that has ensnared educated professionals—individuals society typically views as pillars of progress and healing.

The investigation has exposed an alleged Jaish-e-Mohammad and Ansar Ghazwatul Hind module comprising at least four doctors, a sobering reminder that terrorism does not discriminate by profession or education. Following Dr. Ganai's arrest, authorities also detained Dr. Adeel Majeed Rather from Qazigund, employed at the same institution. However, it is the third doctor, Umar Nabi from Pulwama's Koil village, who has emerged as the prime suspect. Police believe Nabi, who vanished after his colleague's arrest, was the individual captured on CCTV footage driving the fateful Hyundai i20 registered under the name of Nadeem Khan, bearing a Haryana number plate. The owner of record, Amir Rashid from Pulwama's Samboora village, now sits in police custody alongside his brother and at least three others detained for questioning.

The response from authorities has been swift and comprehensive. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after reviewing the situation with Home Minister Amit Shah, expressed condolences and assured that affected families were receiving necessary assistance. Union Home Minister Shah personally visited the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital, where eight victims had died before receiving medical attention and three others battled serious injuries. Delhi Police Commissioner Satish Golcha confirmed that multiple agencies—including Delhi Police, forensic teams, NIA, and NSG—were coordinating their efforts. Ten fire tenders rushed to the scene, bringing the inferno under control by 7:29 PM, while police cordoned off the area and began the painstaking process of gathering evidence, scanning CCTV footage, collecting mobile dump data, and reviewing dossiers of suspected terrorists.

Yet beyond the immediate security response lies a more profound challenge that India must confront. How does a nation protect itself when the threat comes not from external enemies but from seemingly ordinary citizens—doctors entrusted with preserving life—who have been radicalized to become instruments of death? The alleged module was reportedly busted during investigations into Jaish-e-Mohammad posters appearing on Srinagar's outskirts, suggesting that the threads of extremism are being woven across state boundaries with alarming sophistication.

The blast near Red Fort, a monument symbolizing India's sovereignty and resilience, carries symbolic weight that transcends its immediate horror. It represents an attack not merely on human lives but on the very idea of India—a pluralistic democracy where people of all faiths, backgrounds, and aspirations coexist. The fact that this violence erupted at a busy intersection where auto-rickshaw drivers, handcart pullers, taxi drivers, shoppers, and commuters from all walks of life converged underscores the indiscriminate nature of terror's appetite for destruction.

As Mumbai, Jaipur, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand were placed on high alert, as Delhi Police intensified security checks, nakabandi operations, and random inspections across the capital, one truth became inescapable: vigilance alone cannot defeat an ideology. While enhanced security measures and intelligence gathering remain crucial, India must simultaneously address the conditions that make radicalization possible—the grievances, real or perceived, that extremist organizations exploit to recruit educated professionals into their deadly fold.

The eyewitnesses who described feeling they were going to die, who cannot erase from memory the sight of severed hands lying on roads, who felt the tremors shake buildings and heard screams that will echo in their nightmares—they deserve more than our sympathy. They deserve a nation committed to ensuring such horror never repeats, through both robust security infrastructure and sustained efforts to drain the ideological swamps where terrorism breeds. Until that commitment translates into tangible results, the shadow cast by that Monday evening explosion will continue to darken the heart of our democracy. ***(the writer can be reached at dipakkurmiglpltd@gmail.com)***

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COP30 and China's Tibetan plateau paradox

By: Richard Ghiasy and Jagannath Panda

Amid the crowded headlines on the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, another transformation of considerable consequence is unfolding quietly on the roof of the world. The Tibetan Plateau – often known in the scientific literature as the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and also called the Third Pole – is becoming an increasingly important component of Beijing's national power architecture. Yet its remaking is not only military or infrastructural. It is also technological and, importantly, environmental.

COP30 in Brazil must discuss how national sovereignty and global ecological interdependence intersect in one of the world's most fragile ecosystems.

Recent years have seen a steady consolidation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Western Theater Command through a network of dual-use infrastructure across Tibet. Roads, airfields, rail links, and logistics hubs now enable rapid troop mobility along the China-India frontier. These developments are part of what Beijing calls its Military-Civil Fusion (MCF) doctrine.

MCF represents more than an operational doctrine. It is a form of "infrastructural deterrence," in which mobility, access, and logistics substitute for overt escalation. The same highway that moves civilians one week can carry an infantry division the next. The result is a frontier where development and deterrence are structurally indistinguishable. Of course, such fusion is not exclusive to China, and deterrence is preferable over overt escalation.

Tibet's militarization and its civilian expansion have therefore become interlinked processes. Four overlapping objectives are powering this transformation: positioning Tibet as an energy and commodities hub for the emerging AI-driven economy; pre-empting India's northbound strategic depth; securing some degree of leverage over South Asia's hydrology; and reinforcing sovereignty over the plateau. Each of these objectives contributes to what can be seen as comprehensive frontier consolidation.

The Hydro-Strategic Layer

Tibet's significance rests not only in its elevation but in its endowments. The plateau is the source of more than 10 major river systems – including the Brahmaputra, Mekong, and Salween – which sustain some 2 billion people downstream. As climate change accelerates glacial melt and alters monsoon patterns, the control of these headwaters becomes an issue of both national resilience and regional interdependence.

Beijing's vast hydropower program – including the recently announced mega-project on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo River – reflects as much a bid for hydro-sovereignty as for energy production. It aligns with China's broader objective to secure as much autonomy across all domains as possible.

According to estimates, Tibet's rivers hold more than a third of China's hydroelectric potential. The latent generation capacity exceeds 200 GW: enough to power a large European country for about a year. This renewable base could become essential as China grapples with the energy demands of artificial intelligence and data infrastructure, sectors that are consuming an increasing share of national electricity and water. In that sense, the plateau can be recast as a clean-energy hinterland underpinning China's technological ascent.

The Environmental Angle

Yet these gains come with complex environmental trade-offs that are not fully aligned with the Paris Agreement and the anticipated push for stronger implementation at the upcoming COP30 in Belem, Brazil. The Belem conference is expected to speed up the Global Stocktake process and deepen commitments to adaptation and loss-and-damage financing. Tibet's cryosphere – holding the largest reserve of frozen freshwater outside the poles – and should feature in that conversation.

However, China's national climate submissions under the UNFCCC seldom disaggregate the Tibetan Plateau as a specific ecological zone. Recognizing the plateau's vulnerability within the UNFCCC reporting architecture could help integrate mountain ecosystems and water-security linkages into the global adaptation agenda. This would also complement the Brazilian presidency's proposed focus on "climate justice for vulnerable ecosystems."

Approximately 75 percent of the Tibetan Plateau is now classified as moderately to severely ecologically vulnerable. The permafrost layer – covering 40 percent of the region – is thawing rapidly, destabilizing both ecosystems and infrastructure foundations. This vulnerability is likely exacerbated by human production, consumption, and activity in developed economies, including coastal China, rather than by activities in Tibet itself, but every little bit of local constraint helps. Road construction and high-altitude infrastructure projects on the plateau are increasingly linked in academic literature to elevated ecological risk and heavy-metal soil contamination, though precise data tying contamination to military training zones remains limited.

This tension between development and degradation raises difficult questions for global climate governance. China's decarbonization ambitions and its emphasis on renewables are formally aligned with the UNFCCC framework and the Paris Agreement. While Beijing positions itself as a leader in climate cooperation and clean-energy deployment – and it has made great strides toward those ends – it remains constrained by domestic growth imperatives, continued reliance on coal, and its role as the world's primary factory.

Similarly, Tibet also exemplifies the dual logic of climate policy under strategic conditions: a drive to lead in clean energy while accepting localized ecological cost and ramifications for downstream dependents. There is no policy without trade-offs. China's policies may sow discontent in the region, and it is better to address this now than down the road, when sentiments have deeper roots.

A Regional and Global Concern

Indeed, the consequences are not confined to China's borders. Hydrological modeling suggests that by 2035, altered flow regimes from the plateau could affect the water security of hundreds of millions of people downstream. Variations in glacial melt and precipitation could undermine irrigation systems, dam safety, and flood control from the Indus Basin to the Mekong Delta. What occurs in Tibet, in short, will shape the environmental and developmental trajectory of South and Southeast Asia alike.

This is why the plateau's transformation belongs as much in U.N. climate forums as in regional security dialogues. The UNFCCC's call for transboundary cooperation on adaptation and early-warning systems provides a potential framework, yet China has been hesitant to translate it into practical mechanisms with downstream countries. Environmental data-sharing remains partial, and basin-wide coordination through bodies such as the Mekong River Commission or the Brahmaputra Dialogue remains limited.

At COP30, delegates will debate the operationalization of early-warning systems and transboundary data cooperation – precisely the mechanisms missing in the Himalayan-Tibetan context. Belem thus provides an unprecedented opportunity for countries dependent on Tibetan rivers, including India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and those in mainland Southeast Asia, to push for a global "mountain-water framework" under the UNFCCC. Such an initiative would embed Tibet in the broader Global South narrative of equitable adaptation and could encourage China to reframe its climate diplomacy with its neighbors through cooperative rather than competitive lenses.

Such a constructive approach would view Tibet, and the Himalayas for that matter, as a shared climatic asset. The Third Pole's cryosphere regulates the hydrology of about a quarter of humanity. Recognizing this within global climate processes would not diminish Chinese sovereignty; it would elevate ecological interdependence to the level of policy. Indeed, climate diplomacy could then serve as a stabilizing and trust-building channel between Beijing and its neighbors at a time when some traditional confidence-building measures are faltering. Ultimately, China's neighbors would appreciate this gesture, and it may help lessen growing tensions among worried elites and civil societies.

Between Ambition and Fragility

None of these measures would necessarily diminish China's legitimate development imperatives. Tibet's connectivity projects have brought infrastructure, employment and energy access to regions historically isolated and under-invested. Nor is the environmental degradation solely the result of militarization – industrial activity across Asia contributes far more to carbon loading than military footprints at high altitude.

Still, the plateau is entering a period of heightened fragility. Recent studies show parts of the Tibetan Plateau are warming at about 0.35-0.55 degrees Celsius per decade, roughly two to nearly three times the global average rate. Melting glaciers and permafrost could soon undermine the very infrastructure designed to secure the frontier. The paradox is stark: the tools of territorial consolidation may, in the long run, erode the ground – literally – on which they stand.

What emerges from Tibet, then, is a narrative strategic-ecological entanglement. The region encapsulates how power, technology, and climate policy now converge. Roads and runways coexist with solar farms and hydro grids; deterrence logic intertwines with the energy transition. Tibet is thus becoming both a barometer of China's modernization and a test-case for whether national security and global sustainability can coexist on the same terrain. This is a theme worth discussing at COP30.

As the UNFCCC convenes in Belem, the Tibetan Plateau stands as a moral and scientific reminder that no global climate regime can claim legitimacy without addressing the Himalayan-Tibetan system. Whether COP30 acknowledges this frontier as a cornerstone of climate stability will determine not just the success of one conference, but the credibility of mutual climate governance itself.

In the coming decade, the plateau will influence three debates simultaneously: Asia's strategic balance, the geopolitics of water, and the credibility of the global climate regime. Its fate will tell us whether great powers can integrate ecological stewardship into their pursuit of resilience – or whether climate governance will remain secondary to geopolitics.

As Washington prioritizes geopolitical competition over climate governance, Beijing has an opportunity to demonstrate an alternative path, in line with its new Global Governance Initiative. Besides, the other permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), including the United Kingdom, which has played a decisive role in the region historically, must shoulder particular responsibility. As custodians of global stability and the Paris framework's founding advocates, they should treat the Tibetan Plateau as a common climate concern, not a peripheral issue. No matter how ambitious it may appear, a joint statement or cooperative initiative from the P5 at COP30 – linking climate security with ecological peace – would send a vital message that strategic competition need not eclipse collective survival. ***(Courtesy: The Diplomat)***

The Gender Agenda at COP30

By: Sharon Sarah Thawaney

A decade after the Paris Agreement, the global climate regime faces a credibility test. Climate impacts are accelerating, widening existing social and economic divides, particularly across the Global South. Within these divides, gender remains a defining but often overlooked dimension. Women constitute the largest share of those affected by climate variability, given their roles in food production, resource management, and care work.

The Paris Agreement recognises gender equality as core to effective climate action. Article 7 on adaptation makes the strongest reference to gender-responsive approaches, while the preamble and Articles 11 and 12 on capacity-building and education position gender as a cross-cutting priority. This approach was further advanced through the Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG) and the Gender Action Plan (GAP), which institutionalised gender integration within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process.

However, negotiations at COP29 on renewing these frameworks stalled amid differences over language on gender diversity, intersectionality, and finance, leaving the future of gender-responsive climate policy unresolved. At the COP30 in Belém, these frameworks return to the centre of negotiations, offering a critical opportunity to evaluate progress and define the next phase of gender integration in climate governance.

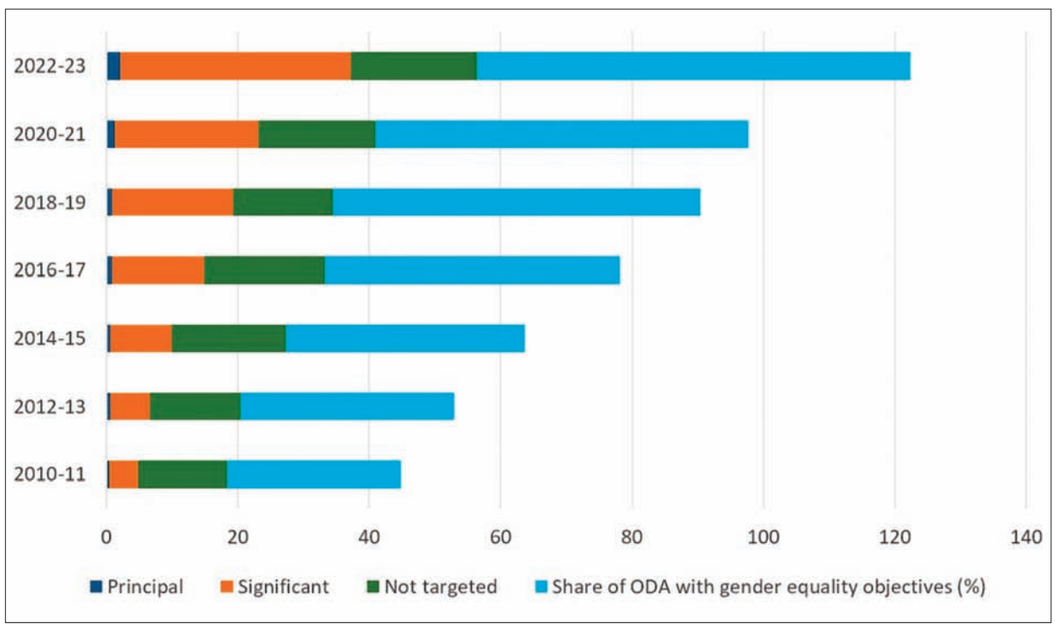
Institutional Evolution and Emerging Limits in Mainstreaming Gender in Climate Action

Since its adoption at COP20 in Lima in 2014, the LWPG has embedded gender equality within the UNFCCC framework, recognising that climate impacts differ by gender and demand tailored responses. The first GAP, adopted at COP23 in 2017, translated this commitment into five priorities: capacity-building, women's leadership and participation, institutional coherence, means of implementation, and monitoring and reporting. To address persistent gaps, an enhanced LWPG and updated GAP were adopted at COP25 to strengthen delivery and accountability. While COP29 extended the framework for another decade, key decisions on its implementation now rest with Belém.

Women's representation in climate governance has long been a global goal. The last COP was the most gender-balanced so far, with women comprising 40 percent of delegates. However, while overall representation seems to have improved, regional disparities remain, with participation lowest in Africa and the Asia-Pacific at around 31 percent and 28 percent, respectively. At COP20, only 8 of the 78 world leaders who spoke at the opening session were women. At the same time, women are also less likely to speak in discussions related to finance and technology as opposed to education and empowerment, indicating that real influence still remains elusive.

There has been some progress: as of 2024, 85 percent of UNFCCC Parties referenced gender in their communications and reports, which includes 100 percent of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). At the national level, the 2025 UNFCCC Synthesis Report, which provides a snapshot of countries' climate commitments through their NDCs, shows that 89 percent of Parties mention gender and 80 percent commit to applying it in implementation. However, the depth of these commitments remains uneven, as 61 percent refer to gender-responsive action, but only 30 percent link it to key sectors such as agriculture, energy, and health.

Over the last decade, gender-targeted climate finance has grown from US$4.8 billion in 2010–11 to US$37.2 billion in 2022–23. Most of this funding is classified as significant, meaning gender is an important objective but not the primary focus, while principal-focused projects, where gender is central, remain far smaller, increasing only from US$0.49 billion to US$2.06 billion. This distinction highlights that while gender is increasingly considered, far fewer projects place it at the core. This could be problematic in key sectors like agriculture, energy, and health, where principal-focused investment can be transformative in addressing structural barriers and enabling meaningful outcomes.



The current GAP lacks mandatory, measurable targets, as the UNFCCC guidance only encourages Parties to collect sex-disaggregated data. While the growing visibility of gender in NDCs signals progress, it remains unclear whether this translates into real outcomes. This absence of mandatory monitoring and inconsistent financing risks making these efforts more symbolic than transformative.

The Gender Imperative in Climate Governance

It is estimated that by 2050, 158 million more women and girls could fall into poverty, while 236 million could face food insecurity. Climate change acts as a threat multiplier, and its impacts are experienced differently by gender, shaped by existing socio-economic structures. For instance, women's labour is concentrated in climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and fisheries. They make up about 40 percent of the global agricultural workforce; however, only about 15 percent own land. This limits their ability to access credit or insurance and reduces their capacity to cope with climate impacts.

Beyond paid work, women bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid labour shaped by gender norms, including water and fuel collection and caregiving. Climate change exacerbates these pressures by threatening natural resources, increasing the time and effort required for daily tasks. For instance, where women spend over 20 minutes daily fetching water, the time spent is expected to rise by nearly 30 percent by 2050.

Climate change also interacts with biological and reproductive vulnerabilities in ways that are often invisible in policy design. In India, for example, pregnant women exposed to extreme heat are more likely to face adverse pregnancy outcomes. However, reproductive health considerations remain absent from national Heat Action Plans.

Despite these vulnerabilities, women are also frontline agents of change. Their daily engagement with natural resources, household provisioning, and community well-being often allows them to detect shifts in climate, informing adaptive practices that sustain both livelihoods and ecosystems. These realities underline the imperative for just climate governance, where policies and finance must address gendered vulnerabilities while recognising and investing in women's essential role in building resilience.

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Recommendations for COP30

COP30 will recognise gender as a cross-cutting theme rather than holding a dedicated gender day. Given the current gaps in implementation, the following recommendations can strengthen gender integration across climate policy and action.

• Women's participation in climate decision-making should move beyond representation to influence. The updated LWPG can mandate Parties to appoint gender focal points to integrate gender perspectives into planning, budgeting, and evaluation.

• Mandatory monitoring and outcome-based metrics, including sex-disaggregated data, must be included in this version of the LWPG to shift accountability from intent to measurable impact.

• Gender-responsive finance should prioritise projects where gender is a principal objective, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, energy, and water. Such investments can address systemic barriers, including women's access to land, credit, and technology, and deliver stronger social and economic outcomes.

• COP30 is recognising Indigenous women's leadership and traditional knowledge as central to adaptation and resilience, particularly through forums like the 'Circle of Peoples' and inclusion in NDC planning. To strengthen this, governments should ensure dedicated funding, capacity-building, and formal integration of Indigenous women's knowledge into national adaptation strategies, enabling their contributions to drive both climate resilience and equitable development outcomes.

• Women's health must be integrated into climate adaptation by strengthening coordination between health and environment, in line with LWPG priorities. Measures could include climate-resilient healthcare infrastructure, mobile clinics, and early-warning systems, ensuring that gender considerations are central to adaptation planning and implementation.

• While unpaid care work is increasingly recognised in COP30 gender and Just Transition discussions, its integration into policy and financing frameworks must be strengthened to ensure tangible reductions in time poverty and support for women's participation.

Bridging structural, financial, and policy gaps is essential to translate climate governance from intent to impact. Although gender is gaining visibility in NDCs and global frameworks, progress remains uneven, with many countries still lacking the systems, resources, and accountability mechanisms needed to act. COP30, positioning itself as the Implementation COP, offers a critical opportunity to embed gender across institutions, align it with national climate commitments, and ensure policies are both equitable and effective. ***(Courtesy: ORF)***

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Myanmar military takes delivery of helicopters, aircraft from Russia and China

BANGKOK, Nov 12: Myanmar says it has commissioned Russian helicopters and Chinese aeroplanes into its air force as the two nations continue to supply the military-run government with equipment despite international pressure to end its bloody civil war.

The United States, the European Union and others have imposed sanctions on Myanmar that include the prohibition of arms sales, but Russia and China have been steadily supplying the military, known as the Tatmadaw, with hundreds of millions of dollars of equipment, according to the UN.

Photos provided by the military indicate it received three Russian Mi-38T helicopters and two Chinese Y-8 aircraft, which experts said will likely be used for operations to bring troops to fight in mountainous areas.

The transport aircraft will add "extra effectiveness" to the Tatmadaw's "ability to ensure airspace security of Myanmar security," the military said in a release on the Nov. 7 commissioning of the aircraft in the capital, Naypyitaw.

"The current international conflicts and internal situation clearly indicate the essential role of all types of aircraft," said Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the head of Myanmar's ruling military government, according to the statement

from his office.

The supply of new helicopters and planes "just shows the Myanmar military continues to acquire important kit despite economic and diplomatic pressures, with Russia as a critical lifeline," said Morgan Michaels, a Singapore-based analyst with the International Institute of Strategic Studies, which runs its Myanmar Conflict Map project.

Myanmar is Russia's first known export customer of the Mi-38T, according to the defence-intelligence company Janes.

"Such preparations by the military commission indicate that it will rely more on air power and increase operations across the country," said the Military Expertise for Democratic Reform analyst group in a research note. The organisation is made up of former Tatmadaw officers who now support the resistance.

The army seized power from the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021, giving rise to peaceful demonstrations across the country.

After those were put down with lethal force, many opponents of military rule took up arms, and the country is now embroiled in a civil war. The Tatmadaw has lost large swaths of the country to new armed pro-democracy People's Defence Forces and established ethnic militias that have been fighting for greater autonomy for decades.

Still, it has been able to use its advantage in heavy weaponry and air power to great effect and has shown no signs of relenting in its fight.

In the run-up to the Dec. 28 election — the first since the military seized power and was rejected by many as a sham with Suu Kyi in prison and her party banned — the Tatmadaw has stepped up its campaign to reclaim territory held by opposition forces, and has achieved a series of significant victories while killing scores of civilians in airstrikes.

Over the past six months, it regained control of four major towns in the northern part of Shan state along a major highway linking central Myanmar to China, including Lashio, a strategically important army headquarters in the northeast.

The military also reached an agreement with a major ethnic rebel group in the last week of October, following Chinese-mediated talks, to retake control of the two additional towns, including Mogok, the ruby-mining centre in the upper Mandalay region. It has also made gains elsewhere in the country in recent months.

Due to the ongoing fighting, the military government has said that the December election polls will not be held in all of Myanmar's 330 townships and voting will be held in phases. *(AP)*

US has to bring in talent from around the world: Trump on H-1B visa

NEW YORK, Nov 12: In what is seen as a U-turn, US President Donald Trump appeared to defend the H-1B visa programme to bring talent from across the world, saying a foreign investor cannot pull people off an unemployment line, who haven't worked in five years, and start making missiles.

"I agree but you also do have to bring in talent," Trump said, responding to a question in an interview with Laura Ingraham on Fox News on whether the H-1B visa issue will not be a big priority for his administration and if one wants to raise wages for American workers as the country cannot be flooded with hundreds of thousands of foreign workers.

When Ingraham noted that "we have plenty of talent", Trump said, "No, you don't, no, you don't. You don't have certain talents. And people have to learn."

"You can't take people off an unemployment line, and say, 'I'm going to put you into a factory, we're going to make missiles'," Trump added.

"In Georgia, they raided because they wanted illegal immigrants. They had people from South Korea that made batteries all their lives. You know, making batteries (is) very complicated. It's not an easy thing, and very dangerous. A lot of explosions, lot of problems," he said.

"They had, like 500-600 people, early stages to make batteries and to teach people how to do it. Well, they wanted them to get out of the country. You're going to need that...I mean, I know you and I disagree on this.

"You can't just say a country is coming in, going to invest USD 10 billion to build a plant and going to take people off an unemployment line who haven't worked in five years, and they're going to start making missiles. It doesn't work that way," the president said.

The Trump administration has launched a massive crackdown to check abuse in the H-1B visa programme, which is used by companies, particularly technology companies, to employ foreign workers in the US.

Indian professionals, including technology workers and physicians, are among the largest cohort of H-1B visa holders.

In September this year, Trump issued a Proclamation titled 'Restriction on Entry of Certain Non-immigrant Workers' as an important initial step to reform the H-1B nonimmigrant visa programme.

Under the Proclamation, certain H-1B petitions filed after September 21, 2025, must be accompanied by an additional USD 100,000 payment as a condition of eligibility.

Last week, the Trump administration launched about 175 investigations into H-1B visa abuse, including lapses such as low wages, work sites that didn't exist and the practice of "benching" employees. *(PTI)*

India reaffirms unwavering support to Bhutan's 13th five-year-plan

THIMPHU, Nov 12: India on Wednesday reaffirmed its "unwavering" support to Bhutan's 13th five-year-plan as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with former king Jigme Singye Wangchuck and joined Bhutanese leadership to attend the Kalachakra initiation ceremony, hosted as part of the Global Peace Prayer Festival.

Following the meeting, Modi lauded Singye's contribution in further cementing India-Bhutan ties and said the discussions focused on bilateral cooperation in areas of energy, trade, technology and connectivity.

"Discussed cooperation in energy, trade, technology and connectivity. Lauded the progress in the Gelephu Mindfulness City Project, which aligns with our Act East Policy," Modi said on social media.

In the morning, Modi inaugurated the "Kalacakra Wheel of Time Empowerment" at the Global Peace Prayer Festival that was attended by top Bhutanese leadership, including Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Singye.

"This is an important ritual with great cultural significance for Buddhists around the world. The Kalacakra Empowerment is a part of the ongoing Global Peace Prayer Festival, which has brought together devotees and scholars of Buddhism to Bhutan," Modi said on 'X'.

Before leaving for New Delhi, Modi said the outcomes from his visit in sectors such as energy, healthcare and connectivity will "add momentum to our bilateral partnership".

In a special gesture, King Jigme Khesar came to the airport to see off Modi.

As Modi wrapped up his two-day trip to Bhutan, the Ministry of External Affairs said the prime minister reaffirmed India's unwavering support to Bhutan's 13th five-year-plan (2024-2029), including the economic stimulus programme, emphasising New Delhi's commitment to actively assisting the neighbouring country in achieving its key development priorities and advancing sustainable growth across sectors.

"The Bhutanese side appreciated India's assistance for Bhutan's 13th five-year-plan period for various projects under implementation across Bhutan and their contribution to the country's development," it said.

India has already committed to providing Rs 10,000 crore for Bhutan's 13th five-year-plan.

Modi also conveyed India's full support for the Gelephu Mindfulness City.

The prime minister also announced a decision to set up an immigration check post at Hatisar in Assam to facilitate the movement of investors and visitors to the economic hub.

A joint press statement, referring to the inauguration of the 1,020-MW Punatsangchhu-II hydropower project by PM Modi and King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, said it stands as a testament to the friendship and exemplary cooperation between Bhutan and India in the field of hydropower.

"The leaders welcomed the understanding reached regarding the resumption of work on the main dam structure of 1200 MW Punatsangchhu-I hydroelectric project and agreed to work for expeditious completion of the project," it said.

"Once completed, Punatsangchhu-I will be the largest hydroelectric project jointly developed by the two governments," it added.

The leaders also welcomed the active engagements of Indian companies in the hydropower projects in Bhutan, and the Bhutanese side expressed appreciation for India's announcement of a concessional Line of Credit of Rs 4,000 crore to fund the energy projects in Bhutan.

The two sides emphasised the importance of improving cross-border connectivity and bolstering border infrastructure, including setting up more integrated check posts, the statement said. *(PTI)*

India, Botswana announce Cheetah translocation pact

GABORONE (BOTSWANA), Nov 12: India and Botswana on Wednesday formally declared the plan to translocate eight Cheetahs from the African nation during the state visit of President Droupadi Murmu.

The President, while thanking her counterpart President Duma Gideon Boko and the people of one of the world's largest diamond producer countries for the gesture, assured that "we will take good care of them (Cheetahs)."

Boko said his country will symbolically hand over the big cats to "her excellency (Murmu)" on Thursday.

The two heads of state will preside over an event where eight captured Cheetahs will be released into a quarantine facility at the Mokolodi nature reserve, marking the symbolic handing over of the hunting cats to India by Botswana as part of Project Cheetah and under a mutual initiative for wildlife conservation.

The Cheetahs have been brought to the nature reserve, 10 kms south of Gaborone, from the Ghanzi town located in the Kalahari desert.

Botswana is a landlocked nation whose 70 per cent landmass is covered by the Kalahari desert.

"It gives me special pleasure to note that Botswana is to reintroduce Cheetahs into India under Project Cheetah which is a unique wildlife conservation initiative of the government of India," Murmu said.

"I am thankful to the President and people of Botswana for sending their Cheetahs to India.

We will take good care of them," she said during a press briefing held at the President's office here. Murmu arrived for a three-day state visit to the country on Tuesday. This is the first visit by an Indian President to the country located in southern Africa.

President Boko added that, as part of a biodiversity cooperation, the move to donate the Cheetahs will work to "assist regeneration" of the population of the big cat in India.

The two leaders made the comments following delegation level talks held between the two sides. On September 17, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released eight cheetahs brought from Namibia into a special enclosure at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, marking the world's first intercontinental relocation of a large wild carnivore species.

India later imported 12 more cheetahs from South Africa in February 2023.

Three years into the ambitious revival programme, the country now has 27 cheetahs, including 16 born on Indian soil. Of them, 24 are at Kuno and three are at the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary (GSWS), located on the boundary of Mandsaur and Neemuch districts in Madhya Pradesh.

Nineteen cheetahs - nine imported adults and 10 cubs born in India - have died from various causes since the project began, while 26 cubs have been born in Kuno so far. After importing 20 animals from Africa, India currently has a net gain of seven cheetahs over the initial number.

The two presidents also oversaw the exchange of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the health sector between the senior officials of the two sides.

Murmu said her travel to Botswana was an "important milestone in our relations."

"Our development partnership is based on the ideals of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayaas' (together with everyone's growth, trust and efforts), she said, adding the visit will strengthen the "multi-faceted" ties between the two nations. Boko said the two sides signed another MoU on cooperation in the health sector as India is one of the "foremost" manufacturers of pharmaceuticals, especially of generic drugs.

This cooperation will also be in the pharmacopeia domain so that quality medicines are facilitated in his country, an area of "acute problem" for Botswana, he said. *(PTI)*

Iran offers condolences over Delhi explosion

TEHRAN, Nov 12: Iran on Wednesday offered condolences over the explosion in Delhi near the Red Fort metro station that left 12 people dead and many injured.

Esmail Baqaei, spokesman for Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, conveyed the condolences and sympathy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the government and people of India, particularly to the families of the victims.

He expressed wishes for the swift recovery of those injured in this tragic incident.

Leaders from across the world, including the US, China, Japan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Israel, Ireland and Nepal, on Tuesday expressed grief and shock over the loss of lives in the explosion in the Indian capital.

A powerful explosion ripped through a slow-moving car at a traffic signal near the Red Fort metro station on Monday evening, killing nine people and injuring 20 others. The death toll rose to 12 on Tuesday, with three more people succumbing to injuries, police said. *(PTI)*

Grameen Bank's branch set on fire in eastern Bangladesh

DHAKA, Nov 12: A local branch of Grameen Bank, founded by Muhammad Yunus, was set on fire by unidentified men in eastern Bangladesh early Wednesday, two days after a crude bomb blast outside its headquarters in the national capital.

No casualties were reported in the fire at the bank's Chandura branch in Brahmanbaria's Bijoynagar upazila, according to the bank authorities.

"The incident took place around 2:00 am when some miscreants poured petrol from outside and set the building on fire," the branch manager, Kalim Uddin, told reporters.

He said that the guard noticed the fire and immediately informed the authorities. The fire was brought under control with the help of locals.

Grameen Bank officials said that the documents and furniture inside the building were damaged, though the vault containing cash remained unharmed.

The authorities have ordered an intensified round-the-clock security vigil across Dhaka, which witnessed a series of crude bomb explosions and burning of a dozen parked empty buses in recent days, ahead of an expected verdict in a case against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's trial in absentia.

Hasina's now disbanded Awami League on social media called for a "Dhaka lockdown" on November 13, when Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD) is set to announce a date for delivering a verdict against Hasina. The prosecution is demanding the death penalty for Hasina.

On Monday, a series of crude bomb explosions took place in Dhaka, including outside the head office of the Grameen Bank and a business outlet owned by an aide of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, prompting authorities to beef up the security.

Yunus, who is currently the Chief Adviser of the interim government, founded the Grameen Bank in 1983 and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his work in poverty alleviation and the empowerment of poor women.

His office has issued a warning saying any attempt to enforce a lockdown would be "met with the full force of the law".

"No terrorist will be spared," Home Affairs adviser Lt Gen (retd.) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury told reporters on Tuesday.

All agencies were now operating in a coordinated manner, with patrols increased and static duties expanded across the country, he added. *(PTI)*

All 20 Turkish military personnel on cargo plane that crashed in Georgia were killed

ANKARA, Nov 12: All 20 personnel on board a military cargo plane that crashed in Georgia were killed, Turkiye's defence minister announced on Wednesday.

The C-130 plane had taken off from Ganja, Azerbaijan and was on its way back to Turkiye when it crashed on Tuesday in Georgia's Sighnaghi municipality, close to the Azerbaijani border. The cause of the crash is being investigated.

A Turkish accident investigation team reached the crash site early on Wednesday and was inspecting the wreckage of the plane, in coordination with the Georgian authorities, the National Defence Ministry said.

The wreckage was spread across a plain that includes farmland and is surrounded by hills, Turkish private broadcaster NTV reported from the site. Debris from the aircraft was scattered across multiple locations, the report said.

"Our heroic comrades-in-arms were martyred on November 11, 2025, when our C-130 military cargo plane, which had taken off from Azerbaijan en route to our country, crashed near the Georgia-Azerbaijan border," Defence Minister Yasar Guler said in a message posted on X, together with photographs of the military personnel who were killed.

On Tuesday, Turkiye's state-run Anadolu Agency quoted the Georgian aviation authority as saying that contact with the plane was lost a few minutes after it had entered Georgia's airspace. The plane had not issued a distress signal, it said.

C-130 military cargo planes are widely used by Turkiye's armed forces for transporting personnel and handling logistical operations.

Turkiye and Azerbaijan maintain close military cooperation.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other Turkish officials had attended Azerbaijan's Victory Day celebrations in Baku on Nov. 8, marking Azerbaijan's military success over Armenia in the 2020 control of Karabakh region, known internationally as Nagorno-Karabakh, a conflict that had lasted nearly four decades.

It was not immediately clear if the military personnel on the cargo had attended the ceremonies.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and Georgian Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili extended their condolences to their Turkish counterparts over Tuesday's crash.

"We are deeply shocked by the news of the loss of life of our soldiers in the accident that occurred on Georgian soil," Aliyev said in a message, according to the Anadolu Agency. *(AP)*

Protesters confront security at main venue of UN climate talks

BELEM (BRAZIL), Nov 12: A group of activists skirmished with security on Tuesday at United Nations climate talks in Brazilian Amazon city Belem, briefly trying to force their way into the main venue before they were pushed back. Two security workers suffered minor injuries, the UN said.

The confrontation came late in the day as people were filtering out of the venue for COP30, as the talks are known.

"Earlier this evening, a group of protesters breached security barriers at the main entrance to the COP, causing minor injuries to two security staff, and minor damage to the venue," UN Climate Change said in a statement.

"Brazilian and UN security personnel took protective actions to secure the venue, following all established security protocols. Brazilian and UN authorities are investigating the incident. The venue is fully secured, and COP negotiations continue."

Agustin Ocaña, mobilization coordinator for youth with the Global Youth Coalition, told The Associated Press he was outside when he saw two groups of people, some with yellow shirts and some in the garb of

Indigenous communities, walking toward the venue.

He said at first they were mostly just dancing and chanting, and he decided to follow because he has some friends in the Indigenous group.

He didn't see which group first broke through security, but said things escalated when security guards reacted by closing the doors forcefully and calling more guards.

Ocaña said some of the people entering were chanting "They cannot decide for us without us," referring to tensions over participation of Indigenous people in the conference.

As security and marchers clashed, he said he saw members of both sides hitting each other with small plastic bins used to hold items near secure entrances. One guard was bleeding from being hit in the head and he said he saw two or three people with bruises, he said.

Ocaña said some Indigenous communities have been frustrated watching resources pour into building "a whole new city" when there are so many needs for education, health and protection of forests elsewhere.

"They were not doing this because they were bad people. They're desperate trying to protect their land, the river," Ocaña said.

"It's important the world knows this is just a small piece of what can happen if we keep having these never-ending conversations about how we're going to protect the planet while we keep destroying it," he said. *(AP)*

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Sardar Patel's legacy of unity

CM reaches Gujarat to attend Bharat Parv function

ITANAGAR, Nov 12: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu reached Gujarat on Wednesday to attend the Bharat Parv function as part of the nationwide celebration of the 150th birth anniversary of India's first home minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Khandu said the occasion marks a moment of national pride as leaders and citizens across India pay homage to Sardar Patel's monumental contribution in unifying the country.

"Reached Vadodara, Gujarat today along with my friend, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya Conrad Sangma ji. As the nation celebrates the 150th birth anniversary of the Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, we will be attending the Bharat Parv function at Kevadia under the theme 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'," he said on social media.

On the occasion of Sardar Patel's 150th birth anniversary, Bharat Parv is being organised at Ekta Nagar from November 1 and will conclude on November 15, coinciding with the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda.

Calling it "a proud occasion to honour the legacy of the great unifier who laid the foundation of a united India", Khandu underscored the timeless relevance of Sardar Patel's vision in strengthening the fabric of the nation.

The event brings together leaders, artists, and citizens from across India in a series of cultural performances, exhibitions, and discussions that reflect the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', a national initiative promoting harmony among states and people.

The celebration not only honours Sardar Patel's unparalleled contribution to nation-building but also reinforces India's collective commitment to unity in diversity, a message that continues to inspire generations. *(PTI)*

Arunachal govt suspends four officials over highway land compensation scam

ITANAGAR, Nov 12: The Arunachal Pradesh government has suspended four officers and recommended disciplinary action against East Kameng deputy commissioner after a fact-finding committee unearthed "large-scale irregularities" in land compensation for the Lada–Sarli portion of the Frontier Highway project.

The investigation found that non-existent assets were assessed for compensation, wrongful evaluations were made, and fraudulent assessments were carried out during the award process for land acquisition from Lada to Sarli (package I to V) of the ambitious project, covering a distance of 125.55 km, an official statement said here on Wednesday.

The suspended officials include Divisional Forest Officer Abhinav Kumar, District Agriculture Officer Miram Perme, District Horticulture Officer C K Tayum, and District Land Revenue & Settlement Officer Takam Kechak.

The government has also recommended to the Ministry of Home Affairs for the suspension of the deputy commissioner Himanshu Nigam, who chaired the Ground Verification Board that approved the controversial award.

The fact-finding committee (FFC) headed by the Commissioner (Transport) and comprising senior officials from PWD, Land Management, Forest, Agriculture, Horticulture, and Fisheries departments, was constituted on August 13 this year, following complaints from affected landowners.

Many alleged that no proper ground survey was carried out, legitimate claimants were excluded, and disproportionate compensation was paid to non-existent beneficiaries.

The FFC's interim report, submitted on November 4, confirmed serious omissions and commissions by the verification team and pointed to gross anomalies and fraudulent assessment practices.

The committee has been granted time until November 30 to submit its final report.

Several local organisations and landowners have accused the administration of betraying public trust and "robbing genuine victims".

Social media has been flooded with demands for a transparent probe and strict punitive action against all those involved. Civil society groups have urged the government to ensure the recovery of public money disbursed illegally.

The land management department, in its order signed by Secretary A K Singh, stated that, considering the gravity of the findings, the officials have been placed under immediate suspension pending final investigation.

The Frontier Highway project, part of India's ambitious border infrastructure plan, has been facing hurdles due to land disputes and compensation controversies. *(PTI)*

APCC collects 50,000 signatures

ITANAGAR, Nov 12: The Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) has collected over 50,000 signatures during the 'vote chori' campaign in the state.

The signatures have been personally submitted to the AICC headquarters in New Delhi recently by APCC President Bosiram Siram.

"The signatures collected are not just numbers, they are the voice of betrayed people," Siram said in a statement here on Wednesday.

He reiterated that Arunachal Pradesh stands as a frontline contributor to the national struggle to restore the sanctity and fairness of India's democracy, vowing that the movement would continue until the genuine mandate of the people is reclaimed.

Launched on September 15 and culminating on October 28, the campaign was part of the nationwide initiative spearheaded by the AICC and the INDIA bloc alliance, under the banner 'Vote Chori Gaddi Chhod' campaign.

Calling the campaign "the beginning of a people's movement to reclaim democracy", Siram said the Congress party, along with youth, students, women, farmers, civil society, and grassroots activists, will continue its organised efforts until the people's voice is restored to power. *(PTI)*

Assam Rifles organises distribution of sports items in Tirap

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 12: Continuing its commitment to youth development and community engagement in Tirap District, the Khonsa Battalion of Assam Rifles organised a Sports items distribution programme at Horu Chinghan Village on Tuesday.

The initiative aimed to encourage local youth to actively participate in sports and fitness activities, promoting the spirit of teamwork, discipline, and healthy living.

During the event, a variety of sports equipment — including footballs, volleyballs, badminton sets, and other sporting gear — were distributed to the village youth and local teams.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from the villagers, village authorities, and youth representatives, who expressed their gratitude towards the Assam Rifles for their continuous efforts in fostering community development and motivating the younger generation.

Speaking on the occasion, the representative of Khonsa Battalion highlighted the importance of sports in building physical fitness, leadership qualities, and unity among youth, aligning with the national vision of a fit and active India.

The event reaffirmed Assam Rifles' commitment to its motto — "Friends of the Hill People" — and its dedication towards promoting peace, prosperity, and progress in the region.

Capacity building, input distribution programme held at Jemeithang

HT Correspondent

JEMEITHANG, Nov 12: The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Tawang, in collaboration with the ICAR–Central Institute of Horticulture, Nagaland, under the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India, organised a Capacity Building and Input Distribution Programme under the NEH Component at Jemeithang.

Col Amit Nachankar graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The event was attended by officials from the security forces, the Jemeithang Circle administration, Subject Matter Specialists from KVK Tawang, and a large number of local farmers. During the programme, agricultural tools, vermicompost kits, and various agricultural and horticultural inputs were distributed among the participating farmers.

Addressing the gathering, Col. Nachankar urged farmers to adopt the knowledge and techniques shared by agricultural experts and to embrace organic and scientific farming practices for sustainable growth.

He lauded the efforts of KVK Tawang in empowering farmers and appealed to the centre to continue providing technical support to enhance productivity and income. He also described farmers as the backbone of society.

Earlier, Dr Anjanand Tripathi, Senior Scientist and Head of KVK Tawang, welcomed the dignitaries and participants.

In his address, he encouraged farmers to make the best use of KVK's services and expertise to improve crop productivity, manage pests and diseases, and adopt improved agricultural practices.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by C.K. Singh.

Air cargo services restored from Donyi Polo Airport

ITANAGAR, Nov 12: Air cargo services have been restored from Donyi Polo Airport, Itanagar, an official said.

The air cargo services were temporarily put on hold following the shifting of operations to the newly inaugurated terminal building of the airport.

A statement issued by Arunachal Pradesh Civil Aviation minister Balo Raja's office on Tuesday said the BCAS regional director has conveyed to Donyi Polo Airport director and Indigo Services manager about approval for resumption of air cargo services.

On October 24 this year, the Arunachal Pradesh government's Trade and Commerce department highlighted the difficulties faced by them, including registered and participating MSMEs of the state in dispatching their consignments for the India-International Trade Fair 2025 to be held in New Delhi from November 14 to 27, due to a lack of air cargo services.

Raja immediately wrote a letter to the Donyi Polo Airport director highlighting the issues and requested him to take immediate steps to restore the services.

The minister's repeated persuasion bore fruit on Tuesday when the BCAS regional director finally gave approval/security vetting for resuming cargo services.

Donyi Polo director P Narendra said the Indigo Airline has already made necessary arrangements for the resumption of the air cargo services and it will be available with immediate effect. *(PTI)*

Elevations above 13,000 feet, a true test of endurance, courage, and self-confidence

All-women high altitude trekking expedition in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, Nov 12: An all-women high-altitude trekking expedition comprising the Indian Army, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) and local Monpa community has started an expedition in the Eastern Himalayas from Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh, a defence release said.

General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Gajraj Corps Lt Gen Gambhir Singh flagged off the all-women high altitude trekking expedition at Zemithang on Tuesday, the release said.

The expedition is being organised to promote women's empowerment and adventure sports, Defence PRO Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said.

Set amidst the breathtaking landscape of Zemithang, the expedition brings together trailblazing women from across India representing the Indian Army, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), and the local Monpa community.

"This pioneering endeavour also underlines the government's vision for vibrant villages and contributes to community engagement and adventure tourism in the border regions of Arunachal Pradesh," the release said.

Following a week-long acclimatisation in the higher reaches, the all-women team is undertaking the 96-hour expedition, charting new paths in one of the most pristine and remote corners of the Eastern Himalayas.

It said these spirited participants are embarking on a challenging trek that reaches elevations above 13,000 feet, a true test of endurance, courage, and self-confidence.

"This maiden trek not only highlights the adventurous spirit and resilience of these women but also aims to inspire more enthusiasts in times to come," the release added. *(PTI)*

ENGAGEMENT UNDER SAMAGRA SHIKSHA AXOM

No. 703128/SSA-15015/58/2025/I/1301537/2025

The Samagra Shiksha, Axom invites online applications from Indian Citizens (as defined in Articles 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India) for the under mentioned positions under Samagra Shiksha, Axom on contractual basis. The online applications will be received from **13.11.2025 to 27.11.2025.** The posts are temporary in nature and the selected candidates will be initially engaged for a period of 11 (eleven) months only. The contractual engagement will neither be regularized under Samagra Shiksha, Axom nor will be absorbed under any job/programme of Government of Assam in future and no person (s) so engaged shall have any right (s) to claim for permanent abortion in any post (s) in the government or in the Samagra Shiksha, Assam.

Age for categories of post : The candidate should not be less than 18 years of age and not more than 62 years of age as on 01-01-2025. The age limit of the candidates will be calculated on the basis of the Matriculation/HSLC Admit Card or Pass Certificate issued by a recognized Board/ Council and no other document shall be accepted in lieu of the mentioned documents.

Sl No	Name of the Post	Essential Qualification and Experience	Pay in Pay Band in Rs	Grade Pay in Rs.	No of Post	Place
1	Quality Expert, [(Quality and Pedagogy]	**1. Education** a. Postgraduate degree in child development / Early Childhood care and Education/ psychology / Education/ Social sciences/ Development studies from a recognised university. b. B.Ed. from any recognized university. (Degree / Diploma in pre-primary education from any recognised university or reputed national-level organization will be preferred). **2. Experience Requirements** i. A minimum of 5 years of progressive experience in development or social sector projects, with demonstrated ability to work in mission mode initiatives. (Prior experience in mission-mode early childhood care or education projects will be considered an added advantage). ii. Proven expertise in MS Office	30,000/- to 1,10,000/-	13300/	01	State Mission Office

N.B-

1. The link of the recruitment portal will be available in the Samagra Shiksha website https://ssa.assam.gov.in
2. Read the User Guidelines carefully which is available on the recruitment portal on how to submit the online application form.
3. Claims for any correction will not be entertained after submitting the online registration and online application.
4. Before filling the on-line application, applicant has to go through the User Guidelines for online registration and online application.
5. Candidate must upload the supporting document of educational qualification, experience and others through portal.
6. Only eligible candidates will have to appear in test/interview, the exact date of which will be communicated separately.
7. A candidate must be in good mental and bodily health and free from any physical defect likely to interfere with the efficient discharge of his/her duties as an Officer of the service.
8. The exact date & time of the Test/ Interview will be communicated to the shortlisted candidates separately.
9. Marking pattern will be on General Awareness, Personality & Aptitude, Subject matter in relevant field, Relevant Experience, etc. for the post. The applicant has to obtain minimum 50% of the total marks on the above in the interview and only then the candidates will be shortlisted.
10. The office will not be responsible for any non submission of online application due to any error or other problem
11. The decision of the Selection Committee in all aspects and all respects pertaining to the application and its acceptance or rejection as the case may be, conduct of test and at all consequent stages concluding in the selection or otherwise of any candidate shall be final in all respects and binding on all concerned. The Mission also reserves its right to alter and modify time and conditions laid down in the notification for conducting the various stages up to selection withdraw the Notification at any time, duly intimating details thereof to all concerned, as warranted by any unforeseen circumstances arising during the course of this process, or as deemed necessary by the Mission at any stage.

Sd/-Executive Director
Samagra Shiksha Axom
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

DIPR /DF/HLT/1311/13-Nov-25

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'The exit polls are indicating a majority for the NDA partners'

Women in Bihar voted 'decisively' in favour of NDA for good governance: BJP

NEW DELHI, Nov 12: The BJP on Wednesday said the high turnout of women voters in the Bihar Assembly polls was a "historic transformation" and claimed that they voted "decisively" in favour of the NDA for development and good governance.

"Since 2014, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, pro-incumbency for good governance has become a new habit in Indian democracy, a trend unseen before," the party said.

Sharing provisional data on Tuesday, the Election Commission said Bihar registered an overall voter turnout of 66.91 per cent, its highest since the first state polls in 1951.

The state also recorded the highest female voter turnout in its history, it added.

The poll panel noted that in the first phase of voting on November 6, female turnout was recorded at 69.04 per cent as compared to 61.56 per cent for men.

In the second and final phase of polling held on Tuesday, the women voters again turned out in larger numbers at 74.03 per cent against a male voter turnout of 64.1 per cent.

BJP national spokesperson and former Union minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy said that the "unprecedented" turnout of the women electors was an indication that they voted in favour of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

He said the Bihar polls were about the choice between PM Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. It was also about the choice between RJD supremo Lalu Prasad and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, he added.

"The exit polls are indicating a majority for the NDA partners. And I am just commenting on the exit polls. It is not my opinion.

"In the next 48 hours, results would be out... There is a positive movement towards NDA," the senior BJP leader told PTI Videos.

Counting of votes will be undertaken on November 14.

Commenting on the provisional voter data, BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari said on X, "The overall male-female ratio stood at 71.6 for women against 62.8 for men. Female turnout 7.48 per cent higher than male turnout. Phase 2: Female turnout 9.93 per cent higher than male turnout."

"Compare this to Bihar's first Assembly election (1952) -- when female turnout was lower than male turnout by 6 per cent. The transformation is historic," he added.

Bhandari said the 2025 Bihar polls have been the "most gender-inclusive" election since Independence.

"Women in Bihar have voted decisively. 'The 'M Factor' --'Mahila Factor' --believing in development and sushasan (good governance) has emerged as the real swing factor," he said, adding, "Political pundits must stop viewing Bihar's polity only through the lens of caste."

Bhandari said the "new political grammar" of Bihar is "gender + governance".

"Since 2014, under PM Modi, pro-incumbency for good governance has become a new habit in Indian democracy -- a trend unseen before," he added.

As the two-phase polling in Bihar concluded on Tuesday evening, exit polls predicted a big victory for the NDA, with the Mahagathbandhan a distant second. They also predicted a disappointing show by Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraaj in its debut outing, forecasting a range of 0-5 seats for it in the 243-member Assembly. (PTI)

Red Fort blast: Woman doctor's brother in disbelief

Ex-husband says she never wore burqa

LUCKNOW/KANPUR, Nov 12: Expressing disbelief over his sister's alleged link with terrorist activities, the elder brother of arrested doctor Shaheen Sayeed on Wednesday said his family was still struggling to accept that she could have been involved in anything unlawful.

Her former husband recalled that she never wore a burqa during their life together, was a loving mother to their children and wanted to move abroad for a better life.

Shaheen has been arrested for alleged links to a terror module connected with the recent Delhi blast, officials said.

The statements of the lady doctor's elder brother and former husband came even as the Uttar Pradesh Police and the Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) continued their probe. Searches and inquiries were also conducted in Kanpur, where Shaheen once lived and worked after marriage.

Speaking to PTI Videos in Lucknow two days after the blast near Delhi's Red Fort that killed 12 people and left around 20 injured, Shaheen's brother Mohammad Shoaib said police and ATS officials visited their home but treated the family with respect.

"They searched the house and asked questions normally, the same way you are asking me now," Shoaib said.

"Neither my father nor I were treated harshly. There was no pressure or force used to make us say anything. They only asked when my sister stopped visiting us," he said.

Shoaib said his sister and he had not been in touch for the last four years. "We have had no contact. It's been four years since we last spoke," he said, adding that his parents nevertheless checked on her occasionally.

"Parents will naturally call their children to ask how they are doing. I am her elder brother; of course, I would also worry about her. Isn't that normal?" he said.

Asked if he had ever visited her residence near IIM Road in Lucknow, Shoaib answered in the negative. "No, I have never gone there. I only knew that she has a house somewhere along the IIM Road. I don't even know the exact location," he said.

Shoaib denied having any suspicion about her activities. "Even when she was studying medicine, there was never any sign of her being involved in anything suspicious. I still don't believe these allegations. As I have said before, I simply cannot believe it," he said.

The Crime Branch of the Kanpur Police on Wednesday questioned Dr Zafar Hayat, the former husband of Shaheen. He told PTI Videos that he learnt about her involvement in the case only on Tuesday evening.

Hayat said he and Shaheen were married in November 2003 and both pursued medical studies separately, with him being her senior. "Our divorce took place towards the end of 2012. I am not sure what was on her mind that led to it.

"There was never any dispute or quarrel between us. She was a loving and caring person," he said.

Hayat added that there has been no contact between them since the divorce. "I never had any inkling that she could be involved in such activities. She was deeply attached to her family and children, loved them immensely and took care of their studies," Hayat said.

Recalling their marriage, he said Shaheen never wore a burqa except during the wedding rituals. "I had never seen her in a burqa. I have no idea about her alleged involvement in any terror activities now being reported. (PTI)

J-K Police raids over 300 locations linked to banned Jamaat-e-Islami

SRINAGAR, Nov 12: Police on Wednesday intensified the crackdown on the terror ecosystem in Kashmir, carrying out raids at more than 300 locations linked to persons affiliated with the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) in the valley, officials said. The raids were based on credible intelligence inputs indicating attempts by JeI-linked elements to revive their activities under different fronts, police officials said.

They said the raids were carried out at several locations across the districts of Kulgam, Pulwama, Shopian, Baramulla and Ganderbal districts, they said. The searches were carried out at the residences and premises of JeI members and their associates.

They added the crackdown is a part of sustained efforts to dismantle the terror ecosystem and its support structure at the grassroots level.

Giving details of the massive operation, the officials said raids were conducted at over 200 locations across Kulgam district in south Kashmir. They said that during the past four days, more than 400 cordon and search operations (CASOs) have been conducted across different areas of the district at the premises of OGWs, J-K-based Jammu and Kashmir Nationals Operating from Pakistan (JKNOP), places where encounters took place in past, hideouts of active/ killed terrorists.

These operations have led to the interrogation of around 500 individuals affiliated with JKNOPs and other banned outfits, many of whom have been bound down and shifted to District Jail Mattan, Anantnag under preventive laws, the officials added. (PTI)

BJP orders 501 kg of laddoos anticipating victory in Bihar polls

PATNA, Nov 12: Anticipating its victory in the Bihar assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party has ordered 501 kg of laddoos ahead of the counting of votes on Friday.

The polling in two phases were held on November 6 and 11 in Bihar, and result will be announced on Friday. The state has registered the highest voter turnout of 66.91 per cent in its history since 1951.

Buoyed by most of the exit poll predictions that have indicated a clear mandate for the NDA government, the saffron party already appears to be in a celebratory mood. BJP worker Krishna Kumar Kallu told PTI, "On the counting day, NDA will celebrate Holi, Dussehra, Diwali and Eid because people have voted in favour of NDA's development works."

He added that the party has ordered 501 kg of laddoos to be "distributed as prasad" among people.

A laddoo maker in Patna confirmed that BJP workers ordered 501 kg of the traditional sweetmeat, which is to be delivered on the morning of November 14. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, however, dismissed the exit poll predictions, claiming that such forecasts were made at the "direction" of the BJP's top leadership. (PTI)

Economic expansion can no longer be pursued in isolation from environmental responsibility: Study

NEW DELHI, Nov 12: Economic expansion can no longer be pursued in isolation from environmental responsibility. While carbon emission is usually associated with growth in the short-term, it is a detrimental growth factor in the long-term, a new research has found.

Conducted by the Goa Institute of Management, in collaboration with Xavier Institute of Management (XIM) University, Bhubaneswar and BITS Pilani, Goa, the research has examined the short-term and long-term linkages between the economic drivers and the environment with the aim of illustrating the two-way relationship of growth and climate action.

Published in the prestigious Bulletin of Monetary Economics and Banking journal, the study addresses how inflation, trade, energy use and carbon emissions jointly shape regional output.

By applying Advanced Econometric Modelling (ARDL), the researchers have showcased that economic expansion can no longer be pursued in isolation from environmental responsibility.

"The approach to growth in the Asia-Pacific can no longer be at variance with the environment; it must be aligned. There is no doubt about it--sustainability is not an obstacle to growth and development, it is an enabler. The region, with the combination of clean energy, strategic policy, and ethically responsible investment, will be able to deliver growth, not only this decade but for many decades to come," said Chinmaya Behera, Associate Professor, GIM.

The research found that trade openness and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are still the major long-term determinants of economic output. (PTI)

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

NOACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/25 Dated: 11-11-2025

PRESS NOTICE

Director-cum-Additional Chief Engineer, P.W.D.(R&B), Hills, Assam Diphu, on behalf of Governor of Assam invites Item Rates bids from registered contractors of Class-1 (A&B) category for various works "Construction of 50 bedded hostel separately for boys & girls" school under the scheme "Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarh Abhiyan" in Karbi Anglong District and West Karbi Anglong District. Details may be seen at e-procurement portal website www. assamtenders. gov. in. and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 12/11/2025 to 19/11/2025. The Bidders must be registered with the E-tendering system (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam.

Sd/-
Director-Cum-Additional Chief Engineer,
P.W.D.(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu.
Memo No ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/25-(A) Dated 11/11/2025.

GOVT OF ASSAM
DIRECTORATE-CUM-ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER
PWD(R&B), HILLS, ASSAM,
DIPHU.

No.ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/24 Date. 10.11.2025.

Cancellation Notice

It is for information to all concerned that the Bids for "Construction of 50 bedded hostel separately for boys & girls at 66 No's of school under the scheme "Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan" in Karbi Anglong District and West Karbi Anglong District, published earlier vide Press Notice Inviting No.ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/08, Dated. 12-08-2025 is hereby cancelled for the following group :-

1. Gr. No. 31 Tender ID 2025_KAAC_46354_1 under Nilip Block.

Due to Technical Reason.
Fresh notice will be floated for the same shortly.

Sd/-
Director-Cum-Additional Chief Engineer,
P.W.D.(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu.
Memo NoACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/24-(A), Date 10/11/2025.

GOVT OF ASSAM
KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR OF SERICULTURE,
DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG.

No.Addl.DSDE.213/2023-2024/57 Dated Diphu the 12th Nov, 2025.

NOTIFICATION

It is hereby informed to all the eligible candidate applied for the post of Junior Assistant (Grade-III) that the office of the Additional Director of Sericulture, Diphu, Karbi Anglong will hold Written Test Exam as per programme given below:

Name of the Post	Grade	Date of Interview	Time of Interview	Venue
1	2	3	4	5
Junior Assistant	III	23-11-2025	10 AM to 1 PM	Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School, Diphu, Karbi Anglong

Note:

1. The Candidates are requested to collect the Admit Card from the office of the Additional Director of Sericulture, Diphu, Karbi Anglong (RESHOM BHAWAN) from 14/11/2025 to 22/11/2025 during office hour. The candidates are requested to bring their Admit Card for the Interview without fail.
2. No TA/DA will be provided by the Department.

Sd/-
i/c Additional Director of Sericulture.
Diphu, Karbi Anglong.
Memo No. No.Addl.DSDE.213/2023-2024/57-(A), Dated Diphu the 12/11/2025.

GOVT OF ASSAM
DIRECTORATE-CUM-ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PWD(R&B), HILLS, ASSAM,
DIPHU.

No.ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/23 Date. 10.11.2025.

Cancellation Notice

It is for information to all concerned that the Bids for "Construction of 50 bedded hostel separately for boys & girls at 66 No's of school under the scheme "Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan" in Karbi Anglong District and West Karbi Anglong District, published earlier vide Press Notice Inviting No.ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/18, Dated.27-10-2025 is hereby cancelled for the following groups :-

1. Gr. No. 59 Tender ID 2025 KAAC 48263 1 under Rongkhang Block.
2. Gr. No. 62 Tender ID 2025 KAAC 48264 1 under Rongkhang Block.

Due to non responsive of all the tenders in the technical bid evolution. Re-tender notice will be floated for the same shortly.

Sd/-
Director-Cum-Additional Chief Engineer,
P.W.D.(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu.
Memo No. ACEH/CS/SSA/03/2025-26/23-(A), Date 10/11/2025.

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NIA raids multiple places in Tripura's Unakoti in document forgery probe

AGARTALA, Nov 12: An NIA team, in coordination with the Tripura Police, conducted raids at several locations across Unakoti district on Tuesday in connection with its investigation into a document forgery scam, a senior officer said.

According to Superintendent of Police (Police Control) Rajdeep Deb, the Ahmedabad branch of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) had earlier informed the Tripura Police about the operation.

"The NIA team carried out raids in Unakoti district today, but we are not aware of further details," Deb said.

Sources from the intelligence wing of the state police revealed that the raids were aimed at tracing two individuals — Paritosh Shil (45), a resident of Bhagyapur area under the Kailashahar Police Station limits, and Ranu Pal (42), residing in the Nidevi area under the jurisdiction of the Kumarghat PS.

Speaking to local reporters, Shil confirmed that NIA officials arrived at his residence around 4 am.

"They searched my house, checked several documents, and seized my mobile phone and a bank passbook. They asked me to appear at the NIA's Ahmedabad office on November 20," he said.

Shil also claimed that the officers showed him a photograph of a person and asked if he knew the individual.

"I have no idea about the person concerned," he said.

According to the sources, the two individuals are suspected of being involved in fabricating fake documents.

However, the NIA has not yet issued an official statement regarding the outcome of the rate or scope of the investigation. *(PTI)*

46 new dengue cases in Tripura's Kailasahar town

AGARTALA, Nov 12: Forty-six new dengue cases have been reported from Kailasahar town of Tripura's Unakoti district, an official said.

Thirteen out of the 46 patients are currently undergoing treatment in hospitals, the official said.

Dr Rohan Paul of Kailasahar Sub-Divisional Hospital said, "The situation in Kailasahar is well under control. There is no cause for panic."

He said Kailasahar town is more prone to dengue than other areas of the state as tests for the mosquito-borne disease are conducted year-round.

He expressed concern that many individuals resort to self-medication without proper medical consultation.

"We are suggesting people to undergo dengue tests at the sub-divisional hospital or at nearby primary health centres. Taking medicine without proper diagnosis can lead to health risks," Paul said.

He said that dengue is transmitted by Aedes mosquito, which breeds in stagnant water. "People should ensure there is no waterlogging around their homes or workplaces to prevent mosquito breeding," he added.

Health authorities have stepped up awareness campaigns and intensified surveillance to prevent further spread of the disease in the district. *(PTI)*

BJP leaders BL Santhosh, Sambit Patra hold meeting with party MLAs in Manipur

IMPHAL, Nov 12: BJP leader BL Santhosh and party MP Sambit Patra, who arrived here on Wednesday for a three-day visit to Manipur, held a meeting with party MLAs, a state unit functionary said.

The closed-door meeting at the BJP's state headquarters was attended by former chief minister N Biren Singh, Speaker Th Satyabrata and more than 20 party legislators, he said.

BJP's state unit president Adhikarimayum Sharda Devi presided over the meeting.

"Though the exact agenda of the meeting is not known, the discussions are likely to centre around the political development in Manipur," the state BJP functionary said.

Earlier in the day, Santhosh, the BJP's national general secretary (organisation), and Patra, its northeast coordinator, were received by Sharda Devi and several leaders at Imphal airport.

When asked about the purpose of their visit, Santhosh responded with "we will tell everything".

Another state BJP functionary said the two leaders met Meitei and Kuki legislators to "strengthen the party's coordination in hill and valley districts and explore the possibilities of government formation in the state".

The Centre had imposed the President's rule in Manipur after N Biren Singh resigned as chief minister in view of ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups. The state assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation.

Santhosh and Patra are also expected to meet alliance partners, representatives of civil society organisations belonging to various communities in the state, the party functionary said.

More than 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic strife since May 2023. *(PTI)*

Sitharaman on 3-day Nagaland visit from today

KOHIMA, Nov 12: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will arrive in Nagaland on Thursday for a three-day visit, during which she will participate in a series of official functions and review the implementation of central schemes in the northeastern state.

Sitharaman will arrive at the Dimapur airport and proceed to Kiphire, one of the state's aspirational districts, where she will review ongoing developmental projects and welfare initiatives, a statement said.

She will visit the Kiphire district hospital, interact with tribal leaders and 'Lakhpati Didis' of the National Rural Livelihood Mission, and chair a review meeting with heads of departments.

On Friday, Sitharaman will interact with Anganwadi workers and participate in the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan' at Hopongkyu Memorial Hall.

She will also inaugurate the Government Industrial Training Institute (ITI) at Kiphire and interact with students while launching the NSRLM stalls and credit outreach programme at the Government High School Ground.

Later that afternoon, she will travel to Kohima, where she is scheduled to attend the signing of the MoU between Telangana State Network (T-SAT) and National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), launch the 'SAMARTH' and digital hardware initiatives, and interact with students at NIELIT-Kohima.

On Saturday, Sitharaman will inaugurate the AI Centre of Excellence for Skilling at the Nagaland Tool Room & Training Centre (NTTC) in Dimapur, followed by a review of the scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) at Niathu Resort before departing for New Delhi. *(PTI)*

Tripura to rope in IIM Calcutta to make 250 'crorepati didis': TRLM CEO

AGARTALA, Nov 12: The Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (TRLM) will take the help of Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Calcutta, to make 250 individual enterprises and group enterprises 'crorepati didis', an official said on Wednesday. Currently, over 4.68 lakh households (individuals) are engaged in 54,263 Self Help Groups (SHGs) and out of whom approximately 1,08,000 women have already become 'lakhpati didis'.

"A ₹ 10.60 crore incubation plan will be implemented over a three-year period by TRLM with the help of IIM Calcutta to produce 'crorepati didis'. A presentation has already been given to the Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) on the project," Chief Executive Officer (CEO), TRLM, Tarit Kanti Chakma told PTI.

He said the TRLM had a plan to make 150 'crorepati didis', but the Centre has suggested making 250 crorepati didis with the state doing well in empowering rural women through SHGs.

Chakma said the TRLM would seek applications from interested women entrepreneurs to be part of the ambitious plan by giving advertisements in local newspapers for wide circulation.

"After collecting the applications, we will send them to IIM Calcutta, to select potential women in order to make them 'crorepati didis'. Of course, the women who are already engaged in SHGs with ₹ 5 lakh annual turnover will get priority in the selection process. However, non-SHGs members will also get the chance to get the opportunity to become 'crorepati didis'," he said. "There will be no dearth of aspiring women for the game changer initiative because the state has already produced over one lakh lakhpati didis. Some SHGs have been earning more than 40 lakh annually, revolutionising the rural economy," he said.

According to him, the TRLM will not only provide training for capacity building but also give a business development plan so that they can flourish their business in a big way. For proper monitoring, special incubator cells at the district and block level will be put in place, he said, adding that credit linkage to banks and market linkage will also be offered to them.

Chakma added that TRLM will soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IIM Calcutta, as an incubator partner, and it has the expertise to implement such a strategic plan to change the rural face of the state. Currently, the IIM Calcutta, is implementing such programmes in West Bengal, Assam and Bihar, where it has become successful, he said, adding that the Centre has chosen the state for the project due to its success in implementing various government schemes. *(PTI)*

Mizoram bags special award for traffic management

AIZAWL, Nov 12: Mizoram has been honoured with a special award for its outstanding performance in traffic management during the 18th Urban Mobility India (UMI) conference held recently at Haryana's Gurugram, an official statement said.

The award was handed over to the state Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation (UD&PA) secretary Lalmalsawma Pachuau by Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal and Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu during the valedictory session, it said on Tuesday.

Organised annually by the Institute of Urban Transport (India) under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), the UMI Conference is a national platform aimed at fostering innovative, sustainable, and inclusive mobility practices across Indian cities.

For the award selection, Mizoram's Town & Country Planning Wing of the UD&PA department, was invited to make a presentation before the award selection committee, the statement said.

On October 16, the department submitted both a video and powerpoint presentation showcasing the state's innovative approaches to urban traffic management, it said.

The presentation highlighted Mizoram's exemplary adherence to traffic regulations, disciplined road behaviour among citizens, minimal traffic congestion despite limited road space, and the effective functioning of the coordination committee on traffic management, it said.

The presentation also underscored how Aizawl has earned the title of a 'Silent City' due to the commendable public discipline in avoiding unnecessary honking.

The Mizoram government dedicated the award to the people of the state, appreciating their cooperation, civic sense, and commitment to maintaining road discipline, the statement said.

It also extended thanks to all the departments involved for their dedicated efforts and coordination, it said.

Mizoram's traffic discipline has been lauded time and again on the internet and by eminent people, including former Indian President Ram Nath Kovind.

This traffic discipline has earned state capital Aizawl the title of the 'Silent City' or 'No Honking City' of India.

One simple rule followed by drivers or commuters is that cars or four-wheeler vehicles stick to the left side of the road and two-wheelers stick to the right side.

No vehicle will overtake or cross the other side of the road reserved for vehicles coming from the opposite direction. *(PTI)*

Communist era saw a farce in the name of jobs: Tripura CM

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 12: Tripura Chief Minister Prof (Dr) Manik Saha on Wednesday said that during the communist government, there was a farce in the name of jobs, but the current government is working with transparency in all areas, including job provision.

He said that the government is working with priority for the overall development of the education sector in the state and, especially, importance has been given to providing quality education to students.

Dr Saha said this at a program organized on the occasion of the inauguration of Kakraban Government Degree College and the virtual inauguration of the 50-bed girls' hostel of the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) at the Kakraban Government Degree College grounds in Gomati district today.

Speaking at the program, Dr Saha said, "Today is a very happy day for the people of the Kakraban area. Today, a history and milestone has been created here in the field of education. But what was the situation here before? A farce in the name of education. Those who were initiated into the ideology of the communists established anarchy in all schools and colleges under the name of Naxalites at that time. No one knew when a bomb would fall in a school or college, or who would be injured. Such was the situation at that time," he said.

The Chief Minister said that today, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the efforts of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, attempts are being made to eliminate the Maoists.

"Yesterday too, the communists held a meeting in Agartala under the name of CITU. They said that we have to protest, we have to take to the streets. But people no longer like the politics of incitement because they have experienced it and understood it. If someone was not from their own party, they would not get a job. But our current government is now providing jobs by maintaining transparency and impartiality. This government is working transparently in every sphere," he said.

Dr Saha said that the CPI(M) used to look for people from their own party in everything.

"That is, they did the politics of redemptive work. People are now realizing that a farce was made in the name of jobs during their time. What did they do with the 10,323 case? So far, our government has provided about 20,000 jobs after coming to power. There has been no challenge anywhere. We want to build a better Tripura through a peaceful and progressive environment. Our government is working under the Prime Minister's guidance," he said.

He further stated that the present government has given special importance to providing quality education to children.

"I would like to tell the students that during their student life, they should also engage themselves in social work. We have to work for the people. The Prime Minister says that education is not just text-based knowledge, but a tool for values, development, and nation-building. We have to work with this in mind," he added.

Tripura CM reviews Matabari tourist circuit with DoNER Minister

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 12: Chief Minister Prof (Dr) Manik Saha today joined a review meeting with Minister of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Jyotiraditya M. Scindia to discuss the proposed Matabari Tourist Circuit project.

The circuit has been conceptualized as a 4-night, 5-day itinerary, covering Agartala – Neermahal – Sepahijala – Udaipur – Chabimura – Dumboor, reflecting Tripura's diverse natural beauty, cultural heritage, and spiritual significance.

During the meeting, the DoNEr Minister expressed a positive response to the proposal and assured support for funding various developmental components of the circuit.

The Matabari Tourist Circuit is envisioned to give a major boost to tourism infrastructure, generate local employment opportunities, and position Tripura as a holistic tourist destination in the North Eastern region.

CPA to impress upon centre to take steps for NE's sustainable development

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Nov 12: The two-day 22nd annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association India Region Zone-III, convened in Kohima from November 10 to 11, unanimously resolved to impress upon the central government to initiate dialogue with all respective state governments of the Northeast to assess, and prepare a comprehensive and sustainable development plan of the region by taking into account its ethnic diversity. The resolution, received on Wednesday, said the presiding officers from across the Northeast state legislatures reaffirmed their commitment to parliamentary democracy, inclusive development, and regional cooperation.

The meeting also unanimously resolved to review and renew the commitment of the region's respective state legislatures to encourage legislators to connect with the people and contribute to and participate in the mission towards a developed Northeast region as a partner of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Acknowledging and appreciating the initiative of the Centre in the last 10 years to focus on the NE region with the mission of the Act East Policy, the conference noted that the region's socio-economic disparity in comparison with the rest of the country remains to be comprehensively acknowledged and addressed.

In regard to the region's socio-economic significance and international borders, the meeting, among others, unanimously resolved to impress upon the central government to increase the total budget allocated to the Northeast with the objective of making it a part of the Viksit Bharat 2047 growth engine.

Acknowledging the geo-political significance of the Northeast as a gateway to ASEAN, the conference impressed upon the Centre the urgent necessity to prepare an exclusive, targeted developmental programme for social, cultural and economic growth in collaboration and partnership of the region with ASEAN countries.

Preparations underway for annual Sangai tourism festival in Manipur after 2 years

IMPHAL, Nov 12: Preparations are underway for holding the annual Sangai tourism festival after a gap of two years, officials said.

At Hapta Kangjeibung in Imphal, the main venue of the festival, dozens of labourers are engaged in festival work, including the re-painting of structures and building of temporary stalls.

Both state and central police forces have been deployed at the perimeters of the venue, officials said.

The festival is annually held from November 21 to November 30. The Sangai festival was stopped after ethnic violence broke out in the state in 2023. Several Imphal valley-based organisations, including the Coordination Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) and representatives of internally displaced persons (IDPs), have called for a boycott of the festival.

COCOMI had said, "The ongoing conflict has displaced thousands of people, shattered livelihoods, and destroyed trust among communities and yet the government appears eager to showcase a false image of normalcy through festivals."

COCOMI had also said that, "It is not right to cover the harsh reality and show the world that peace has returned in the state when thousands of our people are still living in relief camps."

Meanwhile, an official said, "Every month, many musical concerts and local festivities are organised across the Imphal valley. Hardly any objections are raised against them. The Sangai festival will give ample opportunities to showcase items produced by state entrepreneurs and IDPs as well. In fact, the state government has notified that no deposit fees will be charged for IDPs willing to set up stalls."

"No fees will be charged from IDPs for allotment of commercial stalls," a notification from the Directorate of Trade, Commerce and Industries had said.

Another official said, "The festival will also give a platform to IDPs to earn money by selling their products." *(PTI)*

No.TBDB/MPLAD/75/2024/ *Dated, the 6th Nov/.2025*

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

The B.D.O Tihu-Barama Development Block has invited sealed tender, affixing non-refundable court fee stamp of Rs. 8.25 (Rupees Eight & paisa Twenty Five) only in the prescribed form against the following scheme from the Govt. registered contractors / Vendors of appropriate class. Tenders will be received in the office of the undersigned up-to 2.00 PM on 20/11/2025 and will be opened in the same day on 2.30 PM.

Name of Scheme	Name of Works	A.A. Value (in Rs.)	Tender Value (in Rs.)	Time of Completion
MPLADS(LS) fund for the Year 2025-26	"Construction of road at South Barkuchijhar Bathou Mandir to Dhiren Kalita house under MPLADS(LS)fund for the year2025-26	4,00,000.00	4,00,000.00	60days

Tender not accompanied by the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) is liable to be rejected.

Terms & Condition details may be seen at the office notice board. Tender papers may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on any period of mentioned working days on payment of non refundable Rs. 500.00 (Rupees Five hundred) only in cash for each act of tender paper.

Sd/- Block Dev. Officer Cum Chairman,
Tender Committee, Tihu-Barama Dev. Block

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/3069

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INDIA'S BIGGEST BANNERS POWER THE RISE OF 'CHATHA PACHA: THE RING OF ROWDIES'

NEW DELHI, Nov 12: Reel World Entertainment's audacious Malayalam spectacle transcends boundaries as Dharma Productions, Mythri Movie Makers, PVR INOX, Wayfarer Films, and T Series join forces. Chatha Pacha: The Ring of Rowdies, mounted by Reel World Entertainment, has now become a full-blown industry event. Backed by some of India's most influential banners and distributors- Dharma Productions, Mythri Movie Makers, PVR INOX, and Wayfarer Films - the film marks a historic collaborative moment for Malayalam cinema, with The Plot Pictures extending the film's reach internationally.

The project is powered by Creative Producer Shihan Shoukath who also serves as the producer alongside Ritesh and Ramesh S.Ramakrishnan, together forming the founding team behind Reel World Entertainment.

What began as a fiery Malayalam story rooted in Kerala's street energy and the charisma of wrestling culture has now evolved into a cinematic phenomenon; the one that's breaking language barriers and reimagining the scale of Malayalam cinema. After its electrifying teaser set social media ablaze which was praised for its raw, kinetic visuals has now evolved into one of the country's most hotly anticipated releases.

The teaser, full of grit, colour, and unfiltered energy, has already travelled far beyond Malayalam-speaking audiences. Released simultaneously in Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, and Kannada, it found traction across languages within hours of its drop, sparking discussion among film circles across India.

What followed the film's roaring teaser was a wave of powerhouse alliances that now define its journey to release. Backing the film is an unprecedented line-up of heavyweights.

Dharma Productions, one of India's most celebrated banners, takes charge of the Hindi-speaking markets, marking its first major association with Malayalam cinema. Mythri Movie Makers, the powerhouse behind Pushpa, drives distribution across Andhra and Telangana, while PVR INOX Pictures, India's biggest multiplex distributor, extends its reach to Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. In Kerala, Wayfarer Films, Dulquer Salmaan's banner known for championing dynamic, new-age content, steers the home-ground release. And beyond borders, The Plot Pictures takes Chatha Pacha global, charting an international release in over 100 countries. Now, with India's most powerful production houses rallying behind it, the film's trajectory looks nothing short of explosive.

The project also marks the Malayalam debut of the legendary composer trio Shankar–Ehsaan–Loy, which has already become a talking point. The music rights rest with T-Series, adding musical firepower to the already star-studded project.

The film stars Arjun Ashokan, Roshan Mathew, Vishak Nair, and Ishan Shoukath, each bringing explosive energy to the screen, with a stellar technical team featuring Anend C. Chandran (Cinematography), Jomon T. John (Additional Cinematography), Sudeep Elamon (Additional Cinematography), Ronex Xavier (Makeup), Melwy J (Costume Design), Kalai Kingson (Action), Vinayak Sasikumar (Lyrics), Mujeeb Majeed (Score), Sanoop Thykoodam (Screenplay), and Praveen Prabhakar (Editing).

With its ever-expanding alliances and a teaser that continues to trend across languages, Chatha Pacha: The Ring of Rowdies is becoming a statement that Malayalam cinema is ready to take centre stage in the pan-Indian arena. Now wrapped and racing through post-production, the buzz only gets louder as the film gears up for a thunderous January 2026 release in Malayalam, Hindi, Telugu, Kannada and Tamil. (PTI)

HBO TO ADAPT 'V FOR VENDETTA' IN SERIES

NEW DELHI, Nov 12: HBO is developing a V for Vendetta series adaptation, with Peter Jackson on board to write.

According to a Variety report, sources informed that James Gunn (Superman, The Suicide Squad) and Peter Safran will serve as executive producers alongside Ben Stephenson and Leanne Klein. Gunn and Safran are the current heads of DC Studios.

However, the studios are yet to make an official confirmation.

Written by Alan Moore and illustrated by David Lloyd, the classic graphic novel, released in 1982, previously got a live-action adaptation 20 years ago, starring Hugo Weaving and Natalie Portman. The former portrayed the masked vigilante figure who takes on a totalitarian government ruling a futuristic Britain with the help of a young woman played by Portman. Sporting a Guy Fawkes mask, the anarchist hunted corrupt and fascist figures while the secret police pursued him.

If done well, V for Vendetta could become another noteworthy addition to the HBO catalogue, following other acclaimed original DC adaptations, Watchmen and The Penguin, both multiple Emmy award winners.

Created by filmmaker Damon Lindelof, the HBO Watchmen was a sequel to the graphic novel created by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. Its principal cast included Regina King, Don Johnson, Tim Blake Nelson, and Yahya Abdul-Mateen II. The Penguin, developed by Lauren LeFranc, was a spin-off of Matt Reeves' The Batman. It was headlined by Colin Farrell and Cristin Milioti, delivering critically acclaimed performances. HBO's upcoming DC show is Lanterns, headlined by Kyle Chandler and Aaron Pierre as Green Lanterns Hal Jordan and John Stewart. (PTI)

Red FM & SkillBox Present SMX Tour Celebrating 10 Years of Seedhe Maut & Indian Hip-Hop

NEW DELHI, Nov 12: Red FM, in association with SkillBox and DL91 Era, proudly presents the SMX Tour, a celebration marking 10 years of Seedhe Maut, paying tribute to their journey and influence on India's hip-hop movement.

The multi-city spectacle kicked off with a high-octane show in Jaipur, setting the tone for an electrifying run through 15 cities across India from November 1 to December 27, 2025.

Capturing the essence of Delhi's dynamic rap duo, Calm (Siddhant Sharma) and Encore ABJ (Abhijay Negi), the SMX Tour embodies their lyrical grit and raw energy, connecting deeply with the youth and making an entire generation groove to their unapologetically bold beats. This landmark celebration follows the release of Seedhe Maut's 30-track mixtape DL91 FM (2025), the first under their new label, DL91.

The SMX Tour also reflects Red FM's commitment to empowering artists and showcasing the sounds that define India's young, ever-evolving music culture. Staying true to its "Bajaate Raho" ethos, Red FM continues to champion creativity, originality, and the spirit of self-expression.

On the association, Nisha Narayanan, Director and COO, Red FM, said, "Celebrating Seedhe Maut's 10-year journey is about honouring their fearless talent and the impact they've had on the Indian hip-hop scene. At Red FM, we've always believed that music has no boundaries. From hip-hop to indie to folk, every artist deserves a platform. Through initiatives like Red Indies and collaborations such as the SMX Tour, we're proud to bring independent voices like Seedhe Maut to the forefront, amplify their voice, and give them the recognition they deserve. This tour is another way for us to create memorable live experiences and connect our communities with the music they love."

Anmol Kukreja, CEO, SkillBox, said, "Seedhe Maut's journey is more than just music — it's the story of a movement that has shaped Indian hip-hop from the ground up. At SkillBox, we're proud to partner with DL91 and Red FM to celebrate this landmark decade with their biggest tour yet. The SMX Tour is not just a series of shows; it's a testament to the power of raw expression, resilience, and culture. This is history in the making — and we can't wait for fans across 15 cities to be part of it."

Tickets for the SMX Tour are available on skillboxes.com. Fans can look forward to an immersive live experience and a true celebration of artistry, community, and culture built for the SMX era.

About 93.5 RED FM

Red FM stands out as India's largest radio channel and one of the biggest entertainment networks. We are hyper-local, hyper vocal, and with our brand philosophy and attitude 'Bajaate Raho!' We are at the core of millennials' hearts. By leveraging our two-decades-old legacy and expertise, we sow the seeds of a 'larger than life experience'. We thrive on the emotional connection with the listeners and audience fashioned through a massive footprint of radio stations nationwide. We create original podcasts, digital shows, and on-ground events, feature independent music, make 360-degree noise, and speak the truth. As the 'station of expression,' Red FM boasts over 663 award-winning campaigns including BEST BRAND, BEST FM STATION, and BEST RJs. (PTI)

ACTOR GOVINDA ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL AFTER FEELING DISORIENTED, SAYS FRIEND

MUMBAI, Nov 12: Bollywood actor Govinda has been admitted to a hospital in suburban Juhu after he experienced disorientation and briefly lost consciousness at home, his legal advisor and friend Lalit Bindal said.

The 61-year-old actor is now stable and undergoing tests at the CritiCare hospital, Bindal added.

"He felt disoriented at around 8:30 pm yesterday and became unconscious. The family then consulted the doctor, who prescribed him some medicine. But he still felt weakness. So we consulted the doctor again and on his advice, we took him to the hospital. He is now stable and resting. Doctors are monitoring him," Bindal told PTI.

Earlier, Bindal had said the actor fainted in the evening and was immediately taken to the CritiCare hospital.

He also shared the health update about Govinda on Instagram.

"My dear and respected @govinda_herono1 has been admitted in hospital with complaints of disorientation and unconscious (sic). I pray for his speedy recovery," he posted.

In October last year, Govinda was rushed to CritiCare hospital after his licensed revolver allegedly misfired, resulting in a bullet wound to his knee.

The actor, a member of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, was discharged from the hospital three days after the incident. (PTI)

RITWIK GHATAK'S FILMS DWELT ON 'COLLECTIVE REFUGEE EXPERIENCE' : PARTICIPANTS AT KIFF SEMINAR

KOLKATA, Nov 12: The films by auteur Ritwik Ghatak bring to the fore a 'collective refugee experience' and retains their relevance even today, participants at a seminar said on his birth centenary at the 31st Kolkata International Film Festival have said. They also rue that Ghatak, known for making films on India's partition in the eastern border, did not get any acknowledgement despite his films talking about human displacement.

Supriyo Sen, eminent independent film maker and director of acclaimed documentaries, recalled how he came to know Ghatak through his movies.

"I heard from my father how we left East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, in the early 1950s and settled here. When I first watched Ritwik's films, the words of my father and the experience of my family members - as I heard from them - echoed in my mind," said Sen at the seminar held on Tuesday.

The maker of documentaries and films like 'Way Back Home', 'The Nest', 'Hope Dies Last in War' and 'Wagah', said his association with Ghatak was through his "partition-related films that brought to the fore a collective refugee experience".

"His films acted as spark as it narrated the tale of the displaced like it is about an unrealised promised land," Sen said.

Ghatak could not reach that promised land before he went to Bangladesh and made 'Titash Ekti Nadir Naam' (A river named Titash,1973), produced by Habibur Rahman of that country, Sen said.

Coming to the present political situation "where partition still haunts us", Sen said during his visit to Bangladesh with his father, he could meet the fictional characters in Ritwik's film like Ramprasad and Kader during interaction with the people there and sensed the bonding that is intrinsically embedded.

Actor-director Parambrata Chatterjee, who is the grandnephew of Ghatak, said that when he was 15 or16 years of age, he came to watch Ritwik's film 'Komol Gandhar' (1961) with his mother and "it remained with me."

Describing the phase, preceding and succeeding the partition era, as the "biggest human displacement in modern history," Chatterjee said apart from Ghatak's, there was not much reflection of the turbulent times, of bloodshed and violence in movies made other film makers of the time.

"I am a proud Indian, I am also fundamentally a Bengali. Not a Hindu Bengali, as I believe Bengalis of all communities were shuddered by the jolt of partition. Ritwik Ghatak dwelt on this partition-riddled past and his films were much impactful. There should be more studies and research on his works," Chatterjee said.

Eminent director Ashoke Viswanathan said that unlike several others, Ghatak was very little influenced by any film movement and followed his own path.

"In 'Jukti Takko Aar Goppo" (1974), he shunned narratives and the way he positioned camera added more depth to the frames," he said.

Referring to the rebellious streak of Ghatak, Viswanathan, the Dean (Film) of Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), said, "Ritwik used to curse his films and himself. He was instinctive. Even during acting, he showed his intense emotion and passion in every shot."

Ghatak, who was born in 1925 in Dhaka in present-day Bangladesh, had debuted in film making from 'Ajantrik' (1958) and then went on making 'Bari Theke Paliye' (1958), 'Meghe Dhaka Tara' (1960), 'Komal Gandhar' (1961), 'Subarnarekha' (1965), 'Nagraik' (1977) and 'Jukti Takko Aar Gappo' (1974). (PTI)

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Fitness drill for skipper Bavuma as South Africa eye strong start at Eden

KOLKATA, Nov 12: Skipper Temba Bavuma, making a return from injury, underwent a fitness drill under the supervision of the team's trainer, physio and head coach Shukri Conrad as South Africa trained at the Eden Gardens on Wednesday morning ahead of the opening Test against India starting from Friday.

The drill involved short sprints between three marker cones and lasted about 20 minutes. While his teammates were engaged in an intense nets session, Bavuma completed his running routine, did some shadow practice, and later joined the nets.

Bavuma, who missed the start of South Africa's World Test Championship title defence against Pakistan with a calf strain sustained in England in September, returned to action last week in the second unofficial Test against India A in Bengaluru.

He made a composed 59 off 101 balls in the second innings after a first-ball duck, helping South Africa A to a five-wicket win.

He is expected to replace Dewald Brevis, who managed only 46 runs in two Tests in Pakistan.

Tony de Zorzi, South Africa's top run-getter in that series with a century and fifty and is a good player of spin, will likely be shuffled from the No 4 position he had occupied in Bavuma's absence.

Conrad hailed Bavuma as the team's key player and said their drawn series in Pakistan without him was a massive boost.

"Temba's massive for us, he's our best player. It's as simple as that, which makes winning a Test match in Pakistan so much better for us, that we were able to do it without our best player," Conrad said.

"So a lot of feel-good, a lot of confidence. And if you take the last two years maybe, he's been one of the best players in the world. So his record speaks for itself.

"The calmness he brings to the batting unit, his leadership, his quiet demeanour. We get a lot of feel-good from that and he certainly brings a lot of confidence," Conrad said.

"And we're thrilled that he got through the A game as well as he did. I remember speaking to him after the first or second day when he got a first ball. We were hoping that he'd get some time out in the middle of the second innings, which he did."

Senior opener Aiden Markram, who struggled to convert starts in Pakistan, also had an intense nets session, taking short-distance throwdowns before facing the main nets.

Tristan Stubbs batted long and also bowled part-time off-spin, giving the think-tank a possible additional spin option to complement their three specialists -- Keshav Maharaj, Simon Harmer and Senuran Muthusamy who were instrumental in South Africa's 1-1 draw in Pakistan.

Pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada had a light session, limiting himself to a few shadow runs and rhythm drills late in the day, while Corbin Bosch, the 140kph all-rounder with a first-class century and IPL debut experience with Mumbai Indians this season, slogged it out at the nets.

It remains to be seen whether team goes with the tried and tested Marco Jansen or unleash Bosch to partner Rabada with the new ball.

Historically, the Eden Gardens track, because of stadium's location adjacent to river Hooghly, has offered movement early on for pacers before aiding spin from the third day onwards.

With a nip in the air, Rabada and the seamers are expected to be key with the new ball.

"I think it's a typical Kolkata wicket. I didn't expect any different. My observation is that there will be something in it for the quick bowlers. It's an early morning start.

"We practiced here in the afternoon session yesterday and found that the ball started swinging. So that might not be pitch-related, but certainly overhead-related.

"And definitely it will spin. The question is always how early in the match it does spin. It's pretty much stock standard what's out there. I don't think there are any demons, nothing that will surprise us," he said.

The last edition of the Freedom Trophy, played in South Africa in 2023-24, ended in 1-1 draw and the series prior to that was won by the Proteas 2-1. The last time South Africa played a Test series in India, they were blanked 0-3. *(PTI)*

Countering Bumrah before spinners come into play will be key for SA: Graeme Smith

MUMBAI, Nov 12: South Africa will have to find a way to deal with the lethal opening spells of India's lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah before the spinners come into play in the two-Test series beginning on Friday, said Graeme Smith on Wednesday.

Smith said neither team would want to lose wickets to pacers before spin comes into play.

"I think it's never at the forefront of people's conversation when you play cricket in the subcontinent but I think the South African team will definitely be preparing for how they're going to handle spin," SA20 league commissioner Smith told the media here.

"But getting off to a solid start, having a top three that can lay a platform for you, there's nothing worse than if you go two or three down and then the spinners come on and you're against the game already.

"So countering Bumrah up front is going to be a big thing, and Rabada as well for India. They're world-class bowlers with world-class Test records," he said.

Smith said it will be a challenge in particular for Rabada to set the tone for the team with the new ball.

"This is a big challenge for KG… coming to the subcontinent. He's definitely the leader of the attack and how he can set the tone with that new ball is going to be important for Temba (Bavuma) and the team," he said.

The former skipper said South Africa batters will have to "step up" in the first Test at Kolkata. .

"The fact that a lot of the players with the A-team games and obviously that (Pakistan) Test series have played a bit of cricket in the subcontinent, which is always important. Your game needs to adapt, your thinking needs to adapt to be able to play here," he said.

"I'm hoping that with the first Test in Kolkata, it's generally quite a good place to bat. You get good value for runs and it's a stadium that especially if it's full (it) will really make the South Africans motivated to do well in."

Smith said it will be crucial for Bavuma's team to start well as making comebacks in the subcontinent is never easy.

He also noted that South Africa's spin attack comprising Keshav Maharaj and the experience Simon Harmer can do the damage but said how the Rabada-led pace attack handles reverse swing would be vital.

"South Africa (have) arrived here with a decent bowling attack, especially in the spin department. Maharaj and Harmer can definitely do (the) damage," he said.

"They can control the game and they have the ability to turn the ball which is wicket-taking options with spin and then to see how Rabada and the likes handle reverse swing."

Smith quipped his former teammate Morne Morkel, now India's bowling coach, is an enemy.

"You know he's an enemy now. Morne is on the wrong side of the fence," he joked.

Former captain Faf du Plessis seconded Smith in underlining that South Africa will have to start well in the series as comebacks are never easy.

"I feel generally your best chance of having success here is when you start the series well and you, especially as a batting unit, get a bit of confidence that you've got runs under the belt and you almost put the conditions a little bit out of your head," he said.

"Then the rest of the series definitely will feel easier versus starting and you're under pressure and it's (a) low score (and) you lose the first Test, ball spinning a bit more. Then it's that expectation that it's going to be a hard tour for the team." Du Plessis said South Africa are not short on confidence for having had a successful run in Tests over the last year.

"The guys have played really well in the subcontinent for the last 12 or 14 months. When they've gone to Pakistan, they've played well," he said.

"I'm expecting the wickets to be very much suited for spinning conditions. But it seems like the guys have really worked hard on it." *(PTI)*

Basketball High Performance Centre unveiled

BENGALURU, Nov 12: Aimed at developing a fresh line of players, the Basketball Federation of India (BFI) and ACG Sports Pvt Ltd on Wednesday unveiled a residential High Performance Centre in Bengaluru as a pre-cursor to the inaugural season of the India Basketball League (IBL).

The HPC, located at the Lakshyan Academy, has three FIBA-standard courts, complemented by a state-of-the-art strength-and-conditioning gymnasium and a world-standard 25-metre swimming pool.

The HPC's integrated approach to high-performance basketball development will bring together a sports health department equipped with advanced biomechanics analysis technology, alongside dedicated nutrition, physiotherapy, and mental conditioning capabilities — all under one roof to ensure holistic athlete development.

"The India Basketball League represents years of vision becoming reality. This is about creating national heroes and building a basketball culture that resonates across India," said Aadhav Arjuna, President, BFI.

"Basketball is an Olympic discipline, which gives our efforts even greater meaning. With the HPC operational and delivered by ACG in just six months, and the league launching next year, we're setting new standards for Indian sport and opening the doors for generations to come." *(PTI)*

Jerlin Jayaratchagan named India's flagbearer for Tokyo Deaflympics

NEW DELHI, Nov 12: Three-time gold medallist Jerlin Jayaratchagan will be India's flagbearer at the Deaflympics, beginning on Tokyo from November 15.

India is sending a record 111-member contingent to the Deaflympics.

The contingent was given a warm sendoff by secretary (sports), Hari Ranjan Rao, at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Wednesday. The first batch of Indians will leave for Tokyo on Thursday.

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, in a message to the Indian contingent, said: "India's rapid progress in global events for special athletes is something to be proud of. As part of our endeavour to promote inclusivity and foster healthy outreach through sports, we are extremely happy to send the biggest-ever Indian squad to the Deaflympics."

"Every year our medal count has been increasing and I am very sure that we will even do better than Brazil."

India will take part in 11 disciplines – athletics, badminton, golf, judo, karate, shooting, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, wrestling and tennis.

The Deaflympics are conducted by the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD). The Deaflympics are held under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee.

"Being chosen as the flagbearer is a moment of great pride and emotion for me. This is my third Deaflympics, but the first time I'll be leading my country with the flag — it feels truly special," said Jerlin. *(PTI)*

Tezpur FC enters quarterfinals of 77th I-Day Cup

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 12: Tezpur Football Club entered the quarterfinals of the ongoing 77th All India Invitation Prize Money Independence Day Cup Football Tournament, organised by the Nagaon Sports Association, after defeating Warriors Football Club, India, 1–0 in a closely contested match at the Nurul Amin Stadium here on Wednesday.

Santanu Chutia scored the decisive goal in the 76th minute, securing Tezpur FC's place in the quarterfinals.

In another match played at the Chaparmukh playground, Morigaon Football Club defeated River Gangtok, Sikkim, 3–0 to advance to the pre-quarterfinals. Nipen Deka Raju netted once, while Masum Ahmed struck twice for Morigaon, who led 1–0 at halftime.

Anahat Singh loses in China

NEW DELHI, Nov 12: Talented Indian squash player Anahat Singh took lead against Egyptian eighth seed and world No. 15 Sana Ibrahim but could not sustain the momentum, losing the round of 16 match at the China Open in Shanghai on Wednesday.

The Indian went down 11-5 6-11 4-11 7-11 at the PSA Gold event.

Meanwhile, at the Bondi Open PSA Challenger event in Sydney, top seed Rathika Suthanthira Seelan progressed to the semifinals.

She began her campaign by getting the better of compatriot Aaradhana Kasturiraj 11-8 11-3 11-5 and followed that up with a 11-7 11-3 11-3 win over Thaliand's Anantana Prasertratanakul in the quarterfinals. *(PTI)*

Assam to participate in Pickleball Nationals 2025 in Bengaluru

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 12: The Assam Pickleball Association has announced a 25-member contingent to represent the state at the Pickleball Nationals 2025, scheduled to be held from November 13 to 16 at The Sports School, Bengaluru.

The championship, hosted by the Karnataka Pickleball Association, is being organised under the aegis of the Indian Pickleball Association (IPA), recognised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) and the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

The Assam team will be led by Captain Nazneen Rahman and Team Manager Bulbul Das.

Players were selected through state-level selection trials held on October 4 and 5 and will compete across categories including U-16 Boys, U-16 Girls, Men's Open, 30+ Men & Women, 40+ Men & Women, and 50+ Men.

In addition to team events, the players will also participate in individual categories, reflecting their commitment, teamwork, and determination to bring laurels to the state.

The Assam Pickleball Association extended best wishes to all players and officials, expressing confidence that the team will perform with excellence and uphold the sporting spirit of Assam at the national championship.

Lavanya makes late surge to take sole lead

NOIDA, Nov 12: Young Lavanya Jadon, who claimed her first professional title about six weeks ago, grabbed the pole position with three birdies in the last five holes of the first round at the 15th Leg of Women's Pro Golf Tour here Wednesday. The 18-year-old golfer from Gurugram, who is playing her first season as a pro, fired a solid 4-under 67 to take sole lead at the Jaypee Wishtown par 71 layout.

She is now one shot ahead of amateur Mahreen Bhatia and Sneha Singh, a former winner of the Order of Merit, who pulled in back-to-back birdies on the back nine to card 68. Four players, including the Order of Merit leader Vani Kapoor, Heena Kang, Ridhima Dilawari and Anvitha Narender were tied for fourth with rounds of 2-under 69 each.

Three other players, Jahaanvie Walia, Amandeep Drall and Ananya Garg carded 1-under 70 each to be Tied-eighth, as ten players carded under par rounds on a good scoring day. Lavanya, playing in the last group of the day, birdied the first and sixth against one bogey on the fourth for a 1-under front nine. On the back nine, she picked up the pace and birdied the 14th, 16th and the 18th for a good round of 67 to give herself a chance of a second win in her first season.

Mahreen, a multiple medallist at the US Kids Golf World Championship in the United States, had a good day with five birdies, including one of them at the closing 18th, against two bogeys.

She birdied the third, seventh, 12th, 14th and the 18th and dropped shots on the eighth and the 17th.

Sneha, one of the only three players to have won more than once this season, had four birdies against one bogey. Her gains came on the second, eighth, 14th and the 15th holes, while her sole dropped shot was on the Par-4 sixth hole. Sneha played alongside Khushi Khanijau (72) and Nayanika Sanga (76), who had a rough day. *(PTI)*

Haryana CM felicitates World Cup winner Shafali Verma

CHANDIGARH, Nov 12: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Wednesday felicitated India's Women's World Cup-winning team member Shafali Verma at his official residence here.

Saini honoured her with a shawl and a cheque of Rs 1.50 crore and a 'Grade A' sports gradation certificate.

According to an official statement, Shafali was appointed as the brand ambassador by the Haryana State Women's Commission.

"Today, met Shafali Verma, the beloved daughter of Haryana and a member of the team that made India world champions with their historic performance in the Women's Cricket World Cup, at Sant Kabir Kutir (Haryana CM's official residence here), and extended heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for this remarkable achievement," said Saini later in a post on X.

"On behalf of the Haryana government, in honour of this outstanding performance, she has been awarded Rs 1.50 crore in cash and a 'Grade A' gradation certificate. This recognition will inspire Haryana's sporting talents to reach even greater heights," the CM said.

Saini said with her hard work and dedication, Shafali has not only brought glory to Haryana but to the entire nation.

"This achievement serves as an inspiration for all the daughters of the state; I wish you continued success in making the country's name shine with your stellar performances," he said.

The state government is implementing numerous programmes to encourage athletes. Nearly 2,000 sports nurseries have been opened in the state, where children at grassroots level are being provided platform to progress.

Shafali thanked the Haryana government and said, "We are very happy to have won the World Cup. The spirit of sports is ingrained in Haryana, and everyone in the state encourages sports." *(PTI)*

DP World India Championship to return next season

DUBAI, Nov 12: The DP World India Golf Championships will be back next year with plans to become a regular fixture on the Tour calendar. World No.2 Rory McIlroy, who competed in the tournament, said that he was bowled over by the country's warmth and a meeting with Sachin Tendulkar at a dazzling Diwali party.

McIlroy and another top star Tommy Fleetwood, the eventual winner, hogged the limelight during the event in Delhi last month.

McIlroy, in whose name the Tour has instituted a new award called the 'Rory McIlroy Award', to be given to the best-performing DP World Tour member across the four Major Championships – gushed about the DP World India Championship.

"I enjoyed it, I had a great time in India. I don't know if I have one lasting memory. I guess I'll remember not hitting the driver for four days. But the hospitality, the welcome, the generosity of the people there, it was absolutely amazing," he said.

Talking of the highlight of the week, he paused and said, "I would say the Diwali party on the Friday night and being able to spend some time with Sachin Tendulkar, that was a pretty big highlight."

Yuvraj Narayan, Group Deputy CEO and Chief Financial Officer of DP World, was buoyed by the success of the event, which brought unprecedented crowds to the Delhi Golf Club. It was a USD four million event, which was the richest ever in India.

"New events such as the recent DP World India Championship show how we are supporting the game's growth and accessibility for the long term," he said.

The DP World Tour had 42 tournaments in 26 different countries this season. *(PTI)*

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'Would be very surprised if you don't see Dhruv and Rishabh playing in this test'

Jurel to play in place of Nitish Kumar Reddy in opening test vs South Africa

KOLKATA, Nov 12: In-from wicketkeeper-batter Dhruv Jurel will play the opening Test against South Africa here and all-rounder Nitish Kumart Reddy is set to be the one who makes way for him in the line-up, India's assistant coach Ryan Ten Doeschate said on Wednesday.

The 24-year-old Jurel, who has played seven Tests so far, has struck four centuries in his last five first-class matches, including twin hundreds against South Africa 'A' in Bengaluru last week.

With first-choice wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant back after recovering from a foot fracture he suffered during the fourth Test against England in Manchester in July, there were questions over whether the management would find room for Jurel.

But Ten Doeschate said they were "clear" about their combination ahead of the opening Test at the Eden Gardens beginning Friday.

"I think we've got a pretty good idea of the combination, and I don't think you can leave them (Jurel and Pant) out for this Test -- that's the short answer," Ten Doeschate told reporters at a media interaction here.

"I would be very surprised if you don't see Dhruv and Rishabh playing in this Test this week," he added.

Now a year and a half into his international career, Jurel has shown poise and maturity beyond his experience.

Since mid-September 2025, his first-class form has been remarkable with scores of 140, 56, 125, 44, 132 not out and 127 not out across five matches (including Ranji, Test and 'A' games). His first-class average has surged from 47.34 to 58.00, making it impossible to overlook him.

"Given the way Dhruv (Jurel) has gone in the last six months, and scoring two hundreds in Bangalore last week, he is certain to play this week," Ten Doeschate added.

PTI had reported on November 8 that Jurel would come in as a pure batter with Pant reclaiming the wicketkeeper's gloves, and Ten Doeschate confirmed that Nitish Reddy would be the one to miss out.

Asked about Reddy's omission, the former Netherlands cricketer said, "In the West Indies series, Nitish played both Tests and we said it was important to groom him for the future. So yes, we do look at him as a potential player who is playing to learn.

"But I also said strategy comes first. The primary thing is to set out a strategy to win the game. If you can accommodate giving guys a chance for development, that comes in.

"Our position certainly hasn't changed on Nitish. He didn't get much game time in Australia. But given the importance of this series and the conditions we think we're going to face, he (Nitish Kumar Reddy) might miss out in this Test this week," Ten Doeschate added.

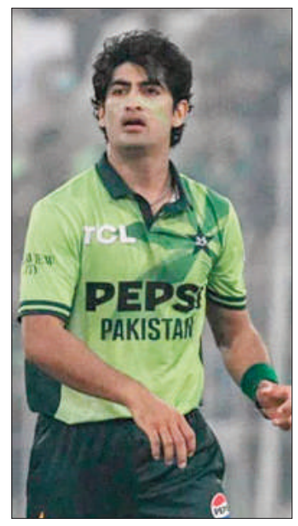
The assistant coach also highlighted India's depth and flexibility in the lower middle order, thanks to their spin-bowling all-rounders.

"Again, like what I mentioned about Washi (Washington Sundar), Axar (Patel), and Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) -- for me, you've actually got three batters there. So, it does give us a lot of flexibility," he said, hinting that Axar Patel could return to the XI in place of Kuldeep Yadav.

The seam-bowling all-rounder had a modest outing in the West Indies series that India swept 2-0, bowling just four overs in the opening Test and going wicketless.

His contribution with the bat was 43 from one innings. In the subsequent ODI series in Australia, he scored 19 not out and 8 in two matches. *(PTI)*

Firing incident at Naseem Shah's ancestral home could be due to property dispute: Police



KARACHI, Nov 12: The firing incident at the ancestral home of Pakistan cricketer Naseem Shah has been attributed to a possible dispute over property by police probing the attack that has caused a furore in the region.

Unknown assailants fired at the gate of Naseem's ancestral home in Lower Dir district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa though the bowler decided to stay with the team for the first ODI against Sri Lanka on Tuesday as nobody was harmed in the incident.

Taimur Khan, the District Police Officer (DPO) in Lower Dir, said that initial investigations indicated at property dispute or regional enmity.

"It could be the result of the overall security environment in the area," Khan said.

He said he had met with Naseem's father and other relatives and formed a team to investigate the incident and additional security was also provided at the cricketer's residence.

He added that the attackers fired shots at the entrance of the Hujra (guest space) next to the family home in Lower Dir.

Many of the national team players come from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province where in Northern areas security forces are fighting terror attacks frequently.

The northern areas are also known for tribal feuds.

The three-match ODI series in Rawalpindi will be followed by a T20I tri-series, which features Zimbabwe as the third team. *(PTI)*

All draws keep five Indians in hunt for the next round

PANAJI, Nov 12: Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi drew the first game and remained committed to cement his place in the Candidates as all Indian contenders drew their first game of the fourth round of the FIDE Chess World Cup.

The day provided just two decisive game out of a possible 16 as Armenian turned American Levon Aronian defeated Radoslav Wojtaszek of Poland and Jose Martinez continued with a grand run, defeating Alexey Sarana of Slovenia.

Only five Indians, out of 32, remain in the hunt and leading the list is Arjun who is yet to endure a difficult day in the office.

In the first game of the fourth round, Arjun did not have to face many problems against Peter Leko who was happy with a draw with white pieces on Tuesday. The Indian is likely to come back with guns blazing in the return game now.

Praggnanandhaa was worse when Daniil Dubov decided it was not much to look forward to. It was

clear that Dubov was hoping to take his chances in the shorter time control that he dominates. However, Pragg, as he is referred to, will not mind the new situation and will try to keep things under control.

As things turned out Grandmaster P Harikrishna also drew with Nils Grandelius of of Sweden. Nils is someone known to be chasing the higher prize fund but for Hari it does not matter much. The Swede will have to keep his moves intact if he has to proceed to the tiebreaker after the return game.

For the records, Arjun employed the Sicilian Taimanov and got an opening survey from one of the main lines. Peter Leko being the theoretical masterclass he is, did not find any flaws per se in Arjun prep and decided to draw instead of trying to fight on the long ordeal.

Complete pairings round 4 (Indians unless specified): Frederic Svane (Ger) drew with Shant Sargsyan (Arm); Peter Leko (Hun) drew with Arjun Erigaisi; R Praggnanandhaa drew with Daniil Dubov (Fid); Matthias Bluebaum (Ger) drew with Alexander Domchenko (Ger); V Pranav drew with Nodirbek Yakubboev (Uzb); Andrey Esipenko (Fid) drew with Vincent Keymer (Ger); Wei Yi (Chn) drew with Parham Maghsoodloo (Iri); Alexey Sarana (Fid) lost to Jose Eduardo Martinez Alacantra (Mex); Nils Grandelius (Swe) drew with P Harikrishna; Samuel Sevian (Usa) drew with Lorenzo Lodici (Ita); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra) drew with Aleksy Grebnev (Fid); Awonder Liang (Usa) drew with Gabriel Sargissian (Arm); Le Quang Liem (Vie) drew with V Karthik; Sam Shankland (Usa) drew with Richard Rapport (Hun); Levon Aronian (Usa) beat Radoslav Wojtaszek (Pol); Yu Yangyi (Chn) drew with Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb). *(PTI)*

Security beefed up for Sri Lanka team following suicide bombing in Islamabad

RAWALPINDI, Nov 12: Security has been beefed up for the visiting Sri Lankan cricket team following terror attacks in Islamabad and Wana with the island nation's High Commissioner also given assurance that the touring players are being treated as "state guests".

The security issue was taken up at a meeting between the Sri Lankan High Commissioner, Admiral (retired) Fred Seneviratne, Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi and government officials in Islamabad.

Sources said that Naqvi, who is also the Federal Minister for Interior affairs, had earlier also met officials of the Sri Lankan team and assured them of fool-proof security.

"Security has been beefed up with Pakistan Army and the paramilitary rangers now deputed to monitor the visiting players and officials," the source said.

During Wednesday's meeting, the security situation was discussed in the presence of top police officials of Islamabad.

Naqvi assured Siriwiratnay that the visiting team players and officials were state guests in Pakistan. The High Commissioner, after the briefing, expressed satisfaction with the security arrangements.

Pakistan has blamed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) for the terror attacks.

On Tuesday, a suicide bomber detonated himself outside a judicial complex in Islamabad killing 12 people and injuring scores, while in Northern Pakistan's Wana area a terror attack on the Wana Cadet College was foiled by security forces and around 300 students were safely evacuated.

Federal Minister for Information, Ata Tarar said if security forces had not acted swiftly, Pakistan could have witnessed a bigger incident like the Peshawar school attack in 2018.

Three years back the New Zealand team cancelled a white-ball series in Rawalpindi and returned home without playing a match after receiving creditable intelligence information about a possible terror attack targeting the visitors.

"That is why Mohsin Naqvi personally went to the stadium and met with the visiting team members and assured them they would be safe and secure," the source said.

In March 2009, TTP terrorists had attacked the Sri Lankan team bus close to the Gaddafi stadium, resulting in the closure of international cricket in Pakistan for nearly 10 years as foreign teams refused to visit the country due to security concerns.

Sri Lanka, after playing three ODIs in Rawalpindi, will then take part in a T20 triangular series also involving Zimbabwe from November 17 to 29. *(PTI)*

Hopefully we have learned from the New Zealand series: Ten Doeschate

KOLKATA, Nov 12: India's assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate is hoping that his batters have learnt lessons from the rare series-defeat at home against New Zealand last year as the hosts get ready to take on spin-heavy Proteas in the two-Test rubber, starting Friday.

Armed with a potent spin attack, taking on South Africa seems like competing against a "subcontinent team", Ten Doeschate said, admitting that they need to get better at negotiating the challenge posed by tweakers.

South Africa's recent Test series in Pakistan saw their spin quartet of Keshav Maharaj, Simon Harmer, Senuran Muthusamy and Prenelan Subrayen take 35 wickets to draw the two-match series 1-1.

"They have got four (three specialist) spinners at their disposal. Most likely they will play three and it is a little bit like playing against a subcontinent team," Ten Doeschate said during a media interaction ahead of the opening Test.

The Proteas arrive with a balanced attack in both pace and spin.

If Kagiso Rabada and Marco Jansen spearhead the pace department, they have three specialist spinners in Maharaj, Simon and Muthusamy.

Harmer (13), Muthusamy (11), and Maharaj (9) shared 33 wickets among them in two Tests. Muthusamy also scored 106 runs and was named Player of the Series.

"You normally worry about the pace attack first and I am pretty sure they will go with two seamers and three if not four spinners. But that is also the challenge when you are playing in the subcontinent.

"Something as a team that we need to get better at. We addressed it early on. We have come up short a few times. So it is a great challenge."

The concern seems valid as India had endured an unprecedented 0-3 home defeat to New Zealand exactly a year back. The collapse came largely against spin, as Ajaz Patel (15), Mitchell Santner (13) and Glenn Phillips (8) shared 36 wickets between them.

"Hopefully we have learned from the New Zealand series. We have put some plans into place against how to play the spin. It is going to be so important over these two games. Particularly how well they did in Pakistan about four weeks ago."

He further hailed South Africa's overall development and the quality of their attack, and said the visitors deserve credit for how they have rebuilt into a formidable side in all conditions.

"They deserve a lot of credit for how they have gone about their work in the last 9-10 months. The position they have found themselves in the World Test Championship, they have shown that they are a quality team -- to beat Australia in the final...," he said.

"Also, the mention of how potent they are as a spin attack makes it even more mouth-watering, to be playing them at home.

"The WTC is just so important. There is no series that you can take lightly or let slip by. Obviously, a very big step to us achieving getting to the World Test Championship Final. Everyone is looking forward to it. It should be a great contest."

India have been switching formats almost non-stop since their Asia Cup T20 triumph in Dubai. It was followed by a 2-0 sweep over the West Indies, beginning their 2025-27 WTC cycle and then a white-ball tour of Australia.

"It's not overly taxing; you just have to switch your mind tactically. The longer format demands more input from the coaching staff, but the players have become very good at adapting," he said.

He also said it's a big challenge for players like Test and ODI skipper Shubman Gill, Jasprit Bumrah and Axar Patel to manage the three formats ahead of the next year's T20I World Cup.

"It is super challenging. You're seeing fewer and fewer guys play all three formats across the world now. Mentally, when you take on a challenge like that, you have to lay out a road map of how you're going to go about things. Gill, for example, has been very good.

On the much-debated Eden pitch, ten Doeschate said it looked "good and fair".

"Just from the early looks at the wicket, it looks a good wicket that should spin later," he said. "So yes, it is not just going to be about spin. The batters have to bat really well in the first few days when batting should be slightly easier.

"Of course, both teams have quality fast bowlers, so the challenge will be in the combinations we go in with.

"We'll rely on our seamers to make early inroads in the first couple of days. That's what you want from a really good Test wicket -- balance, not just one facet dominating the game. But I do think spin is going to be important here in the long run," he added. *(PTI)*

There's a real hunger and desire to beat India in India: Keshav Maharaj

KOLKATA, Nov 12: South Africa have not won a Test match in India for 15 years but there's a "real hunger and desire" to put an end to it in the upcoming series, said spinner Keshav Maharaj while describing it as one of their toughest tours.

India and South Africa will lock horns in a two-match Test series from November 14, with Kolkata and Guwahati playing hosts.

Acknowledging the magnitude of the challenge ahead of South Africa, Maharaj said during an online interaction, "There's a real hunger and desire within the camp to beat India in India. It's probably one of the toughest tours, if not the toughest in the Proteas calendar, for the various generations that have come (here).

"We feel like it's one of our biggest tests. And it will be a wonderful opportunity to grade ourselves, to see how far we've come slowly. *(PTI)*

Quietly confident that we can make history of our own here: Shukri Conrad

KOLKATA, Nov 12: South Africa's head coach Shukri Conrad is backing his spin troika of Keshav Maharaj, Senuran Muthusamy and Simon Harmer to match their seasoned counterparts from India and "make history of our own" in the upcoming Test series, which he likened to their WTC final against Australia.

After the series-opener at Eden Gardens from Friday, Guwahati will host its first-ever Test from November 22, and the South African spinners will look to carry their good form they displayed in Pakistan recently, to India. "Having good spinners in your team, does that add spice to the overall contest? Yes, I think it gives us a lot of confidence," Conrad said during a press conference on Wednesday.

"Not saying that we didn't have good spinners in the past, but we certainly think we've got a better pack of spinners now in Keshav, Simon and Sen.

"It gives us a lot of confidence that if the conditions are (conducive) we feel that we've got the armoury to obviously challenge India in that respect as well," he added. "We're quietly confident that we can make history of our own here in Eden Gardens and in India."

Conrad compared the contest against India to their World Test Championship (WTC) final against Australia in which they emerged triumphant for a rare glory in an ICC event.

"Yes, we had the final against Australia that we won which was massive. I compare this series, and this match, to that final."

Conrad understands the magnitude of playing a formidable opposition like India in their own backyard.

"Look India, tough challenge anyway in the world and when you come to an iconic venue like Eden Gardens, it just makes it even tougher. *(PTI)*

There is no forgiveness for us, expected to perform like robots: Haris Rauf

RAWALPINDI, Nov 12: Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf has lamented the "unforgiving" nature of international cricket in which "humans are expected to perform like robots" as he responded to criticism of his recent underwhelming performances, including the Asia Cup final against India.

Haris produced a match-winning burst of three wickets and ended up with four scalps to lead Pakistan to a narrow six-run win over Sri Lanka in the first ODI here on Tuesday.

He had copped a two-match suspension during the previous series against South Africa for offensive gestures during the Asia Cup games against India that "brought the game into disrepute" in September.

"Humaray liye koi maafi nahi hoti (there is no forgiveness for us) we are expected to perform like robots but we are human beings and we can have bad days," Haris said at the post-match conference when asked why he has faltered in big matches like the Asia Cup final against India.

Haris, who went for 50 runs in 3.4 overs to be the most expensive bowler of the Asia Cup final that India won, said that as a player one can have a bad day because plans don't always work out.

"The main thing is you don't give up. You don't die from a bad day. We just keep belief in our skills and keep on working on rectifying mistakes but as a professional cricketer any bowler can have a bad day," Haris said to another question.

To a question of the fans' disappointment, he said they should never doubt that players had not tried their best even on a bad day.

"No player likes to be criticised, yes everyone has his opinion but like I said for us, there is no forgiveness. You might have 10 good matches and one bad game and everyone will remember the bad game," he rued.

Haris said he was open to playing Test cricket for his country.

"...I want to play Tests also for Pakistan. I am ready whenever the selectors or the Board want me for Tests but my only point is to inform us in advance so that we can go and prepare for red-ball cricket where you have to bowl a lot of overs in a day," he said. *(PTI)*

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