

6	WORLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British Indian minister Lisa Nandy apologises after rules breach</li> <li>S Korea says N Korea fired at least 1 ballistic missile toward its eastern waters</li> </ul>
8	NATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key stanzas of 'Vande Mataram' dropped in 1937: PM</li> <li>Congress proud flagbearer of 'Vande Mataram' while BJP, RSS avoid it: Kharage</li> </ul>

## Sitharaman visits Tata semiconductor plant in Assam

# 48 mn semiconductor chips to be produced per day

**JAGIROAD, Nov 7:** Tata Group's upcoming ₹ 27,000-crore semiconductor plant will put Assam in the driver's seat of the engine for developed India, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday.

Sitharaman reached Guwahati in the morning on a two-day tour, during which she will unveil a range of projects at various places in the state.

In the afternoon, she visited the upcoming facility of Tata Electronics' Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT), situated at Jagiroad in Morigaon district of central Assam.

"During her visit to the upcoming semiconductor facility, Smt @nsitharaman also interacted with the officials overseeing the project," the Union Finance Minister's Office said in a post on X.

With an investment of ₹ 27,000 crore, the facility is expected to produce up to 48 million semiconductor chips per day, employing advanced packaging technologies, like flip chip and Integrated System in Package (ISIP), it added.

"Through this unit, Assam will probably be the driver of the engine for Viksit Bharat. I think Assam has a golden moment," Sitharaman told a group of entrepreneurs and students during an interaction in the presence of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The under-construction facility is developing an ecosystem, which is



supporting local entrepreneurship with technology and orders, she added.

"Youth in Assam should really come out now and take the little risk of not being comforted by a job which pays you salary, but the risk of doing business on your own. Today, you have the right kind of people to handhold you. Come out and contribute to the Viksit Bharat dreams," Sitharaman said.

The Union Finance Minister's Office said that the semiconductor project, which is set to become one of the country's premier manufacturing sites, aligns with the nation's broader goal of establishing a self-sufficient semiconductor ecosystem.

"The Morigaon semiconductor facility is part of a wider network of government-backed projects aimed at bolstering India's semiconductor production capabilities," it added.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the NDA government has been promoting the growth of semiconductor and chip manufacturing within the country, paving the way for technological advancement and economic resilience, the finance minister's office said.

"It is designed to cater to essential sectors such as automotive, electric ve-

hicles, telecommunications, and consumer electronics. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi, since 2014, has focused on the holistic development of the North-East, which is critical for achieving the goal of #ViksitBharat by 2047," Sitharaman's office said.

Earlier during the day, she was accorded a warm welcome by the chief minister at Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International (LGBI) Airport in Guwahati. State Finance Minister Ajanta Neog was also present there.

Sarma, accompanying Sitharaman to Jagiroad, expressed heartfelt gratitude for her support in bringing the semiconductor project to Assam.

"The Tata semiconductor facility marks India's future in high-tech manufacturing, set to redefine Assam's industrial landscape and generate vast opportunities for our youth. We remain grateful for her constant support in shaping Assam's semiconductor journey," he added.

In the evening, Sitharaman will inaugurate the 'Gateway of Guwahati', comprising a terminal and jetty on the Brahmaputra riverbank, developed at a cost of ₹ 305 crore.

She will also dedicate the Brahmaputra Riverfront project, set up at Sati Radhika Udyan, for an expenditure of ₹ 327 crore, in the state capital.

On November 8, Sitharaman will go to Gohpur in (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## SIT grills Zubeen's former-manager



**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 7:** Nearly fifty days after the untimely demise of legendary singer Zubeen Garg, his former longtime manager, Tarsame Mittal, appeared on Friday before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in Guwahati to record his statement.

Mittal was summoned as part of the ongoing probe into the circumstances surrounding the artist's death, in which the state-government-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been interrogating a number of individuals connected to Garg's professional circle.

These questioning sessions are reportedly examining potential financial and managerial irregularities that came to light after Garg's demise.

Mittal, who had managed Garg's professional affairs for a long period, was replaced by Siddharth Sharma, who is currently in judicial custody.

Significantly, sources said that Sharma entered Garg's management fold through a recommendation from Mittal, and that the two

shared a close professional relationship — a connection that may yield key insights into the financial dealings under investigation.

There have been serious questions as why Tarsame Mittal was not being called by the SIT despite he was related to Siddharth Sharma, Garg's manager.

According to sources, the late singer bought a number of properties in Guwahati including his Jonali studio and land in Khar-guli when Mittal was his manager.

The house in Khar-guli is under construction and Garg's wish to stay on the banks of Brahmaputra could not be fulfilled as his life was cut short during the sea outing in Singapore.

On September 19, Zubeen Garg died in Singapore while on a visit as brand ambassador for the North East India Festival.

The Singapore death certificate lists "drowning" as the cause of death.

The Assam government on September 25 formed an SIT to probe the case.

Most recently, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma declared that Garg's death would be treated as a murder case, rather than a misadventure.

He set a deadline of December 8 for the SIT to submit its chargesheet, and said that because the incident happened on foreign soil, approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is required before charges can be formally filed.

At this stage, the investigation encompasses both the events leading up to the singer's death and alleged irregularities in his financial and managerial domain. Mittal's deposition is (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## IAF to hold full-scale air show in Guwahati this weekend



**GUWAHATI, Nov 7:** The Indian Air Force has geared up to hold the first ever full-scale air show in the Northeastern region at Guwahati over the next two days, showcasing the country's fighter planes like Rafale, Sukhoi, Apache and IL-78 refueller.

To mark the 93rd anniversary celebrations of the Indian Air Force, Eastern Air Command is organising the show on Saturday and Sunday at

Lachit Ghat above the Brahmaputra river, to display over 75 fighter helicopter and planes in more than 25 formations.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will join the forces in presence of Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Air Command Air Marshal Surat Singh to witness the spectacle amid the scenic beauty of the river on Sunday along with other dignitaries like Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

"It is for the first time that the IAF is holding such an expanded show in the Northeast. IAF's almost entire range of aircrafts and helicopters will be on display, presenting different maneuvers in the sky. The people here will get a glimpse of our sky warriors," Defence PRO Lt Col Mahender Rawat told PTI.

Featuring frontline fighter planes, transport aircrafts and helicopters flying in coordinated formations, the display promises a visual symphony of speed, skill and synchronization, which will offer the citizens a rare opportunity to witness the nation's aerial might up close, he added.

"Beyond the spectacle, the event aims to inspire youth across the Northeast, showcasing career opportunities in the IAF and fostering a spirit of patriotism, discipline and service to the nation. The flypast will be open to the public, with designated

Protected wildlife species recovered, two held

**TEZPUR, Nov 7:** In a crackdown on wildlife trafficking, six tokay geckos, one slow loris and nearly 11 kg pangolin scales were recovered from two persons, who were nabbed in Nagaon district of Assam, officials said.

A team of the special task force (STF) intercepted the duo involved in the smuggling of endangered species at Jakkhalabandha area of the district during the intervening night of Thursday and Friday, an Assam Police spokesperson said.

"During the operation, the team... recovered several protected wildlife species and their parts," he said.

"Preliminary investigation indicates that the recovered wildlife species and parts were intended for trafficking to international markets, where such items are in high demand for illegal trade," the officer said.

The police are carrying out further investigation to find out more details, he added. (PTI)

## 'Vande Mataram' not just a song but a divine invocation: CM

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 7:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday joined the mass rendition of Vande Mataram held at Janata Bhawan to mark the 150th anniversary of India's National Song.

The rendition was performed in its original form, paying homage to the timeless composition that continues to stir patriotic fervour across generations.

Addressing the gathering, the chief minister said the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram is a moment of immense pride for every Indian.

"With reverence in our hearts, we come together to honour that sacred song which once awakened a dormant nation, filled it with courage and sowed in every heart the indomitable dream of freedom," he said.

Recalling the origins of the song, Sarma said that Vande Mataram was composed by the eminent writer Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on November 7, 1875, on the auspicious day of Akshaya Navami exactly 150 years ago.

"Bankim Chandra did not merely write a poem; he invoked the divine spirit of the Motherland, envisioning Bharat Mata as a sacred force nurturing her children with courage, wisdom and prosperity," the chief minister said.

He added that in the darkest days of colonial rule, Vande Mataram lit the lamp of hope in the nation's

heart. It became a call for awakening, freedom and self-respect.

The chief minister also recalled how Rabindranath Tagore first sang Vande Mataram at the 1896 session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta, filling the gathering with devotion and patriotic fervour.

By the time of the 1905 partition of Bengal, the song had become the anthem of the Swadeshi movement, inspiring millions to boycott foreign goods, revive indigenous industries and reclaim India's pride, he said.

Sarma said that realising its power, the British authorities banned the song in schools and public meetings, yet its spirit could not be silenced.

"Truth, ideals and patriotism can never be suppressed," Sarma remarked, paying tribute to revolutionaries like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, Bhagat Singh and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, who carried forward the flame of Vande Mataram until Independence.

As a tribute to that enduring spirit, India's first President Dr. Rajendra Prasad accorded Vande Mataram the status of the National Song in 1950, Sarma said.

The chief minister noted that while the original song has six stanzas, only the first two are widely sung and recognized today. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## CID intensifies crackdown on Veer Lachit Sena 11 arrested in statewide raids

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 7:** The Assam Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has launched a large-scale crackdown against the Veer Lachit Sena, days after a fresh case was registered against the outfit at the CID Police Station.

Acting on directions to consolidate earlier FIRs filed across multiple districts, the agency has reopened pending case files and initiated coordinated operations.

According to police officials, at least 11 members of the organisation

were picked up in simultaneous raids conducted across several districts.

All those detained are being brought to the CID headquarters in Guwahati for exhaustive questioning.

A new case (No. 20/25) was formally lodged on Thursday, following which the CID began compiling past cases involving the outfit from various police stations.

This move is aimed at streamlining the probe under a single, coordinated investigation instead of scattered district-wise inquiries.

## Brahmaputra Riverfront terminal is unique in the country: Himanta

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 7:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said that there has been a major boost in river tourism following the inauguration of Guwahati Terminal and Jetty along with Sati Radhika Shaanti Udyan—two projects aimed at transformation of Brahmaputra riverfront.

Sarma said, "The newly inaugurated Brahmaputra riverfront terminal is unique and no terminal in the country can match the beauty of this project. This project was aimed to provide a major boost in river tourism. Assam has huge potential for river tourism and this can be explored in the coming days."

The chief minister asserted that this Guwahati terminal was designed to give people a taste of what tourists in Singapore or Bangkok normally enjoy by

staying for hours in the river.

"In Singapore and Bangkok, people enjoy 2-3 hours of river outing and this can also be enjoyed at Guwahati terminal as we have unlocked the huge potential of river tourism here," he said.

Sarma also mentioned that once Guwahati-North Guwahati bridge over the Brahmaputra River becomes operational, the ferry service will become dysfunctional in this route and river tourism will be given priority by the state government.

The chief minister highlighted the transformation of Guwahati's riverfront through the newly developed Guwahati Gateway Terminal and jetty along the Brahmaputra.

Sharing images of the illuminated riverbank, he described the project as a (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## SC to hear on Nov 11 pleas challenging EC's decision to conduct pan-India SIR exercise



**NEW DELHI, Nov 7:** The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear on November 11 pleas challenging the Election Commission's decision to conduct a pan-India Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said it will start hearing the pleas from November 11 onwards after advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for NGO, Association of Democratic Reforms, said the issue goes to the root of democracy.

The bench said though several important matters are listed from November 11 onwards, it would try to adjust the hearing of other matters to take up SIR matters.

Bhushan said urgency of the matter is because the SIR exercise has started in different states.

The top court is already hearing pleas challenging the validity of the poll panel's decision to conduct the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise in Bihar.

On October 16, the EC termed the Bihar SIR "accurate" and told

the apex court that the petitioner political parties and NGOs are merely content with making "false allegations" to discredit the exercise.

The poll body also told the apex court that not a single appeal has been filed by any voter against name deletion since the publication of the final electoral roll.

It denied the allegation of the petitioners that there was a "disproportionate exclusion of Muslims" from the final electoral roll of the state prepared after the months-long SIR exercise.

On September 30, the EC, while publishing the final electoral list of the poll-bound Bihar, said the total number of electors has come down by nearly 47 lakh to 7.42 crore in the final electoral roll from 7.89 crore before SIR.

The final figure has, however, increased by 17.87 lakh from 7.24 crore electors named in the draft list issued on August 1, which had removed 65 lakh voters from the original list on various accounts, including (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## The three-day festival began on November 5 3rd Assam Garo Wangala Festival concludes at Tinglijan

**HT Correspondent**  
**DONGKAMUKAM, Nov 7:** The 3rd edition of the Assam Garo Wangala Festival organised by the All Assam Garo Cultural Society (AAGCS) and the 29th edition of the Karbi Anglong Wangala Festival organised by the Karbi Anglong A'chik Cultural Society (KAACS)—a three-day cultural extravaganza showcasing the rich and vibrant culture and heritage of the Garo community—concluded at Tinglijan Garo village near Bokajan on Friday.

The three-day festival began on November 5.

The spectacular post-harvest thanksgiving is dedicated to the



Garos community's 'Great Giver' or god of fertility, Misi Saljong, to whom the community offers the first share of their harvest before consumption.

The three-day festival featured

various cultural competitions such as dama (traditional drum beating of different notes), adil sika (buffalo horn blowing), matrik chroka (warrior dance), traditional games and sports, competitions on traditional cuisine, harvesting dance, modern dance, group songs, and more.

Participants came from Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong, Goalpara, Kamrup, Sivasagar, Hojai, Udalguri, and other districts.

Addressing the open session on the concluding day, Assam Legislative Assembly speaker Numal Momin assured that the proposal for establishing a satellite-based Garo Autonomous Council (GAC) within Assam would be fulfilled soon.

Momin said, "The BJP, a national party, has always shown love for the Garo community. In 2011, the party gave an MLA ticket to Sandhyarani Sangma from Bokajan, though she did not win. Again in 2016, the BJP fielded another Garo candidate—myself—from the same constituency, and I won. In 2021, I was re-elected and appointed as Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly."

He recalled that during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led BJP government in 2003, the plain Garos were granted Scheduled Tribe status, which, he (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

# Stock markets decline for 3<sup>rd</sup> day on foreign fund outflows, weak global peers

**MUMBAI, Nov 7:** Falling for the third straight day, benchmark index Sensex declined by nearly 95 points while Nifty slipped below 25,500 on Friday as relentless foreign fund outflows and weak trends in global markets hit investors' sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 94.73 points, or 0.11 per cent, to settle at 83,216.28. During the day, it tanked 640.06 points, or 0.76 per cent, to 82,670.95.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 17.40 points, or 0.07 per cent, to 25,492.30.

Among Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel tumbled 4.46 per cent after Singtel said it has sold about 0.8 per cent stake in the firm for Rs 10,353 crore (SGD 1.5 billion).

Tech Mahindra, Trent, Reliance Industries, HCL Tech, Hindustan Unilever, and ITC were also among the laggards.

However, Bajaj Finance, Tata Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Bajaj Finserv were among the gainers.

"Domestic equities rebounded from early losses as buying emerged at key support levels,



though it may be premature to call this a trend reversal amid mixed earnings, cautious global cues, and persistent FII outflows.

"Going forward, markets will closely monitor US shutdown and tariff-related developments with US-India and US-China deals to assess the durability of the current momentum," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE midcap gauge went up by 0.25 per cent, while smallcap ended marginally lower by 0.01 per cent.

Teck dropped 1.46 per cent, followed by telecommunication (1.19 per cent), power (0.52 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.50 per cent), IT (0.39 per cent) and services (0.37 per cent).

However, metal jumped 1.41 per cent, financial services (0.74 per cent), commodities 0.65 per cent, auto (0.55 per cent) and

bankex (0.31 per cent).

In a holiday-shortened week, the BSE benchmark tanked 722.43 points or 0.86 per cent, and the Nifty declined 229.8 points or 0.89 per cent.

A total of 2,105 stocks declined while 2,069 advanced and 141 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite Index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled lower.

Markets in Europe were trading lower. US markets ended significantly lower on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 3,263.21 crore on Thursday, however, Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth ₹ 5,283.91 crore, according to exchange data.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 1.31 per cent to USD 64.21 per barrel.

On Thursday, the Sensex declined 148.14 points, or 0.18 per cent, to settle at 83,311.01. The Nifty dipped 87.95 points, or 0.34 per cent, to 25,509.70. (PTI)

## ICICI Prudential Life launches BSE 500 enhanced value 50 index fund for ULIP investors

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 7:** ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has announced the launch of the ICICI Prudential Life BSE 500 Enhanced Value 50 Index Fund, a new investment option under its Unit Linked Insurance Plans (ULIPs), designed to help investors participate in India's economic growth through value-oriented investments.

The fund will track the BSE 500 Enhanced Value 50 Index, which includes 50 companies identified on value-based parameters such as earnings, book value, and sales relative to price.

It aims to capture opportunities in fundamentally strong but temporarily undervalued stocks, allowing investors to benefit as these companies move toward fair valuation.

Following a systematic, rule-based investment process, the index is reviewed and reconstituted quarterly to align with emerging value opportunities across large, mid, and small-cap segments.

The diversified structure and low tracking error are

expected to help investors achieve stable, long-term growth.

Highlighting the fund's potential, Manish Kumar, chief investment officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, said, "This passively managed fund provides our ULIP customers a transparent way to participate in India's growth story through long-term value investing. ULIPs, by design, encourage disciplined savings, and this index fund will help customers work toward goals such as retirement or children's education while ensuring financial security through life cover."

According to the company, the BSE 500 Enhanced Value 50 Index has historically outperformed its parent index in 12 of 19 years between 2006 and 2024, underscoring the resilience of a disciplined value strategy.

The fund is available across ICICI Prudential Life's popular ULIP offerings, including ICICI Pru Signature Assure, ICICI Pru SmartKid Assure, and ICICI Pru Smart Insurance Plan Plus (SIP+), among others, via the company's official website — [www.iciciprulife.com](https://www.iciciprulife.com).

## IDBI Bank launches 'Sugam Rinn Bhugtan Yojana (SUGAM)-II'

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 7:** IDBI Bank has announced the launch of a special One Time Settlement (OTS) scheme titled "Sugam Rinn Bhugtan Yojana (SUGAM)-II" to strengthen its recovery drive and provide relief to eligible borrowers.

The scheme covers retail Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) classified up to March 31, 2022, with a borrower-wise aggregate Gross Principal Outstanding (GPO) of ₹ 5 lakh and above, and up to ₹ 5 crore, subject to other eligibility criteria outlined in the scheme.

The initiative offers borrowers whose accounts have been classified as NPAs an opportunity to settle their dues under defined terms and avoid legal proceedings.

Details of the scheme, including eligibility conditions and settlement terms, are available on the bank's official website: <https://www.idbi.bank.in/idbi-bank-sugam-rinn-bhugtan-yojana.aspx>.

## Birla Corporation posts ₹ 90 cr net profit in Sept quarter

**KOLKATA, Nov 7:** Birla Corporation Ltd, the flagship company of the M P Birla group, on Friday posted a net profit of ₹ 90 crore during the second quarter of the 2025-26 financial year with improved profitability in its cement and jute divisions.

The company had made a loss of ₹ 25.19 crore in the same period last year.

Its total income during the July-September period stood at ₹ 2,233 crore, higher from ₹ 1,970 crore in the year-ago quarter.

The company's consolidated EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation) in the September quarter jumped 71 per cent over

the same period last year to ₹ 332 crore, despite subdued cement demand and weak pricing in key markets.

"The consolidated revenue for the quarter at ₹ 2,233 crore represents a 13 per cent year-on-year (yoy) growth as cement sales by volume rose 7 per cent to 4.2 million tonnes (mt) and Birla Jute Mills staged a turnaround," the company statement said.

Cement sales during the quarter were impacted by excessive rainfall at the company's footprint areas, subdued prices and market disruptions owing to GST changes in September 2025, it said.

The key drivers of growth in

## Balmer Lawrie net profit dips in Sept quarter

**KOLKATA, Nov 7:** Diversified PSU Balmer Lawrie & Company Ltd on Friday reported a marginal dip in net profit to ₹ 48.48 crore in the quarter ended September compared to ₹ 49.69 crore in the corresponding period a year ago. The company's net total income slightly declined during the reporting quarter to ₹ 647.48 crore from ₹ 648.66 crore in the year-earlier period.

The profit before tax came in at ₹ 65.50 crore in the July-September period as against ₹ 68.58 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago (PTI)

**NAME CORRECTION**  
My actual and correct name is Mohammed Nizam Uddin, S/o-Ahmed Ali, Vill-Khatalur P.O- Nilbagan, P.S- Hojai, Dist- Hojai (Assam) That wrongly my name has been written in my daughter's Some documents as Nizam Uddin which is not correct. My actual name is Mohammed Nizam Uddin.

**LOST**  
I have lost my the following mentioned original documents on 04th November, 2025 on my way from Diphu market to my home at Rongmili, Diphu.  
1. Aadhar Card-615316385441, 2. PAN Card- AYYPT3132D, 3. Driving Licence No. AS0920220004219, 4. Vehicle Registration Card No. AS 09K 0193, 5. Voter ID Card- KZG1940712.  
Finders are requested kindly to contact to the undersigned.  
Name: Theresa Terangi  
D/o Manik Terangi  
Add. Rongmili, Ward No. 6, Diphu, Karbi Anglong.  
Mobile: 9101833765 / 8402937729

**AFFIDAVIT**  
I, Arun Kumar Lama son of Late Chitra Bahadur Lama a permanent resident of Baruah grant, Margherita, District Tinsukia Assam hereby declare before the Notary Public/Magistrate Margherita that my mother name is Lachu Mai Lama which is recorded in all documents and that in my passport vide no. AI321043 my mother name is recorded as Lochue Maya Lama which ought to be Lachu Mai Lama. That Lachu Mai Lama and Lochue Maya Lama is same and one identical person that is my mother.

# Growth to be north of 6.8 per cent in FY26: CEA

*'I think there is a lot of comfort in saying that it would be definitely north of 6.5'*

**NEW DELHI, Nov 7:** Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran on Friday exuded confidence that economic growth would be upwards of 6.8 per cent in the current financial year driven by consumption boost provided by GST rate cut and income tax relief.

The Economic Survey tabled in parliament in January had projected real economic growth of 6.3-6.8 per cent for FY26.

"Comfortable looking at a number north of 6.8 per cent now. My original range was 6.3 to 6.8 per cent (projected in Economic Survey). Back in August, we were all concerned about whether we would even go towards the lower end of the 6-7 range.

"Now I think there is a lot of comfort in saying that it would be definitely north of 6.5 and I am more comfortable saying even north of 6.8 but whether I will put a 7 handle in front of it, I will wait for the second quarter numbers to come out before I move even a notch higher," Nageswaran said at CNBC-TV18's Global Leadership Summit 2025.

India recorded a 7.8 per cent gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal year mainly driven by a good showing by the farm sector, and also helped by services like trade, hotel, financial and real estate.

The previous highest pace of



growth in the country's GDP was recorded at 8.4 per cent during January-March 2024, as per the data. India remains the fastest-growing major economy, as China's GDP growth in the April-June period was 5.2 per cent.

Nageswaran further said the pace of growth would get a boost, if the bilateral trade deal between the US and India is concluded.

"If by some chance, as we are still hoping, there is a resolution on the trade front, then the upward bias will become a mainstream forecast," he said.

On the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) with the US, he said, "hopefully done soon" but did not give a specific timeframe.

In absence of BTA, the US has imposed a steep tariff of 50 per cent on goods from India that took effect on August 27. The tariffs -- among the highest in the world -- include a 25 per cent penalty for buying crude oil from Russia.

On August 7, the Trump administration enforced a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods, citing India's persistent oil imports from Russia and long-standing trade barriers. (PTI)

# Wall Street opens lower, headed for losing week

**NEW YORK, Nov 7:** Stocks are off to a lower start on Wall Street and on track for their first weekly loss in the last four. The S&P 500 fell 0.5 per cent in the early going Friday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 174 points, or 0.4 per cent, and the Nasdaq composite fell 0.8 per cent. Markets are reacting to the latest quarterly reports from US companies. Payments company Block, which operates the Square and Cash App businesses, sank after turning in results that fell short of forecasts. Exercise equipment maker Peloton jumped after its results beat estimates. Treasury yields moved higher in the bond market.

Shares were mostly lower in Europe following a retreat Friday in Asia after losses for influential technology stocks pulled Wall Street benchmarks lower.

US futures edged higher and oil prices advanced.

Germany's DAX edged 0.1 per cent lower and the CAC 40 in Paris was little changed at 7,965.31. Britain's FTSE 100 lost 0.4 per cent to 9,696.82.

The future for the S&P 500 was up 0.3 per cent and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.2 per cent.

In Asian trading, Japan's Nikkei 225 index fell 1.2 per cent to 25,276.37.

China reported that its exports contracted 1.1 per cent in October, as shipments to the United States dropped by 25 per cent from a year earlier. But economists expect Chinese exports to recover after US President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping agreed last week to de-escalate the trade war between the two largest economies.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index

fell 0.9 per cent to 26,241.83, while the Shanghai Composite index slipped 0.3 per cent to 3,997.56.

South Korea's Kospi shed 1.8 per cent to 3,953.76 and Taiwan's Taieix lost 0.9 per cent.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 skidded 0.7 per cent to 8,769.70.

Concerns over technology industries have helped drive markets up and down all week.

On Thursday, the S&P 500 fell 1.1 per cent and the Dow industrials declined 0.8 per cent. The Nasdaq composite fell 1.9 per cent.

The biggest weights on the market included Nvidia, which dropped 3.7 per cent, and Microsoft, which fell 2 per cent. Their huge values give them outsized influence over the market's direction. Other big stocks dragging down the market included Amazon, which slumped 2.9 per cent.

Elon Musk won a shareholder vote on Thursday that would give the Tesla CEO stock worth \$1 trillion if he hits certain performance targets over the next decade. The company's shares, already up 80 per cent in the past year, fell but then rose in after-hours trading, ending at USD 445.91.

Corporate earnings and forecasts remained the big focus for Wall Street on Thursday. The latest round of results and statements from executives could help shed some light on the condition and path ahead for the economy amid a lack of broader information on inflation, employment and retail sales because of the ongoing government shutdown.

DoorDash sank 17.5 per cent for one of the sharpest drops on Wall Street. The food delivery app warned investors that it will be spending significantly more on

product development next year.

CarMax slumped 24.3 per cent after giving investors a disappointing financial update and announcing that CEO Bill Nash is stepping down in December.

Software company Datadog jumped 23.1 per cent after its latest earnings beat analysts' forecasts. Rockwell Automation rose 2.7 per cent after turning in results that easily beat analysts' forecasts.

The broader stock market has had a record-setting year, but that has raised worries that stocks could be overvalued. Those concerns are even more focused on big technology companies that have been leading the market higher amid the focus on artificial intelligence advancements.

The latest round of earnings is being closely monitored to gauge whether the market's big values are justified. They also are helping to fill in gaps in information because of the US government shutdown.

Airlines are feeling the impact of the shutdown as airports grapple with critical staffing problems. The Federal Aviation Administration will reduce air traffic by 10 per cent starting Friday across 40 "high-volume" markets. American Airlines fell 2 per cent, Delta Air Lines fell 1.2 per cent and United Airlines fell 1 per cent.

In other dealings early Friday, US benchmark crude oil gained 66 cents to USD 60.09 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, added 65 cents to USD 64.03 per barrel.

The US dollar rose to 153.48 Japanese yen from 153.06 yen late Thursday. The euro fell to USD1.1537 from USD1.1546. (AP)

Contd. from Page 1...

## 48 mn semiconductor

Biswanath district and lay the foundation stone for the Swahid Kanaklata Barua State University. The Assam Cabinet in June this year had approved the development of the varsity at a cost of Rs 400 crore. (PTI)

## SIT grills Zubeen's

seen as a key piece in the puzzle, given his prior role and connection to the incoming manager. The SIT's work aims to uncover whether negligence, criminal conspiracy, or other serious lapses played a role in this tragic case — and deliver accountability for what the chief minister has described as a homicide.

## 'Vande Mataram' not

On this historic occasion, he urged everyone to make efforts to render the complete version in its original form.

"Each word of the song, 'Sujalam, Suphalam, Malayaja Sheetalam' celebrates the sacred beauty and grace of our land," he said. "It reminds us that Bharat is not just a country but a living Mother who nurtures her children with love, tolerance and strength."

The chief minister informed that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Union Cabinet has decided to hold a year-long nationwide celebration titled 'Vande Mataram@150', which will continue till November 7, 2026.

During this period, mass recitations, music performances, police band renditions and educational events will be organised across all States, Union Territories and districts.

"Today's celebration is not just about remembering the past, it is a day to renew our pledge," Dr. Sarma said. "We reaffirm our commitment to building a strong, self-reliant and progressive Assam that stands as a confident partner in India's journey towards Atmanirbhar Bharat."

He noted that Assam has made remarkable progress in most of the priority sectors identified by the Prime Minister in his vision for Atmanirbhar Bharat and highlighted the advancements made in sectors like hydrocarbon, semiconductor and energy.

## IAF to hold

viewing areas along the both sides of the riverbank," Rawat said.

He said that practices on the ground and in the sky have been going on in the area since Tuesday, evoking excitement among the people.

According to the 'Flying Display 2025' communique, the show will begin at 12:30 pm and end at 2 pm on both days. More than 75 aircraft will showcase their stealth in 25 formations. These flying machines will operate from seven air bases in the region -- Guwahati, Tezpur, Jorhat, Chabua, Hasimara, Bagdogra and Panagarh.

The list of fighters will include Rafale, Sukhoi-30, Apache, MiG-29, IL-78 refueler, Mirage, Jaguar, C-17 Globemaster, MI-17, Advanced Light Helicopter-MK1, C-130 Hercules, Antonov AN-32 and Surya Kiran.

Inviting the people to view the show, the Indian Air Force in a post on X said, "As part of the 93rd #Air-ForceDay celebrations, join us for the spectacular IAF Flying Display 2025. Witness the power and precision of the #IAF in the skies." (PTI)

## Brahmaputra Riverfront terminal

major step forward in strengthening Assam's connectivity and tapping into the economic potential of inland waterways.

According to Sarma, the initiative is part of the Centre's Maritime India Vision 2030, aimed at developing sustainable port-led infrastructure and boosting regional trade routes.

He said that the new terminal is expected to improve passenger movement, promote tourism, and enhance cargo transport through the National Waterway-2, positioning Guwahati as a key link in Northeast India's river transport network.

## SC to hear on Nov

deaths, migration and duplication of voters.

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

The first phase of elections in Bihar on 121 seats of the 243-member assembly got completed on Thursday, while the remaining 122 constituencies will go to polls on November 11. The counting of votes will be held on November 14. (PTI)

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Assam Garo

said, reflected the party's affection for the community.

He further added that it was during the tenure of Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal that the Garo Development Council (GDC) was approved.

Momin lauded chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for declaring November 7 as a restricted holiday in Assam on the occasion of the Wangala Festival.

"The Chief Minister also sanctioned ₹ 5 lakh for organising the state-level Wangala Festival, which shows the BJP's immense love for the Garo community," he said.

He urged all tribes and indigenous communities living in Karbi Anglong to coexist harmoniously as brothers and sisters and respect each other.

Garo Students' Union (GSU) Central Executive Committee president Tengsak Momin, who travelled from Tura to attend the event, appealed to the Garo community to live peacefully with all tribes while preserving their rich composite heritage and culture.

On the concluding day, cultural troupes representing various communities—including Assamese Bihu groups, Karbis, Bodos, Dimasas, Kukis, Tai communities, Meiteis, Adivasis, and Bengalis—participated in a colourful cultural procession showcasing their distinct attire, dances, and drum performances.

A souvenir was also released to commemorate the celebration.

The open session was presided over by AAGCS president Niharson Sangma and attended by Garo Sahitya Sabha president Frylin Marak; KAAC Minority Development Board chairman Prakash Sangma; senior social worker Jibon Pathak; and other dignitaries.

In the cultural night, Saldorik S Dio, a band from Tura, Meghalaya, enthralled the audience with their energetic performances.

From district offices to schools, Assam marks the iconic national song with mass renditions

# Assam reveres 150 years of Vande Mataram with patriotic celebrations

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Nov 7:** A grand event marking 150 years of the patriotic song 'Vande Mataram' was held at Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) Memorial Town Hall in Diphu on Friday. The celebration marked the start of a year-long nationwide commemoration honouring Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's timeless creation, which continues to inspire patriotism across India.

The event was organised under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and attended by several dignitaries, including Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) Tuliram Ronghang, KAAC Chairman Raju Tisso, MP Amarsing Tisso, MLA Darsing Ronghang, BJP East Karbi Anglong District Committee president Roland Killing, Executive Members (EMs) and Members of the Autonomous Council (MACs), as well as chairpersons of various development boards.

Hosted by the District Administration under District Commissioner Nirola Phangchopi, the programme reflected patriotic fervor and cultural vibrancy. In his address, the CEM described 'Vande Mataram' as "a living symbol of unity, sacrifice and devotion to our motherland."

Cultural performances by local artists and school children enlivened the celebration, while the hall resonated with the powerful chorus of "Vande Mataram," reminding attendees of the sacrifices that shaped India's destiny and reinforcing a spirit of national pride and unity.

Here's a polished version of your news article with improved clarity, flow, and readability:

**Our Maligaon Correspondent adds:** As part of the nationwide observance of 'Vande Mataram', Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) celebrated the 150th anniversary with enthusiasm across its jurisdiction. The main event was held at the NFRSA Complex, Maligaon where NFR General Manager Chetan Kumar Shrivastava led the program in the presence of senior officials, railway staff and their families. Railway personnel, school children and members of various organisa-

tions joined together to sing the full version of 'Vande Mataram' in unison, creating a resounding tribute to India's freedom, unity and cultural heritage.

The NFR (Construction) Organisation also observed the day at the GM (Construction) office in Maligaon. Across all five NFR divisions—Tinsukia, Luming, Rangiya, Alipurduar and Katihar—as well as at major railway stations, schools and offices, the celebration featured patriotic songs, cultural performances and community participation, fostering a shared spirit of nationalism and harmony.

A mass singing of 'Vande Mataram' was held at around 9:50 AM nationwide, including at NFR locations, with railway staff, students and local residents joining together, generating a wave of energy, pride and unity.

Composed by Bankimchandra Chatterji on Akshaya Navami, November 7, 1875 and first published in Bangadarsan as part of his novel 'Anandamath', Vande Mataram continues to symbolise India's indomitable spirit, unity and self-respect. The 150th anniversary marks a proud milestone, reaffirming the nation's collective commitment to harmony, patriotism and national pride.

Here's a polished and refined version of your news article:

**Our Nagaon Correspondent adds:** The 150th anniversary of the iconic song 'Vande Mataram' was celebrated with enthusiasm and solemnity at the Nagaon District Commissioner's office on Friday. The event was held in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to commemorate this milestone.

The celebrations began with a collective rendition of Vande Mataram, led by noted singer Ranjan Bezbaruah and accompanied by the Band Party of the 9th AP Battalion, Barhampur.

In his address, District Commissioner Debashish Sarma highlighted the song's significance in India's freedom struggle, noting that it had inspired generations and had even been banned by the British colonial authorities due to its powerful impact.

The event also included a live screening of Prime Minister Modi's address on the occasion. Senior officials, including



District Development Commissioner Devayani Choudhury, Additional District Commissioners and other members of the district administration, attended the programme.

The celebration paid tribute to the enduring legacy of Vande Mataram and its role in shaping India's national identity, reminding all present of its historical and patriotic significance.

Here's a polished and refined version of your news article:

**Our Margherita Correspondent adds:** The 150th anniversary of India's national song, 'Vande Mataram', was observed on Friday at the premises of the Co-District Commissioner's (CDC) office in Margherita as part of a nationwide celebration.

Composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in the 1870s and published in his novel 'Anandamath' (1882), Vande Mataram became a unifying anthem during India's freedom struggle and was later adopted as the National Song of India by the Constituent Assembly on January 24, 1950.

The programme began with an introduction by Sishu Ranjan Baruah, Junior Administrative Assistant of the CDC office, highlighting the significance of the occasion. Co-District Commissioner Rahul Doley, in his welcome address, spoke about the song's role as a symbol

of national unity and its enduring relevance in contemporary India. Dr Runjun Baruah, faculty at Margherita College, also delivered a talk on the history and significance of Vande Mataram.

The highlight of the event was a mass singing of the song by teachers and students of Huror Deoul Sangeet Vidyalaya, joined by all attendees. A live webcast of the national-level programme, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address was also screened. On this occasion, the Prime Minister released a commemorative postal stamp and coin to mark 150 years of Vande Mataram, paying tribute to its enduring message of unity and patriotism.

The event was attended by Anand Kumar Sharma, Chairman of the Margherita Municipal Board, ward members, Circle Officer Gyanjyoti Dutta, Assistant Commissioners Pritom Gogoi, Pronamika Konwar, Alokesh Bordoloi and officials from various government departments.

Across Margherita Co-District, Vande Mataram was sung in all educational institutions, reflecting widespread participation and patriotic fervor.

Here's a polished and refined version of your news article:

**Our Bilasipara Correspondent adds:** India's national song, 'Vande Mataram', completed 150 years, marking

a historic milestone in the nation's journey of unity and patriotism. Symbolising devotion to the motherland, the occasion was celebrated with enthusiasm across the country, including a special observance at Bilasipara in Assam.

At the Bilasipara Co-District Office premises, a collective singing of Vande Mataram was organised under the initiative of Co-District Commissioner Dr Preeti Lekha Deka. Dr Deka along with all officials and staff members, joined in unison, spreading a powerful message of patriotism and national unity.

The celebration extended to the three municipal boards under Bilasipara Co-District—Bilasipara, Chapar and Sapatgram as well as various schools and colleges in the region. The air resonated with the soulful rendition of Vande Mataram, inspiring a deep sense of national pride and emotional connection to the country's rich heritage.

**Our Silchar Correspondent adds:** Cachar district marked the 150th anniversary of India's national song, 'Vande Mataram', with patriotic fervor in schools, government offices and public institutions. The day-long celebration, organised by the District Administration, brought together students, teachers, officials and artists in a display of unity and national pride.

The main event took place at the District Commissioner's Office, Silchar attended by Minister Kaushik Rai, Dholai MLA Nihar Ranjan Das and DC Mridul Yadav, along with senior officials and invited artists. The programme began with a collective rendition of Vande Mataram, followed by a live webcast of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address.

In his keynote, Minister Kaushik Rai highlighted the historical and patriotic significance of the song, tracing its origins to Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's 'Anandamath' and its role in India's freedom struggle. MLA Nihar Ranjan Das praised the song as a timeless symbol of national unity, while DC Mridul Yadav emphasised the importance of keeping the patriotic spirit alive among youth.

The event also launched the year-long nationwide celebration of 150 years of Vande Mataram, continuing until No-

vember 7, 2026. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Additional DC Antara Sen.

**Our Jorhat Correspondent adds:** With the rest of the country Jorhat also celebrated the 150th year of the National Song 'Vande Mataram' penned by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in his novel 'Anandamath' in 1875.

The immortal song is a unique symbol of nationalism and unity.

Organised by the Jorhat District Administration, the event took place at the auditorium of the Jorhat Science Centre and Planetarium. The live telecast of the national ceremony, attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi and Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma in Guwahati was screened during the programme.

Additionally, the 3rd APBN Band of Assam Police performed Vande Mataram and other patriotic songs at the district-level event held at the Science Centre and Planetarium, followed by a march-past up to the Office of the Superintendent of Police.

The ceremony began with a welcome address by Jorhat District Commissioner Jay Shivani, followed by a keynote speech from Dr Saumitra Pujari, Principal of Jorhat College. The event was graced by the presence of Jorhat Superintendent of Police Shubhrajyoti Bora, Chairman of the Assam Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation Shantanu Pujari, Chairman of the Assam Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Board Rana Goswami, former MLA Hemanta Kalita and former president of the Jorhat Zila Parishad Ranjan Saikia.

The year-long celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram will be held in four phases from November 7–14, 2025, January 19–26, 2026 during Republic Day celebrations, August 7–15, 2026 alongside the Har Ghar Tiranga 2026 campaign and November 1–7, 2026 as part of Smaran Week.

It is noteworthy that collective renditions of Vande Mataram were also organised across all block development offices, revenue circle offices, various government institutions and all schools and colleges within the district.

## SMC to crack down on illegal parking near hospitals

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 7:** Silchar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has announced a strict enforcement drive to tackle illegal parking along the stretch from Rangirkhari Point to Silchar Medical College Road, following complaints about obstructed hospital entrances and traffic congestion.

Improperly parked vehicles have caused inconvenience to patients, attendants and emergency vehicles, prompting hospital authorities to raise concerns over delayed ambulance movement and bottlenecks during peak hours.

The crackdown will be a joint effort by the District Transport Office (DTO), Silchar Police and SMC officials. Vehicles parked in restricted zones or blocking hospital access will face fines, penalties or towing. SMC Commissioner Sriшти Singh emphasised, "Ensuring smooth access to hospitals is our top priority. Illegal parking cannot be tolerated, as it affects emergency services and public convenience. This drive is about civic discipline, not just penalties." She appealed to citizens to use designated parking areas and follow traffic rules.

The coordinated action is expected to improve traffic flow, ensure road safety and maintain unobstructed access to vital medical facilities. Repeat offenders will face stricter penalties, sending a strong message against civic indiscipline.

## Elephant herds wreak havoc in West KA



**HT Correspondent**

**KHERONI, Nov 7:** What was once an occasional sighting has now become a daily ordeal in the Southern Forest Range of West Karbi Anglong district. Herds of wild elephants are roaming freely through villages under Kheroni Police Station, leaving destruction in Jiribasa, Hawaipur, Belbari, Mailoo, Dhikrek, Kheroni Nepali Basti, Guhagoan, Majbasti, Lambathar and surrounding areas bordering Hojai district.

Every evening after dusk and in the pre-dawn hours, families live in fear. "We can't predict where the herd will appear next," said a farmer from Hawaipur whose ripe paddy field was flattened overnight. "One night it's our village, the next it could be Belbari or Mailoo. We keep fire and drums ready, but nothing stops them."

The elephants have destroyed the primary source of livelihood for hundreds of small and marginal farmers. Ready-to-harvest paddy, vegetable plots and sugar-

cane fields have been trampled and eaten, pushing many families to the brink of starvation just weeks before the harvest season.

Despite repeated appeals to the Forest Department and district administration, villagers say no major steps have been taken to address the crisis. Frustrated farmers are demanding immediate government intervention.

They have called for the urgent deployment of permanent anti-depredation teams, strengthened corridor management, revision of compensation rates—whichever they are far below actual market value and timely disbursement of payments without bureaucratic delays that sometimes stretch for years.

As night falls over Kheroni, the sounds of beating drums, firecrackers and desperate shouts echo through the villages—a grim reminder that for these farmers, the real "man-animal conflict" is not in headlines, but in empty granaries and sleepless nights.

## Zubeen Garg's birthday celebration



**HT Correspondent**

**JAMUGURIGHAT, Nov 7:** Jamugurihat in Sonitpur district, known for its rich cultural and literary heritage, is all set to celebrate the birthday of musical icon Zubeen Garg on November 18 at Madhab Devalaya in Madhab village. The day-long programme, organised by a specially constituted birthday celebration committee will include the distribution of Nahar saplings to villagers for planting in front of their homes, a community earthen lamp lighting ceremony in the evening and a floral tribute to the portrait of Zubeen Garg.

The celebrations will culminate with a song competition featuring performances of Zubeen Garg's popular songs from 6 PM onwards. The event is being coordinated by Ranjit Borthakur president, Manoj Phukan working president and Pritam Bora and Anshul Borthakur joint secretaries, as per a press release.

## AJYCP demands removal of GU Vice-Chancellor

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Nov 7:** The Nagaon District Unit of the Asom Jatiyatibadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) submitted a memorandum to the Governor of Assam through the Nagaon District Commissioner on Friday, demanding the removal of Dr Nani Gopal Mahanta from his position as Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati University.

The memorandum, signed by Prabal Sarma, president and Hemanta Das, General Secretary of the district unit, alleged that Dr Mahanta has been involved in large-scale irregularities and corruption in the utilisation of university funds and infrastructure development.

It noted that these allegations have been widely reported in various newspapers and electronic media, tarnishing the reputation of the prestigious

university. The organisation had earlier urged Dr Mahanta to resign voluntarily, but he has reportedly failed to do so.

The memorandum called on the Governor to take immediate action to remove Dr Mahanta and to initiate an impartial investigation into the alleged corruption and irregularities. It emphasised that the reputation of the university and the academic future of its students are at stake making swift action essential to restore the institution's integrity.

The AJYCP highlighted that the demand for Dr Mahanta's removal is based on allegations of financial irregularities and favoritism in the development of university infrastructure. The youth organisation warned that inaction could further damage the university's standing.

## Guv urges ombudspersons to strengthen ethics in universities

Focus on impartial grievance redressal, transparency and accountability in higher education

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 7:** Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya on Thursday chaired a meeting with Ombudspersons of the state's universities, including private institutions at Raj Bhavan. The meeting focused on promoting ethical governance, transparency and accountability in higher education institutions across Assam to ensure better outcomes for students.

Ombudspersons play a critical role in implementing the University Grants Commission (Redressal of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2023, issued on April 11, 2023. These regulations are designed to ensure fair grievance redressal, compliance with academic standards and adoption of best practices in higher education for students' benefit.

Governor Acharya emphasised that the meeting was not merely administrative but aimed at strengthening the moral foundations of

universities. "Universities are not only centers of knowledge but also breeding grounds for values, conduct and character," he said. He stressed that education must extend beyond textbooks to include ethics, empathy and social responsibility, warning that any act of injustice within institutions undermines their collective dignity.

Highlighting the role of Ombudspersons, the Governor described them as "sentinels of fairness" who uphold justice and integrity in the university system. He noted that their independence allows them to conduct inquiries and make recommendations impartially, serving as a bridge of trust between students, faculty and administration. "The true power of an Ombudsperson lies not in authority but in impartiality and moral conviction," he said.

Referring to the National Education Policy 2020, the Governor underlined that as universities gain



greater autonomy and accountability, the Ombudspersons' role becomes increasingly significant. Beyond resolving disputes, they must act as catalysts for positive change, promote openness in academic functioning and reinforce trust within the educational community. He urged them to proactively identify policy

gaps that could generate grievances in the future and work toward constructive solutions.

Acknowledging the challenges Ombudspersons may face, including limited resources and administrative hurdles, the Governor expressed confidence in their wisdom and fairness. He emphasised that ethics and

transparency form the core of university culture and that Ombudspersons' integrity should inspire both students and faculty.

Acharya recommended that universities strengthen their Ombudsperson Cells through the adoption of technology, clear timelines and transparent grievance resolution standards. He also suggested regular awareness programs for students and faculty and including the Ombudspersons' annual recommendations in institutional reports to enhance accountability and public trust. "May the ideas emerging from this meeting ignite a new consciousness of trust, ethics and justice in our higher education system," he said.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner and Secretary to the Governor S S Meenakshi Sundaram, Advisor Dr Harbansh Dixit, OSD Prof Bechan Lal, Joint Secretary Bidit Das and Ombudspersons along with senior officials from universities across the state.

E-AUCTION CONTRACT FOR LEASING OF SLRS AND VPs IN LUMDING DIVISION			
E-Auction is invited for the contract of leasing SLRs and VPs for 2 years in trains originating from Lumding Division. <b>Description:</b> Parcel Space in SLR Coach and Parcel Van. <b>Rate Unit:</b> Per Trip Licensing Fee & Per Round Trip (Two Way).			
<b>Auction Catalogue No. Lease-LMG-48-25 Auction Start Date &amp; Time: At 11:00 hrs on 18-11-2025.</b>			
Seq No.	Lot No. / Category	Days	
AA/1	55608-SLR-F1-GHY-MNDP-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	314	
AA/2	55675-SLR-F1-AGTL-DMR-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	1096	
AA/3	55620-SLR-F1-GHY-MNDP-25-3 (Parcel-SLR)	1096	
AA/4	15655-SLR-F1-KYQ-SVDK-25-1 (Parcel-SLR)	157	
AA/5	55601-SLR-F1-GHY-LMG-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	471	
AA/6	55661-SLR-F1-MSSN-SCL-25-3 (Parcel-SLR)	940	
AA/7	55676-SLR-F1-DMR-AGTL-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	1096	
AA/8	55665-SLR-F1-SCL-VNGP-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	1096	
AA/9	55804-SLR-F1-GHY-NBQ-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	1096	
AA/10	55662-SLR-F1-SCL-MSSN-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	940	
AA/11	55666-SLR-F1-VNGP-SCL-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	1096	
AA/12	55685-SLR-F1-MSSN-SCL-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	940	
AA/13	55606-SLR-F1-SKHV-GHY-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	314	
AA/14	55604-SLR-F1-MBO-GHY-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	1096	
AA/15	55605-SLR-F1-GHY-SKHV-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	314	
AA/16	55603-SLR-F1-GHY-MBO-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	1096	
AA/17	55810-SLR-F1-GHY-NBQ-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	1096	
AA/18	55678-SLR-F1-DMR-SCL-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	314	
AA/19	55686-SLR-F1-SCL-MSSN-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	940	
AA/20	55602-SLR-F1-LMG-GHY-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	469	
AA/21	55802-SLR-F1-GHY-NBQ-25-2 (Parcel-SLR)	1096	
AB/1	12505-12506-VP-1-KYQ-ANVT-25-1 (Parcel Van)	1096	
AB/2	15644-15643-VP-1-KYQ-PURI-25-1 (Parcel Van)	157	
AB/3	15630-15629-VP-1-SHTT-TBM-25-3 (Parcel Van)	157	
AB/4	19616-19615-VP-1-KYQ-UDZ-25-1 (Parcel Van)	157	
AB/5	12518-12517-VP-1-GHY-KOAA-25-3 (Parcel Van)	157	
AB/6	15662-15661-VP-1-KYQ-RNC-25-1 (Parcel Van)	157	
AB/7	15603-15604-VP-1-GHY-LEDO-25-1 (Parcel Van)	1096	
AB/8	15640-15639-VP-1-KYQ-PURI-25-1 (Parcel Van)	157	
<b>E-Auction Close Date &amp; Time: At 16:10 hrs on 18-11-2025. Initial Cooling off period is 30 minutes. Successive lots closing interval 10 minutes. Note: Prospective bidder are requested to visit e-Auction leasing module on IREPS website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> for more details.</b>			
DRM (C), Lumding		<b>NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY</b>	
Serving Customers With A Smile			

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

Voters don't decide issues; they decide who will decide issues. - George Will

## Kerala to seek legal redress against SIR

Kerala has decided to seek legal redress against the Election Commission of India's (ECI) decision to conduct the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the State. This decision was taken at an all-party meeting convened by the Left Democratic Front (LDF) Government. All parties except the BJP extended their full support to the decision. The move comes close on the heels of the decision taken at a meeting of Tamil Nadu political parties, chaired by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin, to approach the supreme court against the SIR. The house-to-house enumeration phase kicked off in Kerala in line with a national-level schedule for SIR 2.0. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told the all-party meeting that the Government would seek legal advice on the EC's decision to go ahead with the SIR at a time when the 2025 elections to the local bodies were imminent in the State. The Chief Minister also criticized the EC decision to take the 2002 SIR voter roll as the base document for the current exercise instead of the list updated for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls saying that it was unscientific and ill-intentioned. CPI(M) state secretary M. V. Govindan identified himself with the opinion voiced by the CM. The meeting saw representatives of various political parties expressing concern over the EC's decision to use the 2002 SIR list as the base document.

The Kerala Assembly had passed a resolution against the SIR and the EC decision to proceed with it when the local body elections were imminent in the State. Political parties, including the CPI(M), had registered their strong protest against the EC's decision at two consultations with political parties held by the State Chief Electoral Officer, Rathan U. Kelkar on September 20, and after the EC announced the SIR 2.0 schedule on October 29. The meeting also witnessed political parties questioning the timing of the SIR and the decision to use the 2002 electoral rolls as the base document. They had also pointed to a possible operational overlap between the SIR and the work connected to the 2025 local body polls. Expectedly, the BJP supported the EC's decision at both the meetings. It urged the Government to ensure that the SIR does not affect the arrangements for the local body polls.

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Kerala Rathan U. Kelkar has directed the district collectors to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the both the SIR of the electoral rolls and the upcoming local body elections without operational overlap between the two exercises. The CEO's office had taken a decision that the Booth Level Officers will not be assigned any duties connected with the local body elections.

# Political Awareness of the General Public

The foundation and true strength of democracy lie in the active political awareness of the general public. This vigilance, as the bedrock of a strong and dynamic society, is not merely an idealistic concept but a practical necessity. Without political awareness, a democratic system of governance risks becoming a nominal formality, where power becomes centralized and the fundamental rights of the people are neglected. It is through this awareness that citizens become fully informed about their constitutionally granted rights and social responsibilities, enabling them to participate meaningfully in the country's policy-making process. The term 'politics' does not refer only to visible activities such as electoral battles or cabinet formations; it is deeply connected to the life and livelihood of the people at every level of society. From educational standards to healthcare facilities, infrastructure development for roads and transportation, market price control, national security policies, and resource distribution—all these areas are directly and profoundly influenced by political decisions. Therefore, acquiring organized knowledge about this complex system becomes a moral and constitutional duty for every citizen. Without this comprehensive awareness, the public is compelled to passively accept decisions taken against their interests, resulting in diminished control over the governance system and obstacles to the goal of a welfare-oriented administration.

The primary foundation of political awareness is the acquisition of pure knowledge and information. A society must first ensure that its citizens are accurately informed about national and international events. However, information alone is not enough; the ability to deeply analyze and critically evaluate this information is equally important. The public should strive to gain detailed knowledge about the fundamental principles of the country's constitution, the interrelationships and limits of power among the three branches of government (executive, legislative, and judiciary), the history, ideologies, and programs of various political parties, and the true objectives and effectiveness of government schemes. In gathering information, the public should not rely solely on popular news media or the narrow and emotional propaganda of social media but should cultivate the habit of acquiring knowledge from neutral analyses, research-based reports, and authentic sources. As a result of this practice, they become capable of easily distinguishing between truth and falsehood, logic and emotion, and self-interest and public welfare. In a society where such thoughtful analysis is lacking, leaders and political parties can easily influence the public with false promises or misleading in-



formation, leading to failure in exercising the right to vote correctly and the long-term proliferation of incompetent leadership in the country's political arena. This foundation of knowledge inspires citizens to become active participants rather than blind followers.

A vigilant society does not end its responsibility by merely electing representatives; it meticulously monitors the actions, decisions, and financial management of elected representatives. This active oversight naturally deters government officials and political leaders from misusing their power. Alert citizens continually raise questions about the actual implementation of government schemes, the extent to which the public benefits from them, and the proper use of public funds. These questions compel the government to maintain transparency and accountability. The public expresses its demands and reactions through various civil society organizations, discussion forums, and mass media, creating democratic pressure. This pressure serves as a strong foundation for controlling the spread of corruption in the governance system. In the absence of awareness, the people cannot easily detect administrative flaws or corrupt activities, or even if they do, they are unable to raise a unified voice against them. In such situations, the level of power abuse increases, and justice and equality gradually fade from society. Therefore, awareness acts as a tool of democratic control in the hands of the public.

Political awareness is also an extremely influential tool in establishing social justice and equality. Vigilant citizens do not view the complex and multidimensional problems facing society—such as poverty, economic inequality, caste-religion-gender-based biases, unemployment, and environmental degradation—as mere personal misfortunes. Instead, they attempt to identify the root political and policy causes of these problems.

They realize that inequalities in society arise and weaker sections fall further behind due to the flaws in political decisions and government policies. This deep understanding motivates them to take organized and collective action. Aware citizens move beyond narrow personal interests to voice demands for the greater welfare of society and equal rights for all citizens. They participate in organized protests, discussions, petitions, and legal processes for policies that ensure socio-economic justice. This awareness fosters a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility among the people, creating unified strength instead of isolation and division. In a society where political apathy prevails, those in power can easily resort to divisive politics to create differences among the public and divert attention from core societal issues. Therefore, awareness is the public's contribution to equality and human dignity.

The development of political education and critical thinking is an integral part of awareness. Quality education and the habit of critical thinking are essential for building a vigilant society. Education not only provides basic knowledge but also empowers individuals to analyze complex information and base their decisions on rationality. Schools and higher education institutions should teach students in detail about political science, history, sociology, and ethics so that they deeply understand democratic values, comparative analysis of various governance systems, and the necessity of social justice. This education protects the younger generation from being easily influenced by superstitions, narrow-mindedness, and political propaganda. Furthermore, a vigilant society recognizes a free and impartial press as the fourth pillar of democracy and actively advocates for its independence. When the media, free from political influence, advertising, or financial pressure, provides accurate information, debate, and broad perspectives, the public becomes capable of

making informed decisions. In a society where media freedom is absent or the public is deprived of the right to education, the seeds of political awareness cannot germinate, and the people are forced to surrender easily to the will of powerful parties. Therefore, education and a free press are the two main driving forces of awareness.

The essence of political awareness is active citizen participation. Voting in elections is not the sole measure of vigilance; it means participating every day in every public matter. A vigilant citizen attends meetings of local administrative bodies, expresses opinions in discussions and debates on government policies, raises their voice in civil society movements, and offers constructive suggestions in the law-making process. This active participation strengthens the political system from the bottom up, making the administration sensitive to the real needs of the people. As a result of this active role, political parties are not confined to the interest of seizing power but are compelled to prioritize accountability to the public and the establishment of good governance. If the public remains passive, political leaders can easily ignore public demands after elections. Vigilant citizens break this environment of passivity through their organizational strength and maintain continuous control over the governance system. This democratic activism plays a decisive role in protecting the fundamental rights of the people and building a welfare-oriented state.

Finally, the political awareness of the general public is inextricably linked to national unity and a sense of social responsibility. Vigilant citizens realize the interconnected relationship between their local problems and national policies. They give greater importance to a broader national identity rather than narrow regional or ethnic identities. As a result of this broad perspective, they begin to think collectively about national interests and security and play an active role in preserving the country's unity and integrity. This awareness helps them stay away from divisive politics and communal incitement, which weaken the foundation of a society. Politically aware citizens are fully informed not only about their political rights but also about their social responsibilities. They do not merely seek services or benefits from the government but voluntarily and constructively contribute to public matters such as the development of their area, environmental conservation, and corruption prevention. Such an active, responsible, and aware populace is the greatest strength of a true democracy. Only a country where such deep political awareness prevails among the people can advance on the path of stability, justice, and progress. Therefore, the political awareness of the general public is not just a political practice but a determining force in the life of a progressive society.

## Ras Festival: A sacred celebration of divine Love and Spirituality

By: Dipak Kurmi

The Ras-Krira, or The Divine Display of Love, carries a profound spiritual significance. From a historical standpoint, it is presumed that Lord Krishna's birth occurred in the first decade of the sixteenth century B.C. or the last decade of the fifteenth century B.C. (approximately 1510 B.C. - 1490 B.C.). According to Indian astronomy, Lord Krishna manifested during the Dwapar Yuga, the third of the four yugas or ages. The Ras-Krira or Ras-Leela, intertwined with Lord Krishna, is considered a creation of the Dwapar Yuga. In revered scriptures such as the Hariavansha, Srimadbhagavata, Kirtana-Ghosa, Bishnu-purana, Brahma-vaivarta Purana, Geeta Govinda, Keli Gopal Nat, Lord Krishna is hailed as the "Purnabrahma" (complete incarnation of God) of the Dwapar Yuga. Consequently, people worship Lord Krishna as omnipotent, acknowledging him as "Krishna Eka Deva Duhahari," signifying Krishna as the sole alleviator of troubles in the Kali Yuga, the Fourth Age. Throughout the cyclical divisions of the yuga or era, the Ras-Krira or Ras-Leela takes diverse forms, shaped by the unique characteristics of different regions, atmospheres, and the varied nature of mankind.

The Ras-Leela or Ras-Yatra, which blossomed during the Dwapar Yuga in the sacred land of Vrindavana, where Krishna joyously engaged with the "Gopys" (female milkmaids) during the autumnal season, is eloquently portrayed by Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva as "Ras-Krira." The term Ras-Krira signifies the circular dance of Lord Krishna with the cowherdesses of Vrindavana on the banks of the river Yamuna during the clear autumnal nights. Despite its apparent erotic aesthetics, the Ras-Krira is profoundly spiritual, illustrating the connection between the individual and the Soul Supreme. The depiction of Ras-Leela in Srimadbhagavata can be found in Adi Dasama, Kirtana-Ghosa, and the Keli Gopal Nat, compositions by Srimanta Sankaradeva. In the Ras-Leela section of Dasama, he captivatingly describes—

*guspura surabhi gandhe amoda manata /  
gunjare bhramare madhupane huya matta //  
hena bitopana bane bhrami bhagavanta //  
gopisava same kririlanta aparjanta //*

Inhaling the fragrance of flowers, his mind fills with profound joy. Enchanted by the sweet nectar, black bees hum in delight. The divine presence gracefully moves through this beautiful jungle, engaging in the exquisite play of love with abundant "Gopy's."

The Ras-Krira, originating from almost 177 slokas (verses) in the Bhagavata, receives a detailed exploration in the works of Sankaradeva, particularly in the Kirtana-Ghosa and Adi Dasama. Within the Ras-Krira section of Kirtana-Ghosa, there exist 18 Ghosas and 218 padas (verses). Similarly, in the Ras-Krira of Adi Dasama, one encounters 23 chapters and 421 padas (verses).

The Brajvali language's Keli GopalNat serves as a concise rendition of Ras-Krira found in Kirtana and Dasama. The depiction of Ras-

Krira in Kirtana-Ghosa unfolds in the following manner—

*ito ras-krira katha krishnara /  
ekanta cite sune jito nara //  
krishnata bhakati barhibe tara //  
sukhe hoibe kama-sagara para //*

Refrain:

The tale of Rasa-Krira belongs to Krishna. For the one who listens with a purposeful soul, their devotion to Krishna shall intensify, leading them to joyfully conquer the sea of lust.

Again...

*ito ras-krira keli name kama-jaya /  
karila bhrittara pade Krishna kripamaya //  
aka sune bhane jitojane abishrama //  
barhibe bhakati ati jimbeka kama //*

Refrain:

Rasa-Krira, this divine play, serves as the conquest of lust, a gracious act performed by Lord Krishna to deepen the trust of devotees. Whether one sings or listens without interruption, the journey of devotion shall progress further, marked by the triumphant overcoming of lust.

The Ras-Yatra's observance in the Pre-Sankarite Era in Assam remains uncertain. However, it can be asserted that the first occurrence of Ras-Yatra in Assam took place during the era of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva. Acting on the request of his brother Ramrai and crafting the drama "Keli Gopal," Sankaradeva initiated the tradition. Since then, Ras-Yatra or Ras-Utsav has been an integral part of the celebrations in the Satras of Assam. The "Keli Gopal" drama, conceived during Mahapurusha Sankaradeva's time in Patbasi, serves as the foundational origin of the Ras-Utsav in Assam. The exquisite depiction of Ras-Krira is eloquently presented in the drama "Keli Gopal"—

"jamunaka bali nami : rasakrira karite arambhala. Gopisaba biraha tapa tejiye : Krishna bakyamrite tripiti huya : parama utsuke kiriraka pravesala. Hari kahuka sumbai : kahuka hasye nirkhaya : kahuka nakhe stana parasaya : kahuka alingaya. ebambidha nana ananga khelaye : gopika citra ranji : srigopale krira kayala. Gopisabo krishnaka samnana pai : jaise parama utsuke keli kayala : ta dekhaaha : sunaha."

Means "arrived on the sand of Yamuna: (He) started Ras-Krira. Gopy's have forsaking the pang of separation: pleased with the nectar words of Krishna: they started loving sport with great enthusiasm. Hari kissed someone: looked with laughing someone: touched with nails someone's breasts: embraced someone. Like this various sport played by Krishna: giving full of bliss to the Gopy's: Srigopal did amorous sport. Gopy's getting great regards from Krishna: how they did loving sport with great enthusiasm: look that: listen"

On the stage, numerous playwrights have brought forth a plethora of dramas and bhonaas, drawing inspiration from the ideals embedded in the Keli Gopal Nat in the Assamese language. Majuli stands as the original epicenter of the Ras-Utsav in Assam. Despite the composition of Keli Gopal Nat during Sankaradeva's time in Patbasi, its inaugural performance unfolded



exclusively at Majuli. The Kamalabari Satra of Majuli hosted the first enactment of Keli Gopal Nat. Furthermore, at various junctures, compositions of drama or bhona, crafted in a blend of Brajvali-Assamese or pure Assamese, have graced the stage at Kamalabari Satra.

The Ras-Leela, or Ras-Utsav, holds immense significance as a sacred festival in upper Assam, particularly in the Majuli-centric Satras. This revered celebration occurs on the full moon day of the "Kati" (Oct.-Nov.) or "Aghon" (Nov.-Dec.) month of the Assamese calendar, known as "Ras-Purnima." Serving as the soul center of Satra culture, Majuli's Satras immerse themselves in the joy of dance, song, and acting during Ras-Utsav.

The commencement of this festival follows complete Mahapurushya customs, beginning with morning songs and Nam-Prasanga on the day of the full moon. Sung with devotion, the Ghosa heading "dina dayasila deva damodara hari damodara" is followed by the rendition of three Ghosas from the Ras-Krira chapter of Kirtana-Ghosa, such as "kare rasa keli Gopala gopi sange." Afterward, with humble salutations, devotees bow down at the feet of Lord Srikrishna and partake in prasada (offerings).

Simultaneously, the reciting and explanation of the "Ras-Panchadhyaya" from the Bhagavata commence. Following the Bhagavata explanation, the "carit-tola" customs, narrating the deeds of the Guru, unfold. Some excerpts from the "Madhyalila" (middle part) of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva's biography are recited. Dancing is also exhibited at times during this sequence.

The "Maharas-Yatra" takes place on the night of "Ras-Purnima," starting before the night itself and concluding on the third day. In this Ras-Utsav, various enactments, including the dance of "Dasavatara" (Ten Incarnations of Vishnu),

Narayana's endless sleep (Ananta Sayana), the great Ras (Maharas), the birth of Krishna, the killing of demons (Asur Badh), Kaliya Daman Nat, Sankhasur Badh Nat, and the reconciliation of Radha-Krishna, are showcased.

The Ras-Bhona, performed within the fixed exrimity of the Kirtana-ghara of the Satra, captivates the neatly arranged devotees and watchers on both sides of the floor. Actors, singers, and musicians participate in the Ras-Bhona with unwavering devotion. Over time, this Ras-Bhona program has expanded beyond the confines of the Satra, reaching places like Guwahati, the soul center of Assam. Notably, Ras-Yatra performances, enacted on stages by individuals, have become a prominent occurrence in different parts of Guwahati.

Devotees engage fervently in the preparations for dance and bhona, dedicating themselves to rehearsals in the Satras a month or even a month and a half before the Ras Festival. This vibrant festival unfolds over three days in some Satras. During the night of Ras-Purnima, amidst the Ras-Leela, a captivating and enchanting scene occurs during Maharas. The disappearance of Srikrishna among the Gopis, followed by his re-appearance due to the earnest and flattering entreaties of the Gopis, creates a spellbinding spectacle. The immersion of devotees in the pleasing presence of Srikrishna, coupled with the creation of a heavenly spiritual ambiance, stands out as a paramount characteristic of Satra-Ras.

The noteworthy distinction lies in the fact that, while idols find no place in the Ras-Utsav of most Satras, Dakshinpat Satra has maintained the tradition of idol worship. Since 1840 A.D., Ras Festival has been observed with idol worship at Dakshinpat Satra. The "Salagram," brought from Brindavana, was established at Dakshinpat Satra, and the idol of Srikrishna,

named "Brindavana Chandra," found its place. Encircling the main altar of the Ras-Utsav, the idol of "Garuda" (a mythical bird on which Vishnu rides) stands alongside the idol of Krishna. Interestingly, Radha does not have a presence here. However, it's notable that there is a lack of the splendor of Ras-Utsav in the Satras of Lower Assam. There is no information about dramatic performances of

Keli Gopal Nat or any other Bhona in the Ras-Utsav of Lower Assam. Undoubtedly, it is known that in the Satras of Lower Assam, particularly in South Kamrup, Ras Festival is not observed. Nevertheless, in Barpeta and Barpeta-centric Satras, the "Ai-Sakal" (female devotees) engage in Nam-Kirtana, singing in admiration of Lord Krishna for several days from "Hati" to "Hati" (devotee's residential area) early in the morning, starting from the day of Ras-Purnima.

The Ras-Festival in various locations of Lower Assam is celebrated with immense pomp and magnificence. The customs and traditions of Ras-Festival in Lower Assam differ slightly from those in Upper Assam. The worship of idols holds a paramount position in the Ras Festival of Lower Assam, where the idol takes precedence over human performances. The meticulously crafted idol chambers, adorned with grandeur and utilizing modern electrical mechanisms, have the captivating ability to enchant and soothe the eyes of thousands of onlookers. Consequently, the Ras-Utsav (Festival) transforms into a grand celebration known as Ras Mahotsav. The Ras-Mahotsav of Lower Assam exhibits a distinct influence, believed to stem directly from the Ras-Yatra of Kochbihar and Brindavan-Mathura. This influence is evident in the prioritization of idols and the depiction of "Jugal-Keli" (amorous sport in a pair) between Radha and Krishna during the Ras-Mahotsav.

The description of Ras-Krira in the 'Shastras' (sacred books) holds a grave and profound spiritual significance in every performance of Ras-Leela or Ras-Utsav. Recognizing this significance, the eminent scholar Narayan Chandra Goswami emphasizes that the highest spiritual truth of Ras-Leela lies in the supernatural deeds of the Supreme Spirit with the sentient soul. In this context, Krishna embodies the Supreme Spirit, the Gopis represent the sentient soul, Brindavana serves as the amorous sport ground within hearts, Sankhasur symbolizes pride or sin, the flute embodies nature, the sound of the flute represents the mighty sense, and the Ras manifests as the delightful power of the soul. Viewing the world as a theatre-stage or the house of Bhauana, Narayan Chandra Goswami elucidates that every creature within this house delivers dialogues through their actions. The cosmic performance executed by Vishnu, residing widely in every heart, is identified as the Ras-Krira. In this grand drama, the world is a Bhouna-House or Brindavana, with all creatures serving as its sentient souls, Srikrishna as the Supreme Soul, Gopis as characters, and Parameswar (God) as the director. As the "Sutradhara" (interlocutor of an Assamese drama), God extensively controls every aspect of this divine play. This, according to Narayan Chandra Goswami, encapsulates the true significance of Ras-Krira. (the writer can be reached at dipaknews1@gmail.com)

# Types of Cybersecurity Roles: Job growth and career paths

By: Nicholas Patterson

Cybersecurity is a specialty in the world of tech — but the role is wider and encompasses more career options than you might realize.

When it comes to climbing the cybersecurity career ladder with the right skills, credentials and contacts, “the sky is the limit,” according to Dr. Dennis Backherms, an IT professional and an associate dean of cybersecurity at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU).

This is true, in part, because of technology’s ubiquity in our lives. “Nowadays, everything is done with computers and involves data,” said Rodney Royster, an adjunct faculty member at SNHU with more than three decades of experience in the cybersecurity sphere. “And that means everything is vulnerable to attack from bad actors.”

Cybersecurity is important because it protects vulnerable information from these “bad actors,” including hackers and other cybercriminals trying to access valuable data. The information cybercriminals desire includes intellectual property, government secrets, credit card numbers, account passwords or electronic medical records. Meanwhile, professionals in different cybersecurity roles, from entry-level analysts to top-level executives, protect and defend against these continually evolving threats and attacks.

**What Are the Main Categories of Cybersecurity Jobs?**

According to the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Careers and Studies (NICCS), there are 5 major kinds of roles in the field. They include:

- Design and Development: This category encompasses cybersecurity architecture, secure software development and other roles focused on planning and building secure platforms and systems, NICCS noted.

- Implementation and Operation: Administrator roles, technical support and network operations are just a few positions that make up the implementation and operation category, according to NICCS.

- Investigation: Investigation roles include cybercrime investigation and digital evidence analysis roles, NICCS said.

- Oversight and Governance: This category includes roles in instruction, executive leadership, systems security management and more, said NICCS.

- Protection and Defense: Protection and defense roles include vulnerability analysis, threat analysis and incident response, NICCS noted.

These categories are based on what part of the cybersecurity ecosystem each role serves, but there are also specializations you might pursue within the field.

**What Are Different Specializations in Cybersecurity?**

Cybersecurity professionals can benefit from starting as generalists and then specializing in an area of interest or strength, according to Brandon Champion, an adjunct faculty member at SNHU. Some correspond directly with a role, and others may be functions within a broader position. These areas can include:

- Application security
- Data loss prevention
- Network security
- Security architecture
- Vulnerability management

There are also specializations focused on preventing and responding to cybercrime, including:

- Forensics
- Incident response
- Threat intelligence

The specific job responsibilities for any role

can depend on the size and resources of the employer. “At a smaller or mid-size firm, you might end up being a ‘jack of all trades,’ while at a larger firm, you’re more likely to have specialists,” said Champion.

**What Are 5 Examples of Cybersecurity Jobs?**

If working in the cybersecurity field interests you, here are 5 careers to consider.

**1. Computer Network Architects**

In the design and development category of cybersecurity roles, computer network architects design and implement data communication networks, including local area networks (LANs), wide area networks (WANs) and intranets, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). They consider an organization’s specific needs and requirements, including information security, when planning networks.

To enter this role, BLS reported that you’ll typically need a bachelor’s degree in a computer-related field and some relevant experience.

Computer network architects earned a median pay of \$130,390 in 2024, and the field is expected to grow 12% through 2034, according to BLS — much faster than the average 3% projected growth rate for all occupations.\*

**2. Database Architects**

Database architects design and build database systems that store and secure a variety of data, from financial information to customer shipping records, BLS reported. Since many databases contain personal, proprietary and financial information, database architects and administrators are responsible for planning the measures to protect that data.

A bachelor’s degree in computer and information technology is typically needed to enter this role, according to BLS, although some employers may prefer a master’s degree in a similar field.

In 2024, the median pay for database architects was \$135,980, and the position is expected to grow 9% by 2034, BLS said.\*

**3. Information Security Analysts**

If you’re interested in planning and executing security measures to protect an organization’s computer networks and systems, then this role may be for you. According to BLS, information security analysts are responsible for staying up to date on the latest methods that attackers are using to infiltrate computer systems and need to research new technology to decide the best way to protect their organization.

To break into this field, BLS reported that you’ll typically need at least a bachelor’s degree in computer science, along with related work experience.

The median pay for information security analysts in 2024 was \$124,910, with an expected 29% job growth through 2034, according to BLS.\*

**4. Network and Computer Systems Administrators**

Network and computer systems administrators install, configure and maintain organizations’ LANs and WANs, data communication networks, operating systems and servers, BLS reported. This includes maintaining network and computer systems cybersecurity.

For this role, you’ll typically need a bachelor’s degree in a related field, although BLS reported that some employers may only require a postsecondary certificate or associate degree.

In 2024, the median pay for the role was \$96,800, according to BLS, with an estimated 14,300 job openings per year through 2034.\*

**5. Software Developers, Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers**

This role can involve creating computer applications to help underlying systems and testing and designing software to identify problems, BLS

reported. Software developers need to take many requirements into account, including the security of an application or program.

Usually, a bachelor’s degree in computer or information technology is required, but some employers may prefer to hire developers with a master’s degree, according to BLS.

The field is expected to grow nearly 15% by 2034 — much faster than the projected average for all roles — and in 2024, BLS reported the median pay was \$131,450.\*

**What Are Some Other Job Titles in Cybersecurity?**

Cybersecurity professionals go by many names, but the job titles or descriptions will typically include “information security” or “cybersecurity” or other related terms, according to Backherms. Examples include:

- Cybersecurity technical architects
- Information security, cybersecurity or vulnerability analysts
- Penetration testers
- Security administrators, engineers and technicians

“You’ll often also see the words ‘entry,’ ‘associate’ or ‘senior’ accompanying these titles,” Backherms said. “Once you get to the executive level, cyber roles tend to be categorized by manager, director or officer (for example, CISO) title types.”

While some positions may require a bachelor’s degree or a certain amount of experience, entry and associate level roles are usually achievable through earning an associate degree in cybersecurity.

Meanwhile, on the government side, roles might be designated as “level I,” “level II” or “level III” based on the minimum level of knowledge, experience or certification required, according to Royster.

In other words, you can find career opportunities at all levels — from the day-to-day operations and management to the senior executive level and even on the board.

“Keep in mind, though, that these job titles change,” said Royster. “I was looking at a job posting the other day for a CISO, but it was for a chief innovation security officer.”

**What Are Some More Advanced Roles in Cybersecurity?**

As you continue to gain experience and expertise during your career, you might set your sights on pursuing cybersecurity positions or opportunities in:

- Consulting: According to Royster, the best consultants have not only the technical chops but also considerable experience with recognized organizations across multiple industries — in addition to the presentation and interpersonal skills needed to engage with IT-savvy clients. “You need to be able to talk the talk. So, find your niche, master those skills, and then see if consulting is the right fit for you,” he said.
- Education: Professionals can also explore opportunities for teaching or mentoring, both formally and informally. “Teaching, for me, is a way to give back to the field,” said Champion. “It’s still a fairly small community, and — perhaps selfishly — I want the next generation of people potentially working for me to keep moving our field in the right direction.”

- Leadership: Senior- or executive-level roles typically require solving higher-order problems, making strategic decisions and building teams and processes while collaborating across business divisions. “Every day is different for a CISO,” said Evans. “Sometimes it’s a high-stress situation, and everyone looks to you for direction and answers. That means you have to think fast, and your decisions can have significant consequences.”

**Where Can You Work in the Cybersecurity Field?**

Alex Petitto ‘21 earned a bachelor’s in cybersecurity from SNHU while serving in the U.S. Air Force. At the end of his program, he accepted an offer to move into a cyber role.

“I chose to remain with the Air Force and transfer to a cybersecurity unit, and this degree was a major factor in allowing me to do so,” he said.

Although Petitto’s path from one position to another might not be possible for everyone, cyber professionals work in nearly every sector and industry — public and private, for-profit and non-profit — and at businesses and organizations large and small, including:

- Banking and finance
- Healthcare
- Insurance
- Law enforcement and government
- Technology and telecommunications

“Cybersecurity is an industry-agnostic field,” according to Champion. “But the industry dictates which risks you have to worry about.”

Champion knows this first-hand. In his role as chief information security officer (CISO) within the global power and engineering industry, he might focus his team’s efforts on protecting the company from ransomware, malicious software that locks out the system’s users until a ransom is paid. Meanwhile, in his other role as senior information systems officer for the Army National Guard, he works to prevent security breaches by nation state actors, including foreign governments with political agendas.

“The threat landscape continues to change on a daily basis and requires a more agile workforce to maintain comprehensively protected networks,” according to Backherms.

**How to Get Started in Cybersecurity**

Whether you’re a generalist or a specialist, you’ll need to keep up with ever-changing technical requirements, the latest legal regulations and best practices, as well as the emerging trends in the industry to achieve your career goals. To that end, consider:

- Completing a relevant internship
- Earning a degree or certificate in cybersecurity

- Joining a professional organization or association, such as ISACA, Information Systems Security Association (ISSA) or SANS Institute

- Networking or finding a mentor to help you outline and achieve your short- and long-term career goals

- Taking coursework toward a degree or certification that aligns with your career aspirations
- Upskilling in virtual labs to practice industry applications and technologies

“There’s a shortage of people in this field, which makes finding qualified cyber talent very difficult,” said Dr. Trebor Evans, a CISO and STEM adjunct faculty member at SNHU. In the job search, a relevant degree can help you stand out as a well-qualified candidate.

Evans earned his undergraduate degree in information technology, worked in various IT roles (server administrator, database administrator, desktop support) and then earned his MBA before transitioning to a dedicated cybersecurity role.

“I didn’t necessarily count myself as a security individual, but I’ve always been security-minded,” Evans said.

When the right career opportunity presented itself through his professional networks, Evans was upfront with the hiring managers about the training he would need to be successful in the role.

“The company gave me a trial run and said, ‘You should probably get your CISO certification within a year.’ I finished it within two months,” he said. Evans also got certified as a data privacy

solutions engineer.

**Upskilling in Cybersecurity**

“My best advice, after years in the industry, is to find an area that piques your interest and develop the sharpest skill set possible in that area,” said Backherms. “The more honed a skill set in an area, the better chance someone has of securing better-paying jobs.”

Certifications can be useful in this regard. “Professionals already working in a cyber position should achieve relevant certifications based on their areas of interest and the needs of their organization,” Backherms said.

Some colleges will consider your certifications as transfer credits you can use toward a degree program, saving you time and money if you’re looking to go back to school.

In 2023, the Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity at SNHU became a validated program of study by the National Security Agency (NSA). As a designated National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD), SNHU met the federal government’s strict criteria when it comes to excellence in cybersecurity education, said Jonathan Kamyck, a senior associate dean of STEM programs at SNHU and Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) who holds master’s degrees in information assurance and organizational leadership.

Meanwhile, it’s worth exploring your interests or staying current with industry standards by upskilling. According to Royster, useful resources include:

- Codecademy
- Cybrary
- National Initiative for Cybersecurity Careers and Studies (NICCS)

Another factor to consider for your education is finding a school participating in the National Cyber League (NCL) competitions. In a 2024 NCL competition, SNHU ranked 4th nationally out of more than 500 colleges and universities.

If your career goals include growing in the field or becoming a manager, then an advanced degree might be right for you. “An advanced degree can help you learn the foundational and conceptual ideas concerning cyber strategies while developing the soft skills — such as communication, teamwork or leadership — that you’ll need to succeed,” said Backherms.

An advanced degree signals your commitment to learning, which is an important quality in any professional, according to Evans. Plus, the credential can help set you apart from other candidates and move your resume to the top of the hiring manager’s pile. Evans said that as CISO, he is constantly seeking to hire qualified talent and prefers those with a master’s degree.

“There’s always something new to learn in cybersecurity, whether you’re an analyst, engineer, architect, all the way up to CISO,” he said. “My advice? Don’t be afraid to try anything and everything, even if it’s outside of your scope. If you stay in your comfort zone, you’ll never grow.”

\*Cited job growth projections may not reflect local and/or short-term economic or job conditions and do not guarantee actual job growth. Actual salaries and/or earning potential may be the result of a combination of factors including, but not limited to: years of experience, industry of employment, geographic location, and worker skill.

Nicholas Patterson ‘22 ‘25MFA is a writer based in West Michigan with several years of experience as a content creator in higher education. He’s an alumnus of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), where he earned both his bachelor’s in English and creative writing and his Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. When his head’s not in novels, you can find him outside dreaming up his own stories. Connect with him on LinkedIn.

## RRB NTPC Recruitment 2025 – 8868 Graduate & Under Graduate Level Posts

Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) has released two employment notifications for the recruitment of 5810 Graduate Level posts and 3058 Under Graduate Level posts in various Zonal Railways and Production Units of Indian Railways against Centralised Employment Notice no. CEN 06/2025 for Non Technical Popular Categories (Graduate) posts and CEN 07/2025 for Non Technical Popular Categories (Under Graduate) posts.

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Graduate Level Posts

Name of post: Station Master, Goods Train Manager, Traffic Assistant, Chief Commercial cum Ticket Supervisor, Junior Account Assistant cum Typist and Senior Clerk cum Typist

No of posts: 5810 posts

Total No of posts of Graduate Level @ RRB Guwahati: 56 posts

Pay: Level 4, 5, 6 in 7th CPC

Age Limit: 18-33 years as on 01.01.2026.

Educational Qualification: Degree from recognized University or its equivalent. Other Criteria: Typing proficiency in English/Hindi on computer is essential for the posts of Senior Clerk cum Typist and Junior Account Assistant cum Typist. Under Graduate Level Posts

Name of post: Commercial cum Ticket Clerk, Account Clerk Cum Typist, Junior Clerk Cum Typist and Trains Clerk

No of posts: 3058 posts

Total No of posts of Under Graduate Level @ RRB Guwahati: To be updated

Pay: Level 3, 2 in 7th CPC

Age Limit: 18-30 years as on 01.01.2026.

Educational Qualification: 12th(+2 Stage) or its equivalent with not less than 50% marks in the aggregate. 50% marks is not to be insisted upon in case of SC/ST/Persons with Benchmark Disability/Ex-servicemen and candidates Who possess qualifications higher than 12th (+2stage).

Other Criteria: PI check official notification.

Age Relaxation: The relaxation of upper age limit for reserved categories are as follows:

Category Age Relaxation

OBC-NCL 3 years

SC/ST 5 years

PwBD - UR & EWS 10 years

PwBD - OBC/NCL 13 years

PwBD - SC & ST 15 years

Application Fee: Candidates have to pay an examination fee as mentioned below as per their categories or community:

Category Fee

SC/ST/ PwBD Rs 250/-

Ex-Serviceman Rs 250/-

Female Rs 250/-

Transgender Rs 250/-

Minorities Rs 250/-

Economically backward class. Rs 250/-

Others Rs 500/-

Payment Mode: Candidates can pay their exam fee through online mode using options like Internet Banking, Debit Card, Credit Card, or UPI.

Note: For General/ OBC category candidates, an amount of ₹400 will be refunded after appearing in the 1st Stage CBT. For all other categories, the full fee of ₹250 will be refunded after appearing in the 1st Stage CBT.

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these posts by visiting

the official portal of RRB. They may follow below mentioned steps .

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

# Click on Online Application Form link .

# A new webpage will be opened .

# Enter all your personal and educational details as required .

# Upload your passport sized photograph and signature and other required documents.

# Pay the examination fee as per your category and at the end click on submit button .

# Don't forget to take a print of submitted application form .

# Starting date of submission of online application: 21st October 2025

# Last date of submission of online application: 20th November 2025

## AIIMS Guwahati Recruitment 2025 – Project Technical Support Post

Last Date: 17/11/2025.

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Guwahati has released an advertisement for the recruitment of Project Technical Support-II post under the research project entitled, "Family-centred tobacco cessation intervention among Indigenous tobacco users in Assam, Nagaland and Andhra Pradesh: A multi-centre feasibility study", funded by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Government of India at AIIMS Guwahati. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Name of post: Project Technical Support-II  
No of posts: ONE (1)  
Pay: Rs. 20,000/- p.m. + 20% HRA

Duration: Selected candidates will be initially appointed for a period of six (6) months, which upon favourable performance reviews may be extended on half yearly basis for the duration of the project.

Maximum Age Limit: 30 years

Essential Qualification:

Three-year Graduate degree in relevant subjects i.e. Psychology/Rural development /Public health / Social work + 2 years' experience in relevant field (e.g. in community health interventions / family interventions delivery);  
OR  
Three-year training as professional nurse (GNM) from recognized nursing training program with at least 2 years' experience in relevant field.

Desirable Experience:

B. Sc nursing with 6 (six) months of field experience in community health interventions delivery/family interventions delivery

Experience of working in the area of tobacco cessation/substance use disorders

Experience of working in health sector research projects for at least 6 (six) months

Experience in preparing and contributing to research publications in indexed and peer reviewed journals

Prior experience in preparing reports and documents for circulation / dissemination

Excellent proficiency in English + Assamese (reading +writing +speaking)  
Well versed in MS Office applications and related digital tools  
Interested and eligible candidates may apply online at the following link.

In case of problems faced during the process of completing the application form, applicants may send email query to: icmrtobacco@gmail.com  
# Starting date of submission of online application: 11th October 2025  
# Last date of submission of online application: 17th November 2025

## Border Roads Organisation Recruitment – 542 MSW & Vehicle Mechanic Posts

Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 542 MSW & Vehicle Mechanic Posts under General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) of BRO. Interested and eligible candidates may apply here.

Name of post: Multi Skilled Worker (MSW ) & Vehicle Mechanic

Name of organisation: General Reserve Engineer Force (BRO)

Advertisement No: ADVT NO. 02/2025

No of posts: 542 posts

Category-wise vacancy:

# SC: 72

# ST: 38

# OBC: 136

# EWS: 19

# UR: 27

Trade-wise vacancy:

# MSW (Painter):13 posts

# MSW (DES): 205 posts

# Vehicle Mechanic: 324 posts

Gender: Only male candidates need to apply for these posts.

Age Limit:

# Vehicle Mechanic: 18 to 27 years as on 24th November 2025.

# MSW: 18 to 25 years as on 24th November 2025.

Age Relaxation: Category wise age relaxation is as mentioned below:

# SC/ ST: 5 years

# OBC: 3 years

Educational Qualification:

Vehicle Mechanic:

# Matriculation from a recognised Board or equivalent.

# Possessing certificate of Mechanic in Motor Vehicle/ Diesel/ Heat Engine.

MSW (Painter):

# Matriculation from a recognised Board or equivalent.

# Painter Certificate from Industrial Training Institute/ Industrial Trade Certificate/ National Council for Training in the Vocational Trades/State Council for Vocational Training.

MSW (DES):

# Matriculation from a recognised Board or equivalent.

# Possessing Certificate of Mechanic Motor/ Vehicles/ Tractors from Industrial Training Institute/Industrial Trade Certificate/ National Council for Training in the Vocational Trades/ State council for Vocational Training.

Application Fee:

# UR/ OBC/ EWS: Rs. 50/-

# SC/ ST: NIL

# PwBD: NIL

# Payment Mode: Online

# Applications need to filled up in English/ Hindi only.

# Candidates should super scribe the word APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF Category

# British Indian minister Lisa Nandy apologises after rules breach



**LONDON, Nov 7:** Lisa Nandy, the UK's Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, on Friday apologised to Prime Minister Keir Starmer after she was found to have "unknowingly" breached the country's public appoint-

ment rules when appointing England's new football watchdog.

The Independent Commissioner for Public Appointments, Sir William Shawcross, concluded in his report that the appointment of David Kogan last month breached the governance code as he had made two donations totalling 2,900 pounds to the British Indian minister's Labour leadership campaign five years ago.

"The Commissioner finds that she has unknowingly breached the Code. She should have carried out that check and taken any necessary consequential action before selecting him," Shawcross notes in his findings.

In a letter to Starmer, Nandy said she had declared Kogan's donations to her

campaign "as soon as I discovered these donations existed".

"I deeply regret this error. I appreciate the perception it could create, but it was not deliberate and I apologise for it," said Nandy.

"As soon as I discovered these donations existed, I chose to declare them and recuse myself from the process," she said.

Starmer accepted her apology and concluded that she had acted in "good faith". "I know you to be a person of integrity and on the basis of your letter, it is clear you have acted in good faith. The Commissioner acknowledges that you acted swiftly to step back from the appointment when you became aware of the perception of a conflict of interest," reads

Starmer's reply.

"Nonetheless, the process followed was not entirely up to the standard expected and I welcome your department's willingness to cooperate with the commissioner and the Cabinet Office to learn lessons and to improve the guidance on handling conflicts of interests," he said.

In the 18-page report, Shawcross concludes that Nandy and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) had breached the governance code on public appointments.

The report said they breached the code by not immediately declaring that Kogan had donated twice to her unsuccessful 2020 campaign to succeed Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader, by not discussing this when she interviewed him for the

role, and not declaring Kogan's larger donations to Labour, including to Starmer's leadership campaign.

"Ministers are reminded of their duties to declare and resolve any interests and relationships which they have with a candidate participating in a campaign regulated by the Governance Code," the report notes.

"It is also recommended that officials in the Cabinet Office, together with key stakeholders, including departmental officials and the Commissioner, work together to agree steps to avoid a similar situation arising in the future," it adds.

The appointment of Kogan, a prominent media executive, as the head of the Independent Football Regulator (IFR) remains unaffected.

"If Labour is serious about integrity and transparency, this appointment must be withdrawn immediately. Anything less would be a betrayal of the very standards Labour claim to uphold," said Nigel Huddleston, shadow culture secretary.

The development comes as further embarrassment for Starmer's leadership, after two other Cabinet ministers, Chancellor Rachel Reeves and Angela Rayner, have recently been found to have breached official rules over their housing arrangements.

While Reeves was able to prove her lack of a tenancy licence was an oversight on the part of the estate agents, Rayner had to resign from her post as Deputy Prime Minister and housing minister in September. (PTI)

## S Korea says N Korea fired at least 1 ballistic missile toward its eastern waters

**SEOUL, Nov 7:** North Korea on Friday fired at least one ballistic missile toward its eastern waters, South Korea's military said, as Pyongyang steps up its testing activity while talks with Washington and Seoul remain stalled.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff didn't immediately release other details, including what type of ballistic weapon it was or how far it flew.

North Korea has been accelerating the pace of its weapons testing in recent weeks, including the firing of purported hypersonic missiles and cruise missiles last month that it said expanded the capabilities of its nuclear-armed military.

South Korea's military previously said it detected the North firing 10 rounds of artillery into its western waters on Monday as US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth began a two-day visit to South Korea.

The joint chiefs also said the North fired the same number of rounds on Saturday afternoon, before a summit between South Korean President Lee Jae Myung and Chinese President Xi Jinping in South Korea's Gyeongju, where



Lee called for a stronger role by Beijing to persuade the North to return to dialogue with Washington and Seoul.

Following annual security talks with South Korean defence officials on Tuesday, Hegseth praised South Korea's plans to raise its military spending in the face of North Korean nuclear threats and other regional uncertainties.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been shunning all forms of talks with Washington and Seoul since his diplomacy with US President Donald Trump derailed dur-

ing Trump's first term in 2019 amid disagreements over trading relief from US-led sanctions on the North for steps to dismantle Kim's nuclear programme.

He has since accelerated the expansion of his nuclear weapons and missiles programme, while making Russia of his foreign policy, sending thousands of troops and large amounts of military equipment to help fuel President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine. Kim's arsenal now includes nuclear-capable missiles of various ranges targeting US allies in Asia

and the US mainland.

At a major military parade in Pyongyang last month – attended by high-level officials from Russia, China and Vietnam – Kim showcased some of the most powerful weapons in his arsenal, including a new intercontinental ballistic missile that he may be preparing to test in the coming weeks.

Kim has urged Washington to drop its demand for the North to surrender its nukes as a precondition for resuming diplomacy. He ignored Trump's proposal to meet while the American president was in South Korea last week for meetings with world leaders attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Gyeongju.

North Korea on Thursday denounced the Trump administration's latest sanctions targeting cybercrimes that help finance its illicit nuclear weapons programme, accusing Washington of harboring "wicked" hostility toward Pyongyang and vowing unspecified countermeasures.

Some experts said the statement suggests that North Korea does not have an immediate urgency to reopen talks with Washington. (AP)

## North Korean, Russian military officials discuss further cooperation in Pyongyang



**SEOUL, Nov 7:** Senior North Korean and Russian military officials discussed strengthening cooperation in their latest talks this week in Pyongyang, North Korea state media said Friday, as the two countries continue to align over Russia's war in Ukraine. The report came days after South Korea's spy agency, in a closed-door briefing to lawmakers, said it had detected signs of recruitment and training activities in North Korea, possibly in preparation for additional troop deployments to Russia.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said North Korean officials, led by Pak Yong Il, vice director of the Korean People's Army's General Political Bureau, held talks Wednesday with a

Russian delegation headed by Vice Defense Minister Viktor Goremykin.

KCNA said the two sides discussed expanding cooperation in line with the "deepened bilateral relations" developed under North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The report didn't mention any specific agreements. KCNA also said Goremykin's delegation separately met with North Korean Defence Minister No Kwang Chol on Thursday.

When asked whether North Korean and Russian officials may have discussed additional North Korean troop deployments to Russia, Chang Yoon-jeong, a spokesperson for South Korea's Unification Min-

istry, said Seoul was closely monitoring the situation but wouldn't make assumptions.

The North Korean-Russian meetings came days after US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth travelled to South Korea for annual security talks between the allies on Tuesday and praised South Korean plans to raise its military spending in the face of threats by nuclear-armed North Korea and other regional uncertainties.

According to South Korean assessments, North Korea has sent around 15,000 troops to Russia since last fall and also supplied large quantities of military equipment, including artillery and ballistic missiles to support Moscow's war against Ukraine. Kim has also agreed to send thousands of military construction workers and deminers to Russia's Kursk region.

In its briefing to lawmakers on Tuesday, South Korea's National Intelligence Service said it also believes around 5,000 North Korean military construction troops have been moving to Russia in phases since September for possible deployment in infrastructure restoration projects. (AP)

## Sudanese army intercepts RSF drones targeting 2 cities

**CAIRO, Nov 7:** The Sudanese army intercepted drones fired overnight by its rival paramilitary group on two cities in Sudan's northeast, a military official said Friday.

The army official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to freely discuss the matter, said 15 drones targeted Atbara, a city north of the capital, in River Nile province. He confirmed that strikes caused no casualties. Local media reports said residents heard explosions.

The official added that ground defences intercepted a smaller-scale drone attack that also targeted Omdurman, the sister city of the capital Khartoum. The RSF drone strikes come a day after the group announced that it agreed to a humanitarian truce proposed by a US-led mediator group known as the Quad.

A Sudanese military official told The Associated Press on Thursday that the army welcomes the Quad's proposal but will only agree to a truce when the RSF completely withdraws from civilian areas and give up weapons per previous peace proposals.

The war between the RSF and the military began in 2023, when tensions erupted between the two former allies that were meant to oversee a democratic transition after a 2019 uprising. The fighting has

killed at least 40,000 people, according to the WHO, and displaced 12 million. However, aid groups say the true death toll could be many times higher. Over 24 million people are also facing acute food insecurity, according to the World Food Programme.

The US-led plan for a truce would start with a three-month humanitarian truce followed by a nine-month political process, said Massad Boulos, a US adviser for African affairs, earlier this week.

Also Friday, the UN's top human rights body announced it will hold an emergency special session on Sudan on November 14 over recent bloodshed and other violence against civilians in and around the Darfur city of el-Fasher.

The call for the special session by the Human Rights Council in Geneva was led by Britain, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway, and has drawn support from two dozen council members in the 47-member-country rights body so far.

The RSF's announcement that it agreed to the truce comes more than a week after the group seized el-Fasher city which had been under siege for over 18 months. It was also the last Sudanese military stronghold in Sudan's western Darfur region. (AP)

## Multiple explosions shake a mosque in an Indonesian high school, injure 55

**JAKARTA (INDONESIA), Nov 7:** Multiple explosions shook a mosque at a high school during Friday prayers in Jakarta, Indonesia's capital, injuring at least 55 people, mostly students. Police tried to dissuade speculation that the blasts were a terror attack and said they were investigating.

Witnesses told local television stations that they heard at least two loud blasts around midday, from inside and outside the mosque, just as the sermon had started at the mosque at SMA 27, a state high school within a navy compound in Jakarta's northern Kelapa Gading neighbourhood.

Students and others ran out in panic as gray smoke filled the mosque.

Most of the victims suffered minor to severe injuries from glass shards and burns. The cause of the explosions was not immediately known but they came from near the mosque's loud-



speaker, according to Jakarta Police Chief Asep Edi Suheri.

The injured were rushed to nearby hospitals, from where some were sent home after initial treatment but 20 students remained hospitalised for burns, three of them with serious injuries, the police chief said.

Videos circulating in social media showed

dozens of students in school uniform running in panic across the school's basketball court, some covering their ears with their hands, apparently to protect themselves from the loud blasts.

Some of the injured were carried on stretchers to waiting cars.

Shocked relatives of the students gathered at centres set up at Yarsi and Cempaka Putih hospitals to seek information about loved ones. Parents told television stations their children had wounds from being hit in the head, feet and hands by sharp nails and pieces of exploding objects.

Suheri, the police chief, said an anti-bomb squad that was deployed at the scene found toy rifles and a toy gun near the mosque.

"Police are still investigating the scene to determine the cause," he said and urged against speculation that the incident was an attack before police investigation is completed. (AP)

## Pak-Afghan forces trade fire as talks resume

**ISLAMABAD, Nov 7:** As officials of Pakistan and Afghanistan held talks in Turkey to find a lasting solution to the cross-border militancy, their forces traded fire, testing the fragile peace between the two sides.

The talks began in Istanbul to defuse tension between Islamabad and Kabul that erupted in an open border conflict last month.

Both sides reported human losses during the clashes from October 11-15, which were brought under control after a temporary ceasefire that was extended and is still holding. (PTI)

## Supreme Court lets Trump block transgender

**WASHINGTON, Nov 7:** The Supreme Court on Thursday allowed US President Donald Trump's administration to enforce a policy blocking transgender and nonbinary people from choosing passport sex markers that align with their gender identity.

The decision is Trump's latest win on the court's emergency docket, and allows the administration to enforce the policy while a lawsuit over it plays out. It halts a lower-court order requiring the government to keep letting people choose male, female or X on their passport to correspond with their gender identity on new or re-

newed passports. The court's three liberal justices dissented.

The court has sided with the government in nearly two dozen short-term orders on a range of policies since the start of Trump's second term, including another case barring transgender people from serving in the military. In a brief, unsigned order, the conservative-majority court said the policy isn't discriminatory.

"Displaying passport holders' sex at birth no more offends equal protection principles than displaying their country of birth," it said. "In both cases, the government is merely at-

testing to a historical fact without subjecting anyone to differential treatment." The court's three liberal justices disagreed, saying in a dissent that those passports make transgender people vulnerable to "increased violence, harassment, and discrimination".

"This court has once again paved the way for the immediate infliction of injury without adequate (or, really, any) justification," Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson wrote, saying the policy stemmed directly from Trump's executive order that described transgender identity as "false" and "corrosive". (AP)

## Drone sightings halt flights at major European cargo airport in Belgium



**BRUSSELS, Nov 7:** Flights out of one of Europe's biggest cargo airports were briefly suspended after drones were spotted, an airport official said Friday, an incident that comes amid a spate of incidents around Belgium in recent weeks.

Christian Delcourt, the head of communications for Liege airport, said drones forced a sequence of flight interruptions between 9 pm Thursday and 1 am Friday, and again between 7 am and 8 am on Friday, when full operations resumed.

Dozens of flights at Belgium's main international airport in Brussels were cancelled on Wednesday after drone sightings on Tuesday night forced it to close temporarily, prompting Prime Minister Bart De Wever to convene emergency government talks. It was the first time that the airport in Brussels was shut down by drones. The incidents come after a series of unidentified drone flights over the weekend near a military base where US nuclear weapons are stored.

More drones were spotted near the base, Kleine-Brogel, on Wednesday evening. Little new emerged from Thursday's emergency talks, although Defence Minister Theo Francken said a decision was taken to get the National Air Safety Centre at Beau-

vechain air base in eastern Belgium fully operational by January 1.

"This centre will ensure better monitoring and protection of Belgian airspace, and prepare Belgium for future challenges in air safety," Francken said in a post on social media.

NATO declined to say whether drones had been spotted near its headquarters in Brussels, its military HQ in Mons, southern Belgium, or other alliance-linked facilities across the country.

In recent months, drone incidents across Europe have forced airports to suspend flights temporarily. Mysterious drone flights over the airspace of European Union member countries in recent months have alarmed the public and elected officials. Russia has been blamed in some cases, but Belgium has not said who has been operating the drones. Francken has said that he believed that some incidents were part of "a spying operation" that could not have been done by amateurs.

Belgium also hosts the headquarters of the EU, as well as Europe's biggest financial clearinghouse holding tens of billions of euros in frozen Russian assets. Many EU countries want to use those assets as collateral to provide loans to Ukraine, but Belgium has so far resisted. (AP)

## Brazil stumps up billions of dollars for its ambitious rainforest fund at UN climate summit

**BELEM (BRAZIL), Nov 7:** Brazil on Thursday unveiled long-awaited details of a plan to pay countries to preserve their tropical forests and announced it had already drawn USD 5.5 billion in pledges. The fund is President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's flagship project as he welcomes world leaders to the edge of the Amazon for the United Nations annual climate summit -- an effort to draw attention and money to the imperiled rainforest crucial to curbing global warming.

Financed by interest-bearing debt instead of donations, the fund, dubbed the Tropical Forests Forever Facility, seeks to turn the economic logic of deforestation on its head by making it more lucrative for governments to keep their trees rather than cut them down.

Although destroying rainforests makes money for cattle ranchers, miners and illegal loggers, Brazil hopes to convince countries that preserving forests promises richer rewards for the entire world by absorbing huge amounts of planet-warming emissions.

As senior Brazilian officials walked reporters through the fund's inner workings, Norway pledged USD 3 billion -- the biggest commitment of the day -- raising hopes about Lula's ambitions becoming a reality.

Through investments in fixed-rate assets,



the fund aims to issue USD 25 billion of debt within its first few years before leveraging that into a pot worth USD 125 billion that can pay developing countries to protect their tropical rainforests. A list of more than 70 heavily forested countries -- from Congo to Colombia -- will be eligible for payments as long as they keep deforestation below a set rate. Nations that fail to protect their forests will see their payouts reduced at a punitive rate for every hectare destroyed.

"I was already very excited about this, but now even more so," Brazilian Finance Minister Fernando Haddad said in a press conference.

But the fine print on Norway's announcement -- contingent on Brazil raising some USD 9.8 billion in other contributions -- has ramped up the pressure on Brazil to deliver.

Other pledges include USD 1 billion from Indonesia and USD 500 million from France, along with USD 5 million from the Netherlands and USD 1 million from Portugal to-

ward setup costs. Brazil earlier announced USD 1 billion to kick off the fund. Officials said they expected to hear about Germany's contribution on Friday.

But it remained unclear how many other countries would follow suit. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer expressed support for the initiative on Thursday but declined to declare a pledge. Brazil is also banking on the participation of the private sector after the fund reaches USD 10 billion, considered enough to start preparing bond issuances.

When asked about possible concerns on Thursday, Norwegian Climate Minister Andreas Bjelland Eriksen said he thought the risks to the fund were "manageable".

"There is perhaps an even bigger risk of not participating. Rainforests are disappearing before our eyes," he said.

The fund's rules call for 20 per cent of the money to go to Indigenous peoples.

"These initiatives demonstrate a massive and welcome shift in recognising the central role that Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and local communities play in protecting the forests that sustain us," Wanjira Mathai, managing director for Africa and Global Partnerships at the World Resources Institute, a research organisation, said. (AP)

## Parnaik interacts with students under Ashtalakshmi Darshan Programme

Students from Goa and Uttarakhand meet the Guv at Raj Bhavan, Itanagar promoting national integration

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Nov 7:** Governor Lt General KT Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd), interacted with a group of students from Goa and Uttarakhand at Raj Bhavan, Itanagar on Friday. The students are visiting the state under the Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme, which aims to deepen national integration and strengthen bonds among young people from different regions of India.

The Governor lauded the vision behind the programme, calling it a farsighted initiative that fosters cultural understanding and mutual respect while nurturing 'youth ambassadors'

of unity and harmony. He said such programmes advance the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat, where youth play a pivotal role in driving progress with confidence and shared purpose.

Addressing the students, the Governor urged them to be ideal citizens — educated, disciplined, motivated and guided by strong moral values. He encouraged them to remain informed, practice self-discipline and adopt a selfless approach in life. Taking pride in one's culture, understanding traditions and nurturing love for the nation, he said, are essential for building character and leader-

ship. Sharing a personal mantra for success, the Governor advised the students to be "externally calm and internally intense," a balance that he said helps leaders remain focused and resilient.

Drawing from his experiences in the Indian Army, the corporate sector and his current constitutional role, the Governor spoke about leadership and the remarkable development in Arunachal Pradesh. He highlighted the State's growing excellence in sports, its respect for nature and the role of Hindi as a unifying language. The cultural segment of the pro-

gramme saw the Goa team present Gomantak Sanskruti, while the Uttarakhand students showcased folk traditions from the Kumaon and Garhwal regions. The host Rajiv Gandhi University team added vibrancy with a 'Diversity Dance' celebrating the cultural richness of Arunachal Pradesh's tribes. Organised by the North Eastern Council (NEC), Shillong under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Govt of India, the first edition of the Ashtalakshmi Darshan initiative is being hosted by Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh from Nov 1 to 14, 2025.



## Two-day international conference at NERIST

**HT Correspondent**

**NIRJULI, Nov 7:** A two-day International Conference titled 'Invisible Struggles: Mental Health and the Lived Realities of the Peripherised' was organised by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, NERIST from November 6 to 7. The conference was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India and the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment and Tribal Affairs, Government of Arunachal Pradesh in association with knowledge partners BRIDGE, Kolkata and Mariwala Health Initiative, Mumbai. The event inaugurated at the Silver Jubilee Hall of the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST), also celebrated Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda.

In his welcome address, Dr Ravi Kumar, Associate Professor and Head (In-Charge) of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, welcomed the eminent scholars and encouraged participants to contribute to the cause of mental health and social inclusion. He urged the attendees to have a "collective will to turn empathy into action."

Dr Yuma Narah, Assistant Professor and Convenor of the event, provided an overview of the seminar, emphasising that mental health should be seen as a collective responsibility.

Director of NERIST, Professor Dr Narendranath S, highlighted the importance of addressing mental health concerns, particularly the rising rate of student suicides. He called upon scholars and educators to advocate for a boundaryless, inclusive society and to develop actionable solutions that can be implemented within institutions.

Dr Bikash Bage, Head of the Department of Sociology, Rajiv Gandhi University and State Nodal Officer of the Tribal Research Institute, spoke on behalf of the Department of Social Justice, Empowerment and Tribal Affairs (SJETA). He emphasised the significance of the Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh Pakhwada being celebrated across India from November 1 to 15 in honour of Bhagwan Birsa Munda's 150th birth anniversary.

Special Invitee Prof Nikhil Sengupta, Director of the Psychology and Public Policy Research Unit, University of Kent, United Kingdom expressed his commitment to further engaging in the plenary discussions and underscored the value of continuous learning.

Guest of Honour, Professor Rita

Rani Talukdar, Head of the Department of Psychology, Gauhati University described the conference as a "Gathering of the Thoughtful." She discussed the notion of privilege and called upon scholars to take responsibility for driving social change. Reflecting on the experiences of tribal communities in Assam, she remarked, "Mental health is the story of survival and it's beyond the clinical landscape." She poetically illustrated that "Mental health is the young girl walking kilometres to reach the school," and concluded by asserting that "Mental health is not a privilege but a right."

Two books published by the Tribal Research Institute were launched during the inaugural session: "Mind Matters: Unveiling Mental Health among the Youth of Arunachal Pradesh" and "Sanitation among the Scheduled Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh (Status, Awareness Level and Hygienic Practices)." These publications, funded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and coordinated by the SJETA Department were produced under the supervision of Dr Bikash Bage.

The Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker, Professor Anand Prakash, Emeritus Psychologist and former Head of the Department of Psychology, University of Delhi critiqued the prevailing individual-centric approach to mental health. He called for dismantling such frameworks that overlook intersectional identities and urged for deconstructing the concept of "normal." He emphasised the collective responsibility of communities to foster compassion, dialogue and inclusivity in mental health discourse. The inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Assistant Professor Dr Gelling Modi.

The conference focused on the mental health of marginalised and peripheralised communities through a multidisciplinary lens, encompassing psychology, public health, social work, policy-making and community engagement. Following the inauguration, the first plenary session was delivered by Dr Trude Sundberg from the School of Social Sciences, University of Kent, United Kingdom. Subsequent technical sessions featured simultaneous plenary addresses by Kumam Davidson Singh, Founder of the MATAI Society and Co-Founder of The Chinky Homo Project and Dr Nikhil Sengupta of the University of Kent. The conference witnessed rich academic discussions and active participation from scholars across India and abroad.

## DC Siang visits ITI Pangin, encourages skill development

**HT Correspondent**

**PANGIN, Nov 7:** The Deputy Commissioner of Siang District, Tayi Taggu visited the Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Pangin on Friday, accompanied by Ruzing Bellai, Chief Operating Officer (Rural Skills), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gramen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY). The visit was aimed at interacting with the newly enrolled trainees and reviewing the progress of the recently operational institute.

Addressing the trainees, the Deputy Commissioner underlined the growing importance of skill development and vocational education in today's competitive environment. He urged the students to make full use of the training facilities and opportunities available at ITI Pangin to gain hands-on experience and practical skills that would make them employable in diverse sectors.

"Skill-based learning is a powerful tool for personal empowerment and economic growth," he said, stressing that trained youth are key contributors to the government's vision of a self-reliant, skilled and empowered India. Taggu encouraged the trainees to maintain discipline, dedication and curiosity throughout their training period, assuring them of the district administration's support in promoting employment and entrepreneurship initiatives.

Ruzing Bellai, COO (Rural Skills), DDUGKY, also interacted with the students and highlighted various government initiatives under the Ministry of Rural Development aimed at improving employability among youth in rural areas. He advised trainees to stay motivated and take advantage of upcoming placement and apprenticeship opportunities facilitated through ITIs and related skill programmes.

Niyang Pertin, In-charge Principal of ITI Pangin expressed gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner and DDUGKY officials for their visit and guidance. She noted that it is a moment of pride for the district that the ITI has started functioning, offering youth a platform to develop technical expertise locally. She shared her optimism that the institute will soon become a centre of excellence in vocational education for the Siang region.

Currently, ITI Pangin offers training in three trades — Digital Photography, Solar Technician and Catering and Hospitality Assistant. Plans are underway to introduce more skill-oriented courses in the coming years, aligning with the local employment landscape and emerging industry needs.

## Tedir urges youth to avail sports quota for job opportunities

AOA president encourages youth to pursue sports and benefit from 10% police quota under sports category



**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Nov 7:** Arunachal Olympic Association (AOA) president and former minister Taba Tedir has appealed to the educated youth of the state to avail the benefits of the sports quota to secure job opportunities in various government departments, including the 10% reservation in the police force.

Tedir, who also serves as the Chairman of the Arunachal Pradesh Energy Development Agency (APEDA), was addressing a large gathering during the closing

ceremony of the games and sports events organised as part of the 53rd APP Raising Day at the Arunachal Pradesh Battalion (APBN) ground in Chimu on Thursday afternoon.

Speaking on the occasion, Tedir emphasised that "games and sports are a vital part of life" and help individuals maintain physical fitness, mental strength and overall well-being. He advised police personnel to remain physically fit, noting that good health not only improves personal performance but also enhances the overall efficiency of

the police force. "Discipline is the backbone of the force and maintaining a disciplined and healthy lifestyle contributes to a healthy society and environment," he said.

Tedir reminded the players that winning and losing are both integral parts of sports and that participation itself is valuable. "Every game teaches us something new. Play with dedication and spirit—victory will follow," he added.

Highlighting the state government's continuous efforts to promote sports, Tedir said that major

importance has been given to developing sports infrastructure and supporting athletes. "We are looking forward with great hope and expectation that our youth will participate in the next Olympics. The state government is ready to provide all necessary support, including training facilities and exposure," he said.

He further mentioned that numerous regional, divisional, zonal and national sporting events are being organised across Arunachal Pradesh, which are motivating young athletes. "Such events strengthen the morale of our youth and soon, we expect to see our boys and girls represent the state in the Olympics and Commonwealth Games," he added.

Sports Authority of Arunachal (SAA) Chairman John Neelam, who attended the event as the guest of honour, also addressed the gathering. He motivated players and police personnel to continue improving their skills and suggested forming a dedicated football team from the Arunachal Pradesh Police to showcase local talent.

The dignitaries also kicked off the final football match and took part in the prize distribution ceremony for various sporting and athletic events held during the celebrations.

Among those present at the event were AOA vice president Kamta Lapung, SAA Director Gumiyu Karbak, IGP Tusar Taba, Chukhu Apa, Takhe Ringu, DIG Tumme Amo, SPs and other senior officers.

## Police returns 25 luxury vehicles to owners, 11 arrested in theft racket

**HT Correspondent**  
**ITANAGAR, Nov 7:** The Itanagar Capital Police has so far returned 25 luxury vehicles to their rightful owners from across the country as part of its ongoing crackdown on an interstate vehicle theft and smuggling racket. To date, 11 people have been arrested and 76 high-end vehicles have been seized with efforts underway to nab the kingpin of the operation.

Police had earlier registered a suo motu FIR (Ita PS Case No 102/25) under Sections 111(2)(b)(3)(4)(5), 317(4), 336(2), 340 and 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Following the registration, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was constituted under the close supervision of SP Capital, Jummar Basar, APPS. The SIT led by SDPO Kengo Dirchi as the Investigating Officer, included Inspector K Yangfo, SI P Padam, SI S Samuel, Head Constable Robi, Constables Samdeep Yadav, Dagle and Wangpan.

The SIT launched the operation on July 2, 2025 and successfully dismantled a large interstate vehicle smuggling syndicate operating across multiple states. During the investigation, 57 high-end stolen vehicles were initially recovered from various parts of the Itanagar Capital Region. Later, ad-

ditional vehicles were traced, bringing the total number of recovered vehicles to 76.

Verification revealed that all the vehicles were blacklisted and linked to theft and robbery cases across Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and other states. The seized vehicles were documented through the e-Sakshya portal. SDPO Kengo Dirchi informed that the delivery of the recovered vehicles to their rightful owners has been taking place under court orders. "So far, 25 vehicles have been handed over to their actual owners, who have come from places like the National Capital Region, Haryana and Punjab. After filing claims in court with proper documentation, the vehicles are released as per 'Jimanama' orders," he explained.

He added that after the registration of the case, police messages were sent to all police stations across India, notifying them of the vehicle recoveries along with engine and chassis details. "Owners have since been contacting us through various means. Based on court orders, we have returned 25 vehicles to date," he said.

Among the 11 arrested suspects are a District Transport Officer (DTO), a Data Entry Operator (DEO) and nine others. "We are investigating the case carefully and are deter-

mined to apprehend the kingpin soon," SDPO Dirchi said.

He further shared that the owners who traveled to Itanagar to claim their vehicles were elated to recover them after losing hope. "We encourage all rightful owners to claim their vehicles through legal means with valid documentation and court orders," he added.

The ongoing case marks one of the largest vehicle recovery operations in Arunachal Pradesh and among the biggest in the country, with an estimated value exceeding Rs 30 crore. The recovered vehicles include models such as Toyota Fortuner, Hyundai Creta, Kia Seltos, Maruti Brezza, Kia Sonet, Tata Safari, Tata Harrier, Mahindra Thar, Mahindra Scorpio, Toyota Innova, Audi, Ford Endeavour, Hyundai Venue, Maruti Baleno and others.

Appealing to the public, SDPO Dirchi advised citizens to verify vehicle ownership history through the VAHAN portal or respective RTO records before purchasing any vehicle. He cautioned against buying vehicles without genuine documentation and urged the public to immediately report any suspicious sellers or vehicles to the nearest police station. "Always ensure ownership transfer in case of second-hand vehicles," he added.

## Northeast leaders to form a united regional party

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Nov 7:** A group of political leaders from the northeastern states have recently announced plans to form a united political party to represent the region's collective aspirations at the national level. The initiative, supported by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma and other prominent leaders, aims to create a single, strong and indigenous political entity for the Northeast, informed Arunachal Pradesh NPP General Secretary Paknga Bage.

Bage said the proposed party seeks to provide a unified platform to address regional issues and ensure that the collective voice of the northeastern states is heard in national policymaking. "The aim is to establish a united singular political entity that can effectively raise the concerns of the region in Parliament and other national forums," he stated.

The announcement was made recently in New Delhi, where leaders from Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam, Tripura and other states met to discuss the formation of the new political front. While the parties will maintain their individual structures, they have agreed to work together for shared regional goals and interests.

A nine-member committee headed by James Sangma has been constituted to oversee the unification process and coordinate with various regional political parties across the Northeast.

Calling for a change in political mindset, Bage urged all like-minded leaders to join the movement for "one voice for one Northeast." He also highlighted the need to move away from the prevailing "money culture" in politics, expressing optimism that the youth of the region will drive positive change and demand cleaner, more accountable governance.

## Guv joins 150 Years of Vande Mataram celebration

Parnaik calls Vande Mataram the song that awakened India's soul, urges citizens to embody patriotism

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Nov 7:** Governor Lt General KT Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd), participated in the commemoration of 150 years of Vande Mataram at the State Banquet Hall, Itanagar on Friday. The Governor joined people from across the state in the nationwide collective singing of the Rashtriya Geet, paying tribute to a song that continues to inspire generations.

Greeting the people on the historic occasion, the Governor described 'Vande Mataram' as the timeless song that stirred the soul of India's freedom movement. He said it stands today as a living celebration of unity, courage and the enduring bond shared with the motherland.

Recalling that Vande Mataram was written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1875 in his novel 'Anandamath', the Governor said the song became the chant of defiance and the heartbeat of

India's awakening. It echoed through rallies, inspired courage among freedom fighters and remains an enduring symbol of patriotism.

He said that even today, Vande Mataram shines as a symbol of India's unity, dignity and resilience, reminding every citizen that the nation's strength lies in its diversity and emotional oneness.

As India moves toward 2047, marking 100 years of Independence, the Governor urged citizens to renew their commitment to the ideals embodied in the song—love for the motherland, pride in heritage and responsibility toward future generations.

Addressing the youth, he called upon them to serve with sincerity, lead with compassion and uphold the unity and harmony that define India. "In today's world, patriotism is reflected in honesty in our work, empathy in our actions and integrity in every decision we make," he said.



Rajiv Gandhi University Vice Chancellor Prof S K Nayak, Chief Secretary (In-charge) Pawan Kumar Sain and Prof P K Nayak of RGU shared their reflections on the significance of the Rashtriya Geet.

Speaker of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly Tesam Pongte, along with government officials, students from Goa and Uttarakhand and citizens from diverse walks of life, joined the commemoration, making it a truly inclusive celebration of national pride. The event organised by the De-

partment of Art and Culture under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, featured a patriotic musical performance by artists of the department.

**Our Pisaghat Correspondent adds:** Joining the nation in celebrating the 150th anniversary of 'Vande Mataram', the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Arunachal Pradesh unit organised a series of commemorative events across the state to honour the historic national song that inspired India's freedom

movement.

The main state-level programme was held at Donyi-Polo Vidya Niketan, Talom Rukbo Nagar, Pasigat where State BJP president Kaling Moyong led the celebration along with students and faculty members. Later, in Itanagar Moyong administered the Swadeshi Pledge, emphasising the spirit of self-reliance and national pride that Vande Mataram symbolises.

Another commemoration was held at KVK Chimu, attended by Nari-Koyu MLA Tojir Kadu, where students and teachers participated in patriotic renditions and discussions on the legacy of the song. A similar event was also organised at the State BJP Headquarters in Itanagar attended by senior party leaders, workers and members of the public.

During the ceremonies, students were educated on the historical and cultural significance of Vande Mataram. The song, composed in 1875 by Bankim Chandra Chatter-

## Divisive mindset still challenge for country, says Modi Key stanzas of 'Vande Mataram' dropped in 1937: PM

**NEW DELHI, Nov 7:** In an apparent attack at the Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said important stanzas of the national song "Vande Mataram" were dropped in 1937 which sowed the seeds of partition and asserted that such a "divisive mindset" is still a challenge for the country.

Modi made the comments after inaugurating the year-long commemoration of "Vande Mataram" to mark 150 years of the national song. He also released a commemorative stamp and coin on the occasion at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium here.

"Vande Mataram became the voice of India's freedom struggle, it expressed the feelings of every Indian. Unfortunately, in 1937, important stanzas of Vande Mataram...a part of its soul, were severed. The division of Vande Mataram also sowed the seeds of partition. Today's generation needs to know why this injustice was done with this 'maha mantra' of nation building...this divisive mindset is still a challenge for the country," he said.

Noting that "Vande Mataram" is relevant in every era, the prime minister, in an apparent reference to Operation Sindoor, said, when adversaries dared to attack India's security and honour through terrorism, the world saw that while India "embodies the spirit of 'Kamala and Vimla' in service to humanity, it also knows how to become Durga — the wielder of ten weapons — for



the destruction of terror".

On 24 January 1950, the Constituent Assembly of India officially adopted "Vande Mataram" as the national song, giving it enduring significance.

According to various accounts, a truncated version of "Vande Mataram", keeping only the first two of the original six stanzas, was chosen as the national song in 1937 by the Congress after a committee consisting of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Acharya

Narendra Deva, and Rabindranath Tagore recommended the adoption.

Earlier in the day, the BJP alleged that the Congress party "brazenly pandering to its communal agenda under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru", adopted only a truncated "Vande Mataram" as the party's national song in 1937.

"The Congress committed the historic sin and blunder of linking the song with religion. Congress under Nehru citing religious grounds deliberately removed stanzas of

Vande Mataram which hailed Goddess Ma Durga," BJP spokesperson CR Kesavan charged in a post on X.

In his remarks at the event, the prime minister said as the country marks 150 years of "Vande Mataram", it gives us new inspiration and fills people of the country with new energy.

"Vande Mataram is a word, a mantra, an energy, a dream, a resolve...We have to build a nation which is at the top on the basis of knowledge, science and technology," Modi said. He said for centuries, the world listened to stories of India's prosperity.

"Just a few centuries ago, India accounted for nearly one-fourth of the global GDP. However, he noted that when Bankim (Chandra Chatterjee) Babu composed Vande Mataram, India had drifted far from that golden era. Foreign invasions, plunder, and exploitative colonial policies had left the country suffering with poverty and hunger," he said.

"Yet, Bankim Babu invoked the vision of a prosperous India, driven by his belief that no matter how great the challenges, India could revive its golden age. And thus, he gave the clarion call - 'Vande Mataram,'" Modi said.

The prime minister stated that during the colonial era, the British sought to justify their rule by portraying India as inferior and backward. (PTI)

## Congress proud flagbearer of 'Vande Mataram' while BJP, RSS avoid it: Kharge



**NEW DELHI, Nov 7:** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday said his party has been the proud flagbearer of "Vande Mataram", which awakened the collective soul of the nation and became the rallying cry for freedom, whereas BJP and RSS have "avoided" the national song despite its universal reverence.

RSS and BJP, who claim to be self-proclaimed guardians of nationalism, have never sung "Vande Mataram" or the national anthem, "Jana Gana Mana", in their shakhas or offices.

On the 150th anniversary of India's national song, Kharge said in a statement that "Vande Mataram", composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, embodies the spirit of Bharat Mata and celebrates the unity and diversity of India.

"The Indian National Congress has been the proud flagbearer of 'Vande Mataram'. It was during the 1896 session of the Congress in Calcutta, under the leadership of the then Congress President Rahmatullah Sayani that 'Vande Mataram' was sung publicly for the first time by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore.

"That moment infused new life into the freedom struggle. The Congress understood that the British Empire's policy of divide and rule, manipulating religious, caste and regional identities, was designed to break India's unity. Against this, 'Vande Mataram' rose as a song of unflinching strength, uniting all Indians in devotion to Bharat Mata," he said.

From the Partition of Bengal in 1905 to the last breaths of the country's brave revolutionaries, "Vande Mataram" echoed through the land, the Congress president said.

It was the title of Lala Lajpat Rai's publication, inscribed on Bhikaji Cama's flag raised in Germany, and found in Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil's Kranti Gitanjali, he noted.

"Terrified by its popularity, the British banned it, for it had become the heartbeat of India's freedom struggle," Kharge said.

In 1915, he said, Mahatma Gandhi wrote that "Vande Mataram" had become the "most powerful battle cry among Hindus and Muslims of Bengal during the Partition days. It was an anti-imperialist cry".

The Congress chief said Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, said in 1938 that "for more than 30 years now, the song is related directly to Indian nationalism. Such 'songs of people' are not tailor-made neither can they be imposed on the minds of people. They attain the heights

by themselves".

Kharge claimed that in 1937, the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly started reciting "Vande Mataram" when Purushottam Das Tandon was the speaker. In the same year, the Indian National Congress formally recognised "Vande Mataram" as the national song, reaffirming its position as a symbol of India's unity in diversity, he noted.

"However, it is deeply ironic that those who today claim to be the self-proclaimed guardians of nationalism -- the RSS and the BJP -- have never sung 'Vande Mataram' or our national anthem, 'Jana Gana Mana', in their shakhas or offices.

"Instead, they continue to sing 'Namaste Sada Vatsale', a song glorifying their organisations, not the nation. Since its founding in 1925, the RSS has avoided 'Vande Mataram' despite its universal reverence. Not once in its texts or literature does the song find mention," he alleged.

Kharge further said, "The RSS and Sangh Parivar supported the British against Indians in the national movement, did not raise the national flag for 52 years, abused the Constitution of India, burnt effigies of Bapu and Babasaheb Ambedkar, and in the words of Sardar Patel, were involved in Gandhi ji's assassination."

The Congress, on the other hand, takes immense pride in both "Vande Mataram" and "Jana Gana Mana", he said, adding that both songs are sung with reverence at every party gathering and event, symbolising India's unity and pride.

From 1896 to the present day, "Vande Mataram" has been sung with pride and patriotism as a tribute to the people of India at every Congress meeting, from small to big, he added.

"The Congress party reaffirms its unshakable faith in 'Vande Mataram', the eternal song of our motherland, the clarion call of our unity, and the voice of India's undying spirit," Kharge said.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in 2003, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, one of India's most distinguished historians, published a definitive biography of "Vande Mataram".

"Rabindranath Tagore had first sung Vande Mataram in the Dec 1896 session of the Indian National Congress in Kolkata. "Subsequently, he was to play the most crucial role in determining the place of Vande Mataram in our public life as reflected in the Congress Working Committee resolution of October 29, 1937," Ramesh said. (PTI)

## Tejashwi's favourite CM Stalin whose party DMK compares Biharis with 'bidis': Shah

**JAMUI/BHAGALPUR (BIHAR) Nov 7:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday unleashed a no-holds-barred attack on the family of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, claiming that his son Tejashwi Yadav's "favourite" CM is MK Stalin, whose party DMK "insults Biharis by comparing them with bidis".

He also accused Congress leader Sonia Gandhi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of maintaining silence over repeated attacks by Pakistani terrorists during the UPA regime and claimed that "they did not have the courage to retaliate or even issue a statement against terrorism".

"Someone asked Lalu's son - who is his favourite CM? He replied that DMK's (MK) Stalin, who is Tamil Nadu's CM, is his favourite. Do you know who he is? I will give his (Stalin's) introduction...his party compares Biharis with 'Bidis'. His party insults Biharis and disgraces them. Tejashwi's favourite is this CM," Shah claimed at a Bhagalpur rally.



The BJP leader also alleged that Stalin's party "insults Sanatan Dharma, opposes creation of Ram Temple".

The Tamil Nadu CM had, last week, condemned Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his alleged remarks that "DMK men harassed workers from Bihar in Tamil Nadu".

Stalin asked him to give up doing "cheap politics" by targeting Tamils and showing malice against

them in poll-bound states.

Claiming that the opposition leaders have "no development" agenda for Bihar, Shah alleged that the RJD-Congress combine did "not do anything for the poor" during their rule in the state, except "patronising infiltrators".

Addressing a rally in Jamui earlier in the day, he launched a blistering attack on Lalu Prasad and Sonia Gandhi, alleging that "those concerned only about the welfare

of their sons and daughters cannot make Bihar developed".

"Give us a mandate for five more years, and Bihar will be counted among the developed states. It will be made free from floods. Lalu-Rabri-Rahul have no development agenda," Shah claimed.

He also alleged, "They did not do anything for the poor, barring patronising infiltrators who are usurping poor people's jobs, food-grain and resources. Do you think that those who are concerned only about the welfare of their sons and daughters can make Bihar a developed state? They can't."

In Bhagalpur, the union minister also termed the opposition bloc 'Mahagathbandhan' as "thagbandhan", claiming that "they have no policy and no unity among them".

"No one can prevent riots in Bhagalpur if the RJD wins the Bihar polls...You have to decide whether you want the kidnapping industry in Diara or the development of tourism," Shah told the rally. (PTI)

## Record turnout shows Bihar's trust in Modi-Nitish track record: PM

**AURANGABAD/BHABHUA (BIHAR), Nov 7:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday asserted that the record turnout in the first phase of Bihar assembly polls was proof that people have reposed their trust in the "track record of Narendra and Nitish".

While the NDA will register its largest victory in this election, the Congress is now busy finding excuses for the impending defeat, the PM claimed.

Addressing back-to-back rallies in Aurangabad and Bhabhua, the headquarter of Kaimur district, in the poll-bound state, Modi predicted victory of the NDA, led in Bihar by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the JD(U) president, and also lauded the Election Commission for successfully conducting elections across 121 constituencies where voting was held.

He cited the examples of Ram temple in Ayodhya, abrogation of Article 370 and Operation Sindoor to assert "I do what I promise".

"Yesterday, the voters of Bihar broke all records. Never before in the history of the state has there been such a high poll percentage. Much of the credit goes to mothers and sisters, the Maatri Shakti (mother power), who turned up in large numbers to raise the turnout to nearly 65 per cent. It is evident that they all have trust in the track record of Narendra-Nitish," said Modi.

The people have voted to ensure that an NDA government, which would guarantee good governance, remains in place in Bihar, the PM said.

"They have not been taken in by the false promises of RJD-helmed opposition. Even the Congress, despite being an ally, is not trusting the RJD's promises made in their manifesto," claimed Modi.

Without mentioning INDIA bloc Chief Ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav by name, the PM said "The crown prince of jungle raj gets tongue tied whenever he is asked what are his plans for fulfilling the bogus promises he has been making".

People do not want a return of the "jungle raj" during which Naxals ruled the roost and several lives were claimed in violence that used

to take place during elections, he asserted.

Hinting at a poll campaign of the RJD, which has been a matter of controversy, Modi said, "The jungle raj wallahs have taught even children to speak of things like katta (unlicensed country-made handgun) and dunaali (double-barreled gun)".

"Investors would run away at the sight of lantern (RJD) panja (palm of hand symbol of Congress) and laal jhanda (red flags of the Left). They must have tried to create mischief this time as well. But I commend the Election Commission for conducting orderly polls," said Modi.

The Prime Minister alleged that Nitish Kumar, the state's longest serving Chief Minister, whom he credited with having "brought jungle raj to an end", faced non-cooperation from the Centre "in the first nine years of his tenure", when Congress-led UPA was in power.

They tried to take revenge on the people of Bihar, alleged Modi.

"People have faith in the track record of Modi and Nitish because I do what I promise. Today a Ram temple is in place at Ayodhya, which has undone 500 years of injustice. Article 370 has been scrapped. And, I had promised on Bihar's soil that perpetrators of Pahalgam terror attack will be punished. You all know what happened in Operation Sindoor," said Modi.

In an apparent jibe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's "Vote theft" charge, Modi claimed the opposition party was "already busy finding excuses for impending defeat. They are carrying out a net practice of how to explain why they lost Bihar".

"It is now confirmed that the NDA will register its largest victory in this election. I urge you to be ready for a victory celebration after November 14," he told the gathering.

Speaking in an area of Bihar from where a large number of people are known to be in the armed forces, the Prime Minister also spoke of the one rank one pension scheme which has led to Rs one lakh crore being transferred into accounts of ex-servicemen. (PTI)

## Maha must be at forefront of implementing new criminals laws: CM Fadnavis

**MUMBAI, Nov 7:** Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday said Maharashtra should remain at the forefront in implementing the new criminal laws and directed officials to ensure effective execution of every component.

Fadnavis reviewed the implementation of the new criminal laws at a meeting held at his official residence 'Varsha' in the presence of ministers of state for home Dr Pankaj Bhojar and Yogesh Kadam as well as Chief Secretary Rajesh Kumar, among others.

"The new laws are helping in quicker investigation and conviction of accused persons through the use of modern technology. This has improved conviction rates. Maharashtra must remain ahead of other states in implementing every aspect of these laws," the CM said. He instructed that FIRs registered under the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) should be transmitted electronically to the courts, adding the system should be fully operationalised at the earliest.

Fadnavis also directed that the percentage of chargesheets filed within 60 days of establishing the offence should be increased, and an officer be ap-

pointed exclusively to monitor this progress.

The CM also called for the creation of two separate prison divisions for Nagpur and Amravati, and proposals for new jails at Nagpur and Wardha. He also reviewed the construction of a new prison at Thane.

Fadnavis instructed officials to expedite linking of e-FIRs with e-witness statements and to ensure citizen-centric services.

"Complainants should receive SMS updates about the status of their cases. All police personnel should be trained under the new laws, and capacity-building initiatives be conducted regularly," Fadnavis said.

He further said mobile forensic vans should be used to strengthen evidence collection, and all 251 such vans be made available soon.

According to official data presented at the meeting, training of 2,884 police officers and personnel has been completed so far. Video conferencing facilities have been provided in 2,148 courtrooms and 60 prisons. Between July 1, 2024 and September 30, 2025, 958 e-FIRs and 12,398 zero FIRs were registered, including 2,871 from other states. (PTI)



## Global experts unite in Delhi to address hidden hunger in mothers, its impact on child brain growth

**NEW DELHI, Nov 7:** Public health experts and policy makers from India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka deliberated on how the deficiency of micronutrients in pregnant women can adversely affect the neurodevelopment of the unborn child at a two-day meet here.

At the Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research, Delhi, scientists and public health experts, along with representatives from UNICEF and WHO, came together on a common platform under the SACMIND Stakeholders meeting held on November 6 and 7.

The focus was on understanding what various national surveys from these five South Asian countries reveal and identifying actionable steps to ensure healthier newborns.

Discussions also centred on the measures taken so far to address specific micronutrient deficiencies among pregnant women, and how effective those efforts have been in improving outcomes.

Speaking at the meeting, Dr Vani Sethi from UNICEF said that in South Asia, 40 per cent of children are born with low birth weight. Maternal micronutrients during pregnancy play a key role in improving birth weight and pregnancy outcomes.

"While there are programs addressing



anaemia, there is a need to review and expand programmes to tackle all micronutrient deficiencies, particularly B12 and Vitamin D, and to study the role of micronutrient malnutrition in neurodevelopment outcomes," she said.

These ongoing studies and initiatives aim to bridge the knowledge gap in policy and

programs linking micronutrient nutrition in pregnancy with children's neurodevelopment and inform future policy improvements, Dr Sethi said.

Dr Jitender Nagpal, Principal Investigator of SACMIND and Deputy Medical Director at Sitaram Bhartia Institute, highlighted that around 30 million women experience preg-

nancy every year in India, yet there has been no comprehensive national survey to assess micronutrient deficiencies in them.

He emphasised the need to strengthen surveillance systems for maternal nutrition, ensuring data-driven policymaking and action plans.

Dr Nagpal added that attention must be given to prevent deficiencies of key micronutrients such as B12 and Vitamin D during pregnancy to safeguard the health and development of newborns.

Dr Sheila Chandra Vir, Founder Director of the Public Health Nutrition and Development Centre, noted that the findings discussed during this meeting reaffirm the direct link between maternal micronutrient deficiency and neurodevelopment in children.

She urged policymakers to prioritise this issue and promote awareness and education among women.

After two days of intensive deliberations, experts agreed to share the key findings with governments across the region, urging them to take maternal micronutrient deficiency seriously, develop robust policies, and establish effective monitoring systems to ensure that interventions truly reach the ground level. (PTI)

## 40 per cent of budget funds kept for tribal welfare in Tripura, says CM



AGARTALA, Nov 7: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said that his government has kept 40 per cent of the total budgetary outlay during the 2025-26 financial year for tribal welfare.

The state's budget for the current fiscal stands at ₹ 32,000 crore.

While speaking at a programme at Chailengta in Dhalai district on Thursday, the chief minister said the development of the northeastern state is not possible without upliftment of the tribal people.

"Driven by this reality, the state government

has kept over 40 per cent of the budget for tribal area development during the 2025-26 financial year. The government is also focusing on skill development of the tribal, especially the resettled Bru people," he said.

Several thousand Bru families, who were living in Tripura since late 1990s because of ethnic violence in their home state Mizoram, were rehabilitated in several districts of this state following an agreement signed in 2020.

"Under the PM Kaushalya Yojana and Mukhyamantri Dakkhata Yojana, the govern-

ment provides skill training to these Bru people," the chief minister said.

Saha said that Union Home Minister Amit Shah, during a visit to a Bru resettled village in Ambassa, had asserted that providing houses, water, and other benefits would not be enough for sustainable livelihood for them.

"The Skill Development Department is providing training to them. The Bru people have said that they are happy and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We must provide skills to the Bru people to ensure their employment," he said.

The chief minister claimed that no political party or government had raised a voice for a permanent solution to the Bru people for the past 23 years.

"The BJP-led government, on humanitarian grounds, solved their issues by signing an agreement. Our government is with you and working for your development. The government is working to make people self-reliant," he said.

Saha said when the agreement was signed in 2020 for the Bru people, a series of talks were held, and finally they were resettled in 12 locations in the northeastern state.

"We have provided toolkits to 895 people and driving licences to 200, for which ₹ 1.45 crore was spent," he said.

Earlier, the chief minister distributed toolkits for skilled Bru candidates and virtually inaugurated new buildings of a school and several government departments. (PTI)

## BJP MLAs united for popular govt in Manipur, says ex-CM Biren Singh



IMPHAL, Nov 7: Former Manipur chief minister and BJP leader N Biren Singh on Friday said the party's legislators in the state have conveyed to central leaders that it is both the wish of the people and the MLAs that a popular government be installed in the state at the earliest.

Talking reporters at the BJP headquarters after a rendition of the national song 'Vande Mataram', Singh said the legisla-

tors are united on the formation of a popular ministry.

"We had gone to Delhi recently. Twenty-five MLAs met BJP North East in-charge Sambit Patra, who personally came to Manipur Bha-

van. We informed him that it is public demand that a popular government be installed. We also conveyed issues related to IDPs. He said the matter will be pursued with higher levels as the situation in the state has improved consider-

ably," Singh said.

Singh added, "Six of us also met BJP organisation general secretary BL Santhosh. We requested him that it is the public's demand as well as ours that a popular ministry be installed as early as possible. Santhosh also said the demand is being considered and that he will come to Imphal soon. We cannot tell everything to the media."

On issues concerning internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the state, Singh said, "The governor is well qualified and experienced and is working hard to bring changes in the lives of IDPs. However, IDPs have conveyed to me that bureaucrats are not reaching out to them often."

He appealed to government officials, saying, "IDPs are facing a lot of hardships and to look after them and care for them should be our religion and responsibility. We MLAs will also do whatever can be done."

Earlier, BJP legislators, Rajya Sabha MP Leishemba Sanajaoba, state unit president Adhikariyamum Sharda Devi, and party workers performed Vande Mataram at the party headquarters to mark the 150th anniversary of the national song. (PTI)

## Tripura CM launches celebrations of 150th year of 'Vande Mataram' song

AGARTALA, Nov 7: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Friday launched year-long celebrations to mark the 150th year of 'Vande Mataram' and said the song inspired the people during the country's freedom movement.

Saha appealed to the people to join the celebrations in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for a tribute to the motherland by singing 'Vande Mataram'.

The chief minister said, "Vande Mataram is not just a song but a slogan which is filled with patriotism and inspired the people during the freedom movement."

The song was written by Ben-

gali novelist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on the occasion of Akshaya Navami, which fell on November 7 in 1875.

The song first appeared in the literary journal, "Bangadarshan", as part of Chattopadhyay's novel, "Anandamath".

"Vande Mataram had become a symbol of the sentiment of the country's people during 1905 (partition of Bengal). It's a hymn of unity and courage and remains a salute to the motherland," Saha said.

The chief minister said the government will organise various programmes throughout the year to

educate the young generation about the significance of the 'Vande Mataram' song.

Quiz, cultural programme, exhibition and rallies will be organised in schools, colleges and universities to mark the 150th year of 'Vande Mataram', he said.

"Mass signing of 'Vande Mataram' was organised at the police headquarters, Tripura, today, followed by a photo exhibition and a band performance", the police said on X.

Director General of Police (DGP) Anurag Dhankar and senior officials joined the programme. (PTI)

## 'Vande Mataram' awakens spirit of unity, devotion to motherland: Manipur Guv

IMPHAL, Nov 7: Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Friday said the national song "Vande Mataram" awakens the spirit of unity among people and devotion to the country.

Bhalla also called upon everyone to uphold the timeless ideals of patriotism and national harmony that the 'Vande Mataram' song so beautifully embodies.

In a post on X, the Raj Bhavan said the governor of Manipur joins the nation in celebrating 150 years of 'Vande Mataram', the "immortal song that awakens the spirit of freedom, unity, and devotion to our Motherland".

The song was written by Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on the occasion of Akshaya Navami, which fell on November 7 in 1875.

The song first appeared in the literary journal, "Bangadarshan", as part of Chattopadhyay's novel, "Anandamath".

"On this historic occasion, the governor pays tribute to the deep patriotic spirit of the people of Manipur, whose rich cultural heritage and unwavering love for the nation reflect the very essence of 'Vande Mataram'," the Raj Bhavan statement said.

Former chief minister N Biren Singh also paid his tributes to the national song. In a post on X, Singh said, "On this historic day, we celebrate the 150th anniversary of our soul-stirring National Song, Vande Mataram. 'Mother, I Bow to Thee' and let the anthem of resilience echo throughout the nation."

He said the song "ignited the flame of freedom in every Indian heart during our struggle for independence".

"Let us bow in reverence to our motherland, drawing strength from her eternal spirit to build a united, prosperous India," he added. (PTI)

## Tripura Assembly revives tradition of singing 'Vande Mataram' after 2018: Min

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 07: Tripura Power Minister Ratan Lal Nat today said that the patriotic hymn "Vande Mataram" composed 150 years ago, continues to resonate in the hearts of crores of Indians with the same emotion and rhythm even on Friday.

While speaking at celebrating 150 years of Vande Mataram at Muktaadhar Auditorium, Minister described "Vande Mataram" as not merely a poem or song, but a mantra that symbolizes India's national consciousness, unity, and sacrifice.

He said the world's best devotional mantra, Vande Mataram, was composed in 1875 in devotion to the motherland by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and later

featured in his novel Anandamath in 1882.

"Since then, it has become a call of patriotism—a mantra that binds us as one nation. The phrase continues to inspire Indians as a pledge and responsibility toward the nation, especially in an era of technology, globalization, and social change," said Minister.

The minister announced that the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram will be celebrated across India from November 7, 2025.

"The year-long commemoration will include social initiatives, cultural events, and educational programs designed to rekindle the spirit of patriotism and strengthen national unity", he said.

Minister said that Vande Mataram was sung during the

proclamation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and continued to inspire freedom fighters throughout the Indian independence movement.

He informed that Tripura's Legislative Assembly had never sung Vande Mataram before 2018 due to political objections. "Since 2018, the song has been sung in every session, and every member pays tribute. This reflects the revival of true national sentiment," he said.

The minister urged the youth to learn about the song's history and significance, saying, "At a time when divisions of language, religion, and region persist, Vande Mataram reminds us that we are all one. The 150th anniversary celebrations will bring that message to every corner of the country."

## 'Vande Mataram' song enduring symbol of India's unity: Sikkim CM

GANGTOK, Nov 7: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Friday described 'Vande Mataram' as a sacred song, and asserted that it symbolises India's freedom movement and an enduring symbol of unity, strength and pride of the country.

The song was written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on the occasion of Akshaya Navami, which fell on November 7 in 1875. "As we commemorate 150 glorious years of Vande Mataram, we pay heartfelt tribute to the sacred song that awakened the soul of our nation," he said in a message on Facebook. "The stirring verses of Vande Mataram became the heartbeat of India's freedom movement and an enduring symbol of unity, strength, and pride," Tamang said. (PTI)

## Pradyot holds meeting with Tripura CM

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Nov 7: Tipra Motha Party founder Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma and Tripura Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha on Friday held a significant meeting on Friday, describing their ongoing dialogue as moving in a "right and positive direction," with a shared focus on the state's overall development.

Addressing reporters after the meeting, Pradyot described the interaction as both "productive and cordial." "In the meeting, I presented my views, and the Chief Minister shared his. We are hopeful that the discussions will continue in a constructive manner for the betterment of Tripura. Many important issues were discussed, and we are moving forward positively. The talks were not about elections but about finding solutions. Discussions on the Tiprasa Accord process are progressing," he said.

Ahead of the meeting, Pradyot had reiterated that any conversation with the Chief Minister would prioritize the welfare of Tripura's people.

## Preserve and pass down traditions to future generations, says Rio



HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Nov 7: Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio on Friday emphasised the importance of preserving and passing down traditions to future generations.

Addressing the golden celebration of the Kohima Lotha Hoho at Nagaland Baptist Church Council convention centre in Kohima as the chief guest, Rio urged the people to direct their energy and resources toward meaningful and constructive pursuits.

Congratulating the Kohima Lotha Hoho on reaching the 50-year milestone, which coincided with the Tokhu Emong festival of the Lotha tribe, he lauded the community's hardworking and innovative spirit, describing it as an inspiration to others.

Referring to Wokha district, home of the Lotha tribe, as a land rich in beauty, resources, resilience and potential, Rio noted that the community ranks high in per capita income and human development indicators.

Rio also officially launched a book titled "The Divine in the Ordinary" written by Sentienla P Ezung after the formal programme.

Addressing the occasion as the guest of honour, deputy chief minister Y Patton urged the youth to work hard, pursue knowledge and rise above divisive "isms" while upholding unity, forgiveness and harmony for the progress of Nagaland.

He expressed gratitude to the Lotha community for its steadfast support to the state government. The community members presented cultural dances and songs to mark the occasion.

## Prime suspect in attempted armed bank robbery surrenders

HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, Nov 7: Following a relentless and intensive manhunt operation by the Kohima police, the prime accused in the October 31 attempted armed robbery case at the Chedema branch of the SBI surrendered at the North police station, Kohima, on Thursday, Kohima police PRO said in a release on Friday.

The sustained pressure applied by the Kohima police left the suspect, Vitoulu Domeh (35), with no escape route, compelling him to surrender, the release said.

He is now in the custody of Kohima police.

The accused, who had terrorised bank staff using a pistol and a body-worn explosive device, was identified and pursued based on credible intelligence and public support.

The release said his surrender is a direct result of the unwavering resolve of the Kohima police to bring perpetrators to justice.

It further said the investigation is ongoing to uncover all facets of the case.

Kohima police expressed gratitude to the public and the media for their crucial cooperation in the case.

Earlier, the police said the swift and courageous intervention of the on-duty bank security guards prevented the robbery.

The bank guards also recovered the entire looted amount and seized the pistol from the miscreant. However, the suspect managed to escape from the scene after the incident.

## Wildlife panel clears 13 defence, paramilitary projects in Ladakh, Arunachal

NEW DELHI, Nov 7: The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wild Life (NBWL) has recommended 13 defence and paramilitary projects, most of them in high-altitude protected areas of Ladakh and one in Arunachal Pradesh, according to the minutes of its 86th meeting.

The proposals, submitted by the Ministry of Defence, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), include new border outposts, a brigade headquarters, ammunition storage and training facilities and bridge and culvert works.

The committee has approved these projects with strict environmental safeguards to protect fragile Himalayan ecosystems.

According to the minutes, the committee has recommended the use of 0.37 hectare of the Eco-Sensitive Zone of the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh for the construction of a 158-metre-long permanent bridge on the Balipara-Charduar-Tawang road under Project Vartak.

The area lies within a global biodiversity hotspot and an important elephant corridor.

The proposal was cleared with a mitigation plan that includes con-



struction only during daylight hours, speed-control measures and waste and noise management.

In Ladakh, several major defence projects were approved inside the Changthang Cold Desert and Karakoram (Nubra-Shayok) wildlife sanctuaries.

These include the establishment of a 315 Field Workshop Company

at Chushul, spread over 3.7 hectares, to support the 142 Infantry Brigade deployed near the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The committee has also cleared a Formation Ammunition Storage Facility (FASF) at Tsogtsalu, covering 24.2 hectares, in the Changthang Sanctuary.

Another FASF of 47.1 hectares

at KM-47 in the Karakoram Sanctuary has also been recommended.

A 48.6-hectare Training Node Area at Tara in the Changthang Sanctuary, located around 15,500 feet above sea level, was recommended to provide realistic high-altitude tactical training for troops.

The committee has also approved the use of 40 hectares at

Chushul for establishing a Brigade Headquarters for the 142 Infantry Brigade, along with related support units.

Other projects cleared include an artillery battery on 9.46 hectares at KM-148 and an Army camp on 8.16 hectares at KM-120 in the Karakoram Sanctuary.

The committee has also recommended three new ITBP border outposts at Quazi Langer, Bopsang Lungpa and KM-156, each spread over about 1.62 hectares, and a 0.1-hectare transit detachment at KM-80.

A small hume pipe culvert at Mudh, near the Nyoma Advanced Landing Ground, was also cleared to facilitate movement across the Indus river.

During discussions, ecologist R Sukumar advised that defence infrastructure should not be located close to marshes, riverbanks or narrow valleys prone to flash floods and avalanches.

The committee noted his suggestions and directed that these be incorporated into mitigation plans.

The panel said while these projects are critical for national security, their implementation must ensure minimal ecological disturbance in the sensitive Himalayan landscape. (PTI)

## Japan country of focus at IFFI, festival to screen over 240 films from 81 countries



**NEW DELHI, Nov 7:** The 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) will be held in Goa from November 20 to 28 and feature over 240 films from 81 countries, including 13 world premieres, five international premieres and 44 Asian premieres, officials said on Friday.

Japan has been named the 'Country of Focus' for 2025 and six curated titles, representing the nation's evolving cinematic language, will be screened at the festival. Spain will serve as the 'Partner Country', while Australia will be the 'Spotlight Country'.

The festival will host three international competitions featuring 32 films from five continents, along with top award-winning titles from world's major film festivals such as South Korean drama "No Other Choice", Cannes Palme d'Or winner "It Was Just An Accident", "Father Mother Sister Brother", the Golden Lion winner at Venice, "The Message", which won the Silver Bear at Berlin festival and "Sentimental Value" by acclaimed filmmaker Joachim Trier.

This year's festival received a record 2,314 submissions from 127 countries, including 1098 entries from 18 different languages from India.

"IFFI 2025 marks a significant chapter as it embraces inclusivity and diversity, showcasing voices from all corners of the world while spotlighting Indian regional cinema's rich tapestry. By introducing programmes focused on emerging filmmakers and digital storytelling, IFFI is nurturing platforms that champion new talent and celebrate the evolution of filmmaking in the digital age," information and broadcasting minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said

in a statement.

The opening film of IFFI 2025 is Brazilian auteur Gabriel Mascaro's "The Blue Trail", a sci-fi and fantasy feature following a 75-year-old woman's defiant voyage through the Amazon. The film, a quiet manifesto on freedom and dignity, won the Silver Bear - Grand Jury Prize at the 2025 Berlin International Film Festival.

The Gala Premieres segment will feature 18 titles, including 13 world premieres, two Asia premieres, one India premiere, and two special showcase screenings.

Over 160 films will screen in the International Section, including 13 world premieres and 80 award-winning festival titles, as well as 21 Oscar-nominated films. The jury for international competition is headed by filmmaker Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra.

The festival's nine curated sections include Docu-Montage, From the Festivals, Rising Stars, Mission Life, Experimental Films, Restored Classics, Macabre Dreams, UNICEF and Cinema of the World.

The film gala will feature an extensive slate of 21 masterclasses and panel discussions across 10 formats at Kala Academy, bringing together some of the most prominent names in Indian and international cinema.

Participants include Vidhu Vinod Chopra, Anupam Kher, Amir Khan, Bobby Deol, Ravi Varman, Kushboo Sundar, Suhasini Maniratnam, Christopher Charles Corbould OBE, Pete Draper and Sreekar Prasad.

Sessions will cover topics such as editing and acting in the digital era, theatre and sustainability, as well as AI and VFX technologies. Panels will explore cin-

ema's role in promoting peace and the challenges of modern filmmaking, while "In Conversation" sessions will host leading artists and technicians.

IFFI 2025 will celebrate centenaries of cinematic legends Guru Dutt, Raj Khosla, Ritwik Ghatak, P Bhanumathi, Bhupen Hazarika and Salil Chowdhury by showcasing restored classics of their work.

The Indian Panorama section will feature 25 feature films, 20 non-feature films and 5 debut features.

Tamil film "Amaran", directed by Rajkumar Periyasamy and starring Sivakarthikeyan and Sai Pallavi, will open the feature category, while "Kakori" will open the non-feature section.

The feature film jury is headed by actor Raja Bundela, while Dharam Gulati leads the jury for non-feature category.

The Women in Cinema and Emerging Voices segments will spotlight inclusivity and new perspectives, featuring over 50 films directed by women and an equal number by debut filmmakers.

The Waves Film Bazaar, in its 19th edition, will feature over 300 film projects across Screenwriters Lab, Market Screenings, Viewing Room Library and Co-Production Market.

The co-production market will showcase 22 feature films and 5 documentaries, with total cash grants of USD 20,000 to three winning projects.

The Creative Minds of Tomorrow (CMOT) programme, which saw 799 entries this year, will feature 124 selected participants across 13 filmmaking crafts, including three new ones. The initiative also includes a 48-hour filmmaking challenge in collaboration with ShortsTV. (PTI)

## ACTOR SAIYAMI KHER BATS FOR DOCU-SERIES ON INDIA WOMEN CRICKETER'S WORLD CUP WIN

**MUMBAI, Nov 7:** Actor Saiyami Kher, an avid cricket fan, believes that the inspiring journey of Indian women cricketers and their recent World Cup victory deserves a cinematic portrayal. India clinched their first-ever global title in women's cricket by defeating South Africa by 52 runs in the 50-over

World Cup final in Navi Mumbai on Sunday, a landmark moment for the sport in a cricket-loving nation.

Saiyami, who played a cricketer in the 2023 sports drama Ghoomer, said a film won't be able to do justice to the stories of the players who made the historic triumph possible.

"I feel more than a movie I'd like to see like a proper detailed series, documentaries, docu-series on it more than just a film because there are so many stories that it won't do justice to do it in just like a two-hour film."

"So, this is something that Ravi Chandran Ashwin, the cricketer, spoke about... and I completely agree with him that there are way too many stories that should be told, and a series would be a better option," Kher told PTI in an interview.

The 33-year-old actor said she rescheduled her travel plans to make sure she could be at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai to witness the World Cup final.

She said she came back from a family trip from Italy and completed her work commitments on the film "Haiwaan", in which she stars alongside Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan, before heading to the stadium for the match.

"It is the World Cup final and there is absolutely no way I was going to miss it. I was not going to be in the city but I had to re-plan my travel because there is nothing in the world I would miss it for. I was there in 2011

when the men played, so why should it be any different for the women's World Cup," she added.

Kher said she was "overwhelmed" to see a "jam-packed stadium" supporting the women in blue, which turned out to be a nail-biting match.

"I was very happy to see an absolutely jam-packed stadium with full-grown men, women and sold-out signs outside the stadium. We've seen how far women's cricket in India has come, like where they used to pay spectators to come and watch, give free tickets to now, how it is all sold out. It was extremely overwhelming and this historic day is going to turn a new chapter in sport and women," she said.

The actor said she is thrilled that "Ghoomer" is re-releasing in theatres at an opportune time and added that it's their way of paying tribute to the women cricketer's recent victory.

The film tells a triumphant story of a paraplegic sports person portrayed by Kher, who excels as a cricketer under the guidance of her coach, played by Abhishek Bachchan.

"I couldn't have asked for a better timing, you never know when things are going to pan out. For R Balki (director) sir as well, it's more a celebration and a tribute to what the girls have done."

"We wanted to make a film, celebrate women in cricket, celebrate para-athletes, which we did two years ago. Unfortunately, there were so many films at that point, we didn't get too many screens. So, this release is just a celebration and tribute to what the girls have achieved."

"Ghoomer", which also features Shabana Azmi, Shivendra Singh Dungarpur and Ivanka Das, was re-released in theatres on August 12, 2023, and received positive reviews from critics. (PTI)

## Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal welcome baby boy



**MUMBAI, Nov 7:** Bollywood actors Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal on Friday announced the birth of their first child, a baby boy. The couple shared the announcement in a joint statement posted on their respective Instagram accounts.

"Our bundle of joy has arrived. With immense gratitude, we welcome our baby boy. 7th November, 2025 — Katrina & Vicky," the post read.

Katrina and Vicky tied the knot on December 9, 2021 at a private ceremony in Rajasthan. The couple announced Katrina's pregnancy in September

this year. At the time, they had shared a polaroid where the two were seen looking joyfully at Katrina's baby bump.

"On our way to start the best chapter of our lives with hearts full of joy and gratitude," they wrote in the caption.

Vicky recently appeared in the period drama "Chhaava" and is set to feature in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's "Love and War" alongside Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt.

Katrina was last seen in the 2024 thriller "Merry Christmas" opposite Vijay Sethupathi. (PTI)

## 'Jassi Weds Jassi' a comedy of errors, I play a hopeless romantic in it: Harshh Vardhan Singh Deo

**NEW DELHI, Nov 7:** Actor Harshh Vardhan Deo says his new film "Jassi Weds Jassi" is a comedy of errors and he loved playing a romantic fool in it.

Directed by Paran Bawa, the film stars Deo in the lead role. It is set in the nostalgic era of the 90s where Jassi falls in love with a woman named Jassi. However, there are multiple people with the same name and it leads to a hilarious series of events.

Produced by Mazahir Abbas and Soma Singh Deo, the film features an ensemble cast of actors like Ranvir Shorey, Sikandar Kher, Manu Rishi Chaudhary, Sudesh Lehri, Grusha Kapoor and Amit Vikram Pandey. Rehamat Rattan plays the romantic lead opposite Deo. "Jassi Weds Jassi" released in theatres today.

"My Jassi is actually quite a bit of an idiot and a hopeless romantic and he's got this strange unshakable faith in the whole concept of love," Deo told PTI in an interview.

"That's (love) what he lives for and I found it very adorable and silly. What appealed to me was not just the concept (of the film), but the way he (Jassi) approaches everything," said the actor, who is also a musician and a poet who often uploads Urdu couplets on Instagram.

The actor said when his friend Bawa, who assisted on films like "Rang De Basanti", "Kartik Calling Kartik" and "Angrezi Medium", came up with the

idea, he was instantly hooked to the story.

"I heard the story a few years ago because the director is a friend of mine, and we were just brainstorming and figuring because we always wanted to work together. Then there came this really hilarious script that he's been working on... When I heard the narration, I just couldn't stop laughing. So, that's when I knew I had to do this film," the actor said. The film features seasoned names and the actor said he got to learn a lot from them.

"My set was super awesome because of all these guys being so professional. They would add so much to each scene and to the script. There were never any delays, everything would just be spot on. Honestly, nobody felt like they're working, everybody was just having so much fun and organically, everything just came together," he added.

The film, however, did have some challenges. The actor, who is also backing the film via Divinity Studios, said the process of actually releasing it was quite the task.

"The most challenging thing about this film was to actually wait for everything to come together in terms of the forces that are beyond your control like the whole release, distribution and promotion," he said.

"And because the game and the business is changing rapidly, and there are so many external forces that push and pull, releasing the film has been a learning



experience. But making the film, it's obviously been a joyride," the actor added.

Deo made his acting debut with the 2014 film "Jigariyaa" which he remembers fondly and describes it as a great experience.

"That (film) is always going to be special because our firsts are always special. Plus the kind of film it is—Romeo and Juliet set in late 80s set in Agra, Mathura, rooted in our culture, it's a beautiful love story," he said.

For Deo, his interest in acting started at a young age as a way to escape studies.

"I used to want to escape studying. So, whatever I could get in order to do that without being frowned upon, I think I did that. So be it

playing sports or learning some sort of music or some sort of art form," he explained. As a single child who was constantly moving around and had no friends due to his parents' transferable jobs, the arts became a place of refuge.

"Being a single child and being a loner, you develop this strong sense of imagination, where you build a world around you to keep yourself entertained," Deo said.

But the idea to get into acting took shape later.

"Right out of college, I realized this is my calling because filmmaking is the most complete art form, where all the other art forms come together and then create a product... it's the perfect amalgamation of all the art

forms, sciences, and finance business, everything comes together like a painting, be it music, dance, acting or photography," he said.

While the actor admitted that he doesn't like to plan ahead, he is excited to see his audience show up for "Jassi Weds Jassi" as well as his future endeavours.

"I look forward to seeing my audience in the theatres, every now and then with something different, unexpected, and something cracking," he said.

"I have previously co-written a song along with my friend and now I am coming up with my own stuff, where I'm writing and composing songs and hopefully, you will get to hear those very soon," Deo added. (PTI)

# Indian Hockey celebrates 100 glorious years with Olympics legends

**NEW DELHI, Nov 7:** The iconic Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium came alive on Friday as Indian hockey celebrated 100 glorious years with legends of the sport, including Olympic gold medalists Gurbux Singh and Aslam Sher Khan, gracing the historic occasion.

Hockey India felicitated some of the game's most celebrated icons in recognition of their lasting contributions to the sport and for the inspiration they provided to the generations of players.

Those honoured at the ceremony included Gurbux, Aslam, Harbinder Singh, Ajith Pal Singh, Ashok Kumar, B P Govinda, Zafar Iqbal, Brigadier Harcharan Singh, Vineet Kumar, Mir Ranjan Negi, Romeo James, Asunta Lakra, and Subhadra Pradhan.

Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, who attended the event alongside Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju and Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Thiru Udhayanidhi Stalin, lauded the sport's illustrious journey and its deep-rooted connection with India's sporting pride.

"The sport has seen many phases, and it was through hockey at the Olympics that we showed the world what India can achieve in sports. We have never looked



back since," Mandaviya said. "With its rich history, Indian hockey is once again rising and moving towards another Olympic medal."

The centenary celebrations began with an exhibition match between the Sports Minister's XI led by Mandaviya himself and the Hockey India XI captained by Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey.

The friendly yet competitive game set the tone for the day's festivities.

The Sports Minister's XI registered a 3-1 victory, with goals from Beauty Dungdung, Salima Tete, and Krishna Pathak, while Manpreet Singh netted the lone goal for the Hockey India XI.

The match featured a mix of players from both the men's and women's national hockey teams.

Adding to the celebrations was the launch of a commemorative book, "100 Years of Indian Hockey," chronicling the sport's century-long journey through triumphs, challenges, and revival.

A special photo exhibition showcased rare archival photographs, Olympic memories, and memorabilia tracing Indian hockey's evolution from its golden debut at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics to its resurgence in the modern era.

Tirkey said it was deeply emotional to return to the venue where his own hockey journey began.

"It is an honour for me to stand here at the very stadium where I attended my first camp and played my first major tournament. Today is a tribute to those who laid the foundation for Indian hockey a century ago and to every player who has brought glory to the nation through this sport," Tirkey said.

With Tamil Nadu gearing up to host the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup 2025, the coveted trophy was also on display, marking the start of a 20-city trophy tour.

Extending the centenary spirit across the country, a nationwide hockey festival was organised simultaneously in 500 districts, engaging more than 36,000 players in over 1,000 exhibition matches.

The initiative brought together school athletes, veterans, and community teams, transforming the milestone into a true national celebration of the sport. (PTI)

## Muted reception for World Cup winner Uma Chhetri sparks concern

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 7:** Uma Chhetri, the talented cricketer from Assam who scripted history as part of India's ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025-winning team, returned to her home state on Wednesday to a surprisingly subdued reception.

Despite her remarkable achievement, there was no official welcome at the airport. Only a small group comprising members of the All Assam Gorkha Students' Union (AAGSU) led by president Sunil Chetry, a few representatives of the Assam Cricket Association, local journalists, and well-wishers were present to greet her.

No other organisations or state representatives attended the homecoming.

The absence of fanfare stood in sharp contrast

to the grand receptions often accorded to sportspeople returning after major international victories. The lack of presence from the state's key sports authorities has drawn widespread criticism, with many questioning the apparent inaction of the Sports and Youth Welfare Department headed by Minister Nandita Garlosa.

Observers have pointed out that the muted response raises uncomfortable questions about the recognition of women athletes and potential community bias.

Uma Chhetri, who hails from a modest background in Golaghat, has long represented both Assam and the Northeast with distinction.

"This is not merely an oversight, but a reflection of how women achievers — especially those from marginalised communities — are often cele-

brated less enthusiastically," remarked AAGSU president Sunil Chetry, expressing disappointment over the government's indifference.

Though officials have indicated that a felicitation ceremony may be held later, the lack of warmth at her arrival has dampened public sentiment. Civil society voices have called for introspection and equal recognition of women sportspeople who bring national glory.

India's triumph at the Women's Cricket World Cup remains a proud moment for the nation and for Assam.

Supporters say Uma Chhetri's success deserves the same public celebration and respect accorded to her male counterparts — not only to honour her journey but to inspire future generations of girls from the Northeast.

## HOME-COMING

# World champions Amanjot and Harleen get grand welcome in Chandigarh



**CHANDIGARH, Nov 7:** World Cup-winning women's cricket team members Amanjot Kaur and Harleen Deol were welcomed with sweets and beats of the dhol by their families and top leaders of Punjab's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as they landed at their home base here on Friday.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side scripted a defining moment for Indian women's cricket by winning its maiden global title — the 50-over World Cup — with a 52-run victory over South Africa in the final in Navi Mumbai on Sunday.

Punjab's Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema and AAP MP Gurmeet Singh Meht Hayer were among the ruling party leaders present at the airport to receive the two players and accord them a grand welcome.

The family members of the two players and several fans were also present, eagerly waiting for their arrival. Soon after they came out of the airport, Cheema and Hayer offered the two players sweets and honoured them by presenting shawls.

Speaking to reporters, Amanjot said, "This victory is of entire India, entire Punjab."

She also said that the team members did not sleep after the semi-final win over mighty Australia.

"Later, on the day of the (final) victory too, we did not sleep," she said.

Deol said her family always supported her dreams. "Girls can bring laurels when given freedom and opportunity. My family always supported me. I want to give a message to parents that give freedom to your daughters ... I want to tell girls that they must follow their passion and work hard," Deol said.

"We had belief that we will do well and lift the Cup".

Hayer, who earlier also served as Sports Minister in the AAP government in Punjab before contesting last year's Lok Sabha polls, said the state government has a sports-friendly approach.

Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said, "On behalf of the Punjab government, I welcome all the daughters, they are making us proud. The daughters are bringing laurels in other sports too at various international competitions".

Amanjot's cousin Satwinder Kaur, meanwhile, recalled the time when the cricketer used to play with boys.

"She also broke many window panes in the neighbourhood while she used to play...The family supported her throughout to excel in life," she said excitedly.

The family members also danced to the beats of 'dhol'.

Later, the two players headed for their homes in an open vehicle, with their family members, Minister Harpal Cheema and some others accompanying them.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had met the team at his residence and lauded the players for their remarkable resilience and comeback after enduring a tough phase marked by three consecutive defeats.

In lighter vein, Modi also spoke about Amanjot's juggling catch in the final. (PTI)

## 77th ID Cup Football Tournament to kick off from Nov 9

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, Nov 7:** The Nagaon Sports Association is set to host the 77th Independence Day Cup Football Tournament, one of the oldest and most prestigious all-India invitational prize money tournaments, from November 9 at the Nurul Amin Stadium here.

A total of 16 teams will compete for the coveted trophy, with matches scheduled to be played at multiple venues including Nurul Amin Stadium, Kapahera, Saraibahi, Chaparmukh, Jajori, and Raidongia.

This year's edition promises an exciting contest as several top

teams from across the country are expected to participate. Last year's finalists — Oil India Football Club from Dilluajan and River Gangtok from Sikkim — along with strong contenders such as Three Brothers (Mizoram), Shadar Hill Football Club (Manipur), PFR Shillong, Assam Police, and AISEB Sports Club will be in the fray.

The tournament, organized annually by the Nagaon Sports Association for the past 77 years, continues to uphold the district's rich sporting legacy and its tradition of hosting major football events that draw large crowds and enthusiastic local support.

## Inter-College Badminton & Chess Tournament concludes at Commerce College Kokrajhar

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, Nov 7:** The two-day Inter-College Badminton and Chess Tournament (Men & Women) under Bodoland University concluded at Commerce College, Kokrajhar, on Thursday.

Teams from Girls' College Kokrajhar, Science College Kokrajhar, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar University, Fakiragram College, Barama College, and the host institution took part in the event.

**Winners:**  
**Badminton (Men's Singles):** Champion — Tanit Kumar Brahma (Bodoland University); Runners-up — Pritiraj Basumatary (Commerce College Kokrajhar).

**Badminton (Men's Doubles):** Champions — Kingshuk Brahma & Ankit Barman (Kokrajhar University); Runners-up — Tanit Kumar Brahma & Bhaibhab Raj Dutta (Bodoland University).

**Badminton (Women's Singles):** Champion — Manisha Basumatary (Science College Kokrajhar); Runners-up — Baidangshri Goyari (Commerce College Kokrajhar).

**Badminton (Women's Doubles):** Champions — Manisha Basumatary & Padmini Basumatary (Science College Kokrajhar); Runners-up — Rashmi Deka & Baidangshri Goyari (Commerce College Kokrajhar).

**Chess (Men's Category):** Champion — Nayandeep Gope (Commerce College Kokrajhar); Runners-up — Om Upadhyay (Commerce College Kokrajhar).

**Chess (Women's Category):** Champion — Chanda Mali (Kokrajhar University); Runners-up — Usha Rani Basumatary (Science College Kokrajhar).

## Ballet star Roberto Bolle will headline 2026 Winter Olympics closing ceremony in Verona

**VERONA (ITALY), Nov 7:** Internationally acclaimed ballet star Roberto Bolle will headline the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics closing ceremony, titled "Beauty in Motion," in Verona's ancient Roman amphitheater, one of the world's oldest, organizers announced. The Feb. 22 closing event will pay homage to the city of Verona — which is a UNESCO world heritage site — and the Arena's role as the venue for a famous summer opera festival, while celebrating athletic excellence and addressing climate change, said Alfredo Accatino, artistic director for the closing ceremony. "If the climate continues to change, there won't be Winter Olympics anymore," Accatino lamented.

The central stage within the nearly 2,000-year-old Arena will be shaped like a waterdrop, symbolically uniting the mountain venues with the fertile Po River Valley, where Milan and Verona are located, and the Venetian lagoon, Accatino said. Bolle, who performed at the opening ceremony for the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin, is a familiar sight at the Arena, where he travels each summer with his "Roberto Bolle and Friends" annual gala. He is the only talent announced so far. The 2026 Winter Games (Feb. 6-22) will be the first with two official host cities, Milano in Lombardy and Cortina in the Dolomites of Veneto. The opening and closing ceremonies will also be held in two different cities: Milan

and Verona. The addition of Verona, an elegant city of cobbled streets nestled along the winding Adige River and against pre-Alpine mountains, has generated excitement among the delegations more accustomed to sports venues, said Giovanni Malagò, president of the Milan Cortina Foundation local organizing committee.

"This will be a great advertisement for Verona," Malagò said. "It is quite obvious that the atmosphere will be completely different from a sports stadium. There is a lot of curiosity to come here."

Centrally located among the far-flung Olympic venues, Verona is shaping up to be a base for many Olympic visitors, not just a destination for the Feb. 22 closing ceremony, Mayor Damiano Tommasi said, citing hotel reservation trends.

Verona is about an hour and 15 minutes by train from Milan, where ice sports are being held, and is just over three hours by car to Bormio, the venue for men's downhill, and about the same to Cortina, where women's downhill, curling and bobsled will be held. Organizers said they were still finalizing the number of tickets to be sold for the closing ceremony. The Arena di Verona typically holds about 15,000 spectators during opera season, but the closing ceremony capacity will be lower because the central stage will be expanded and many seats are reserved for athletes and official delegations. (AP)

## Nick Dunlap and Sami Valimaki tie course record at 61 and share lead in Mexico

**LOS CABOS, Nov 7:** Nick Dunlap turned a tough lie into an chip-in eagle on his final hole to tie the course record with an 11-under 61, only for Sami Valimaki to join him about 30 minutes later on a day of low scoring in the World Wide Technology Championship.

Both were desperate for some good results, particularly Valimaki. While the 27-year-old from Finland made a late push to secure his European tour card with a runner-up finish in Switzerland, he came to El Cardonal at Diamante at No. 103 in the FedEx Cup.

Only the top 100 keep full status for 2026, and only three tournaments are left.

"It's not the best pressure, but it's how it is," Valimaki said. "At least I made my card back in Europe so at least I have something over there, so I feel like that gives you a little extra freedom. Of course, you want to play here. Just have to play good these last three."

He played bogey-free on a picturesque day along the Pacific with no wind, allowing players to take aim, and it showed in the scores. Valimaki played bogey-free for his 61, a course record first set by Carson Young in the second round last year.

Dunlap is well outside the top 100 but still has full status from his two wins last year, the first when he was still in school at Alabama that led to him turning pro. He played his final six holes in 6-under par, including the chip-in eagle on the par-5 closing hole.

"Golf's been very hard recently and today was the opposite of that," Dunlap said. "I think I hit every fairway. The fairways are pretty forgiving out here for the most part. Gave myself a ton of good iron and wedge opportunities and rolled it really, really nice."

They had a three-shot lead over a group of five players that included Vince Whaley, who continued his steady fall, having started right at No. 100 and improved to No. 89 — some breathing room, but still not enough with tournaments left in Bermuda and the Georgia coast.

Also at 64 was Kris Ventura, who was born in Mexico until moving to his mother's homeland of Norway when he was 12.

"I'm 50% Mexican so half my life has been over here almost," Ventura said. "This is where I started my career — I started very young when I was 3 representing Mexico ... and then we moved to

Norway."

Ventura is also aware of recent tournament history — fellow Oklahoma State alumni Austin Eckroat and Viktor Hovland are past champions.

"Yeah, I've seen their pictures up at dining as past winners and I think that would be cool if I can give it a shot," Ventura said.

The group at 65 included Ryder Cup rookie Ben Griffin, former British Open champion Francesco Molinari and Matt Kuchar, the 47-year-old trying to keep a full card for another year.

Johnny Keefe, the player of the year on the Korn Ferry Tour who received a sponsor's exemption, opened with a 66. Keefe is No. 53 in the world ranking and is hopeful of finishing the year inside the top 50 to secure a spot in the Masters.

U.S. Open champion J.J. Spaun, in his first tournament since the Ryder Cup, was at 67.

More than three-quarters of the 120-man field broke par — 20 players were at 66 or better — at the Tiger Woods-designed resort course at the southern tip of the peninsula, with its forgiving fairways. The best defense is the wind off the ocean, and it was missing Thursday. (AP)

## Vani's hat-trick of birdies gets her 5th title at the 14th Leg of WPGA

**JAIPUR, Nov 7:** Vani Kapoor sunk in three birdies in the last three holes to clinch the 14th Leg of the Women's Pro Golf Tour, edging out Jasmine Shekar in the closely-fought third and final round, here Friday.

Vani's three closing birdies gave her a round of 2-under 68 for the third day in a row. It gave her a three-day total of 6-under 204, as Jasmine Shekar (68) despite closing with a birdie, fell one stroke short.

It was Vani's fifth win of the season as she maintains her lead at the top of the Hero Order of Merit.

Sneha Singh (69) finished third at 2-under 208, while Amandeep Drall (70) was fourth at even par 210.

Vani, starting the final day with a one-shot lead, saw that lead go away on the very first hole as Jasmine opened the day with a birdie. Jasmine fell back again as she dropped a bogey on the next.

However, with Vani dropping back-to-back bogeys on the third and the fourth, Jasmine was back on level terms despite a second bogey

on the third.

The tight battle continued as Vani birdied Par-3 sixth to go one ahead, but once again Jasmine caught up with a birdie on the ninth.

On the back nine, Jasmine birdied the 11th to go ahead while Vani's run of pars continued from the seventh to the 15th.

As the lead duo approached the last three holes, Jasmine was still one ahead. Then Vani birdied each of the last three holes while Jasmine managed only to par the 16th and the 17th, and birdied the last.

Amateur Riya Jadon (67) produced the second best round of the final day and the week as she leapt up to fifth place at 1-over 211.

Seher Atwal with a run of five birdies in a seven hole stretch from the fourth to the tenth, shot 4-under 66 and ended in a tie for sixth at 2-over 212.

Smriti Bhargava (69) was eighth, as Khushi Khanijau (70), Jahanvi Bakshi (73) and Ridhima Dilawari (75) finished Tied-ninth at 4-over 214. (PTI)



**NEW DELHI, Nov 7:** Olympian Philippe Goldberg of Belgium has been appointed as head coach of Soorma Hockey Club ahead of the second season of Hockey India League, the club said on Friday.

Joining Goldberg in the revamped coaching setup is Olympian Ignacio Ricardo Bergner of Argentina, who takes on the role of Analytical Coach.

The club's current Head Coach, Jeroen Baart, will transition into an advisory role, continuing to contribute to team strategy and technical planning throughout the season.

"Joining Soorma Hockey Club is an exciting opportunity to contribute to India's evolving hockey landscape," Goldberg said in a release. "The team has laid a strong foundation, and my goal is to enhance it with a strategic frame-

work that encourages discipline, creativity, and sustained performance. Together, we'll build a brand of hockey that's bold, intelligent, and unmistakably Soorma."

Goldberg, a European medalist and former Belgium U21 and senior team coach, played a key role in shaping Belgium's rise to global prominence.

Bergner, an Olympian and former Argentine international, contributed to Belgium's 2016 World Cup runner-up and 2017 European Championship campaigns, later coaching Argentina's senior and women's national sides (Las Leonas).

Soorma Hockey Club, who finished third in an impressive debut season, have retained most of their core players, keeping the heart of their team together.

"The addition of Philippe and Ignacio marks a significant step in our journey as a team. Philippe's approach to building structured hockey teams that express themselves aligns perfectly with our playing philosophy," Arjun Halappa, Technical Director, Soorma Hockey Club, said.

"Ignacio's analytical depth will elevate our match preparation and tactical execution. With this combination of experience and innovation, we're looking forward to taking Soorma Hockey Club to greater heights in the upcoming season."

Led by Harmanpreet Singh, the club will kick off its 2026 campaign against defending champions Shraichi Rarh Bengal Tigers on January 4 in Chennai. (PTI)

# India target batting consistency, Australia hope to counter spin threat in final T20I

**BRISBANE, Nov 7:** On the cusp of another overseas series win, India will look to overcome batting inconsistencies and finish the tour of Australia with authority when the two sides clash in the fifth and final T20 International here on Saturday.

With an unassailable 2-1 lead in the five-match series, India have extended their 17-year streak of not losing a T20I series against Australia and Suryakumar Yadav and Co. will look to finish strongly in this one too.

The focus will be on Shubman Gill and skipper Suryakumar Yadav's batting, while Australia will look to counter India's spin challenge when the two sides clash for the last time ahead of next year's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.

India showed better tactical awareness in the previous match, adjusting on a tricky Carrara pitch. Gill led the way in a promising start of 121 for 2 in 14 overs before a late collapse saw them lose four wickets for 15 runs.

For vice-captain Gill, it has been seven innings without a fifty, though his 46 in the fourth T20 was a sign of his returning form.

Gill has not quite displayed the fluent touch that has defined his batting in recent years. He looked composed in the last match before being undone by a slower ball. The opener will be eager to sign off on a high and ease concerns within the team management.

Suryakumar has also shown flashes of brilliance across the series but has struggled to convert his starts. The captain would be expected to bat with more freedom and lead by example ahead of next month's South Africa.

Tilak Varma is another batter who is yet to find his rhythm, managing scores of 0, 29, and 5 in his last three outings.

The pressure will also be on wicket-keeper-batter Jitesh Sharma, who has featured ahead of Sanju Samson in the last two



games but is yet to make a substantial impact.

Abhishek Sharma, however, has lived up to his reputation as the world's top-ranked T20 hitter, scoring a fluent half-century and providing brisk starts.

India's lower order has also chipped in effectively, with Axar Patel smashing an 11-ball 21 in the previous match. The presence of all-rounders at No. 7 and No. 8 has given the team valuable flexibility and depth.

In the bowling department, Arshdeep Singh has once again proved his worth for India, picking up four wickets and forming an effective new-ball pairing with Jasprit Bumrah.

The spin trio of Varun, Axar, and Washington has been a major strength for India despite the absence of Kuldeep Yadav. Both Shivam Dube and Washington have been instrumental with bat and ball.

While Dube's 23-ball 49 turned the third

T20 in India's favour, Washington's 3 for 3 in the fourth sealed the contest. Dube also contributed 18 off 22 and took two wickets in that game.

For Australia, the fourth T20 once again exposed their weakness against quality spin. Varun Chakaravathy, Axar, and Washington Sundar combined to take six wickets in under 10 overs at the Carrara Oval.

The visitors' batting has been heavily reliant on skipper Mitchell Marsh, Marcus Stoinis, and Tim David. The absence of Travis Head hurt their chances in the last game, as they failed to chase down a modest 168.

All-rounder Matthew Short, who has enjoyed success as an opener, batted lower down the order in this series but missed an opportunity to impress at the top in Head's absence. He will be keen to make amends on Saturday.

The absence of Josh Hazlewood has also been felt, as the home team's bowling attack has lacked penetration.

Nathan Ellis and Adam Zampa have shouldered much of the responsibility, but Ben Dwarshuis went wicket-less in the fourth T20. The hosts might consider handing a debut to Mahli Beardman in the final game.

**Teams:**  
**India:** Suryakumar Yadav (C), Abhishek Sharma, Shubman Gill (VC), Tilak Varma, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Varun Chakaravathy, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Sanju Samson (WK), Rinku Singh, Washington Sundar.

**Australia:** Mitchell Marsh (C), Matthew Short, Josh Inglis (WK), Josh Philippe (WK), Mitchell Owen, Glenn Maxwell, Matt Kuhnemann, Adam Zampa, Mahli Beardman, Ben Dwarshuis, Xavier Bartlett, Nathan Ellis, Marcus Stoinis.

Match starts at 1:45 PM (IST). (PTI)

## De Kock revives international career with a century South Africa thrashes Pakistan in 2nd ODI

**FAISALABAD, Nov 7:** Quinton de Kock revived his international career with a fluent 22nd ODI century as South Africa hammered Pakistan by eight wickets in the second match and leveled the series 1-1.

The left-handed de Kock, who reversed his 2023 ODI retirement before the white-ball series in Pakistan, smashed an unbeaten



123 off 119 balls in the Proteas' chase of 270-2 in 40.1 overs.

Fast bowler Nandre Burger (4-46) and leg-spinner Ngabuyomi Peter (3-55) — the two changes South Africa made from its narrow loss in the first ODI — had picked up career-best figures to restrict Pakistan to 269-9 after South Africa lost its seventh consecutive toss on the tour.

The third and final match of the series is on Saturday at Faisalabad, which is hosting international games for the first time in 17 years.

De Kock turns the clock in style. The South African opening pair of de Kock and 19-year-old Lhuan-dre Pretorius (46) got engaged in yet another aggressive stand of 81 runs off 71 balls as

Pakistan's fast bowlers erred repeatedly in hitting the right lengths. Naseem Shah couldn't hold on to a sharp return catch in his follow through that could have dismissed Pretorius on 18 as the left-hander smashed seven boundaries and a six before Mohammad Wasim found the outside edge and denied Pretorius a half century.

Nawaz then gave de Kock a reprieve on 15 when he crassed a catch at deep mid-wicket and the pace bowlers consistently found it difficult to control the wet ball because of dew.

De Zorzi took his time but carried his test match form into white-ball cricket with an entertaining 153-run stand off 137 balls with de Kock as Pak-

istan's newly installed ODI skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi struggled to get the breakthrough.

Pakistan's decision to leave out specialist spinners also didn't go in its favor as off-spinners Saim Ayub and Salman Ali Agha conceded 46 runs off their combined 6.1 overs without getting any success.

Afridi used eight bowlers, but de Zorzi and de Kock unleashed boundaries at will in a rapid Proteas chase. De Kock completed his century off 96 balls with seven fours and six sixes when he drove Wasim to wide mid-on for two runs in the 31st over. Pakistan had a below-par day in the outfield as Faheem Ashraf dropped de Zorzi soon after he had completed his half century. (AP)

## Bellingham and Foden back in England squad but no room for Alexander-Arnold

**LONDON, Nov 7:** Jude Bellingham and Phil Foden were recalled Friday by England coach Thomas Tuchel for the team's upcoming World Cup qualifiers against Serbia and Albania. The attacking midfielders — two of the country's most talented players — were left out of England's last squad, with Tuchel stressing the need to have a strong team spirit in the camp and warning there would be "no guarantees" for his superstar players.

Bellingham has started all five of Real Madrid's games since the last international break, scoring in three of them, and looks to be fully recovered after missing the start of the season because of shoulder surgery.

Foden is back to his best form with Manchester City, too, scoring twice against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on Wednesday.

"I think the contribution of both of them to their clubs lately was immense," Tuchel said. "They play regularly, they play a big role in the success of Real and City's matches lately. They score regularly decisive goals. We are delighted they are in shape, in form and back with us."

England has already qualified for the World Cup, with a 5-0 victory over Latvia in October guaranteeing Tuchel's team first place in its group and taking its qualifying record to six wins from six matches. (AP)

## Mumbai players will try to lift Sarfaraz Khan's confidence anyway we can: Siddhesh Lad

**MUMBAI, Nov 7:** Being ignored from national side and even 'A' teams could be a demotivating but Mumbai teammates are firmly behind India batter Sarfaraz Khan to lift his spirits "any way we can", said Siddhesh Lad here on Friday.

Sarfaraz, who had made his way into the Indian Test side on the back of consistent heavy scores in domestic competitions, is yet to cross fifty so far in this Ranji Trophy season, having made 42, 32, 1, 15 and 5 not out in three matches.

The 28-year-old Sarfaraz was a part of the Indian side on the tour of Australia and since then has not been considered for any of the 'A' team assignments as well.

"At the end, he is a human being and everyone makes some mistakes. There is always that (rough) patch for big players. If we look at the last 4-5 years, he has consistently scored runs," Lad told the media here on the eve of Mumbai's Ranji Trophy match against Himachal Pradesh.

"Somewhere, it could be demotivating as a player but at this time, it is up to us as a team and support staff as to how do we lift him up? We know his potential and if he plays (well), he will play big innings. As a team, we will try to lift his confidence in any way we can," Lad added.

The points table of the Elite Group D has three teams — Hyderabad, Mumbai and Jammu and Kashmir — tied at 10 points each but Lad said the 42-time champions will look to make most of their two matches at home.

Mumbai will play against Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry before the break and Lad added that the team has developed better understanding of the pitch here at the BKC Ground which has been slower and more spin-friendly from the past given a prolonged rainy season.

"Both these matches are very important for us. We have to finish the first leg well. I feel as a team we have done well. We made some mistakes in the first innings (against Rajasthan) but we have learned from our mistakes," Lad said.

"Of course, if you are playing at your home, you know the conditions, (and) everything about the pitch. We are well prepared in that way. We know that it is very important to win both the games for us if we want to qualify in the knock-out stage."

Mumbai, who had Yashasvi Jaiswal (67 and 156) in their ranks for the away game in Jaipur, conceded a 363-run lead in the first innings to Rajasthan in the first innings. But riding on Jaiswal's second innings ton, Mumbai were able to force a draw.

"We didn't give the outright win. We batted really well in the second inning. Especially Yashasvi and Musheer Khan. (We are) very happy (that) Musheer is back in form. We know he has got the potential to score big runs," he said.

The Mumbai middle-order mainstay said his experience has helped him overcome pressure situations given high expectations from his team.

"Any game for Mumbai, (or) even for the club cricket, pressure will be always there because if I go and play for (a) club, there will be expectations from me. If we play for Mumbai, all (of) India watches your score (and) your scorecard. There are high expectations always from the Mumbai team," he said.

"Even if we lose the finals, it is counted as a bad year for us, so there is always pressure. But now, my experience has helped me to overcome the pressure when the team needs," he added. (PTI)

## I had a feeling Shafali would do something special in final: Pratika Rawal



**NEW DELHI, Nov 7:** Being a student of psychology has given Pratika Rawal some insight into how a human mind works and her gut feel told her that Shafali Verma, who came in as her replacement in the World Cup knock-outs, would do something special in the final.

Her intuition was right about Shafali even though it was all down to a cruel twist of fate that prevented Rawal from playing the two biggest games of her career because of an injured ankle and knee.

"Shafali doesn't need motivation. She plays with instinct and belief. Be-

fore the final, she came up to me and said, 'I'm really sorry you can't play,' and I told her it's fine, these things happen. I had a feeling she would do something special that day," Rawal told PTI Videos. Rawal, who had scored 308 runs was third in list of run-scorers after Smriti Mandhana (434) and Ashleigh Gardner (328), got injured against Bangladesh in the last group league game.

The setback due to injury at most crucial juncture could have been mentally crushing but for someone who has completed her Bachelors' degree in psychology, it did become

easier to process what was going through her mind.

"I should not say I am a psychologist yet because I haven't completed my Masters' degree," she smiled.

"But as someone who has studied psychology, it really helped me to understand human emotions better — including my own. The first thing is to accept what's happened. You can't undo it. Once I accepted the injury, I focused only on what I could control — recovery, sleep, nutrition, and supporting the team." That pragmatic approach, she said, prevented her of suffering from self-pity.

"There was disappointment, yes, but no breakdown. My dad was there, my coach (Shravan Kumar) kept checking on me, my mom and brother called every day. I have such a good support system. They didn't let me spiral or feel alone," she said.

Her father, she recalled fondly, took the injury harder than she did.

"I don't show emotions easily, but my dad cried a lot — I had to calm him down," she laughed. Things have been a bit surreal she admits since last Sunday when a wheel-chair bound Rawal was escorted by her teammates for on-field celebrations.

"It's going to take me a lot of time to get used to the fact that we have won the World Cup. It has not sunk in yet. Whenever I see that trophy, that's when I realised, oh, this has actually happened," she said. (PTI)

## Learnt from past mistakes, don't let boundary size dictate shot selection: Axar

**CARRARA (GOLD COAST), Nov 7:** Indian all-rounder Axar Patel says he has learnt from his "past mistake" of letting the size of boundaries dictate his shot-selection, something that was evident from the manner in which he targetted the more distant sides during the fourth T20I against Australia here.

Axar's 11-ball 21, laced with a four and a six in the last over off Marcus Stoinis, was crucial to India breaching the 160-mark and posting 167, which Australia fell short by 48 runs. The visitors now have an unassailable 2-1 lead in the five-match series after the first game was washed out.

"Obviously I knew it was tough because wickets were falling back to back. The message that I got from the dressing room was to take it to the last over because there weren't any batsmen after me," Axar said in a video interview with teammate and fellow all-rounder Shivam Dube, posted by the 'bcci.tv'. "So I thought I would take a chance in the last over. The side boundaries were big but I thought if I could hit my shape and watch the ball, I could clear them," he said.

"I have felt in the past that if I think about the size of the boundary and



don't hit towards those sides, they become predetermined shots and because of that we make mistakes. I learnt from past mistakes and played my shots here," he added.

The fifth and final T20I will be played on Saturday in Brisbane.

Besides the significant runs, the 31-year-old Axar also picked up a couple of wickets in the game to deservedly win the player of the match honours.

Dube asked him about his wickets, especially the LBW dismissal of Matthew Short, which was the result of an accurate review taken by Axar

in consultation with Jitesh Sharma.

Axar said he is not particularly a fan of reviews but took his chance this time.

"I'm never ready to take a review. But when the ball hit (his pads) this time, I think it stayed low. And the kind of action that I have, I bowl a little wide off the crease. So I always feel that the ball will hit outside the wicket or go from an angle," he explained.

"But in this I knew that the ball was hitting and (although) it could have been a little outside the off stump, we could take a chance on umpire's call and when I spoke to Jitu, he said 'Axar it's inside, I mean in the middle'."

"So I said 'yes we can take a chance'," he recollected.

Speaking about his overall bowling strategy in the game, Axar said he was looking to be economical as the wicket wasn't assisting spinners.

"As a spinner, I felt like, it was important for me to contain. I was looking at that and bowling wicket to wicket because I was not getting much spin but I was getting a little bit of bounce because of the dew. The ball was skidding a lot," he said. (PTI)

## Uthappa shines as India beat Pak by 2 runs in rain-affected Hong Kong Sixes game

**HONG KONG, Nov 7:** Former India cricketer Robin Uthappa and Bharat Chipli played blazing knocks as India defeated Pakistan by two runs via DLS Method in a rain-affected Pool C match of the Hong Kong Sixes, here on Friday.

Uthappa smashed a quick-fire 28 off 11 balls and Chipli struck 24 (13b) as India posted 86/4 in six overs.

Pakistan began the chase well, reaching 41/1 after three overs before heavy rain halted play.

Once play was called off, the DLS calculation left Pakistan two runs short of the par score.

Stuart Binny's economical spell, where he conceded seven runs and took a wicket, proved to be the difference.

In Pool B, Australia cruised to a 10-wicket win over the UAE, chasing down a target of 88 in just three overs.

Jack Wood led the assault with a blistering 55 (11b), while Nick Hobson remained unbeaten on 26 (5b).

Afghanistan continued their strong form in Pool A, notching up a commanding 49-run win over South Africa, their second victory of the tournament.

Captain Gulbadin Naib struck a rapid 50 off 12 balls, while Karim Janat added an explosive 46 off 11 as Afghanistan posted 148/2 in six overs.



In reply, South Africa managed 99/2, falling well short of the target.

In Pool D, Bangladesh secured a 14-run victory over Sri Lanka.

Skipper Akbar Ali top-scored with 32 off 9 balls, but it was Mosaddek Hossain's 3/20 that turned the game in Bangladesh's favour, as they successfully defended 75, restricting Sri Lanka to 61/6.

The defeat marked Sri Lanka's second consecutive loss in the tournament.

The match between Australia and England was abandoned due to rain. (PTI)

## Irfan to lead young Pakistan Shaheens in Asia Cup Rising Stars

**KARACHI, Nov 7:** Pakistan's white-ball discard Muhammad Irfan Khan was on Friday named captain as the national selectors announced a young squad for the men's Asia Cup Rising Stars tournament to be held in Doha later this month.

The squad only includes three players who have represented the senior team in a few games, including Irfan, spinner Sufiyan Muqem and fast bowler Ahmed Daniyal.

The remaining players have impressed in under-19, Shaheens or domestic circuits, and in the Pakistan Super League.

Pakistan and India will face off once again with eight teams competing in the tournament from November 14 to 23.

Pakistan Shaheens are placed in Group 'B' alongside Oman, India 'A' and UAE, while Afghanistan 'A', Bangladesh 'A', Hong Kong and Sri Lanka 'A' are placed in Group 'A'.

Pakistan will play their opening match of the T20 tournament against Oman on November 14, before taking on India 'A' on November 16. Shaheens' final group match will be against UAE on November 18.

Pakistan Shaheens 15-member squad: Muhammad Irfan Khan (captain), Ahmed Daniyal, Arafat Minhas, Maaz Sadaqat, Mohammad Faiq, Muhammad Ghazi Ghorri, Mohammad Naem, Mohammad Salman, Mohammad Shahzad, Mubasir Khan, Saad Masood, Shahid Aziz, Sufiyan Moqim, Ubaid Shah and Yasir Khan. (PTI)