

**6 WORLD**  
 ● India tells UNSC it has suffered from cross-border terror, illicit arms trafficking  
 ● Conspirators behind Delhi blast will not be spared: PM

**8 NATION**  
 ● Highest-ever voter turnout of 67.14 pc recorded in 2<sup>nd</sup> phase  
 ● SC seeks EC's response on pleas of DMK, TMC challenging SIR exercise in TN, WB

Vol .No. II Issue No. 246 RNI-ASSENG/2023/86488 GUWAHATI, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2025 PAGES 12 PRICE ₹ 8

**Sarma unveils ₹84.6 cr Raha Overbridge connecting WKA**

**HT Bureau**  
 GUWAHATI, Nov 11: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday inaugurated a newly constructed Railway Overbridge on the road connecting Raha to Champukh Railway Junction and West Karbi Anglong.  
 The bridge, built at a cost of ₹ 84.6 crore, spans a total length of 1.179 km and is expected to ease traffic congestion and improve connectivity between Nagaon and West Karbi Anglong districts.  
 The inauguration took place in the presence of minister Piyush Hazarika, Raha MLA Sashikanta Das, Divisional Railway Manager (Lumding) Sameer Lohaney, and several senior officials.  
 The bridge is part of the State Government's push to strengthen road and transport infrastructure across Assam, ensuring smoother (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**Toll mounts to 12 ● Pulwama doctor was driving car, had links to terror module: Investigators**

**Delhi blast probe handed over to NIA**

**NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, Nov 11:** The Red Fort blast probe was handed over to premier anti-terror agency NIA on Tuesday as investigators zeroed in on a Pulwama doctor with links to a terror module busted with the recovery of explosives mainly from Faridabad. Dr Umar Nabi was driving the car that exploded and is believed to be one of the 12 people killed, officials said.  
 A day after the blast on Monday evening, Jammu and Kashmir police took a DNA sample from his mother to establish the connect.  
 "We have taken the DNA sample in order to match with the parts found at the scene of the blast," an official said in Srinagar.  
 The case was given to the National Investigation Agency after a review meeting chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah. This is a clear



indication that the blast is being considered an act of terror as the NIA is mandated to probe terror cases only.  
 The Red Fort blast on a busy Monday evening came hours after eight people, including three doctors, were arrested and 2,900 kg of

explosives seized with the uncovering of a "white collar" terror module involving the Jaish-e-Mohammed and Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind and spanning Kashmir, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.  
 Among those arrested on Monday were Dr Muzammil Ganaie and Dr Shaheen Sayeed, both connected to the Al Falah university in Faridabad from where 360 kg of ammonium nitrate was recovered.  
 According to investigators, Shaheen was leading the Jaish-e-Mohammed's women recruitment wing in India. She headed the Jamaat-ul-Mominat, the group's female wing.  
 Her father Syed Ahmad Ansari told reporters in Lucknow that he learnt about her arrest through the media.  
 "I last spoke to Shaheen about a month ago. I have never heard her mention Dr Muzammil or anyone connected to such activities," Ansari said.  
 Umar, also connected to Al Falah and believed to be driving the Hyundai i20 car in which the powerful blast took place, allegedly (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**Admin orders crackdown on online terror sympathisers**

People must unite to ensure terrorism cannot revive: Himanta after Delhi blast  
 ● Retired teacher held for posting objectionable comment on social media



**GUWAHATI, Nov 11:** Condemning the Delhi blast, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said people must come together to ensure that terrorism cannot rear its head again in the country.  
 He said the state police were

**Officer held in disproportionate income granted bail after no chargesheet filed**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 11:** A court here on Tuesday granted bail to suspended Assam Civil Services (ACS) officer Nupur Borah, arrested for allegedly possessing assets disproportionate to her known sources of income, officials said.  
 The court asked her to furnish two sureties of ₹ 1 lakh each, her advocate Bijon Mahajan said.  
 "Borah was arrested on September 15 in a disproportionate assets case. The case entails a maximum 60-day custody period, which has almost elapsed, but no charge sheet has been filed yet," Mahajan said.  
 The counsel also claimed violation

of provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) relating to the arrest of a woman after dusk.  
 "Moreover, being a government employee, she poses no flight risk and will appear before the authorities whenever required. After hearing our arguments yesterday, the court of the honourable special judge granted her bail today," Mahajan added.  
 Bail conditions, including depositing the sureties and not leaving jurisdiction of the court without prior permission, have been set, the advocate said.  
 "After the sureties are submitted, Borah is (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**'White-collar' terror: Focus on how accused managed to get huge quantity of Ammonium Nitrate**

**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** Security agencies are focusing on how a sophisticated "white-collar" terror module managed to acquire and store a huge quantity of explosives, including Ammonium Nitrate, the substance suspected to have been used in Monday's deadly blast near the Red Fort area that killed 12 people.  
 The attack has once again highlighted the ease with which a restricted chemical like Ammonium Nitrate can be weaponised with officials

trying to trace the logistics and procurement network of the recently busted inter-state terror cell.  
 The Red Fort blast on Monday evening came hours after eight people, including three doctors, were arrested and 2,900 kg of explosives seized with the uncovering of a "white collar" terror module involving the Jaish-e-Mohammed and Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind and spanning Kashmir, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.  
 Ammonium Nitrate is a dual-use chemical, widely valued as a popular nitrogen fertiliser and used extensively in the construction sector for controlled blasting in stone quarries.  
 However, due to its volatile nature when combined with other chemicals including Potassium Chlorate and Sulphur, it became a favourite component for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used by terror groups. It is also mixed with fuel oil that results

**Assam gov't and JSW sign agreement to set up world-class heritage museum**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 11:** The Assam government and the JSW Group have signed an agreement to set up a world-class heritage museum in the city, with the inaugural exhibition to showcase the 17th-century devotional textile 'Vrindavani Vastra'.  
 According to an official release on Tuesday, the museum, dedicated to the preservation and promotion of art, culture and heritage, will come up on a 45,000 sq ft site at the sericulture farm in Khanapara.  
 The Assam government has allotted the land for the museum, which will be constructed and fully funded by the JSW Group.  
 The museum will serve as a hub for national and international (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Government of Assam  
 Directorate of Economics & Statistics

# Empowering Every District, Every Citizen

The Project for Estimation of District Domestic Product (DDP)  
 -A significant initiative in the journey to build a Viksit Bharat by 2047

**Aim of the project:**

- Assess the district-level income
- Prepare comprehensive District Vision Documents to drive balanced and inclusive growth in Assam

Three major surveys to be conducted across all districts of Assam ensuring accurate & data-driven planning:

Survey of Registered Factories

Labour Force Survey

Unorganised Sector Enterprise Survey

Your cooperation and participation in these surveys will help us shape a stronger, more prosperous Assam

**Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma**  
 Chief Minister, Assam

# Sensex, Nifty extend gains riding on IT, services, telecom stocks

**MUMBAI, Nov 11:** Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended on firm footings despite starting on a weak note on Tuesday as investors rushed to grab low-priced bellwether stocks of IT, services and telecom players amid optimism on a US-India trade deal.

The 30-share BSE Sensex began the trade on a negative note by declining 411.32 points or 0.49 per cent to 83,124.03. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 125.1 points, or 0.48 per cent to 25,449.25 in the early trade.

However, both the indices made a strong comeback and closed the session with significant gains.

The Sensex jumped 335.97 points, or 0.40 per cent, to settle at 83,871.32, while the Nifty climbed 120.60 points, or 0.47 per cent, to close at 25,694.95.

"The domestic market opened on a subdued note amid concerns over potential implications of the Delhi explosion. However, it recovered smartly and closed at the day's high, supported by global cues as the US Senate passed a bill to end the longest-ever federal shutdown.

"Importantly, the Q2 results season is nearing its end and is expected to conclude on a positive note, driven by better-than-expected performance by the broader market. The rally was sustained by gains in IT, auto, metal, and FMCG sectors," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

Among the Sensex firms, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Mahindra & Mahindra, Adani Ports, HCL Technologies, Eternal, Infosys, Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Larsen & Toubro, Hindustan Unilever and UltraTech Cement were the gainers.

Bajaj Finance, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, Kotak Mahindra Bank, PowerGrid and Tata Steel were among the laggards.



Bajaj Finance ended over 7 per cent lower as investors turned cautious after the company's lower Assets Under Management (AUM) growth guidance and rising signs of asset stress. Bajaj Finserv fell 6.26 per cent.

"Investors are now awaiting the upcoming domestic inflation data, with expectations of continued moderation due to a steady decline in food prices -- raising prospects of further policy easing by the RBI. Looking ahead, earnings are expected to witness a robust rebound in the third quarter, underpinned by multiple domestic tailwinds, though much will depend on the successful finalization of a trade deal with the US," Nair said.

The BSE midcap gauge went up by 0.20 per cent while smallcap closed 0.09 per cent lower.

Sector-wise, Services climbed 1.65 per cent, followed by Telecommunication by 1.59 per cent, Focussed IT by 1.21 per cent, Teck by 1.12 per cent, Capital Goods by 1.19 per cent, IT by 1.07 per cent, Auto by 1 per cent, Industrials by 0.75 per cent, and Oil & Gas by 0.71 per cent.

"Markets witnessed a volatile session on the weekly expiry day but eventually ended in the green, extending Monday's rebound.

After an initial uptick, the Nifty drifted lower during the early hours; however, strong buying

across heavyweights in the latter half lifted the index to close near the day's high at 25,694.95.

"Sectorally, a mixed trend kept traders engaged -- IT, auto, and metal stocks outperformed, while financials, realty, and pharma ended subdued. In the broader market, the midcap index gained over half a per cent, whereas the smallcap index closed marginally lower, reflecting selective participation," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking, said.

Mishra further stated the early weakness was primarily driven by cautious global cues and continued FII selling.

"However, renewed buying interest in index heavyweights helped markets recover, supported by optimism following Goldman Sachs' recent upgrade of India's rating outlook. Additionally, some short-covering on weekly expiry further strengthened the momentum in the latter part of the session," he said.

On the other hand, healthcare dropped 0.33 per cent, financial services by 0.21 per cent, and realty by 0.17 per cent.

A total of 2,245 stocks declined while 1,936 advanced and 182 remained unchanged on the BSE.

President Donald Trump announced on Monday that the US will soon reduce the tariffs imposed on India, as the two nations moved closer to finalising a trade

deal.

Meanwhile in Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Hong Kong's Hang Seng, and Japan's Nikkei 225 index settled higher while Shanghai's SSE Composite index closed in the red territory.

Markets in Europe were trading higher. The US markets ended higher on Monday.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, increased by 0.33 per cent to USD 64.27 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded equities worth ₹ 4,114.85 crore on Monday while Domestic Institutional Investors remained the net buyer of stocks worth ₹ 5,805.26 crore, according to the exchange data.

On Monday, the 30-share BSE Sensex benchmark climbed 319.07 points to close at 83,535.35. The 50-share NSE Nifty advanced 82.05 points to settle at 25,574.35.

Meanwhile, the net inflows into mutual funds' equity schemes dropped by nearly 19 per cent to ₹ 24,690 crore in October, making it the third consecutive month of a decline in the number, an industry body said on Tuesday.

On the systematic investment plans (SIPs), the preferred vehicle of retail investors, the overall inflows grew to ₹ 29,529 crore from September's record high of ₹ 29,631 crore.

Amid the rally in gold prices, gold exchange traded funds saw net inflows at ₹ 7,743 crore during the month taking the overall assets under management (AUM) in the category to above Rs 1 lakh crore, as per data disclosed by the Association of Mutual Funds of India (Amfi).

The net flows into equity MFs had declined 9 per cent on-month to ₹ 30,421 crore in September, after August's 22 per cent decline to ₹ 33,430 crore, amid corrections in the equity benchmarks. (PTI)

# Rupee jumps 23 paise to close at 88.50 against US dollar

**MUMBAI, Nov 11:** The rupee appreciated 23 paise to settle at 88.50 against the US dollar on Tuesday, amid progress on the US shutdown bill and optimism over the US-India trade deal.

Forex traders said a rebound in domestic equities and optimism over a nearing US trade deal supported the local unit.

However, elevated crude oil prices and foreign fund outflows weighed on investor sentiment.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 88.69 against the American currency, touched an intraday high of 88.50 and a low of 88.72 during the session.

The domestic unit finally settled for the day at 88.50, higher by 23 paise from its previous close.

"The rupee gained on Tuesday, on a rise in risk appetite in global markets and a weak dollar," Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said, adding that expectations of the end of the US government shutdown boosted global market sentiments.

Choudhary further noted that the rupee is expected to trade with a slight positive bias on rising global markets and weakness in the US dollar.

"However, elevated crude oil prices and importer demand for dollars may cap the upside. Markets may remain volatile as the US government shutdown nears an end. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 88.30 to 88.80," he said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.03 per cent to 99.61.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.34 per cent to USD 64.28 per barrel in futures trading.

Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said the rupee exhibited a notable uptick "primarily catalysed by comments from US President Donald Trump, who said the US and India were moving 'pretty close' to finalising a trade deal."

"We expect that the successful culmination of the trade deal with the US will serve as a powerful catalyst for the Indian rupee, potentially triggering a swift and substantial appreciation. In the near

term, the spot USD-INR pair faces critical support at the 88.40 level, while encountering resistance at 88.75," Parmar said.

US President Donald Trump has said that the US is "pretty close" to reaching a "fair trade deal" with India, adding that he will lower the tariffs imposed on New Delhi "at some point".

"We're making a deal with India, a much different deal than we had in the past. So right now, they don't love me, but they'll love us again," Trump said on Monday.

Moreover, top Trump aide Sergio Gor was sworn in as the US Ambassador to India, with President Donald Trump calling the post a "big deal" and underscoring that he is entrusting the new envoy to help strengthen one of Washington's "most important international relationships".

On the domestic equity markets front, Sensex jumped 335.97 points to settle at 83,871.32, while the Nifty climbed 120.60 points to 25,694.95.

Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded equities worth ₹ 803.22 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

## Officer held in disproportionate

likely to walk out tomorrow," he added. Borah was arrested by the CM's Special Vigilance Cell after searches at her residences led to recovery of over ₹ 92.50 lakh in cash and ornaments worth nearly ₹ 1.5 crore on September 15. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had claimed that she had amassed assets 400 times more than her known sources of income, and said panel measures beyond suspension or dismissal from job was being pursued to ensure that the officer is held accountable as per law.

Borah had been under surveillance for the last six months when she had authorised an illegal land transfer deal while posted as circle officer in Barpeta, following which she was transferred.

At the time of her arrest, she was posted as the circle officer at Goraimari in Kamrup district. (PTI)

## 'White-collar' terror:

during 2000-2011. Concerned over its frequent use by terror groups in making bombs, the government in 2011 declared fertilisers having more than 45 per cent of Ammonium Nitrate as an explosive substance.

"... the central government hereby declares that Ammonium Nitrate or any combination containing more than 45 per cent of Ammonium Nitrate by weight including emulsions, suspensions, melts or gels shall be deemed to be an explosive," a gazette notification of Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) had said in 2011. In 2015, the government further tightened the norms for import and transportation of Ammonium Nitrate, misused for terror activities, and ordered that its shipments will be allowed in "bagged form only" and its movement within the country must be accompanied by armed guards with GPS vehicles. (PTI)

## Assam govt and

artefacts, travelling exhibitions and cultural showcases, creating opportunities for global cultural exchange. The inaugural exhibition will feature the Vrindavani Vastra, the devotional textile woven under the spiritual guidance of Srimanta Sankardev, which is currently preserved at the British Museum in London.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the museum will be a source of immense pride for the state.

"It will not only bring the sacred Vrindavani Vastra home but will also provide a state-of-the-art facility for showcasing Assamese art and heritage alongside global exhibitions," Sarma said.

JSW Foundation's Chairperson Sangita Jindal said through this collaboration, JSW is honoured to support the Assam government in creating a museum that will preserve India's cultural heritage and offer a platform for global cultural engagement. The museum will stand as a 'testament to our shared heritage and artistic devotion as we believe in the power of art and culture to inspire communities.'

The museum will include state-of-the-art climate control facilities and security systems to ensure the preservation of the artefacts, the release added. (PTI)

## Sarma unveils ₹84.6-cr

inter-district movement and better access to key railway facilities.

Earlier in the day, chief minister Sarma distributed cheques worth ₹ 10,000 each to 37,833 women beneficiaries under the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA) for Raha Legislative Assembly Constituency.

The disbursement, amounting to nearly ₹ 40 crore, marks one of the highest beneficiary counts under the scheme in the state. Addressing the gathering at Raha, Sarma said the MMUA aims to transform Assam's women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) into strong social and economic units.

He announced that upon proper utilization of the seed fund, beneficiaries will receive additional instalments of ₹ 25,000 and ₹ 50,000 in subsequent phases. The chief minister further announced that 4,000 new families in Raha Constituency will be added under the Orunodoi Scheme.

He reiterated the government's commitment to women's empowerment, the eradication of child marriage, and the introduction of a new law to prevent polygamy, which will be tabled in the Assembly on November 25.

## Admin orders crackdown

a programme at Raha in Nagaon district, Sarma said, "The blast in Delhi is highly condemnable. As we all know, in the last two days, a huge quantity of explosives was seized from specific people. Definitely a big design was there. Hopefully, we will get a clearer picture by evening." At least 12 people were killed after a powerful explosion ripped through a slow-moving car at a traffic signal near the Red Fort metro station on Monday evening.

Sarma said it was important for the people to unite at such a time, adding, "The people have to come together so that terrorism cannot rear its head again."

He claimed that since the blast, a section of people was making Facebook posts either welcoming the news or putting up happy emojis. He maintained that such a trend was visible post-Pahalgam terror attack earlier this year.

"It means that these people are supporting the terrorists. We are doing background checks on them since last night, and if needed, we will arrest some of them so that terrorism cannot revive in Assam or even be encouraged," the CM said. "If someone is happy in another's death, they are directly or indirectly supporting terrorism. I have already told the DGP to check who these people are, and if they are from our state, if needed, we will arrest them," he said. (PTI)

## Delhi blast probe

carried out the terror attack as he feared he might be caught like his fellow doctors, officials said.

The doctor from Lethpora in south Kashmir's Pulwama district allegedly carried explosives, possibly ammonium nitrate, in the car, they said. A suicide attack was not ruled out. Muzamil, his sister-in-law, said Umar had been an introvert right from his childhood and focused on his studies and work.

"He was working as a faculty at a college in Faridabad. He called on Friday and said he is busy with examinations and will return home after three days," she said. He last visited Kashmir two months ago, she said, adding that he was a loner and did not have many friends.

Preliminary findings suggest ammonium nitrate, fuel oil and detonators may have been used in the blast that ripped through the slow moving car near a traffic signal.

As investigations into the blast and the terror module continues, officials said a man named Tariq from south Kashmir's Pulwama district had given the i20 to Umar and is now under arrest.

Teams from Delhi Police, NIA and intelligence agencies have fanned out across Delhi and Kashmir. Four people have been detained in the raids in Kashmir. Of the four, two have been shifted for joint investigation for their role in the Delhi blast as well as the interstate terror module.

Security agencies are focusing on how a sophisticated "white-collar" terror module managed to acquire and store such a huge quantity of explosives, including ammonium nitrate, officials said.

Delhi Police has registered a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Explosives Act under sections which deal with punishment and conspiracy of a terror attack.

Raids are also being conducted at multiple locations in Delhi. The national capital has been placed on high alert with strict vigil being maintained at the airport, railway stations and bus terminals.

Police said CCTV footage of the car that exploded shows a "masked man" driving the car. Multiple teams have been deployed to scan CCTV from the vicinity of the Red Fort and adjoining routes, officials added.

They said Umar was the lone occupant of the car. All vehicles entering Delhi, whether private or commercial, are being thoroughly checked and verified as part of heightened security measures, officials said.

"Multiple teams have been deployed to scan CCTV footage from the vicinity of the Red Fort and adjoining routes to know more about the masked man," a police official said.

"We also got to know that the vehicle was parked in a nearby parking lot for three hours, before the blast. Footage of different parking lots are also being monitored," the source added.

He added that an overnight search operation was conducted at hotels and guest houses in Daryaganj and Paharganj areas to trace possible suspects. The Red Fort Metro Station was closed for commuters and traffic restrictions imposed in the area. The deceased were identified as Ashok Kumar (34) from Amroha, Uttar Pradesh, and Amar Kataria (35) from Delhi. The other bodies are yet to be identified. They are aged between 28 and 58 years. One mutilated body was recovered from the mangled remains of the car, officials said. Among the 20 injured, 12 are residents of Delhi, and eight belong to other states, including Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh. (PTI)

## Net direct tax revenues jump 7pc to ₹12.92 lakh cr so far in FY'26

**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** Net direct tax collection has grown 7 per cent so far this fiscal year to over ₹ 12.92 lakh crore on higher corporate tax mop-up and slower refunds.

Refund issuances dropped 18 per cent to over ₹ 2.42 lakh crore between April 1 and November 10.

Net corporate tax collection during the period stood about ₹ 5.37 lakh crore, up from ₹ 5.08 lakh crore in the same period in 2024.

Non-corporate tax, including individuals and HUFs, mop-up so far this fiscal year stood around ₹ 7.19 lakh crore, up from about ₹ 6.62 lakh crore in the same period last year.

Securities Transaction Tax (STT) collection stood at ₹ 35,682 crore so far this fiscal year, marginally lower than ₹ 35,923 crore in the year-ago period. (PTI)

### AFFIDAVIT

I, Marjina Khatun do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I am an Indian citizen by birth and permanent resident of the below noted address. My correct name is Marjina Khatun. In my daughter's Birth Certificate (Reg. No. 216/2011, dated 23/09/2011, issued by Addl. Registrar, Birth & Death, Kharupetia PHC, Darrang, Assam), my name is wrongly recorded as Mrs Marzina Begum. Mrs Marzina Begum and Marjina Khatun are the same person. This affidavit is made to confirm the above facts before the concerned authority.

Sd/-

Marjina Khatun,  
W/O Nur Alam,  
Vill: Khairakata  
PO- Chakarabasti,  
P.S. Dalgaoon, Darrang (Assam)

## India wants fair, equitable, balanced trade deal with US: Goyal

**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said India wants a fair, equitable, balanced trade deal with the US and it will not compromise on the interests of farmers, fishermen, and the dairy sector.

He said India and the US are negotiating a good proposed bilateral trade agreement.

"We are working for a good trade deal in the interest of India. At the same time, India is not going to compromise the interests of our farmers, fishermen, workers, labour, and our dairy... We are working on a fair equitable and balanced trade deal," he said here at Udyog Samagam 2025 -- a conference of industries and commerce ministers of states.

"We want a fair, equitable and balanced trade deal (with the US). If that happens, it could happen any day, it could happen tomorrow, it may happen next month, it may happen next year... But as a government, we are preparing for everything," he said.

He also said India is looking for new markets such as Russia for the country's fishery sector, which is facing issues due to the steep tariffs in the US.

India and the US are negotiating a bilateral trade agreement. So far, five rounds of talks have been completed. Both sides have announced to finalise the first tranche of the deal by fall of 2025.

Meanwhile, an official said another round of negotiations may not be necessary.

"They (US) have to get back to us. India's negotiations have been the most comprehensive, most detailed, WTO-compliant compared



to any other country. May be it took time, but we negotiated very cautiously, keeping in view the interests of our sensitive sectors," the official added.

A team of Indian officials, headed by Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal, was in Washington last month to hold trade talks with their US counterparts. The three-day talks ended on October 17.

Negotiations for the pact are important, as relations between the two countries have been under severe strain since the US President Donald Trump administration imposed a steep 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods. It includes a 25 per cent additional import duty for buying Russian crude oil.

The proposed pact aims to more than double the bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030 from the current USD 191 billion.

The US remained India's largest trading partner for the fourth con-

secutive year in 2024-25, with bilateral trade valued at USD 131.84 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports). It accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in the country's total merchandise trade.

India's merchandise exports to the US declined 11.93 per cent to USD 5.46 billion in September due to the high tariffs imposed by Washington, while imports increased 11.78 per cent to USD 3.98 billion during the month, according to commerce ministry data.

US President Donald Trump has said the US is "pretty close" to reaching a "fair trade deal" with India, adding that he will lower the tariffs imposed on Indian goods at "some point".

This is the second time in less than two weeks that the US president held out hope to seal the proposed bilateral trade deal with India. (PTI)

## Bandhan Mutual Fund launches Bandhan Healthcare Fund

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 11:** Bandhan Mutual Fund has announced the launch of the Bandhan Healthcare Fund, an open-ended equity scheme focused on investments across the healthcare, pharmaceutical, and allied sectors.

According to an official statement, the fund aims to capture opportunities within India's rapidly expanding healthcare ecosystem, covering hospitals, diagnostics, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, wellness, and health-tech segments. The New Fund Offer (NFO) opens on November 10 and closes on November 24, 2025. Investors can subscribe through registered mutual fund distributors, investment advisors, online platforms, or directly via bandhanmutual.com/nfo/bandhan-healthcare-fund.

Vishal Kapoor, CEO of Bandhan

AMC, said the healthcare sector represents one of the most enduring growth themes in the global economy.

"As populations age and medical innovation accelerates, healthcare ecosystems globally and in India are expanding rapidly. With economic progress, healthcare expenditure naturally rises, and India is no exception," he said.

Kapoor added that despite rapid growth, India's per-capita healthcare spending and infrastructure remain relatively low, presenting a significant scope for long-term expansion.

"The Bandhan Healthcare Fund offers investors a disciplined and diversified way to participate in this structural transformation, capturing opportunities across the healthcare value chain with a long-term perspective," Kapoor said.

**E-AUCTION FOR ADVERTISING ASSETS OVER LUMDING DIVISION**

E-Auction for advertising assets over Lumding Division. Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee. Trips/Days. 1096.

Auction Catalogue No. ADVT-LMG-44-25

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Description
AA/1	ADVT-LMG-KYG-OH-416-25-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	A proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at Kamakhya Railway Station circulating area for a period of 03 years
AB/1	ADVT-LMG-DMV-OSN-412-25-1 (Advertising - On Station Premise (Non-Digital))	A proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at Dimapur Railway station for a period of 03 years.
AB/2	ADVT-LMG-KYG-OSN-414-25-1 (Advertising - On Station Premise (Non-Digital))	A proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at Kamakhya Railway Station for a period of 03 years

Auction Start Date & Time: 10.30 hrs. & Closing at: 11.20 hrs. of 25-11-2025. Prospective bidders are requested to visit E-Auction Leasing Module on IREPS website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Divisional Railway Manager (C), Lumding

**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
Serving Customers With A Smile

# N F Railway boosts security measures for passenger safety

**HT Bureau:**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 11:** The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of the Northeast Frontier Railway has intensified security arrangements across all railway stations and onboard trains to ensure the safety and security of passengers and railway property.

In view of recent security concerns, alerts have been issued to all RPF units and additional deployment of RPF personnel has been made at sensitive and vulnerable locations throughout the zone. Dog squads have been mobilised to assist in security operations and intensive anti-sabotage checks are being carried out at stations, railway premises and onboard trains.

## RPF intensifies vigilance, deploys dog squads and enhances CCTV monitoring across stations and trains

Monitoring through CCTV surveillance systems has been strengthened, with round-the-clock observation of station premises and platforms. RPF personnel are maintaining heightened vigilance to detect and prevent any suspicious activities or unattended objects.

The RPF is also closely coordinating with the Government Railway Police (GRP) and other security agencies to ensure seamless information sharing and effective joint action wherever required.

Passengers are requested to cooperate with railway authorities during security checks and to report any suspicious items or activities immediately to the nearest RPF or railway staff.

The N F Railway is committed to ensuring the safety and comfort of all passengers traveling across its network.



Passengers are requested to cooperate with railway authorities during security checks and to report any suspicious items or activities immediately to the nearest RPF or railway staff.

# KSA-Inglongpho wins five key posts in AUDC election



**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Nov 11:** In the Assam University Diphu Campus Students Union (AUDCSU) election for the academic session 2025-26, candidates backed by the Karbi Students Association (KSA-Inglongpho) won five out of eight major posts. Voting, counting and results were declared on Monday at AUDC, Lumding Road. Among the six KSA-backed candidates, Ashwinson Teron lost the post of assistant general secretary.

The five winning posts for KSA-Inglongpho backed candi-

dates are: Jewel Kro as president, Solomon Ingti as vice president, Songsar Ronghang as general secretary, Sarbong Hanse as sports secretary and Angtong Lekthe as magazine secretary. The posts of assistant general secretary and cultural secretary were won by Sarpangri Teron and Sarningme Teron of KSA-Lumding Road, while Nancy Rani Timungpi won the reserved seat for girl students as assistant general secretary.

Departmental counselors were also appointed: Abolon Taro for Geography, Bikash Khaklary for

Life Science and Bioinformatics, Jitumoni Pator for Assamese and Samuel Phangcho for Anthropology.

Celebrating their victory, the winning candidates took out a bike rally from AUDC to the KSA-Inglongpho Central Executive Committee (CEC) office at Rongtheang. A short felicitation program was held at the KSA office, where candidates were honoured with bouquets and Karbi traditional turbans.

KSA-Inglongpho president Budho Terang congratulated the winners, calling it a significant achievement. He assured support to AUDCSU for the welfare and development of the campus. General secretary Barnabas Killing added that KSA remains committed to collaborating with AUDCSU on campus issues and initiatives.

The felicitation was attended by KSA-Inglongpho CEC members, including vice president George Timung, assistant general secretary Probinson Englung, finance secretary Baliram Engti and office secretary Pimpo Teron.

# Residents protest halt of Balajan-Basugaon road project

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Nov 11:** Residents of the greater Kali Pukhuri area, predominantly inhabited by the Koch-Rajbongshi community, staged a protest over what they allege is a political conspiracy to halt the construction of a road and permanent bridge over the Champabati River connecting parts of Kokrajhar district.

The protest took place at Kali Pukhuri Bazaar crossroads on Tuesday, with locals demanding the completion of the road and bridge to improve connectivity.

During the 2024 Lok Sabha and 2025 BTC election campaigns, Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma had promised construction of the Balajan-Basugaon road under the "BB Road - Asom Mala" project. A tender notice was issued on October 14, with submission dates from October 22 to November 7. However, the tender process scheduled to conclude on November 8 was suddenly cancelled, sparking outrage.

The road is crucial for access to Kokrajhar Medical College, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar University, banks and markets. Residents allege political motives behind the cancellation and warned that if construction is not resumed, the BJP could face backlash in the 2026 Assembly elections.



The protest took place at Kali Pukhuri Bazaar crossroads on Tuesday, with locals demanding the completion of the road and bridge to improve connectivity.

# DMC Mayor's room vandalised in Dibrugarh

**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, Nov 11:** The door lock and glass tabletop in Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation (DMC) Mayor Dr Saikat Patra's office were reportedly damaged by Deputy Mayor Ujjal Phukan on Sunday evening, while the Mayor was away in Delhi attending the National Urban Conclave on November 8-9.

Speaking to reporters, Mayor Patra condemned the incident, saying, "Everything should be resolved through dialogue, not violence. DMC is one of the oldest civic bodies in Assam and such actions defame its decades-long legacy." He added that the dispute may be related to a tender committee formed for the renovation of his old office in which the Deputy Mayor was not included.

Deputy Mayor Ujjal Phukan, however, denied the allegations, stating, "I have no separate room in DMC and our discussion in the Mayor's office was not a big issue. We have many important tasks to focus on." Sources confirmed that no office is allotted to the Deputy Mayor, as he had vacated his previous room for the DMC Commissioner.

# Assam Police restore peace in Gurufela



**HT Correspondent**

**GOSSAIGAON, Nov 11:** A remarkable transformation has taken place in Gurufela under Kachugaon Police Station in Gossaigaon subdivision, where an area once troubled by illegal and anti-social activities is now experiencing peace and stability, thanks to the sustained efforts of the Assam Police.

According to sources, Mridul Baruah, Officer-in-Charge of the Gurufela Police Outpost has been serving in the post for the past four months. During this period, strict enforcement measures, continuous

surveillance and active community engagement have led to the complete eradication of gambling, illegal lottery operations and other unlawful activities in the locality. His proactive approach to policing has earned wide public appreciation.

Residents expressed their gratitude to the Assam Police for restoring normalcy and social harmony. They noted that earlier, anti-social elements exploited vulnerable sections of society, causing unrest and economic loss. The recent police action has not only curbed these problems but also rebuilt public confidence in law enforcement.

Officer-in-Charge Mridul Baruah urged citizens to stay alert and cooperate with police by reporting any suspicious or illegal activities. He emphasised that lasting peace and security can only be achieved through continued community cooperation.

The Gurufela success story stands as an inspiring example of how committed policing and active public participation can eliminate social evils and create a safer, progressive society.

# Students, ex-servicemen and social groups participate in padyatra honouring Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel 'Sardar @150 Unity March' to celebrate National Unity Day

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Nov 11:** Joining the nation in celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Iron Man of India, the district-level padyatra - 'Sardar @150 Unity March' was held from Taralango Clock Tower to Karbi Anglong Sports Association (KASA) stadium on Tuesday. The march saw participation from school and college students, ex-servicemen, various social organisations and political party members. The nationwide programme "Sardar @150 Unity March" was launched by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports and coincides with Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day).

The District Administration of Karbi Anglong in collaboration with the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and Mera Yuva Bharat, organised the event. Chief Executive Member (CEM) KAAC, Dr Tuliram Ronghang, flagged off the march in the presence of KAAC Chairman



Raju Tisso, MP Amarsing Tisso, MLA Darsing Ronghang, EMS and MACS, District Commissioner Nirola Phangchopi, ACS Jiten Bey and State vice president, BJYM, Assam Pradesh.

Before the flag-off, Karbi cultural troupe performed the Hacha Kekan (post-harvesting dance) and an Assamese troupe presented a Bihu dance. Hundreds of students from schools including Don Bosco Higher Secondary School,

JNV, Chandrasing High School, Binapani High School, New Hope English High School, Covenant High School and Don Bosco Junior College joined the march, which covered a 5 km route through Taralango Clock Tower, in front of DIG Bungalow, Rongkhehan Market and Rongnighang Forest Office Tinali, culminating at KASA stadium.

At a stoppage in front of Don Bosco Higher Secondary

# Three arrested, 11 kg of ganja seized in Kokrajhar

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Nov 11:** Kokrajhar Police apprehended three individuals and seized 11 kg of suspected ganja during a special operation in Habrubil area under Gossaigaon Police Station this afternoon.

Acting on a credible tip-off regarding illegal ganja transportation, the Officer-in-Charge of Gossaigaon Police Station, along with the In-Charge of Shimulaputa TSI, conducted the operation. The accused were identified as Anowar Khan, Aman Ali and Nur Islam.

Around 11 kilograms of suspected ganja, estimated to be worth approximately ₹ 6 lakh in the black market, were recovered from their possession. The contraband was seized in the presence of independent witnesses, following legal procedures.

Police stated that further investigation is ongoing and necessary legal action has been initiated. Authorities also highlighted that



Authorities also highlighted that Kokrajhar Police have intensified efforts to combat drug abuse in the district.

# National Education Day observed at Jagiroad College

**HT Correspondent**

**JAGIROAD, Nov 11:** Jagiroad College observed National Education Day on Tuesday, commemorating the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, with a popular talk on the theme 'Gender Literacy in Creative Arts'. The event was organised by the IQAC in association with the Department of Education and the Institution's Innovation Council (IIC).

Dr Jharna Choudhury, Assistant Professor of Dimoria College, was the resource person for the programme. The session began with a welcome address by Dr Sriyani Das, Head of the Department of Education, who highlighted the role of education and creative expression in promoting gender understanding. Dr Lipika Boruah hosted the event, while Bikashita Borah introduced the resource person.

In his address, Dr Chitta Ranjan Sarkar, Coordinator, IQAC, elaborated on the concept of gender liter-

acy, stressing the need for equal participation of all genders in education, art and public life. He also recalled the historical intellectual equality exemplified in the debate between Ubhaya Bharti and Adi Shankaracharya and urged students to draw inspiration from figures like Rani Lakshmbhai and Rani Gaidinliu.

Dr Jharna Choudhury, in her presentation, discussed the evolving intersection of art and artificial intelligence, while highlighting women's contributions to traditional Indian art forms such as Alpana, Lippan and Madhubani painting.

The programme concluded with an interactive session and a vote of thanks by Dr Pallabi Devi. The event successfully underscored how gender literacy and creativity together can advance equality and cultural enrichment in the vision of a Viksit Bharat 2047.

# Kokrajhar Municipal Board holds swearing-in ceremony

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Nov 11:** The swearing-in ceremony of the newly constituted Kokrajhar Municipal Board (KMB) was held on Tuesday at the board's office premises in Kokrajhar town.

The ruling Bodoland People's Front (BPF) constituted the new KMB body after forming the government in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), securing a majority in the recently concluded BTC elections.

Additional District Commissioner (ADC) Wahidur Islam administered the oath of office in the presence of BTC Executive Member for Urban Development Moon Moon Brahma and MCLAs Doneswar Goyary and Jubiraj Basumatary.

A 20-member committee of the Kokrajhar Municipal Board was formally sworn in with Bishnu Narzary taking charge as Chairperson and Arup Ghosh as Vice-Chairman, along with the newly elected Ward Commissioners.

The BPF has been constituting local urban boards across all BTC districts, as per announcements made by the concerned authorities.

# New BJP Mahila Morcha Demow president

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, Nov 11:** Jyoti Gogoi has been appointed as president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Mahila Morcha, Demow Mandal with immediate effect. The appointment was approved by Bitupon Raidongia, president of BJP Sivasagar District and Juli Pator, president of BJP Sivasagar District Mahila Morcha, on Monday.

# Binoy Kumar Saikia wins Chirantan Rasayan Silver Star Medal

**HT Correspondent**



**JORHAT, Nov 11:** Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar awardee (2021) Binoy Kumar Saikia has been conferred the Chirantan Rasayan Sanstha Silver Star Medal for his outstanding achievements in research and innovation. Saikia, an eminent scientist and academician currently at the North East Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST), Jorhat received the honour from the Chirantan Rasayan Sanstha, established in 2016 to promote research and development across scientific disciplines.

The Society has also invited him to present the Award Lecture at the International Symposium "Science beyond Boundary: Invention, Discovery, Innovation and Society - Rasayan 22," to be held at Visvesvaraya Technological University, Muddenahalli, Chikkaballapur, Karnataka from January 8-10, 2026. His lecture, in the form of a research note or article will be published in the upcoming issue of the society's journal, Prayogik Rasayan.

Binoy Saikia's research interests include sustainable energy and environment, with a focus on coal-based nanotechnology, carbon and nanomaterials, atmospheric chemistry and energy storage devices.

# Public submits memo demanding stay on SBI employee transfer

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARALI, Nov 11:** Putul Gogoi, a temporary employee posted at the Sootea branch of State Bank of India for the past 16 years, received a transfer order from higher authorities on November 7. Due to the office holiday on November 8 and 9, the general public became aware of the transfer only on Monday.

Putul Gogoi, a local youth engaged by the bank since 2009, is closely associated with several socio-cultural organisations in the greater Sootea area. Customers frequently approached him for banking assistance, which he provided with dedication and care.

Following the news of his transfer, organisations including Sootea Nagarik Sabha, Sootea Press Club, the Sootea chapter of the Senior Citizens' Forum and the Sootea branch of Assam Sahitya Sabha submitted a memorandum to the branch manager demanding the cancellation of the transfer order.

The branch manager, however, stated that the order was issued in accordance with directives from higher authorities.



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# AYP leader slams Bireswar Medhi

**HT Correspondent**

**MORIGAON, Nov 11:** Hitting back at Bireswar Medhi, the Assam Gana Parishad's (AGP) central committee general secretary of the Assam Yuba Parishad (AYP) said that Medhi was expelled from the AGP seven years ago before joining the Assam Jatiya Parishad and has now shifted to the Congress.

AYP central committee leader Gautam Bora stated that the AGP continues to remain strong and criticised Medhi for commenting on the party after his expulsion. "A leader who was expelled from the AGP has no moral right to speak about it today," Bora said.

He further remarked that switching to the Congress does not add credibility to Medhi's political standing, adding, "In today's context, there is no relevance for leaders like Bireswar Medhi, who have no backbone."

# Elephant riding reopens at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

**HT Correspondent**

**JAGIROAD, Nov 11:** Elephant riding at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary has reopened for tourists, inaugurated on Tuesday by Chief Wildlife Warden Vinay Gupta, IFS, PCCF (WL), in the presence of Alekh Saxena, IFS, DFO Guwahati Wildlife, Mukul Tamuli, AFS, Retd ACF, Pranjal Baruah, AFS, RFO Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, along with the sanctuary's mahouts and staff.

From now onwards, tourists can enjoy elephant safaris in two morning slots at 6:30 AM and 7:30 AM. Bookings for elephant rides are available online at Pobitorasafari.in and at the help desk of Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.

Earlier, on October 23, the sanctuary had reopened its Jeep Safari for tourists, inaugurated by Forest Minister Chandra Mohon Patowary.

# Annual music festival 'Pulakit Tapoban' held



**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Nov 11:** The 24th edition of the annual music festival "Pulakit Tapoban," organised by Sur Sadhana, was recently held at Nagaon Natya Mandir auditorium. The festival is a key event in the district's music calendar.

The event was attended by several dignitaries, including renowned tabla player Raja Baruah and Nagaon University Vice-Chancellor Hitesh Deka. The festival paid tribute to legendary singer Zubeen Garg, with students of Sur Sadhana and other young artists performing his popular songs.

The programme featured soulful renditions of classical and folk music, highlighting Assam's rich musical heritage. Chief guest Raja Baruah and other dignitaries praised Sur Sadhana's efforts in promoting music education and fostering talent among the youth, while Vice-Chancellor Hitesh Deka commended the organisation's role in encouraging cultural exchange.

Notable performances were delivered by Ariful Haque, Deepak Sarma and Krishna Dulaal Baruah, among others. The event was chaired by Professor Nava Kr Mahanta and concluded with a vote of thanks by Sur Sadhana president Suwagmoni Mahanta, who expressed gratitude to the dignitaries, patrons and students for their support.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*In war the heroes always outnumber the soldiers ten to one. - H. L. Mencken*

## Left re-emerges in UK politics

Battle lines are emerging that could determine whether the left re-emerges as a serious challenger in British politics. For most of the year the main disruptor has been the right, with Reform establishing a steady lead in opinion polls and a huge march through London led by "Tommy Robinson" showcasing global far-right leaders including the world's richest man Elon Musk. Musk is a vile megalomaniac using his wealth to promote race war while fantasising about a dystopian future in which tycoons like him rule via robot armies, all-encompassing surveillance and even slave labour. Those whose fear a modern Britain dominated by precarious work, extortionate housing costs and faceless, unaccountable authority should fear the likes of Musk above all—but so far, the right has been effective at blaming immigration for the results of nearly 50 years of government of, by and for the rich. Nigel Farage's economic speech at the start of the week shows our opportunity. Reform UK's prescription is just more of the same for Britain. Farage thinks the key to growth is to unleash the City of London. Deregulate the banks, unleash the hedge fund and private equity wizards.

Yet the accumulation of staggering wealth by financiers and the asset-rich does not make ordinary people better off. We know, because it has been going on for years. Another Reform UK gimmick is selling the super-rich a "Britannia card" for £250,000 that would exempt them from tax on wealth, capital gains or income "earned" abroad: a loose concept, given the ease with which profits can be shunted from country to country. That's supposed to deal with the alleged flight of wealthy individuals from Britain's shores. Actually, Britain's rich have never had it so good. The number of billionaires in the country has more than doubled since 2010, from 74 to 156. Last year, British billionaires increased their wealth by £35 million every single day. Not only is Reform's claim that Britain is a hostile environment for the rich total nonsense, its prescriptions—more deregulation and tax cuts—are what we've had from every government for decades. As are its proposals for cutting public spending, which would make ordinary people poorer by withdrawing defined-benefit pension schemes and slashing welfare. No wonder Farage seldom dwells on his economic vision, preferring to rail about immigration.

This should be a recipe for failure. The rich and the City are not popular in Britain. But Reform thrives, because the class argument against the rich is too often absent from our politics. Labour doesn't make it: Chancellor Rachel Reeves pushes the delusion that deregulation will promote growth, while taking advice on turning the economy around from the very asset-managers, like Blackrock, who do best from the status quo.

# School amalgamation and its impact on the Education system

School amalgamation is a recent yet far-reaching strategic reform in Assam's education system, the primary objective of which is to eliminate existing inefficiencies in the field of education and establish a robust foundation for quality standards. Through this administrative measure, small schools with low student enrolment and weak infrastructure are merged with nearby larger, resource-rich educational institutions. The concept of this merger is not limited merely to the consolidation of buildings or names, but rather encompasses a broader initiative involving the centralization of financial resources, optimal utilization of human resources, and the creation of a more effective learning environment. For decades, the division into numerous small schools in Assam's rural education system has led to wastage of resources, shortage of specialized teachers, and a decline in the quality of education. This amalgamation policy, adopted to address these issues, has exerted a complex and multidimensional impact on the state's students, teachers, parents, and local communities.

The impact of amalgamation on educational standards and effectiveness is profoundly positive and fundamental. In small schools, it is often observed that due to teacher shortages, a single teacher has to instruct two or three different classes simultane-

ously. In this multi-grade teaching system, the teacher lacks sufficient time to devote proper attention to each class and every student, resulting in diminished student focus and a weakened foundation in basic learning. Following amalgamation, an adequate number of teachers is assembled in the merged school, making it possible to arrange suitable and specialized teachers for each class. Consequently, the teacher-student ratio improves, enabling teachers to address the individual needs, learning styles, and academic weaknesses of each student accordingly. This personalized attention and monitoring significantly aids students in overcoming their learning challenges and gaining a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Furthermore, larger and better-equipped schools foster a healthy educational and competitive environment where students can acquire knowledge more effectively through healthy competition and collaboration with their peers. This qualita-

tive transformation plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall educational outcomes across the state.

Many schools in Assam's rural areas remain deprived of essential facilities such as science laboratories, well-equipped libraries, computer labs, sports amenities, and modern classrooms. Providing these facilities separately in every small school would require a massive financial investment from the government, which is impractical. Through amalgamation, funds allocated for multiple schools are invested in a single central institution. This ensures the optimal use of limited financial resources and facilitates the development of a larger, state-of-the-art educational establishment. The availability of modern science laboratories and technology-based learning facilities in these amalgamated institutions allows students hands-on experience, making their knowledge more practical and applicable. Libraries and digital resources expand students' horizons of knowledge and prepare them for the challenges of the twenty-first century. This centralized and efficient utilization of resources helps control expenses related to school management and maintenance while promoting transparency in procurement processes. Through this economic efficiency, an opportunity is created for long-term financial stability in the education sector, enabling greater investment in acquiring high-standard teaching tools and teacher training.

Nevertheless, another aspect of this extensive administrative reform poses significant challenges, particularly for vulnerable sections of society and rural areas. As a result of school amalgamation, many small schools are closed, forcing students to travel long distances to the newly merged institution. In many tribal, tea garden-dominated, and remote areas of Assam, there is a lack of good roads and safe transportation systems. This daily lengthy and arduous journey considerably increases physical and mental stress for young students. It reduces their ability to concentrate on studies and may compel them to drop out unwillingly. This poses a major obstacle especially for primary-level students and girls, as parents hesitate to send their children, particularly daughters, to distant schools due to safety concerns. Consequently, there is a risk of increased dropout rates in rural communities, which seriously



undermines the core objective of ensuring universal access and equity in education. Therefore, the government must ensure safe, affordable, and free transportation for students while implementing this reform. Without an effective resolution to these social and geographical challenges, the educational benefits sought through amalgamation may not be accessible to all students.

Amalgamation has also introduced a new dimension to teachers' professional lives. Teachers transferred from small schools to larger amalgamated ones gain the opportunity to work within a bigger and more diverse teaching community. This new environment fosters collaboration, exchange of experiences, and mutual learning among teachers. The presence of subject specialists in amalgamated schools encourages teachers to enhance their expertise in their respective fields and learn new teaching techniques from others. Moreover, these larger schools are better equipped to organize regular professional development training programs and workshops for a substantial number of teachers. Such trainings inform teachers about new educational concepts, curriculum changes, and the use of information technology in the classroom. As a result, teachers become more adept at adapting to modern teaching methods, and the quality of their instruction improves. However, this transition and adaptation to a new work culture can pose a psychological challenge for some teachers, especially those long associated with their previous schools. Therefore, the education department should provide psychological and administrative support to these teachers to enable them to work effectively and comfortably in the new setting.

From a social perspective, school amalgamation is a sensitive issue. In rural societies, a school is not merely a center of education; it serves as a focal point for the

local community's social and cultural life. People in the village have years of memories and emotional attachments tied to the old school. Its closure can create a sense of emotional loss and void in the local community, somewhat weakening social cohesion and connections. The proper preservation and utilization of old school buildings also present an administrative challenge. If these buildings are not maintained and used appropriately, they may fall into ruin. The government could reduce local dissatisfaction by developing a well-planned system to repurpose these buildings as village libraries, health centers, or hubs for community development programs. Throughout this amalgamation process, it is essential to value the opinions of local parents and community members and secure their trust and cooperation. Without social acceptability, no reform can succeed in the long term. Therefore, the government should implement this policy not only based on administrative logic but also from humane and social perspectives.

In conclusion, to ensure the long-term success of amalgamation, the government must not only merge schools but also establish a continuous and rigorous monitoring system to maintain educational standards in the amalgamated institutions. This monitoring should include regular and transparent evaluations of students' academic performance, teachers' instructional effectiveness, and infrastructure utilization. Additionally, emphasis should be placed on developing administrative leadership in amalgamated schools. Only a skilled and visionary head teacher can efficiently manage a large institution and guide both teachers and students appropriately. Special training programs should be arranged for leadership development. Furthermore, ensuring financial transparency and proper fund utilization is crucial so that the economic benefits of amalgamation are genuinely applied to the advancement of the education system. The harmonious integration of these elements can transform school amalgamation into an effective and far-reaching educational reform. The goal of school amalgamation is not merely resource conservation but also to provide Assam's future generations with a healthy, robust, and high-quality education, preparing them for the challenges of the twenty-first century. Only through the proper implementation of this reform can this noble objective be achieved.

## Delhi blast: Indication of a bigger conspiracy

By: Dr Priyanka Saurabh

The explosion that occurred outside a CRPF school in the Rohini area of the national capital, Delhi, on Sunday morning shook the entire nation. This was not merely an accident, but likely hints at a larger conspiracy. Such an explosion near a security forces school in the national capital not only raises questions about the vigilance of security agencies but also warns that terrorist and subversive forces remain active and seek opportunities to carry out their nefarious designs.

The blast occurred near the wall of the CRPF Public School in Rohini Sector 14. Locals heard a loud explosion around 7 a.m. The blast was so powerful that it shattered glass windows in nearby houses and shops, created a hole in the wall, and caused momentary panic in the area. Fortunately, the school was closed, preventing any casualties. However, it is more a matter of concern than relief that if this incident had occurred while the school was open, it could have resulted in a major tragedy.

Delhi Police, NIA, NSG, and forensic teams immediately arrived at the scene and began an investigation. Investigations revealed white powder, wire fragments, and traces of explosive material, raising the possibility that a crude bomb or improvised explosive device (IED) was used in the blast. Investigative agencies have examined CCTV footage, which shows a suspicious young man in a white T-shirt roaming around the area. Meanwhile, a channel on the social media platform Telegram claimed responsibility for the blast, which was later linked to pro-Khalistani elements. While this claim has not been confirmed by investigating agencies, it certainly suggests the involvement of an organized network.

Delhi is the nation's capital—home to Parliament, the Supreme Court, the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Prime Minister's Office, and the headquarters of central security agencies. An explosion like this represents a serious security lapse. Even more concerning is the fact that the blast occurred outside a CRPF school—near an institution that itself is affiliated with the country's most powerful paramilitary force. It's natural to ask: If such an incident can occur near a security force post, how safe is the civilian population? The Delhi Police and intelligence agencies must now adopt a proactive strategy, not just a reactive one—that is, they must identify and neutralize such threats beforehand, not after the incident.

Such incidents not only cause physical damage but also create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity in society. Such an explosion in the capital reinforces the belief among ordinary citizens that terrorist forces can strike at any time, anywhere. A blast outside a school impacts the morale of children, parents, and teachers. If the schools where children attend begin to feel unsafe, this situation is not a good sign for our democracy.

Following such incidents, political parties launch into a flurry of statements—some calling it a fail-

ure of law and order, others a political conspiracy. But the truth is that terrorism and anti-national activities are not the preserve of any party or ideology; they are against all of humanity. Therefore, in such cases, the need of the hour is to transcend political considerations and prioritize national security. The central and state governments must jointly formulate policies that are not limited to mere paperwork, but ensure concrete preventive measures on the ground.

Today, terrorists and anti-social elements are moving away from traditional methods and using digital platforms, social media, and the dark web. Attempts to claim responsibility through Telegram channels are part of this trend—making it easier to spread terror, sow confusion, and derail investigations. Therefore, security agencies must now focus on cyber intelligence as much as they do on physical security. Monitoring fake messages, hacking networks, and digital funding is essential. Every time such an incident occurs, we remain silent, assuming that security agencies will handle everything. But the truth is that ordinary citizens are also the first line of defense. Keeping an eye out for suspicious objects, unknown persons, or unusual activity and immediately notifying the police should become a civic duty. Security doesn't come only from guns and bulletproof vests, but also from vigilant civic consciousness.

*The blast at Delhi's Rohini CRPF school is not merely an accident but a sign of a deeper conspiracy. This incident reveals that even a place considered safe like the capital is vulnerable to terrorists and anti-social elements. Such an incident among children is intolerable and horrifying. The government must ensure that investigative agencies take swift action and severely punish the culprits*

India has long been a victim of cross-border terrorism. The capital, Delhi, and other metropolitan cities have been targeted by terrorist organizations on numerous occasions. Incidents like the Rohini bombing are a stark reminder that our adversaries are constantly active and attempting to destabilize the country's stability. Therefore, India must further strengthen its internal security policy—especially by enhancing its technological capabilities for intelligence surveillance of urban areas.

Each such incident takes months to reach a conclusion. It's crucial to provide periodic updates to the public to prevent rumors from spreading. Security reviews around all central and paramilitary institutions should be conducted immediately. Strict action should be taken against extremist messages and channels on social media. Engaging citizens in security operations—running awareness campaigns in schools and markets—is also essential. All parties should issue statements on such matters from a single platform, so that the enemy doesn't perceive the country as internally divided.

While the blast in Delhi's Rohini area fortunately didn't result in any major casualties, it does remind us that the threat of terrorism still exists all around us. This isn't just a police case, but a matter of national security, social cohesion, and civic responsibility. We need to treat the incident not as just "an explosion," but as a warning—a warning that there's no room for complacency.

The nation's security rests not solely on the shoulders of its soldiers, but in the vigilance and unity of every citizen. If we all remain vigilant, aware, and united—no conspiracy can break us.

## Delhi Blast: A conspiracy to halt India's rise

By: Prof Mahesh Chand Gupta

The massive explosion that shook Delhi last evening has jolted the entire nation. According to preliminary reports, nine people have been killed and more than two dozen injured in this blast. Terrorists have previously targeted public transport, various markets, and religious places in Delhi, but due to the government's strict vigilance, they could not carry out their nefarious acts in the capital for fourteen years. After such a long gap, this new attempt by terrorists is not just an act of violence—it is a well-planned effort to disrupt India's peace, stability, and journey of progress. This blast is a conspiracy to stop a rising India.

Since the formation of the Modi government in 2014, the country has been steadily climbing the ladder of progress. Nationalism is fading away. The wheel of development is spinning rapidly across the nation. India's economy, infrastructure, and global stature have grown remarkably. The nation has become the world's fifth-largest economy and is now advancing toward the goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047. Amid this rise, India's internal stability, technological advancement, and global acceptance have made its enemy nations uneasy—especially Pakistan. Struggling with failed politics and a crumbling economy, Pakistan is unable to digest India's growth.

Since 2014, the Pakistani leadership has spent less time thinking about building their own nation and more on devising ways to harm India. India's progress pricks their eyes, and its internal peace disturbs them. Particularly after the Modi government came to power, Pakistan has failed to execute any major terrorist attack within India.

There was a time when the entire country lived under fear and insecurity. Terrorist attacks had become common. Whenever they wished, terrorists would infiltrate across the border and massacre innocent civilians in Indian cities. Bomb blasts from city to city were part of daily life. While Pakistan maintained firing along the borders, it simultaneously fueled terrorism within India.

For Pakistan-backed terrorists, Delhi, Mumbai, and Jammu & Kashmir have always been prime targets. We still remember many of those attacks. But after 2014, cross-border infiltration attempts by terrorists have suf-



fered massive losses. India has adopted a strong policy of eliminating terrorists at the border itself and intensifying the cleanup of those who manage to enter the country.

Frustrated terrorists have indeed attempted attacks in Kashmir's Pulwama and Uri, at Punjab's Pathankot Airbase, and on tourists in Pahalgam. However, India's retaliatory strikes on terrorist bases across the border have isolated Pakistan globally.

India's decisive actions—like the 2016 Surgical Strike, 2019 Balakot Air Strike, and 2025 Operation Sindoor—have sent a clear message to the world that India is no longer a nation that merely endures attacks; it knows how to respond. Following these operations, the international community now recognizes Pakistan as a sponsor of terrorism. The recent blast in Delhi, therefore, may well be the desperate last attempt of a failing terror network.

Although investigations are still underway and agencies have not yet made any official statements, every citizen knows that the blast near the Red Fort is the result of Pakistan's malicious mindset. Delhi is the heart of India. The motive behind carrying out such an act here is to attract global attention. For fourteen years, terrorists failed to execute their plans in Delhi. They may be celebrating this attack now, but their joy will soon turn into mourning—because the Modi government will not spare anyone who dares to cast an evil eye on India. Those terrorists and their masters seem to have forgotten that Operation Sindoor is not yet over. They will soon realize this mistake.

As someone who has lived in Delhi for over five and a half decades, I, like many others, am deeply saddened but not disheartened. We trust our nation. I

have witnessed both peaceful and turbulent days in Delhi. Over the last four decades, Delhi has faced numerous terrorist attacks. Before Modi came to power, our capital was often a prime target. In the past two decades alone, more than 100 people have lost their lives, and over 500 have been injured in Delhi's terror attacks. The December 13, 2001 attack on Parliament was an assault on the sovereignty of the nation.

Not just Delhi and Mumbai—cities like Jaipur, Ajmer, Malegaon, Srinagar, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Rampur, Hyderabad, Coimbatore, and Varanasi—have all suffered from terrorist plots. However, the Modi government's strong internal security measures have prevented such designs from succeeding. I still recall September 7, 2011, when a suitcase bomb exploded outside Gate No. 5 of the Delhi High Court, killing 17 people and injuring 76. Since then, our security has strengthened considerably—but this recent blast has again forced us to think deeply. Just hours before the explosion, an ISIS-linked module was busted in Faridabad, where eight individuals, including three doctors, were arrested. The police recovered 2,900 kilograms of explosive material, an assault rifle, and an AK-47 from them. This clearly indicates that the Delhi blast is connected to that same network. Had this module not been caught in time, the devastation could have spread to multiple cities.

India's intelligence and security agencies have significantly weakened the terror infrastructure in the past decade. Cross-border infiltration has dropped by nearly 60 percent, and local recruitment by terror outfits in Jammu & Kashmir has declined. Coordination among our various security and intelligence agen-

cies is stronger than ever. Still, this attack signals that terrorist organizations remain active in some form and continue to receive financial and ideological support from abroad.

For people like me, who have lived in Delhi for over five decades, this incident is painful. We have seen those dark days when markets, buses, and temples witnessed serial bomb blasts. Today's Delhi is far safer than before—but this blast is a stark reminder that complacency in security can never be an option. All security measures must be reviewed again. The government must tighten its systems further to ensure that terrorists never succeed in their sinister plans.

While the government is doing its job, the opposition parties too must act responsibly. This is not the time for political point-scoring. When the nation's security is at stake, it is not just the government's test—it is the test of the entire country. Unfortunately, at times, statements from opposition leaders, knowingly or unknowingly, strengthen the enemy's narrative. They must realize that India's unity is its greatest strength.

Delhi is the heart of India. This blast is not just an attack on a city but a blow to the nation's confidence and global rise. Yet India is no longer a country that bows down or fears. Those forces envious of India's progress must remember—this is New India, which not only endures attacks but knows how to strike back. The entire nation must stand united to show terrorists and their supporters that no matter the differences in color, dress, or language, every Indian stands as one. (The author is a renowned educationist, thinker, and speaker who served as a professor at the University of Delhi for four decades.)

# Women in blue - shattering stereotypes, forging legacies

By: Amal Chandra

It was never merely a cricket match, nor just another trophy. When the lights dimmed at Navi Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium on 2 November 2025 and Harmanpreet Kaur lifted the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup to a sky ablaze with fireworks, it felt as though a nation had exhaled after decades of holding its breath. India had finally conquered the world stage in women's cricket — a '1983 moment' — defeating South Africa by 52 runs in a performance both poetic and powerful. Smriti Mandhana's exquisite 134 not out was a masterclass in grace, while Deepti Sharma's composed half-century and five-wicket haul sealed the triumph. Beyond the roar was something quieter: India's daughters had rewritten their place in the country's sporting imagination.

This victory was about courage, conviction, and the invisible labour of those who dreamed when no one was watching. For five decades, Indian women's cricket has been a story of defiance — of women who played not for fame but for the right to belong. It began in 1973 under pioneers like Shantha Rangaswamy, whose team played on empty fields with borrowed kits. Their debut came against the West Indies in 1976, but progress was slow and underfunded. Milestones came quietly: the first ODI win in 1982, runners-up finishes in 2005 and 2017, and flashes of brilliance that never quite set the nation alight. By 2025, all that had changed. The Women in Blue had turned history on its head. With 168 ODI victories, seven Test wins, and consistent T20I performances, their dominance was undeniable. This World Cup win — the first by a non-Western nation — shattered the duopoly of Australia and England. Mandhana's century became the highest score in a Women's World Cup final, while Sharma's 5/34 made her the first Indian woman to take a five-for in a global decider.

Over 500 million people watched the semi-final against Australia — proof India wasn't watching women's cricket out of novelty, but necessity. Behind these numbers lie stories that mirror India's social mosaic. Harmanpreet Kaur, the captain from Moga,



began with a bat her father carved from a willow branch. She faced resistance from those who saw cricket as a man's game, yet persisted, debuting in 2009 and leading India to Commonwealth gold in 2022. Mandhana's story is one of resolve — from a wrist fracture at eleven to becoming the first Indian woman to score a double hundred in ODIs.

Deepti Sharma's journey — from being trolled for an overstep in 2022 to hero of 2025 — reads like redemption. Richa Ghosh, from Bengal, became the first Indian to win the U-19 (2023), WPL (2024), and senior World Cup before turning twenty-three — proof that a generation now believes no ceiling is unbreakable.

This diversity is the team's quiet strength. The 2025 squad represents India's regions — from Maharashtra's academies to Bengal's maidans, Gujarat's outfields to Himachal's hilltop pitches. In them, India sees itself: urban and rural, privileged and striving, multiethnic yet united by hope. Yet the ascent of women's cricket has not come without bruises. For

decades, players carried not just kits but the weight of inequality. It was only in 2022 that the BCCI announced equal match fees — Rs 15 lakh for Tests, 76 lakh for ODIs, and Rs 3 lakh for T20Is — a landmark step. Until then, women earned a fraction of men's pay. Even now, gaps persist: the Women's World Cup prize money was Rs 51 crore, far below Rs 125 crore for the men's event. Beyond pay, women's matches still fight for coverage and legitimacy. Players face online abuse and intrusive questions about "settling down". Only one in five of BCCI's 40,000 grounds hosts women's tournaments. The inequity runs deep, but the resistance runs deeper.

The Women's Premier League (WPL), launched in 2023, marked a turning point. The first season became the most-watched domestic women's league, attracting sponsors and global viewers. The professionalisation of the women's game is now real. Its social impact is profound. In a country where girls' sports long occupied the margins, the WPL and the national team's success are rewriting that story. More parents are enrolling daughters in academies, and brands are finally backing female athletes. The question has shifted from whether women can play to how far they can go. As the Women in Blue prepare for the home Ashes in 2026, the challenge moves from conquest to continuity. The BCCI plans to reinvest WPL earnings into grassroots academies.

Yet the revolution remains incomplete until the gender gap in visibility and endorsements — with male cricketers still earning nearly four times more — is narrowed. India's Women in Blue are not anomalies; they are the nation's truest reflection — rising from the same soil that births its contradictions, where girls are taught to shrink their dreams yet choose to stand tall. When Harmanpreet lifted the trophy under the Mumbai night sky, she wasn't merely holding silver; she was carrying the legacy of countless women who were told they couldn't — and proved they could. For every young girl gripping a bat in a dusty field, this moment is both a mirror and a message: play boldly, live freely, and dream without limits. (Courtesy: The Pioneer)

## 'Bread of Angels': Musician-poet Patti Smith's intimate new memoir is a quest for her true self

By: Liz Evans

Patti Smith's new memoir, *Bread of Angels*, arrives on a significant date. On November 4, 1946, Smith's artistic soulmate and first true love, the late photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, was born. Forty-eight years later, on the same day, her "king among men", beloved husband and fellow musician, Fred "Sonic" Smith, died of a heart attack.

It seems entirely fitting that this most intimate, comprehensive book — a decade in the making — should be published on such a hallowed day, almost 50 years exactly since her debut album, *Horses*, was released.

"The hourglass overturns," she writes in the opening pages, shattering the illusion of time. "Each grain a word that erupts into a thousand more, the first and last moments of every living thing."

Like her poetry, Smith's life writing is profound and illuminating. The award-winning *Just Kids* (a reader-voted New York Times best book of the 21st century) details her extraordinary relationship with Mapplethorpe, as the two establish their artistic careers in New York during the 1970s. *M Train* and *Year of the Monkey* offer insights into her spiritual outlook and creative process as she contemplates the passing of time while travelling the world. Devotion explores the business of writing as a call to action that keeps her from being subsumed by the work of others.

*Bread of Angels* folds all of this together, weaving reverie, dreams, visions and images into an autobiographical tale of deep love, unbearable loss, fortitude and artistic practice. Inevitably, some of the details appear in Smith's previous works, but here she spins them anew, casting a more intimate light, achieving a greater sense of completion.

Loosely arranged around the recurring motif of the "rebel hump", ultimately, this book is the story of Smith's quest for her true self. It follows her on a journey of individuation, through one painful growth period after another, as she strives to disguise the "miniature Quasimodo" that lurks, metaphorically, inside her body.

Over the decades, Smith edges her way around her "unbecoming" hump, harnessing her innate curiosity and powerful imagination into a foundation of unshakeable self-belief and self-possession. An inimitable force, she develops a level of conviction that borders on hubris yet rests on humility, as she takes her cues from the spirit world.

Naturally reflective, with a questioning mind, Smith continually wonders who she is and who she is becoming. At the same time, she resists self-doubt and refuses compromise. "I always felt like myself," she writes. "And there were times when I didn't identify with anybody."

Her physical image develops accordingly. Now almost 79, with her wild grey hair, soulful, smiling eyes and an arresting gaze, Smith possesses the hard-won beauty of wisdom. She is a younger woman on the cover of her new book: alluring and ethereal, her introspective expression contrasting with a gesture of supplication.

The photograph, taken by Mapplethorpe for her 1979 album, *Wave*, was intended to capture the essence of Dancing Barefoot, her love song for Fred — and to bid her fans farewell on the eve of her retirement.

**Quivering with meaning**  
Beginning with her childhood, *Bread of Angels* recalls Smith's life through significant events and personal experiences that quiver with meaning. It spans her impoverished upbringing in Philadelphia and her pivotal role as a post-punk revolutionary in New York, to family life in Michigan with Fred — and finally her return, through grief, to writing, travel and performance.

Throughout, Smith navigates the world by symbols and synchronicity, finding sacred patterns and purpose where others might see only luck or coincidence. At seven, a dangerous bout of scarlet fever is a "mystical illness" to be conquered so she can atone for stealing from a friend who dies of lupus. At ten, a broken foot is a reminder to keep a clear head. During a growth spurt, she finds affinity with the local weed trees. "You are my bamboo, I would whisper, the princesses of the train yard."

Smith was born in Chicago, with bronchial distress, on December 30, 1946, to Beverly, a widowed waitress, and her second husband, Grant, a returning soldier weakened by malaria. A sickly but spirited girl, she grew up in condemned housing with three younger siblings.

Talkative and curious, Smith led her brother and sisters in elaborate games, throwing herself into boisterous play, fending off the local bullies, finding solace in quiet pockets of nature with the precious books that fed her inner world.

Entranced by her favourite fairy tales, she would toss her pocket money into the overgrown garden of an abandoned cottage in the hope it would transform into gold, and once spent the morning communing with a snapping "king" turtle instead of going to school. A social studies project initiated

her interest in Buddhism. She felt the presence of spirits in the fields around her home and believed in the magical properties of material objects.

Reluctant to lose her sense of wonder, she resolved to stay connected to these more visionary realms as she grew older, like "a singular traveller in search of the garden of childhood's hour". On a family outing to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 13-year-old Smith came across the work of Picasso and vowed to dedicate herself to the transformative power of art. Adolescence brought poetry and music in the shape of Oscar Wilde, Mexican artist Diego Rivera, French poet Arthur Rimbaud and Bob Dylan.

But at 19, while training to be a schoolteacher, Smith was prematurely wrenched into adulthood through pregnancy. Faced with little choice for her child, she arranged an adoption and underwent a lonely and difficult birth. Physically and emotionally scarred, dismissed from college, she packed a suitcase, turned her back on her family, and boarded a bus for New York: heartbroken, but intent on keeping her promise to Picasso. The year was 1967.

### Just Kids

In the city, Smith met Mapplethorpe. The pair became key players in New York's vibrant community of visionaries and creatives, while embarking on an intense relationship. Eventually, his attraction to men split them up, but the pair remained deeply bound to each other within the socially and culturally progressive arts movements of the late 60s and early 70s.

*Just Kids* offers a poignant close-up of this period, chronicling the details of the couple's formative years together. The new book focuses more on Smith's spiritual evolution and changing identity within her social milieu during this time. As her musical and artistic circles expanded, she drew on a widening range of influences while staying true to herself, all the while, asking: "How should I cast my soul?"

New York's burgeoning underground music scene provided the answer. In 1971, Smith began performing her poetry, accompanied by guitarist Lenny Kaye. Before long, she gathered her band and transmuted into a rock 'n' roll revolutionary, claiming her territory with thrilling live shows. In 1975, her groundbreaking debut album, *Horses*, was released to critical acclaim.

With its improvisational direction and Mapplethorpe's iconic cover photograph, *Horses* embodied freedom and defiance. Opening with a reworking of Van Morrison's *Gloria*, a sexual song clearly intended to be sung by a man, the record confronted the limitations of duality, refused the constraints of convention and issued an explosive challenge to the establishment. Smith was launched as the high priestess of punk and set off on the road with her band, entrancing audiences across America with her bewitching stage presence.

"I had new dark glasses, charms sweet angels stitched on my sleeve," writes Smith of her new incarnation. "The hyena was showing her wet teeth [...] We were touring *Horses*, riding straight into the future."

### Life-changing love

Four months after the release of *Horses*, at a party before her show in Detroit, Smith had a momentary but fateful encounter with former MC5 guitarist Fred "Sonic" Smith. Touring commitments dictated the initial pace of their relationship, but Smith knew this tall, brooding man with the pale blue eyes would alter the course of her life.

After recording her second album, *Radio Ethiopia*, another turning point occurred in January 1977: supporting roots rock musician Bob Seger in Florida, Smith tumbled from a dangerously high stage and sustained serious injuries. Left with fractures to her skull and spine, she was forced into a lengthy rehabilitation but chose to find divine meaning and creative direction in her accident. Encouraged by Lenny Kaye, she spent her recovery writing poems for what would become her first published volume, *Babel*.

During this time, her love for Fred deepened. But as she grew stronger, she began to grapple with her need to write in solitude, and the opposing impulse to get back on the road.

In 1979, two more albums later (*Easter and Wave*, each containing songs either inspired by or co-written with Fred), Smith finally departed from rock 'n' roll — after the theft of a tour truck in Chicago.

Exhausted by constant travel between New York and Fred in Detroit, she was no longer writing, drawing or journaling. She interpreted the robbery as an opportunity and conducted a psychological and emotional audit. "I threw open the carpet of my life," she writes. "It was time to hold myself accountable, trusting there was no harsher judge nor jury."

In a typically symbolic gesture, towards the end of what proved to be her final show in September, she invited the crowd to swarm the stage, encouraging her fans to replace her by occupying their own central positions instead.

And so, aged 32, Smith arrived at her next point of departure, or her "second declaration of existence", as she calls it.

A few months after her final show, during the leap year of 1980, she and Fred were married in a small, private ceremony at the Mariners' Church in Detroit, at the time of a full moon, on March 1.

### A life of quiet romance

Away from the spotlight, Smith lived a life of quiet romance in St Clair Shores, near Detroit, with her husband. Beyond the confines of time, tied to nobody but each other, the couple fell into their own rhythms, creating a home in a little Belgian-style house, complete with a turret. Here, with her low table, a Moroccan silk cushion and a Persian cup for her mint tea, she found a way to be "entirely myself", writing and ruminating in the room she called "my vagabondia".

The couple's occasionally lonely existence was obscure and authentic. It required Smith to grow into a better version of herself, both as a person and a writer. All the while, her mind and imagination continued to dance, nourishing her internal world while she performed her domestic tasks and renovated a boat with Fred.

In time, the couple had two children, Jackson, born in 1982 and Jesse, born in 1987, and the days took on a different shape. With a family to support, Smith and Fred needed to generate an income. Together, they wrote and recorded *Dream of Life* (released in 1988) and planned a follow-up album with the working title, *Going West*.

In March 1989, Mapplethorpe succumbed to complications from HIV in a Boston hospital. Utterly bereft, Smith channelled her grief into *The Coral Sea*, a loving tribute of prose poetry to the man she refers to as her "artist in life".

The following year, Fred fell ill. After a few difficult months of sickness, he was admitted to the hospital where his children were born. Aged 46, he died from a heart attack on what would have been Mapplethorpe's 43rd birthday, November 4, 1994.

### Loss and renewed purpose

Smith briefly refers to Fred as a "troubled man" whose health was damaged by drugs in his late teens and twenties. "I was never to penetrate the true nature of those troubles," she writes, adding "his decline was the tragedy of my life, and it profits no one to outline the private battles of a very private man." Heartbroken, she lay her personal king and protector to rest in the church where they married, wearing the expensive black gown she wore when they met. At the memorial service, she sang *What a Wonderful World*, after hearing it on the car radio on her way there. She didn't particularly like the song, but Fred had always deemed it hers because of her optimistic nature. Now, it seemed he was insisting she perform it just for him.

By Christmas, Smith had regained enough energy to buy presents for her children, but on her return from the toy shop, she suffered another blow. She came home to the news that her brother Todd had died from a stroke.

Smith was broken by this third, devastating bereavement. She stopped writing, retreated into a state of emptiness, and waited for a sign from Fred. In February 1995, while the snow was falling and her children were asleep, she received a phone call from REM's singer, Michael Stipe, who told her how sorry he was about her husband. Knowing she was alone, he offered to be her Valentine, a kindness which touched her deeply. Very slowly, with the support of friends, Smith began another journey towards yet another new life back in New York. It was not an easy return. The city had changed beyond recognition since she left, and she was set adrift, wandering through the streets in tears. One day, wearing Fred's leather jacket, she bumped into photographer Annie Leibovitz, who whisked the grief-stricken, disoriented singer away to her studio. There, they shot what would eventually be the cover photograph for *Gone Again*, the album first mapped out with Fred as *Going West*.

### Recognising the rebel hump

The closing chapters of this shimmering memoir pay homage to Smith's parents, Grant and Beverly, as she recovers long-held secrets regarding her genetic identity and searches for her first, adopted daughter. These interlocking, profoundly moving stories offer the author a certain resolution as she pieces her personal puzzle together, working from the future back into the past.

Shifting, recalibrating, ultimately settling, by tracing "the blood of my mosaic", she is left with a new understanding of herself — and her parents — and is able to locate herself more firmly within the world.

In the concluding pages, from a hotel room in Nice, fittingly overlooking the Bay of Angels, she returns to the motif of the rebel hump as she muses on the ways in which she has changed and not changed over the years.

She imagines a young girl plucking a mirror from the grass. A girl who leaps with joy and lands with delicate certainty — who now accepts the rebel hump, finally recognising its value in a conscious, and loving, act of integration. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

## Hair care during pregnancy

By: Shahnaz Husain

Pregnancy is the time when the body of a woman goes through a lot of changes physically and on the hormone level. For instance, the gestation period when the body is invested in nurturing the foetus all the nutrition is supplemented or rather re-directed there. At this time if the woman is not taking proper diet and her dietary requirements are not fulfilled it leads to deficiencies and hormonal fluctuations that directly impact hair growth.

Reduced hair growth accompanied with hair fall. After pregnancy it takes a lot of time for the body to return to normal, thus due to heavy hair fall women experience hair thinning. Physical stress and emotional adjustment to new life after delivery is a huge change for her to get used to, with this disrupts hair growth. Additionally, the body is breastfeeding and it needs more nutrition, when essential vitamins, such as Vitamin B and iron and zinc are lacking in diet it leads to heavy hair fall.

Some women who suffer massive blood loss post-pregnancy are low in iron that leads to hair fall. Thyroid imbalances too is one of the major reasons for reduced hair growth that is noticeable by hair thinning.

It is essential to plan a proper diet that would supplement you with Omega-3, Vitamins D, C and B12. Calcium and supplement you with iron and protein. When your body receives ample nutrition then you can expect healthy hair. However, I always suggest in obtaining supplements through natural sources instead of pill popping until it is the suggested course of action by your doctor.

The right time when you should begin your hair treatment or hair care regime should be at the time of your second trimester, it is relatively safer. It specially goes for the time when you are getting your hair dye done but it should be chemical free, opting for a vegetable-based colour or organic henna.

You can easily indulge in a gentle hair massage to relax yourself, getting your hair trim appointments, and using natural treatments with precautions are some of the safer options. However, you should be cautious about certain hair treatments like hair straightening, keratin, and certain products for removing dandruff, these contain harmful ingredients and very strong chemicals that when inhaled are detrimental to your health and the health of foetus. It is essential to first consult your dermatologist, check the ingredients of your hair products and let your doctor know of any such procedure that you may undertake for your hair care.

These days it is hard to define what is safe if we are looking for specific products. However, choosing products that are based on natural ingredients that contain plant extracts, botanical blends and essential oils. Organic and herbal extracts all based in nature, without the use of harsh chemical formulation.

For instance, it is safe for pregnant and postpartum women to use herbal shampoos, herb infused hair oils, conditioners that are free of harsh chemicals and products that are gentle on scalp and hair.

Hair care during pregnancy requires a robust routine that is supportive of hormonal health and manage your natural hair cycle. Therefore, it becomes essential to have a proper understanding of what needs to be done and what should be avoided.

Let your hair remain natural rather than dyeing your hair or getting it permed or highlighted. As whatever you put on your scalp gets absorbed in your blood stream too.

Avoid any hair treatments that consist of chemicals similar to or exactly like, minoxidil.

If you feel like getting your hair some highlights then only get the tips of hair done that is safe option.

Be cautious of using shampoo or conditioner with harsh or harmful chemicals. Avoid combing your hair when it's wet as it is prone to breakage.

DIY home remedy to strengthen hair follicles and for shine is boiling handful of curry leaves with coconut oil. Let it cool and use this mix as a hair mask an hour prior to shampoo.

Mixing sesame oil with few drops of lavender essential oil for hair growth or rosemary essential oil will help achieve thick hair.

Healthy hair is the result of a balanced diet that should comprise of proteins that can be supplemented through eggs, tofu, pulses and cheese. Iron is essential to provide strength to your hair so, include beetroot, legumes, jaggery, dates and spinach. Vitamin D and calcium are essential part of hair growth therefore I suggest including milk, sesame seeds and ragi, of course sunlight exposure too is one way of supplementing your body with ample of Vitamin D. include all kinds of nuts and seeds in your diet and remember to supplement your diet with Vitamin C with citrus fruits and Amla.

Different hair types have different requirements, but a healthy diet is always the key to keep your hair healthy. However, for different hair types, you can opt for some simple solutions:

- If you have fine hair then volumizing shampoos and conditioners are the best.

- For wavy hair consider using anti-frizz products and ensure that your hair ends are ample hydrated.

- For thick hair moisturizing shampoos and conditioners work best.

- Curly hair requires deep conditioning and leave-in conditioners.

- Oily hair need scalp clarifying shampoos to help get rid of buildup but remember to choose lightweight conditioners.

# 'India has fought the scourge of terrorism for several decades'

## India tells UNSC it has suffered from cross-border terror, illicit arms trafficking

**UNITED NATIONS, Nov 11:** India has suffered from cross-border terrorism carried out using illicit weapons trafficked across its borders, New Delhi's envoy at the UN has said, in a thinly-veiled reference to Pakistan.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Parvathani Harish stressed on Monday that the UN Security Council must have a zero-tolerance approach towards those who facilitate and sponsor the use and movement of such weapons.

"India has fought the scourge of terrorism for several decades and is therefore aware of the dangers posed by the diversion and illicit transfer of small arms and ammunition to armed non-State actors and terrorist groups," Harish said Monday at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Small Arms.

Harish's remarks in the UN headquarters came hours after a deadly and high-intensity explosion rocked the Red Fort area in New Delhi and killed at least nine people while injuring many more.

The explosion ripped through a slow-moving car at a traffic signal near the Red Fort metro station on Monday evening.

"India has suffered due to cross-border terrorism carried out using illicit weapons trafficked across our borders, including now through the use of drones," Harish said, in an apparent reference to Pakistan.

"The increase in the volume and sophistication of such arsenals reminds us that these groups cannot sustain themselves without being enabled, financed or supported," he added.

India told the powerful UN Security Council that the illicit trafficking of small



arms and related ammunition continues to be a major factor sustaining armed groups and terrorist organisations.

"The consistent access of such entities to weapons highlights the need for coordinated action to prevent their acquisition. The Security Council must continue to uphold a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to those who facilitate, sponsor, finance or enable the use and movement of such weapons," Harish said.

India also stressed that arms embargoes authorised by the Council are an important tool to restrict the flow of weapons into conflict zones and must be implemented consistently, objectively and without selectivity.

Harish noted that the illicit trade, trafficking and diversion of small arms and light

weapons remain a major threat to international peace and security.

As a complex and multidimensional problem, it has a cross-cutting impact on development, security, humanitarian and socio-economic aspects, he said.

Emphasising that India attaches high importance to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Harish said an integrated approach to their management requires addressing both the security and developmental dimensions.

He outlined key elements that are critical for effective small arms and light weapons control, including national ownership through strong legislation and political commitment, and a standardised organisational structure for coordinated action.

Effective data management to enable real-time tracing and accountability, risk management to prevent diversion and misuse, and security protocols and deterrence measures to strengthen border controls, and stockpile management, are also important for the control of these, he said.

He pointed out that the report of the Secretary-General on 'Small arms and light weapons' notes that the diversion and illicit trafficking of such weapons continue to sustain terrorist groups and armed organisations in several conflict-affected regions.

It highlights that porous borders, weak stockpile security and cross-border trafficking networks enable the steady flow of such weapons, while improvised and craft-produced weapons further complicate tracing and accountability.

India underscored that international cooperation is indispensable in preventing diversion, disrupting trafficking networks, improving customs and border coordination, and enabling timely intelligence and information exchange.

Harish said India supports the redoubling of efforts at the national and global level to strengthen the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), including through national legislative measures and enforcement, export controls, information sharing and capacity building.

He reiterated India's firm commitment to preventing the misuse of small arms and light weapons by terrorist groups and thereby continues to contribute to the global fight against terrorism. (PTI)

## Conspirators behind Delhi blast will not be spared: PM

**THIMPHU, Nov 11:** The conspirators behind the Delhi car blast will not be spared as the probe agencies investigating it will get to the bottom of the case to bring those responsible for it to justice, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday.

In an address at an event at Changlimethang Stadium to mark the 70th birth anniversary of Bhutan's former king Jigme Singye Wangchuck, Modi said he came to Thimphu with a "heavy heart" in view of the incident in Delhi.

The prime minister said throughout Monday night, he was in touch with the probe agencies investigating the blast. Twelve people were killed on Monday evening after a car exploded near the Red Fort.

"For centuries, India and Bhutan have shared a deep spiritual and cultural bond. Therefore, it was India's and my commitment to participate in this important occasion," he said.

"But today I have come here with a heavy heart. The horrific incident that occurred in Delhi last evening has deeply saddened everyone. I understand the grief of the affected families. Today, the entire nation stands with them," Modi said.

"Our agencies will get to the bottom of this conspiracy. The conspirators behind it will not be spared. All those responsible will be brought to justice," Modi said.

King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck led a prayer in presence of thousands of Bhutanese at the Changlimethang stadium for the victims of the Delhi blast.

The Bhutanese leadership con-

veyed their heartfelt condolences on the tragic loss of precious lives in the explosion in Delhi and offered special prayers for all those affected by the blasts, Indian officials said.

In Delhi, investigators were probing the blast as a possible terrorist attack and zeroed in on a Kashmir-based doctor, who was driving the car that exploded.

Dr Umar Nabi is believed to have died in the blast. The Jammu and Kashmir police has already



taken a DNA sample from his mother to establish the connection.

The Delhi Police last night said nine people were killed in the blast and several others sustained injuries. The death toll went up to 12 with three people succumbing to their injuries, it said on Tuesday.

In his address at the event in Thimphu, Modi conveyed warm wishes of the people of India to the former king and to the people of Bhutan.

The prime minister highlighted the fourth king's transformative tenure that saw the emergence of Bhutan as a "modern nation-state" and as a constitutional democratic monarchy.

Under the fourth king's leadership, Bhutan introduced the unique concept of gross national happiness, blending economic growth with sustainability, Modi said. (PTI)

## US, China, Sri Lanka 'deeply saddened' by loss of lives in Delhi blast

**BEIJING/WASHINGTON, Nov 11:** The US, China, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Israel, Ireland and Nepal on Tuesday said they were "deeply saddened" by the tragic loss of lives in an explosion in the Indian capital that killed at least 12 people and wounded several others.

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

Expressing condolences over the deadly explosion, the US said it continues to closely monitor the situation.

"Our hearts are with those affected by the terrible explosion in New Delhi. We continue to closely monitor the situation. Our sincere condolences to the families who lost their loved ones. Praying for the speedy recovery of those injured," the State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs said in a post on X Monday.

China expressed shock over the bomb blast in Delhi. "We are shocked by the incident," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told a media briefing in Beijing, replying to a question.

He conveyed condolences to the victims, extended sincere sympathies to the families of the deceased and the injured, and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

"Saddened by news of the explosion in Delhi last evening, Sri Lanka stands in solidarity with the people of India. Our thoughts are with all those affected," Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake said in a social media post.

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu said he was "deeply saddened by the tragic loss of lives" in the blast near Red Fort in Delhi.

"Our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and good wishes for swift recovery of the injured. The Maldives stands in solidarity with the people and Government of India in this difficult time," Muizzu said on X. Nepal's interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki expressed her "deepest condolences to the bereaved families and prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured".

"Nepal stands in solidarity with India in this hour of grief," she said. Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar extended his deepest condolences to the people of India, especially to the families of the innocent victims killed in the blast.

"Israel stands with India in its fight against terror," he said on X. Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister Simon Harris said he was deeply saddened by the tragic explosion in Delhi.

"Our thoughts are with all those who lost their lives, the injured, and their families. We offer our full support and solidarity with the people and Government of India at this difficult time," he said.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath also expressed solidarity with India. (PTI)

## Bangladesh's deposed PM Hasina condemns Delhi blast

**DHAKA/NEW DELHI, Nov 11:**

Deposed Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina has strongly condemned the explosion in the Indian capital on Monday that killed at least 12 people and wounded several others. "The appalling terrorist attack in New Delhi is unacceptable under any circumstances," Hasina said in a statement posted on Awami League's social media. Hasina said the Awami League extended its full support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi "in this principled struggle against terrorism".

"We firmly believe there is no place — and no forgiveness — for such heinous crimes against humanity in today's civilized world," she said. "These extremist terrorist groups strike at the very foundations of a secular, humane and welfare-oriented state," she added.

She said the terrorist groups, "rooted in Pakistan, have infiltrated networks across countries, including Bangladesh, and were carrying out attacks in India to undermine regional peace and stability".

"Wherever the roots of terrorism lie, they must be eradicated completely. Those who support these terrorist groups in Bangladesh and elsewhere are enemies of humanity, and we strongly denounce them as well," she said. (PTI)

## US 'pretty close' to seal trade deal with India: Trump

**NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, Nov 11:**

The US is "pretty close" to reaching a "fair trade deal" with India, President Donald Trump has said, adding that he will lower the tariffs imposed on Indian goods at "some point". This is the second time in less than two weeks that the US president held out hope to seal the proposed bilateral trade deal with India.

It is not immediately clear whether it was Trump's usual hyperbole or there was some progress in the negotiations for the much-awaited deal between the two sides.

"We're making a deal with India, a much different deal than we had in the past. So right now, they don't love me, but they'll love us again," Trump said on Monday without elaborating.

He made the remarks during a ceremony in the Oval Office where Sergio Gora was sworn in as the US Ambassador to India by Vice President JD Vance.

"We're getting a fair deal, just a fair trade deal. We had pretty unfair trade deals. They're very good negotiators, Sergio, so you have to take a look at that, if you would please," Trump said.

"But we're getting close. Scott, I think we're pretty close to doing a deal that's good for everybody," Trump said to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who was present at the ceremony. "That's right," Bessent responded to Trump.

"In the old days, do you think (former US President Joe) Biden would ask that ques-



tion? I don't think so. 'How are we doing with India?' He didn't know about India. He didn't know a damn thing. That's okay," Trump said. Trump was asked about the trade deal with India and whether he is willing to consider lowering the current tariff rate imposed on India.

"Well, right now the tariffs are very high on India because of the Russian oil, and they've stopped doing the Russian oil. It's been reduced very substantially. Yeah, we're going to be bringing the tariffs down," Trump said.

"At some point, no, at some point, we're going to be bringing them down. Without tariffs, this country would be in such trouble as they were for many years."

Relations between New Delhi and Washington have been reeling under severe stress after Trump imposed 50 per cent tariffs on India, including 25 per cent for New Delhi's procurement of Russian oil. (PTI)

## Thailand demands apology from Cambodia for land mine explosion that injured soldiers

**BANGKOK, Nov 11:** Thailand said it has indefinitely paused implementation of a US-brokered ceasefire until Cambodia apologises for a land mine explosion on Monday that injured four Thai soldiers at their border.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul visited the injured troops at the border on Tuesday as the Thai army accused Cambodia of laying new mines in violation of the truce agreement Thailand and Cambodia signed last month.

Territorial disputes between the Southeast Asian neighbours led to five days of combat in late July that killed dozens of soldiers and civilians. Others have been injured by land mine explosions before and after July's combat, and tensions have simmered despite the truce.

The Thai army said one soldier lost his right foot after stepping on a land mine while on patrol along the border in Sisaket province on Monday, while the other three sustained minor injuries. Cambodia denied responsibility.

Thai Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nikomdej Balankura said Tuesday the incident showed "Cambodia's utter lack of sincerity."

He called for Cambodia to apologise, conduct a thorough investigation and implement measures to prevent another explosion. Thailand also said it would indefinitely postpone the return of 18 Cambodian soldiers held since the July conflict.

The situation should not escalate if Cambodia makes a sincere effort to meet the conditions, Nikomdej said.

Cambodia Defence Ministry spokesperson Maly Socheata said Tuesday that the explosion was caused by "the remnants of past conflicts" and urged Thai troops to avoid patrolling in old minefield areas. (AP)

## 12 killed, 27 injured in suicide attack outside court in Islamabad, says Pak Min

**ISLAMABAD, Nov 11:** A suicide bomber on Tuesday detonated his explosives near a police vehicle outside a court in Pakistan's capital, killing at least 12 people and wounding 27 others, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said.

Naqvi, who visited the site of the blast, said the attacker wanted to enter the court complex, but on failure, he detonated his explosives near a police vehicle at the gate of the building in the G-11 area of the capital at 12.39 pm (local time).

The minister said that 12 people were killed and 27 others injured, including security personnel and a lawyer, in the blast near the Islamabad District Judicial Complex.

No group or individual claimed responsibility for the attack, but such strikes are usually carried out by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistani (TTP).

"Our first priority is to identify the attacker. Whenever the attacker is identified, we will share with the media," Naqvi said as he vowed to bring the perpetrators to justice. Naqvi said that the process of identifying the victims has been going on. He said that those sponsoring militants in Pakistan had increased their funding by threefold.

"We are linking today's blast with many factors. Things will be clear in the coming hours. There are several messages of it..." he said. "I don't want to say anything at this point, as often the Indians do (start blaming soon after such incidents). We will come with full evidence and details."

Naqvi said Pakistan is clear that Afghanistan should stop terrorism coming from their soil, "otherwise we will have to take action against them." Both President Asif Ali Zardari and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif termed the attack a "suicide blast".

Defence Minister Asif said the Afghan Taliban has sent a message through the bombing.

"The rulers of Kabul can stop terrorism in Pakistan, but bringing this war all the way to Islamabad is a message from Kabul, to which - praise be to God - Pakistan has the full strength to respond," he said in a message on X to express his reaction to the attack in Islamabad.

"In this environment, it would be futile to hold out greater hope for successful negotiations with the rulers of Kabul," he said.

The minister warned that Pakistan was in a state of war.

"Anyone who thinks that the Pakistan Army is fighting this war in the Afghan-Pakistan border region and the remote areas of Balochistan should take today's suicide attack at the Islamabad district courts as a wake-up call: this is a war for all of Pakistan, in which the Pakistan Army is giving daily sacrifices and making the people feel secure."

President Zardari strongly condemned the suicide blast and expressed deep condolences to the bereaved families. He also prayed for the early recovery of the injured. (PTI)

## Top diplomats from G7 countries meet in Canada as trade tensions rise with Trump

**TORONTO, Nov 11:** Top diplomats from the Group of Seven industrialised democracies are converging on southern Ontario as tensions rise between the US and traditional allies like Canada over defence spending, trade and uncertainty over President Donald Trump's ceasefire plan in Gaza and efforts to end the Russia-Ukraine war.

Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand said in an interview with The Associated Press that "the relationship has to continue across a range of issues" despite trade pressures as she prepared to host US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and their counterparts from Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Japan on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Anand also invited the foreign ministers of Australia, Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, South

Korea, South Africa and Ukraine.

She said "15 foreign ministers are coming from around the world to the Great White North and funnily enough on the week of our first large snowfall."

"The work that Canada is doing is continuing to lead multilaterally in an era of a greater movement to protectionism and unilateralism," Anand said. "And in an era of economic and geopolitical volatility."

Canada's G7 hosting duties this year have been marked by strained relations with its North American neighbour, predominantly over Trump's imposition of tariffs on Canadian imports. But the entire bloc of allies is confronting major turbulence over the Republican president's demands on trade and various proposals to halt worldwide conflicts. (AP)

## 'I wanted to write a book about global loneliness through the lens of a long, unresolved love story'

### Hungarian British author David Szalay beats Kiran Desai to win Booker Prize 2025 for 'Flesh'

**LONDON, Nov 11:** Hungarian British author David Szalay was named the winner of the Booker Prize 2025 for his novel 'Flesh', beating Indian author Kiran Desai's 'The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny' at a ceremony in London.

Szalay, 51, was presented with 50,000 pounds and a trophy on Monday night by last year's Booker winner Samantha Harvey for his novel about an emotionally detached man who is unravelled by a series of events beyond his grasp.

"Using only the sparest of prose, this hypnotically tense and compelling book becomes an astonishingly moving portrait of a man's life," the Booker Prize judges said of their winning choice. Desai missed out on becoming only the fifth double winner in Booker Prize's 56-year history, having won the coveted literary prize for fiction back in 2006 for 'The Inheritance of Loss'.

"I wanted to write a book about global loneliness through the lens of a long, unresolved love story," Desai has said of her new novel.

"I wanted to write a present-day romance with an old-fashioned beauty. In the past of



my parents, and certainly my grandparents, an Indian love story would mostly be rooted in one community, one class, one religion, and often also one place. But a love story in today's globalised world would likely wander in so many different directions," she said.

At 667 pages, 'The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny' was described by the Booker judges as "an epic of love and family, India and America, tradition and modernity" revolving around a pair of young Indians - Sonia and Sunny. "An intimate and expansive epic about two people finding a pathway to love and each other. Rich in meditations about class, race and nationhood, this book has it all," the judges said of the Indian author's latest work.

"The writing moves with consummate fluency between an array of modes: philosophical, comic, earnest, emotional, and uncanny," they praised.

However, it was 'Flesh' that won over the judges in the end and was unveiled as the 2025 winner at a ceremony at Old Billingsgate in London.

"What we particularly liked about 'Flesh' was its singularity. It's just not like any other book. It's a dark book, but we all found it a joy to read," said Irish novelist Roddy Doyle, Booker Prize 2025 chair of judges.

Other works in the race for the big prize included 'Flashlight' by American Korean author Susan Choi, 'Audition' by American

Japanese writer Katie Kitamura, 'The Rest of Our Lives' by British American Ben Markovits, and English novelist Andrew Miller's 'The Land in Winter'. All six short-listed authors will receive 2,500 pounds and a specially bound edition of their book.

"The six have, I think, two big things in common. Their authors are in total command of their own store of English, their own rhythm, their own expertise; they have each crafted a novel that no one else could have written," said Doyle.

"And all of the books, in six different and very fresh ways, find their stories in the examination of the individual trying to live with - to love, to seek attention from, to cope with, to understand, to keep at bay, to tolerate, to escape from - other people. In other words, they are all brilliantly written and they are all brilliantly human," he added.

Doyle's fellow judges for the 2025 panel included Booker Prize longlisted novelist Ay?bami Adebáy?; award-winning actor, producer and publisher Sarah Jessica Parker; writer, broadcaster and literary critic Chris Power; and Booker Prize-longlisted author Kiley Reid. (PTI)

## POCSO court verdict urges community vigilance against sexual abuse Pasighat court sentences sexual assault convict to 20 Years

**HT Correspondent**

**PASIGHAT, Nov 11:** The Special Judge (POCSO), Pasighat has convicted Bomdo Tali to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment in connection with a heinous sexual assault case. The case dates back to 27th November 2023, when A lodged a written FIR alleging that Bomdo Tali had committed rape upon her. A case was subsequently registered under Sections 342, 354B and 376 IPC read with Section 6 of the POCSO Act at the Women Police Station, Pasighat.

The investigation was led by Inspector Ojum Riba, then Officer-in-Charge of the Women Police Station, Pasighat. Through her diligent and professional work, she ensured meticulous investigation, which paved the way for justice to be delivered to the victim. After completion of the investigation and a fair trial, the Special Judge POCSO Court, Pasighat, pro-



nounced the judgment on 18th September 2025, a copy of which was received on Tuesday.

The accused was convicted

under multiple sections: 342 IPC for wrongful confinement, receiving 6 months simple imprisonment; 354B IPC for assault or use

of criminal force on a woman with intent to disrobe, resulting in 3 years imprisonment and a ₹ 5,000 fine; Section 42 of the POCSO Act, carrying 20 years rigorous imprisonment and Section 376(3) IPC for rape of a woman under sixteen years of age, with a ₹ 10,000 fine.

Pankaj Lamba, IPS, Superintendent of Police, East Siang, lauded Inspector Ojum Riba for her dedication, sincerity and professionalism in ensuring justice. He urged the community to unite against crimes of sexual abuse, emphasising the importance of awareness, timely reporting and community vigilance to protect children and women. He also appealed to the public to report any incidents of child or sexual abuse immediately to the nearest police station or through child helpline numbers to ensure prompt intervention and justice.

## Hayang Mangfi urges media to act as watchdogs for social progress

**HT Correspondent**

**SEPPA, Nov 11:** The Seppa Press Club (SPC), affiliated with the Arunachal Press Club (APC), celebrated its first foundation day on Monday with a series of programmes highlighting the importance of responsible journalism and community awareness.

Chayangtajo MLA and Water Resources Development Minister Hayang Mangfi attended the event as chief guest, while former APC president and Arunachal Publishers and Broadcasters Guild president Chopa Cheda was guest of honour. APC vice president Bengia Ajum served as the resource person for the programme.



In his address, MLA Mangfi congratulated the SPC on completing one year and commended its role in promoting journalistic responsibility in the district. He urged the media fraternity to remain vigilant, uphold the spirit of journalism and continue serving as a watchdog for society.

"Due to the emergence of media, development issues are being highlighted and every section of society is now more aware of government activities. Media should continue to work for transparency, awareness and progress," Mangfi said. He also assured to address certain issues faced by media persons in the district.

Guest of honour Chopa Cheda shared his experiences in the media field and suggested ways to strengthen responsible journalism. Resource person Bengia Ajum spoke on media ethics, the importance of integrity and the journalist's role in fostering social change and national development.

EKSWCO general secretary Kasung Cheda, EKDSU president Doba Veo, ANYA East Kameng district unit members, representatives from the district chamber of commerce, SPC president Sime Lochung and general secretary Sapna Tayem Taku were also present and addressed the gathering.

## Library and museum to preserve Nyishi heritage

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Nov 11:** The Nyishi Elite Society (NES) president, Prof Tana Showren, inaugurated the NES Library and Museum at the Nyishi Heritage and Research Centre, Richi Jullang, in a programme organised by the Central Executive Members of the Society.

The initiative aims to preserve and promote the rich traditions, culture and history of the Nyishi community. The museum will serve as a repository for traditional ornaments, artifacts and other cultural items, while the library will document written records and historical narratives for future generations.

Prof Showren described the establishment of the library and museum as a progressive step toward safeguarding the collective memory and cultural wealth of the Nyishi people. He informed that the museum will feature digital facilities for interactive displays and modern archiving systems, enabling visitors to explore the community's history through multimedia presentations.

He further emphasised that such institutions will help younger generations take pride in their roots and foster harmony among communities. Prof Showren also appealed to the public and community members to contribute records, photographs and artifacts for preservation and research.

## Congress alarms over rising crimes in Arunachal schools

**APCC calls for urgent reforms and strict vigilance following cadet suicide and safety concerns**

**ITANAGAR, Nov 11:** The Congress in Arunachal Pradesh on Tuesday expressed concern over the 'shocking and disturbing' rise in crimes and law-and-order issues in educational institutions across the state, calling it a 'collapse of governance and vigilance' under the BJP government.

Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Bosiram Siram said the safety and dignity of children and students have been 'gravely compromised' due to weak institutional administration and lack of responsible oversight.

Siram's statement comes in the wake of the recent suicide of a cadet at Saimik School in East Siang district, which has reignited public debate over student welfare and institutional accountability in the state.

The incident, widely condemned by civil society groups, has prompted calls for transparent investigation and reforms in the management of educational institutions.

"Educational institutions, which must be secure spaces for learning and moral development, are turning into unsafe environments due to negligence," he said.

The APCC president alleged that the recurring incidents of rape, murder, molestation and violence in schools and colleges reflected 'a systemic failure of monitoring and accountability' and accused the government of allowing disorder and criminal acts to proliferate.

"The people of Arunachal Pradesh have every right to ask: Where is the accountability? Where is the monitoring? Where is the leadership?" Siram questioned, demanding the state government take immediate corrective steps.

He urged the government to enforce strict vigilance



and safety protocols across all educational institutions, strengthen law-and-order mechanisms at the district and police levels, and ensure psychological counselling and preventive support systems for students.

"If the government continues to ignore this alarming trend, it will amount to betraying the future of our children," Siram warned emphasising that student safety and dignity must be treated as "the highest priority."

Reaffirming the party's stand, Siram said, the Congress stands firmly with students, parents, and educators.

"We will not remain silent when the future of our youth is at stake," he added. (PTI)

## DNGC hosts peace talk on the 14th Dalai Lama's legacy



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 11:** As part of the 108 Peace Talk Series – Arunachal Pradesh, the Department of Political Science, Dera Nating Government College (DNGC), in collaboration with the 108 Peace Institute, Dharamshala and the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), DNGC, organised a talk on the theme "The Lifelong Legacies of the 14th Dalai Lama and the Road Ahead" on Monday at the College Conference Hall, Itanagar. The event saw enthusiastic participation from faculty members and students across departments.

In his inaugural address, Dr M Q Khan Principal of DNGC, emphasised the importance of global peace for building a harmonious and prosperous nation. He observed that in the pursuit of development, humanity is gradually drifting away from moral values and ethics. Stressing the need to promote non-violence, compassion and brotherhood, he remarked, "No prosperity is possible without peace. We are meant to save lives and spread kindness."

Dr Joba Riba, Coordinator of the program, outlined the objectives of the event and encouraged students to actively participate in discussions promoting peace and human values. Delivering the welcome address, Dr Suparna Bhattacharjee, Head of the Department of Political Science, reiterated that peace, commitment and values are indispensable in today's world. She highlighted four focus areas of the talk—religious freedom, democracy, climate action and leadership—all inspired by the life and legacy of the 14th Dalai Lama. She noted that practicing kindness and warm-heartedness brings happiness not only to others but also to oneself, emphasising that the world today urgently needs peace and harmony.

The resource person, Yeshi Dewa Senior Researcher at the 108 Peace Institute, Dharamshala, delivered an insightful talk on the life and philosophy of the 14th Dalai Lama. He underlined the significance of peace from spiritual and geographical perspectives, stating, "Compassion is like water – it is essential for life."

The session concluded with a Vote of Thanks proposed by Dr Chaluk Lowang, Co-coordinator of the program, who expressed gratitude to all participants and collaborators for making the event a success.

## Army conducts field exercises to boost operational readiness

**ITANAGAR, Nov 11:** In a bid to strengthen joint preparedness and enhance mission efficiency in high-altitude terrain, troops of the Indian Army's Dao Division carried out a series of coordinated training exercises across forward areas of Arunachal Pradesh, focusing on operational proficiency, inter-agency coordination and adaptability under challenging conditions.

The training modules were designed to refine tactical responses, improve teamwork and validate standard operating procedures (SOPs) through simulated operational drills in realistic field environments, a defence spokesperson said here on Tuesday.

The exercises also tested integrated planning, logistics management and communication systems, ensuring seamless synchronisation among participating units and agencies. Guwahati-based defence spokesperson Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said in a statement.

The emphasis remained on operational precision, resilience and rapid response capability in diverse terrains, he said.

The spokesperson added that the coordinated drills reaffirm the Army's commitment to maintaining a high state of readiness and professionalism, consistent with its operational responsibilities in the strategically significant frontier region.

"Through such regular and realistic training, the formation continues to uphold the Indian Army's ethos of preparedness and excellence," he added. (PTI)

## 106 NE students visit ISRO centre under NE-SPARKS

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Nov 11:** A group of 106 students from the eight North Eastern States visited the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Centre in Bengaluru recently as part of the North East Students' Programme for Awareness, Reach and Knowledge on Space (NE-SPARKS), funded by the North Eastern Council and state governments.

The 6th batch of students, selected from 800 meritorious students across the eight states was accompanied by one state coordinator each. The delegation was led by Richard L. Jongte, Deputy Adviser (IPR), NEC, along with officials from the North East Space Applications Centre (NESAC), Uiam.

NE-SPARKS is a collaborative initiative of NEC/MDoNER, NESAC, ISRO and the North Eastern state governments. Under this programme, 800 meritorious students from the region are scheduled to visit the ISRO Centre in Bengaluru to inspire and motivate young minds from the North East. The 7th and 8th batches are expected to visit ISRO in November and December respectively.



## Cane and Bamboo project boosts livelihoods in NE

**HT Correspondent**

**ITANAGAR, Nov 11:** The Cane and Bamboo (CAB) Cluster Development Project was implemented in two phases to promote sustainable livelihoods in the Northeastern region. The first phase, launched in August 2013, was executed by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) in collaboration with the North Eastern Council (NEC), the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) and the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) with NECBDC providing technical support. Phase I established five clusters, while Phase II initiated in 2017, added 11 new clusters covering a total of 16 clusters—two in each of the eight Northeastern states. Some additional potential clusters were also adopted under the project. The total expenditure incurred amounted to ₹ 9.19 crore and the project was completed on October 8, 2025.

The objectives of the project included organising bamboo artisans and producers into Cane and Bamboo Associations, promoting a market-driven approach for domestic markets through product development, design standards and quality certification and facilitating appropriate technology transfer and skill development for the cane and bamboo industry.

Key outcomes of the project include training and organizing 1,992 artisans from rural communities across the Northeast into 31 Cane and Bamboo groups, ensuring sustainable livelihoods. A total of 107 training programmes were conducted to enhance market-oriented product development skills. Tools were uniformly distributed across all clusters to improve production capacity and artisans participated in 15 trade fairs, achieving total sales of ₹ 5.54 lakh. Additionally, 5–6 categories of products, including furniture, baskets and household items were developed and 15 Common Facility Centres (CFCs) and marketing showrooms were established to support aggregation, value addition and marketability.

## Members and officials pledge to build a drug-free Ziro Valley AWAZ marks 11th Foundation Day

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 11:** The Apatani Women Association Ziro (AWAZ) celebrated its 11th Foundation Day cum Drug Awareness Programme with great enthusiasm at Kalung Panchayat Bhawan, Ziro on Monday. The event was graced by Yalem Taga Burang, Chairperson, Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women (APSCW) as the Chief Guest and Oli Perme, Deputy Commissioner, Lower Subansiri, as the Guest of honour.

Delivering the welcome address, Dr Subu Tasso Kampu, president of AWAZ, presented a brief history of the association and its formation. She recalled her childhood days when women were denied education and child marriage was prevalent in the Apatani society. Overcoming those challenges, she became the first woman medical doctor from the Apatani community. Now, she proudly informed that there are more than 130 female doctors from the community.

Dr Kampu highlighted the various achievements of AWAZ over the years and recounted the landmark decision of banning traditional tattooing and nose piercing on women of the Apatani community around 1974, a reform brought about through the collective efforts of the Apatani Youth Association (AYA) and Apatani women. She further appealed that duplicating nose piercing for cultural shows should not be encouraged, as it undermines the progressive steps taken



by earlier generations.

Resource person Dr Misso Yubey, Psychiatrist, TRIHMS gave an insightful presentation on drug awareness through a PowerPoint session. He urged AWAZ to take up the mission of making all schools and campuses in Ziro tobacco- and drug-free zones.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Oli Perme appreciated AWAZ for its continuous fight against social evils and

expressed hope that Ziro Valley should make news only for positive reasons. She also lauded the Apatani Youth Association (AYA) for its active role in checking the drug menace in the region.

In her keynote address, Chief Guest Yalem Taga Burang, Chairperson, APSCW commended AWAZ for its commendable contributions to women's empowerment and social reform. She shared her own experiences as a social worker who had actively

fought against drug abuse and polygamy, emphasising her deep understanding of the systemic challenges.

Burang highlighted that the fight against drug abuse is a massive and collective challenge, requiring the joint efforts of all stakeholders. She cautioned that the drug menace is not merely a local issue but part of an international network that destroys families, societies and nations. Urging mothers to stay vigilant, she said, "Do not remain relaxed thinking that only others' children are suffering — the problem will reach your own homes if ignored." She also informed that the current governments, both at the Centre and the State are women-friendly, implementing numerous women-centric initiatives. She assured that she would convey the voices and concerns of the women of Ziro to any level for appropriate action and support. Furthermore, she pledged her full cooperation and assistance, including help in funding AWAZ's initiatives.

The Chairperson was accompanied by other APSCW members, namely Kipa Kaya Rughu, Kutu Bui, Aben Mize and Techhi Nikhi Yab.

The day-long event saw the participation of a large number of AWAZ members, ASHA and Anganwadi workers and volunteers of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, who collectively pledged to continue spreading awareness and building a drug-free Ziro Valley.

# The second phase, in which eight ministers of his cabinet are in the fray, involves high stakes for the ruling NDA' Highest-ever voter turnout of 67.14 pc recorded in 2<sup>nd</sup> phase

**PATNA, Nov 11:** Bihar on Tuesday recorded its highest-ever voter turnout of 67.14 per cent, provisionally, at close of polling in the second and final phase of the high-stakes assembly elections, seen as a veritable referendum on the state's longest-serving Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

The polling percentage across 122 constituencies comprising 3.70 crore voters, which was higher than the "record" 65.09 turnout registered in the first phase on November 6, was likely to go up, as queues of voters were seen at many booths, officials said.

Kishanganj, the lone Muslim-majority district in the state, recorded the highest polling percentage so far at 76.26, followed by adjoining Katihar (75.23) and Purnea (73.79), Supaul (70.69) and Araria (67.79).

Most of the districts are situated along the border with Nepal, many of them falling in the state's north-eastern region of Kosi- Seemanchal, flood prone and with a high percentage of the minority community. Voting turnout has also been high in south Bihar districts like Jamui (67.81 pc), Gaya (67.50 pc) and Kaimur (67.22 pc). The lowest turnout (57.31 pc) was recorded in Nawada, the only district that did not touch the 60 per cent mark till



5 pm. Although Kumar, who is a member of the state legislative council, is not himself contesting the polls, the BJP-led NDA is banking on 'good governance' during the tenure of the JD(U) president to tackle the anti-incumbency factor.

The second phase, in which eight ministers of his cabinet are in the fray, involves high stakes for the ruling NDA, as also the opposition INDIA bloc, which pins its hopes on the incumbency factor, as well as the high concentration of Muslims in many of the poll-bound districts. The second phase is of particular significance for the Congress, a spent force which is,

nonetheless, the second-largest constituent of the INDIA bloc in Bihar. Of the 19 seats it had won in 2020 assembly polls, 12 go to polls in the current phase. Its sitting MLAs include state president Rajesh Kumar Ram (Kutumba) and Shakeel Ahmed Khan (Kadwa). In the first phase, on November 6, a "record" 65.09 per cent of 3.75 crore electors, across 121 constituencies had cast their vote, which both rival groups claim to be to their advantage.

However, Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor, the proverbial 'X factor' in the elections, believes that the spike in voting percentage is due to the fact

that people of the state, who had been in search of an "alternative", have found one in his barely a year old outfit.

Voting began for 122 constituencies in Bihar in the second and final phase of the high-stakes assembly polls amid tight security arrangements. The polling began at 7 am and will continue till 5 pm.

In this phase, the electoral fate of 1,302 candidates, including several ministers in the Nitish Kumar government, will be sealed.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar urged electors to exercise their franchise in the final phase of polling and set a new voting record.

"Today marks the second and final phase of voting in the Bihar assembly elections. I urge all voters to participate enthusiastically and set a new voting record. I especially urge my young friends from the state, who are voting for the first time, to not only cast their votes themselves but also inspire others to do so," the PM said on X.

Kumar said voting is "not only our right, but also a responsibility".

"I appeal to voters to exercise their right to vote in the second phase of the Bihar assembly elections," he said in a social media post. (PTI)

# SC seeks EC's response on pleas of DMK, TMC challenging SIR exercise in TN, WB

**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought separate responses of the Election Commission (EC) on pleas filed by DMK, CPI(M), West Bengal Congress and Trinamool Congress leaders challenging the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal respectively.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joydip Bagchi asked the poll panel to respond to the fresh petitions in two weeks.

The top court asked the Madras and Calcutta high courts to keep in abeyance any proceedings on petitions challenging the SIR exercise in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. It also allowed the listing of an intervention application filed by the AIADMK in support of the SIR in Tamil Nadu.

During a brief hearing, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing in the court for the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu, said the exercise is being done hurriedly, without following the due process, and different sets of documents are being sought from voters.

He said the northeast monsoon in Tamil Nadu is always heavy during November-December, and the coastal districts experience heavy to very heavy rains during this season.

"According to the meteorological department, this year, heavier rain than usual is predicted. Because of this, the common people will be preparing for the same and the revenue officials who are enlisted as BLOs, EROs, AEROs will have to manage the flood relief as well. Hence, practically, this is not a conducive time for conducting the above exercises," Sibal said. Justice Kant said in a country as big as India, some states will always face natural calamities.

Sibal said there is very poor connectivity in certain areas of the southern state and there will be difficulties in uploading documents.

"Similarly, in West Bengal also, rural connectivity is very poor and much bad with regard to Tamil Nadu," he said. The bench said, "It appears that the case being projected before us is that for the first time, electoral rolls are being prepared. We also know the

ground realities. There is a constitutional authority which is doing the exercise and it is mandated to do it. Earlier also, it has been done." Justice Kant said the problem is that everybody wants "status quo".

Sibal said the petitioners want the EC to do its work but not in this fashion and hurriedly. The bench said political parties should not be apprehensive of the exercise and the EC will give all details related to it.

"If we are satisfied that there is something wrong, we will annul the entire exercise," the court said.

On the argument that different modalities are being adopted in Tamil Nadu, compared to what was followed in Bihar during the SIR exercise, the bench said it means that the EC has rectified its mistakes.

Sibal said the Bihar SIR has nothing to do with the exercise in Tamil Nadu and the situation and conditions are different in the two states. Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing in the court for the EC, sought to file replies to the fresh petitions.

Senior advocate Kalyan Banerjee, appearing for Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Dola Sen, said they too have filed the petition challenging the SIR in West Bengal. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing in the matter for NGO Association for Democratic Reforms, questioned various "procedural irregularities" on the EC's part like issuing a machine-readable voter list in Bihar. The bench said notices are being issued to the EC on all the fresh petitions and the court will look into the pleas after the poll panel's response.

It told the EC, "You should adopt the best practice and experience of the Bihar SIR in exercises which are to be conducted in other states. However, you should always keep in mind the local conditions."

The court listed the matter for further hearing on November 26 and 27, and said it will hear the arguments on the interim relief sought by different political leaders, such as a stay on the SIR.

Besides Sen, West Bengal Congress leader Shubhankar Sarkar, DMK's R S Bharathi, CPI-M's P Shanmugam and other leaders have filed separate petitions challenging the SIR in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry. (PTI)

## Gaganyaan mission: ISRO conducts important test on main parachutes

**BENGALURU, Nov 11:** ISRO on Tuesday said it has successfully conducted an important test on main parachutes for the Gaganyaan Crew Module at the Babina Field Firing Range (BFFR) in Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi on November 3.

The Indian space agency said this test is part of the ongoing series of Integrated Main Parachute Airdrop Tests (IMAT) for the qualification of the parachute system for the Gaganyaan mission.

The Gaganyaan mission is India's first human spaceflight programme, aiming to send a three-member crew on a three-day mission to space and return them safely to Earth. As part of the mission, ISRO is developing a human-rated launch vehicle, an orbital module, and a crew-escape system. The programme includes prior un-manned missions to test critical systems before the first manned flight. In a statement, ISRO said that for the Gaganyaan Crew Module, the parachute system comprises a total of 10 parachutes of four types.

It added that the descent sequence begins with two apex cover separation parachutes that remove the protective cover of the parachute compartment, followed by two drogue parachutes (small powerful parachute deployed from a fast moving object to slow it down) that stabilise and decelerate the module. Upon release of the drogues, three pilot parachutes are deployed to extract three main parachutes, which further slow down the Crew Module to ensure a safe touchdown. ISRO said. (PTI)

## Punjab: Over 59 per cent polling recorded till 5 pm

**TARN TARAN (PB), Nov 11:** A voter turnout of 59.21 per cent was recorded by 5 pm during polling for the Tarn Taran Assembly bypoll in Punjab on Tuesday, with polling remaining peaceful.

Polling concluded at 6 pm, but the turnout figure may increase as more data regarding voting comes in.

Voting began at 7 am and continued until 6 pm, with strict security measures in place, according to officials.

The vote counting is scheduled for November 14.

In the first two hours (7 am to 9 am) of polling, the voting percentage was 11 per cent, and till 11 am, it was 23.35 per cent, according to the Election Commission data.

Voting percentage increased to 36.62 per cent till 1 pm and 48.84 per cent till 3 pm, the data read.

The Tarn Taran assembly seat fell vacant following the death of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Kashmir Singh Sohal in June.

Despite the early morning chill, many voters, particularly elderly individuals and women, made their way to polling stations on Tuesday. There were long queues outside several polling stations early in the day.

Among the early voters were Congress candidate Karanbir Singh Burj and AAP candidate Harmeet Singh Sandhu.

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) candidate Sukwinder Kaur Randhawa visited a polling station in Kaka Kandiala village to cast her vote, accompanied by her daughter Kanchanpreet Kaur.

The bypoll is being seen as a litmus test for Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and AAP leaders, who have campaigned aggressively to retain this seat.

The bypoll was also important as its outcome will also throw light on the popularity of the AAP regime's policies and programmes among voters in the border constituency.

AAP nominated Harmeet Singh Sandhu, a three-time MLA from Tarn Taran, who joined the ruling party in July this year.

Sandhu was elected to the assembly as an independent in 2002 and as a member of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in 2007 and 2012. He unsuccessfully ran for the seat in both 2017 and 2022.

The stakes are high for the Congress party as well, which has nominated its Tarn Taran district unit chief, Karanbir Singh Burj, for the by-election. Burj, an agriculturalist and real estate businessman, is contesting elections for the first time.

The BJP is also looking for a win in this by-election, as prestige is at stake for the party. (PTI)

## India, China leading global clean energy transition: COP30 Prez

**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** COP30 President Andre Corrêa do Lago has praised India and China for playing a transformative role in the global energy transition, saying both countries have embraced climate action "in a very clear way" and are driving down the cost of clean technologies worldwide.



Addressing a press conference at the opening of COP30 in Belem, Brazil, do Lago said China has "embraced this agenda in an extraordinary way" by combining scale, technology and affordability, three crucial ingredients that have accelerated the world's progress towards cleaner energy systems.

He said both China and India are shaping the future of the global energy transition.

"China has very advanced technology and has a scale that can only be compared to India. And India is somehow doing the same, because they also have brilliant companies and engineers and incredible people. They are going in the same direction," he said in response to a question on China's contribution to the fight against climate change.

Do Lago emphasised China's leadership in clean

technology manufacturing, particularly in electric vehicles, solar panels, wind energy and battery production.

"I don't need to say how important China has become for electric vehicles, for solar panels, for wind, for batteries. Thanks to their scale, by lowering the price of all these essential elements in the transition, they are at the same time doing an amazing job of international cooperation," he said. He said China's massive scale has helped reduce the cost of key green technologies, creating ripple effects across the world.

"If the solar panel now costs ninety per cent less than a few years ago, many more people in the developing world can afford them. And somehow, you need fewer resources to get this done in many countries in the world, thanks to the price reduction. And then you can do other things in developing

countries," he added.

"So, we are going to have two major markets which will lower the price of this transition because both countries have embraced this transition in a very clear way," the COP30 president said. COP30, which marks a decade since the Paris Agreement, is taking place amid heightened geopolitical tensions, ongoing wars and economic uncertainty triggered by US tariffs. The United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, along with several developed countries re-evaluating their climate commitments amid economic and energy security concerns, has created a challenging backdrop for this year's climate talks. Hence, a fair and ambitious outcome at COP30 will be important to reaffirm trust in multilateralism.

It is also the moment when countries must submit the next generation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the 2031-2035 period. NDCs are national climate plans under the Paris Agreement that set targets to cut emissions and adapt to climate change, guiding global efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. (PTI)

**OFFICE OF THE  
ADDL. DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION::  
KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL  
DIPHU**

No. ADE/E-22/DGC/2022/91 Dated Diphu the 11/11/2025.

**ADVERTISEMENT**

In pursuance of the Principal Secretary, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu's approval no. KAAC/Esstt-763/P(B)/H.Edn./Prior Approval of Post/2025-26/14 Dated Diphu the 03rd November, 2025 applications are invited from the eligible candidates who are citizens of India as defined under Article 5-8 of the Constitution of India and permanent residents of the administrative jurisdiction of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council in the prescribed Standard Form of Application published in Part-IX of Assam Gazette for filling up the following vacant posts of Grade-III and Grade-IV under Higher Education Department, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu.

Sl. No.	Name of post	Scale of pay	Grade Pay	No. of posts	Minimum Educational qualification
1	Lower Division Assistant (Grade-III)	Rs. 14,000-60,500/-	Rs. 6200/-	02	Graduate from any Govt./Govt. recognized University and 1 (One) Year Computer Degree.
2	Laboratory Assistant (Grade-III)	Rs. 14,000-60,500/-	Rs. 6200/-	02	B.Sc. passed and Degree/Diploma in Computer application.
3	Library Assistant (Grade-III)	Rs. 14,000-60,500/-	Rs. 6200/-	01	B.Lib. and Degree/Diploma in Computer application.
4	Mechanics (Grade-IV)	Rs. 12,000-52,000/-	Rs. 3900/-	01	ITI passed certificate in Mechanical Course.
5	Mali (Grade-IV)	Rs. 12,000-52,000/-	Rs. 3900/-	01	HSLC pass
6	Laboratory Bearer (Grade-IV)	Rs. 12,000-52,000/-	Rs. 3900/-	01	HSLC pass
7	Library Bearer (Grade-IV)	Rs. 12,000-52,000/-	Rs. 3900/-	01	HSLC pass
8	Hostel Cook (Grade-IV)	Rs. 12,000-52,000/-	Rs. 3900/-	01	HSLC pass
9	Helper (Grade-IV)	Rs. 12,000-52,000/-	Rs. 3900/-	01	HSLC pass

**Terms and conditions:**

- Age-Candidate should not be less than 18 years and not more than 38 years for General, 41 years for OBC/MOBC and 43 years for ST/SC candidates as on 01/01/2025.
- The ST/SC/OBC and MOBC candidates should submit caste certificate alongwith the application.
- Incomplete applications shall be summarily rejected on the spot.
- Employment Exchange Registration Certificate should be enclosed alongwith the application.
- Address Proof (Aadhar Card, Voter-ID and PAN Card) is compulsory should be enclosed along with the application.
- Photocopies of certificates, Mark Sheets and all other testimonials duly self attested.
- 02 (Two) copies of recent passport size photographs.
- Contact number of the applicant should be mentioned in application form.
- Application along with other testimonial should be submitted in the Office of the Additional Director of Education, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu, Lumding Road and the last date of receipt of application form is 24th November, 2025 in the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/-  
Additional Director of Education i/c,  
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,  
Diphu.

# 'It was on this very land that our soldiers fought during the Second World War to protect this' Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla pays tribute to WW-II heroes at Kohima War Cemetery



**KOHIMA, Nov 11:** Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday paid tribute to soldiers who laid down their lives during the Second World War, calling the Kohima War Cemetery a "sacred ground of courage, sacrifice, and inspiration".

Speaking at the 2nd Remembrance Day of World War-II, organised by the Nagaland government at the Kohima War Cemetery of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Birla said the day was one of "emotion and remembrance," honouring the brave warriors who defended the nation.

Recalling the famous inscription of the Kohima epitaph — "When you go home, tell them that we gave our today for your tomorrow" — Birla said the words continue to inspire generations to dedicate their present for a better tomorrow.

father too participated in the war, while the Rajya Sainik Board has been working to uplift the morale of soldiers and ex-servicemen in the region.

"India has always been a land of warriors, a land of heroes," Birla said, affirming that the legacy of sacrifice must continue to guide the nation toward peace and unity.

Speaking on the occasion, Rio said the people of Nagaland played a vital role by assisting both the Allied and Japanese forces during the conflict.

"Many Nagas suffered great hardship, yet their resilience and humanity shone through even in those dark times," he said.

Rio added that the annual commemoration is a reminder to value peace, unity, and reconciliation.

"We must continue to remember the lessons of war and work for peace. It is our duty to preserve these memories for the younger generations," he said.

Rio said the Battle of Kohima — known as the 'Stalingrad of the East' — marked one of the fiercest and most decisive turning points of the Second World War.

British Deputy High Commissioner's Bhaarat Dave, in his remarks, described the Battle of Kohima as a "turning point in the Second World War" that safeguarded freedom in Asia.

He reiterated the enduring friendship between the United Kingdom and India, saying, "These words inscribed here are not just a tribute but a call to remember and uphold peace." (PTI)

## Nagaland MLA Imkong L Imchen dies at Guwahati hospital

**DIMAPUR, Nov 11:** Nagaland MLA Imkong L Imchen died at a private hospital in Assam's Guwahati on Tuesday after a brief illness, family members said.

He was 75. Imchen, a former state minister, was admitted to Naga Hospital Authority in Kohima on Saturday following health complications, and was airlifted to Guwahati on Monday for better treatment, his family members said.

A veteran Naga politician, Imchen was a five-time MLA from the Koridang constituency and was serving as an advisor to the Information and Public Relations and Soil & Water Conservation departments.

Nagaland Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla condoled the death of the legislator and described him as a dedicated and sincere leader.

"On behalf of the people of Nagaland and on my own behalf, I convey my deepest condolences to the bereaved family. May the Almighty grant them strength and solace in this hour of grief," the governor stated.

According to official sources, a state funeral will be held at 9:30 am on Wednesday in Kohima. (PTI)

## ZPM, MNF to announce names of candidates for Lai council polls today

**AIZAWL, Nov 11:** Mizoram's ruling party Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) and main opposition party Mizo National Front (MNF) will on Wednesday announce the names of their candidates for the upcoming elections to the 25-member Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) slated for December 3, party sources said.

ZPM president Lalliansawta will announce the names of the nominees at a function to be held at the party office here at 11 am on Wednesday, party sources said.

MNF media cell secretary Lallenmawia Jongte told PTI that party president Zoramthanga will also declare the name of their candidates on November 12.

Congress spokesperson Lallianchunga said the party will announce the name of its candidates after the declaration of the Dampa bypoll result on November 14.

State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Lalrozama said a total of 34.38 per cent of over 20,000 voters exercised their franchise in the bypoll till 11 am.

BJP media convener Johnny Lalthanpuia said the party will



first refer its candidate list for the LADC polls to party leadership in Delhi, after which it will formally announce the names.

According to the schedule announced by Mizoram state election commission on November 7, polling for the LADC polls will be held on December 3, and counting of votes will be undertaken on December 9.

The last date for filing nomination papers is November 14, while candidates can withdraw their names latest by November 17, the poll panel said.

According to the final rolls published in September, a total of 56,873 voters, including 29,019 women voters, are eligible to exercise their franchise in the LADC polls, where Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) will be used.

In the last LADC polls held on December 4, 2020, the MNF, then the ruling party in the state, won 20 out of 25 seats, while the BJP and Congress bagged one each and three independent candidates were also elected. The term of the present council will expire on December 18. (PTI)

# Nagaland to host anti-narcotics conference for NE states, Bengal



**KOHIMA, Nov 11:** Nagaland DGP Rupin Sharma on Tuesday announced that the state police, in coordination with the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) of the central government, will host a two-day Regional Anti-Narcotics Task Force Conference for all North-eastern states, and West Bengal, on November 13 and 14 at Chumoukedima.

Addressing a press conference, the director general of police said that senior officers from the Centre are expected to attend the meet.

"The conference will deliberate on the challenges posed by narcotics trafficking in and from the Northeast, and formulate recommendations for effective implementation and cooperation among states," Sharma stated.

He added that it would also be the first regional conference of its kind in the country under the national 'Nasha Mukta Bharat' mission, focusing on supply reduction, enforcement, rehabilitation, and de-addiction.

On the ongoing recruitment drive for Nagaland Police, the DGP said that the online application portal, which opened on October 6, had its last date of submission extended by 15 days from November 7, to accommodate candidates facing delay in obtaining documents such as indigenous certificates.

Clarifying public concerns about the ₹ 300 application fee, Sharma said that registration on the portal is free and valid for all future recruitments, but candidates must pay the ₹ 300 fee to be eligible for the examination.

Responding to criticisms over fee collection, the DGP said that while the creation of the recruitment portal cost nearly ₹ 40 lakh, there are separate expenses for OTPs, SMS updates, and the three-

ter examination process—physical, written, and interview.

"People should understand that we are not making profit. We are actually cutting costs wherever possible, even producing badges in-house to save funds," he said.

Sharma added that the online system had significantly reduced hardship for applicants, saving them travel and accommodation costs that could otherwise exceed ₹ 5,000 to ₹ 6,000 per person.

To a query about forensic infrastructure, the DGP stated that Nagaland currently has a forensic laboratory in Dimapur, which is "decently placed" to handle around 1,200-1,300 investigation cases per year, though efforts are underway to improve district-level response. He revealed that proposals will be sent to the state government to enable faster forensic team visits to crime scenes as mandated under the new criminal laws, particularly for cases carrying punishments of over seven years.

ADGP (Law & Order) Sandeep Tamgadge added that the government has approved the procurement of mobile forensic vans for all districts, with work orders already issued.

He said the government is also creating additional posts for scientific officers and assistants to strengthen forensic services.

"The way forward is not merely setting up new labs, but decentralising resources and improving mobility so that forensic support reaches scenes of crime faster," DGP Sharma said. (PTI)

## Meghalaya CM condoles death of those killed in Delhi blast

**SHILLONG, Nov 11:** Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Tuesday expressed deep sorrow over the blast near Red Fort in Delhi, and extended his condolences to the families of those killed and wished for a speedy recovery of the injured persons.

"Gravely disturbed by the news of the tragic blast near Red Fort, New Delhi. My thoughts and prayers are with the families who lost their loved ones and with all those injured, wishing them strength and healing," Sangma said in a post on X.

A high-intensity explosion ripped through a slow-moving car at a traffic signal near the Red Fort metro station on Monday evening, killing at least nine people and gutting several vehicles, officials said.

Twenty people, including two women, were injured in the blast that took place on a busy evening when the area was milling with people.

Police said that the car, in which the blast took place, had three occupants, adding that they are also probing if it was a suicide bomber attack. (PTI)

## Tripura unveils Cyber Security Policy



**AGARTALA, Nov 11:** The Tripura government on Tuesday unveiled its Cyber Security Policy which will serve as a framework for securing the state's IT and ICT systems, strengthening institutional mechanisms and capacity building.

The policy will also ensure promoting collaborative actions across public and private sectors to ensure a safe and resilient cyberspace in the northeastern state.

Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, S Krishnan, unveiled the Tripura Cyber Security Policy, 2025 at Pragnya Bhavan here.

"The most important aspect of the Tripura Cyber Security Policy is to protect the citizens of Tripura from potential cyber attack making it sure that data stays safe. It is an important and significant move by the state. It will provide scope to action against any sort of crime that takes place in the state," Krishnan told reporters. He said that the Ministry is trying to enhance cyber security space and to adopt own ways the data comes from the verified sources so that people don't suffer due to leakage of data.

Krishnan also joined the workshop on the National Cyber Security Exercise titled "Cyber Bharat Setu: Bridging States, Securing Bharat". The workshop is aimed at strengthening cyber awareness, readiness and response capabilities of the state. The workshop also focused on strengthening cyber resilience through expert-led training, hands-on drills and simulated scenario-based exercises. (PTI)

## Manipur: Woman among 3 militants arrested for extortion



**IMPHAL, Nov 11:** Three militants, including a woman, belonging to different banned outfits have been arrested from different districts of Manipur for their alleged involvement in extorting the public, police said on Tuesday.

Security forces arrested an active cadre of the banned United National Liberation Front (K) outfit from Lamjao Makha Leikai in Kakching district on Sunday, a police statement said.

He has been identified as 40-year-old Ningthoujam Inaocha. One .32 pistol along with magazine and three cartridges, and Rs 41,200 in cash were seized from his possession.

Police also arrested an active woman cadre of the proscribed Kangleipak Communist Party (Peoples' War Group) outfit from Khumbong Bazaar in Imphal West district on Sunday. She has been

identified as Khumanthem Promila Devi (22), it said.

Security forces also arrested a militant of the banned United People's Party of Kangleipak (UPPK) outfit from his residence at Langmeidong in Kakching district on Monday. He has been identified as Yumnam Arun Singh (27).

"Intelligence-based combing, cordon and search operations are being carried out extensively to nab those involved in extortion and criminal activities in the state," the police statement said.

Meanwhile, security forces seized a cache of arms and ammunition from Melei Tampak area in Thoubal district on Monday.

A self-loading rifle with magazine, a sniper rifle with magazine, a double-barrel rifle, a single-barrel rifle, three hand grenades, and 100 cartridges were seized. (PTI)

## 75 pc voter turnout recorded till 3 pm in Mizoram's Dampa bypoll

**AIZAWL, Nov 11:** A voter turnout of 75.15 per cent was recorded till 3 pm on Tuesday in the Dampa assembly bypoll in Mizoram, seen as a key test for the ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) ahead of next year's civic polls. The bypoll was necessitated following the death of incumbent MNF legislator Lalrinluanga Sailo in July. For the ZPM, the result is likely to influence the upcoming Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) elections on December 3 and the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) poll, which is likely to be held early next year.

If the ZPM wins the polls, it would boost the party's morale amid mounting criticism from opposition parties, observers said.

For the MNF, the bypoll holds special significance, as a defeat would further reduce



its strength in the 40-member assembly and jeopardise its claim to the post of leader of opposition.

A party requires at least 10 MLAs for the



position, and the MNF currently has nine following Sailo's death.

The BJP, which is striving to expand its base in the Christian-majority state, sees the

contest as an opportunity to strengthen its foothold. The party currently has two legislators in the assembly. Polling is underway in all 41 polling stations under tight security with over 20,000 people eligible to vote, state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Lalrozama said.

Although there were issues with VVPAT in some polling stations before voting started, they were immediately replaced, he said.

The assembly segment has a mix of Mizo and minority populations like the Chakmas and the Brus.

Dampa is one of the three assembly segments in Mamit district, the lone aspirational district in the state, which shares an international border with Bangladesh and an interstate boundary with Tripura. (PTI)

## Manipur's leaders express sorrow over Delhi blast, condole deaths



**IMPHAL, Nov 11:** Manipur's leaders cutting across party lines expressed sorrow over the car blast in Delhi and condoled the death of those killed in the incident.

A high-intensity explosion ripped through a slow-moving car at a traffic signal near the Red Fort metro station on Monday evening, killing at least nine people and gutting several vehicles, officials said.

Twenty people, including two women, were injured in the blast that took place on a busy evening when the area was milling with people.

Former Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh, in a post on X, said, "Deeply saddened by the blast near Red Fort metro station in Delhi. Extending my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, and prayers for the speedy recovery of the wounded. May God give them strength and fortitude at this hour of

grief." Manipur's lone Rajya Sabha MP Leishemba Sanajaoba said, "Strongly condemn the car blast near Red Fort metro station, Delhi... Such cowardly acts should be befittingly punished. My condolences to the bereaved families & prayers for speedy recovery of the injured."

State Congress president Keisham Meghachandra condemned the blast and said it was a "complete failure" of the government to ensure public safety.

"Strongly condemn the explosion near Red Fort, Delhi. A serious security lapse at the heart of our national capital! This incident exposes the complete failure of the govt to ensure public safety," he said.

Delhi Police said that the car, in which the blast took place, had three occupants, adding that they are also probing if it was a suicide bomber attack. (PTI)

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# DHARMENDRA 'STABLE AND RECOVERING', STOP SPREADING FALSE NEWS: FAMILY



**MUMBAI, Nov 11:** Dharmendra is "stable and recovering", the veteran actor's family said on Tuesday, urging the media to stop circulating false news about his health.

The 89-year-old star continues to remain under observation at a Mumbai hospital. Earlier in the day, there were several news reports about Dharmendra's death but daughter Esha Deol dismissed them in a post on Instagram.

A representative told the media: "Sir is recovering and responding to treatment. Let's all pray for his good health and long life."

Dharmendra's wife, actor-politician Hema Malini, also criticised "irresponsible" media coverage of the veteran actor's health.

"What is happening is unforgivable! How can responsible channels spread false news about a person who is responding to treatment

and is recovering? This is being extremely disrespectful and irresponsible. Please give due respect to the family and its need for privacy," Malini posted on X.

When contacted, Breach Candy hospital said: "We cannot disclose anything. We are not allowed to. Please contact the family."

Their statements came after several prominent figures, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and lyricist Javed Akhtar, posted tributes on X, even as the family denied reports of Dharmendra's death.

Dharmendra has been in and out of south Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital for several days. Malini had, earlier on Monday night, urged people to remain calm and pray for his recovery.

"I thank everyone for their concern about

Dharam ji who is in hospital for observation. He is being continuously monitored and we are all with him. I request you all to pray for his welfare and speedy recovery," she posted on X. A representative for his son, actor and BJP MP Sunny Deol, denied speculation that the "Sholay" star had been put on a ventilator.

"Mr. Dharmendra is stable and under observation. Further comments and updates will be shared as available. Kindly don't indulge in spreading false rumours regarding his health. Request everyone to pray for his speedy recovery and respect the family's right to privacy," the PR representative said.

The entire Deol family, including Malini, Sunny Deol and Bobby Deol, are currently at the hospital. Superstars Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan visited the family, while actor Govinda was also seen at the hospital. (PTI)

# ALLU ARJUN, PRIYANKA CHOPRA AND OTHERS REACT TO CAR BLAST IN DELHI



**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** Prominent celebrities like Allu Arjun, Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Karan Johar have condoned the deaths in the bomb blast near Red Fort and asked others to "stay alert and informed".

At least 12 people were killed after a powerful explosion ripped through a slow-moving car at a traffic signal near the Red Fort metro station on Monday evening.

Arjun shared a story on his Instagram handle and said he is deeply saddened by the tragic incident.

"Deeply saddened by the tragic incident near Delhi's Red Fort. My heartfelt prayers are with the victims and their families, and I wish for peace to prevail once again," he wrote.

Priyanka uploaded a story on Instagram, calling the visuals from the incident "devastating".

"It's devastating to see the visuals from Red Fort. So much fear, chaos and heartbreak. My thoughts and prayers are with those injured and my condolences for the lives lost. Hoping for

some answers soon. In the meantime, please stay safe and alert," she said.

Karan wrote, "My heart goes out to all the victims and the ones affected by the recent tragedy in New Delhi. Sending all my love and prayers to the families. Please stay safe and alert during this time." Ishaan Khatter said, "Please stay safe and stay informed, Delhi. Disturbed to hear about the blast." Vaani Kapoor also uploaded a post on her Instagram story. "Prayers for the families, the first responders, and every heart shaken today," she wrote.

Sidharth Malhotra said, "My heart goes out to everyone affected by the Red Fort blast. Delhi, stay strong and stay safe Ayushmann Khurrana said he is shocked by the news. "Shocked and saddened by the news from Delhi. My thoughts are with all the victims, their families and everyone injured," he wrote.

Rohit Saraf said, "Holding Delhi, and all the lives affected, in my prayers and in my heart. Stay safe and stay informed." (PTI)

## Shruti Haasan records song for SS Rajamouli film 'Globe Trotter'

**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** Actor-singer Shruti Haasan shared a post alongside Oscar-winning composer MM Keeravani, with whom she has collaborated for a song in SS Rajamouli upcoming film "Globe Trotter".

The film features Mahesh Babu, Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Prithviraj Sukumaran.

Haasan uploaded a post on her Instagram handle on Monday and penned a lengthy note along. It featured behind-the-scenes of the recording sessions.

"It was a pleasure to sing for MM Keeravani sir's musical. What a powerful track... LET IT BANG, 'GLOBETROTTER'. I was seated quietly listening to sir on the keys. He said he usually begins his sessions with the Vigneshwara mantram before anything starts, so I assumed that's what he was starting playing."

"Suddenly, I realised it was appas song... land that moment was super special. Thankyou sir for your kindness and the love and warmth of the entire team that day. Can't wait for you'll listen to the track," she wrote.

Haasan's latest work is "Coolie" from Lokesh Kanagaraj. She will next feature in "Train" and "Salaar 2". (PTI)

## Rajkummar Rao completes shooting for 'Nikam'

**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** Bollywood actor Rajkummar Rao has wrapped shooting for "Nikam", a biopic on the public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam.

Rao announced the news by sharing a note from film's direction team on his Instagram story on Monday.

The handwritten note expressed admiration for the actor, who essayed the character with "honesty and grace".

It read, "Raj sir ... it's honestly so hard to say wrap today. We have spent so many days living this world with you, watching you breathe life into Ujjwal Nikam with such calm, honesty and grace. It's hard to imagine this set without you now. Watching you build Ujjwal Nikam has been such a privilege."

"More than the actor, it's you we all will miss. You make people want to do better. You make it all feel simple again. This wrap doesn't feel like

an ending. It feels like that moment after a long conversation when you don't really want to leave. We will miss the coat, the courtroom, and that unwavering stillness you brought into every frame," it concluded.

Sharing the picture of the letter, the actor wrote, "Thank you so much team #Nikam. This letter has my heart." Directed by Avinash Arun, the film is produced by Dinesh Vijan and also features Wamiqa Gabbi.

It also reunites Rao with Gabbi after "Bholi Ckuk Maa". Directed by Karan Sharma, the film revolved around Rao's character, who gets trapped in a time loop on his wedding day, and must fulfil a forgotten promise to escape it.

Rao's latest work is "Maalik". The film released in July and was directed by Pulkit. It also starred Manushi Chhillar, Prosenjit Chatterjee and Huma Qureshi. (PTI)



# 'Sounds of Kumbha' nominated for Grammy in Best Global Music Album category

**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** "Sounds of Kumbha", a spiritual album inspired by the Mahakumbha festival and presented by singer-composer Siddhant Bhatia, has been nominated for the 68th Grammy Awards in the Best Global Music Album category. The nominations for the 68th Annual Grammy Awards were announced last week. Commissioned by the Uttar Pradesh government as a cultural initiative, the album has been produced in partnership with Network18 and HistoryTV18, and is globally distributed by Universal Music India.

The 12-track project, featuring over 50 artists from India and abroad, aims to capture the spirit of the Mahakumbha, the mega religious gathering in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj that drew over 60 crore pilgrims during its 45-day run in January and February this year.

Described by critics as a "sonic memoir" of the Mahakumbha, the album blends live field recordings from Prayagraj, ancient mantras and contemporary compositions by Bhatia and SoulTrax Studios in New Delhi, a press release said. It also incorporates binaural beats designed to create an immersive, meditative experience for listeners.

Seven producers — Bhatia, Jim "Kimo" West, Raghav Mehta, Madi Das, Ron Korb, Charu Suri and Devraj Sanyal — collaborated on the project.

The album features contributions from Grammy winners and nominees such as V Selvganesh and Raja Kumari, as well as Indian musicians Aditya Gadhi, Kanika Kapoor, Kala Ramnath, Bhanumathi Narasimhan, Pravin Godkhindi, Ajay Prasanna, Kalyani Nair, The Indian Choral Ensemble, Sirojji, Aarti Khetarpal, Tanya

Saxena and Sushant Pujari. Two-time Grammy winner P A Deepak handled mixing and mastering.

Bhatia said the Grammy nomination was a recognition of the Mahakumbha's message of peace and unity.

"Its recognition by the Recording Academy at the Grammys through 'Sounds of Kumbha' is not just a milestone for Indian music, but also a celebration of global spirituality and humanity's collective spirit."

"Inspired by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and with the blessings of all the great saints of India, this nomination is a tribute to oneness, reminding us that faith and music together can heal, unite, and uplift our world. I congratulate every artist, every team member, and everyone around the world who became part of this sacred journey called 'Sounds of Kumbha,'" he said in a statement.

Devraj Sanyal, one of the producers and Chairman & CEO of India SA and SVP Strategy (Africa, Middle East & Asia) for Universal Music Group, said the nomination marked a significant moment for the South Asian music community. "It signifies the power of music in crossing boundaries and connecting hearts, cultures and histories," he said, adding that Universal Music India was proud to serve as a global partner for the album. "Sounds of Kumbha" will compete in the Best Global Music Album category against Burna Boy's "No Sign of Weakness", Youssou N'Dour's "Eclairer le monde - Light the World", Shakti's "Mind Explosion" (50th Anniversary Tour Live), Anoushka Shankar's "Chapter III: We Return to Light" (featuring Alam Khan and Sarathy Korwar), and Caetano Veloso and Maria Bethania's "Caetano e Bethania Ao Vivo". (PTI)



## Atalanta fires coach Juric amid 7-match winless streak in Serie A

**BERGAMO (ITALY), Nov 11:** Gian Piero Gasperini's successor at Atalanta didn't make it through a third of the Serie A season.

Ivan Juric was fired on Monday amid a seven-match winless streak in the Italian league that left the Bergamo squad in 13th place.

The move came two days after a 3-0 loss at home to promoted Sassuolo.

Former Monza and Fiorentina coach Raffaele Palladino was expected to be named Atalanta's new coach before the squad visits defending champion Napoli after the international break.

Following consecutive losses that followed five straight draws, Atalanta trails Serie A leaders Inter Milan and Roma by 11 points.

Roma is coached by Gasperini, who left Atalanta after nine mostly successful seasons in charge and was replaced by Juric.

In the Champions League, Atalanta has two wins, one draw and one loss.

It's the fourth coaching change in Serie A this season after moves at Juventus, Genoa and Fiorentina. (AP)

## Rekhade's five-for powers Vidarbha to 100-run win over Odisha

### Jharkhand-Baroda match ends in draw

**NAGPUR, Nov 11:** Left-arm spinner Parth Rekhade returned with a five-wicket haul as Vidarbha registered a 100-run win over Odisha to move to the top of Group A in the Ranji Trophy here on Tuesday.

Chasing 345 for victory, Odisha were bowled out for 244 in 84 overs after a promising 100-run opening stand between Swastik Samal (65) and Gourav Choudhury (47).

Vidarbha now lead the table with 19 points, while Odisha remain second from bottom with just one point.

Resuming at 44 for no loss, Samal and Choudhury added 56 more runs before Rekhade provided the breakthrough in the 24th over, trapping the latter leg before wicket.

Samal too became his victim soon after, while Sandeep Patnaik's painstaking 27 off 105 balls ended when he was trapped in front by Praful Hinge in the 38th over.

Skipper Subhanshu Senapati



(28) and Govinda Poddar (46) tried to steady the chase but failed to convert their starts, as Odisha kept losing wickets at regular intervals.

Rekhade (5/80) led the bowling effort with Hinge (3/41) providing able support, while Nachiket Bhute (1/50) also chipped in.

In Vadodara, opener Shikhar Mohan struck an unbeaten 102 as Jharkhand reached 226 for four in their second innings before agreeing to a draw with Baroda.

Jharkhand, who bagged three

points for their first-innings lead, are placed second in the group with 18 points. Baroda settled for one to be at fifth spot with a total of 9 points.

Resuming at 10 for one, Mohan hit eight fours and two sixes in his 200-ball unbeaten knock, while Virat Singh scored a fluent 64 off 78 balls with nine boundaries and a six.

With Jharkhand, who posted 506 in their first innings, firmly in control, the two captains decided to shake hands.

On Monday, Andhra beat Tamil Nadu by four wickets, while Uttar Pradesh registered an innings and 265 runs win over Nagaland.

**Brief Scores:**  
**In Vadodara:** Jharkhand 506 & 226/4 (Shikhar Mohan 102 not out, Virat Singh 64; Bhargav Bhat 3/73) drew with Baroda 291.

**In Nagpur:** Vidarbha 286 & 218/2 decl in 59 overs beat Odisha 160 & 244 all out in 84 overs (Swastik Samal 65; Parth Rekhade 5/80). (PTI)

## A new low for Delhi: Hosts lose to J&K in Ranji for first time in 65 years



**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** Delhi cricket hit a new low on Tuesday after a spirited Jammu and Kashmir thrashed them by seven wickets for their first-ever Ranji Trophy victory over the formidable opposition that was powered by opener Qamran Iqbal's superb hundred here.

After four games, Delhi coached by Sarandeep Singh, are sixth among eight teams in Group D with seven points and it will take a miracle to qualify for the knockouts with only four points from three home games.

Questionable selections, poor strategies, absence of smart captaincy and a state unit in which teams have suffered due to factionalism and infighting has brought about the team's downfall.

Since 1960, Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir have met 43 times and 37 of those games have ended in outright wins for the seven-time champions.

Chasing a target of 179 for victory, J&K needed 124 runs on the final day with opener Iqbal (133 not out off 147 balls) at the crease with night-watchman Vanshaj Sharma (8 off 55 balls).

What looked like a difficult pitch suddenly became placid as Iqbal took it upon himself to use his long levers and big stride to negate any turn off the surface.

The roughs and indents were created on both sides of the track and Delhi's spinners Mannan Bhardwaj and Hritik Shokeen didn't attack the stumps as much, trying to bowl too fast which also didn't get them any purchase.

Towards the end, Iqbal was hitting one-handed slog swept sixes and lofted boundaries. Even 40-year-old skipper Paras Dogra, the former doyen of Himachal Pradesh cricket, played his part with a first innings hundred.

In his 22nd first class season, Dogra only second to Mumbai stalwart Wasim Jaffer in terms of runs in Ranji Trophy, scored tons against both Mumbai and Delhi this season.

For Delhi, retaining Sarandeep as the head coach after a disastrous last season due to alleged pressures from a strong DDCA lobby has only ensured that there was no consistency in selection.

Skipper Ayush Badoni is scoring some attractive half-centuries but no team in domestic cricket is in awe of him.

Arpit Rana, a top scorer in DPL, has been found wanting

against quality seam bowling as Auqib Nabi with his seaming deliveries exposed his poor technique.

A positive opening batter like Priyansh Arya was benched in first two games only to be played out of position at No.4.

Worse, with two good keeper batters in Tejasvi Dahiya and Pranav Raghuvanshi on the bench, Anuj Rawat, a player with less than 30 average across eight seasons keeps on playing.

After this defeat, DDCA president Rohan Jaitley is expected to crack the whip.

**Draw in Hyderabad**  
In the last group match to finish on Tuesday, Hyderabad earned three points for taking a first-innings lead after the contest against Rajasthan ended in a draw on the fourth and final day in Hyderabad.

Hyderabad, who had put 364 on board batting first, had taken a lead of 95 runs as Rajasthan managed only 269 in their first innings.

Resuming the final day's play at 198/7 with an overall lead of 293 runs, Hyderabad declared at 244/9 to set an improbable target of 340 runs for Rajasthan to win in less than three sessions.

The visitors reached 207 for three with opening batter Salman Khan making a fluent 79 (138 balls, 4x4s, 2x6s) in their second innings when the game was called off sometime after the tea break.

Rajasthan earned one point from the game.

Hyderabad were placed at the top of the points table in Group D with better quotient before the fourth round but victories for other teams pushed them to third with a total of 13 points.

Mumbai's win over Himachal Pradesh by an innings and 120 runs saw them move to the top of the table with 17 points, followed by Jammu and Kashmir at the second with 14 points.

Chhattisgarh, who had handed Pondicherry a 10-wicket defeat on the third day, are placed fourth.

**Brief scores:**  
**At New Delhi:** Delhi 211 and 277 J&K 310 and (target 179) 179/3 (Qamran Iqbal 133 not out).

**At Hyderabad: Hyderabad** 364 and 244/9d in 78 overs (Rahul Singh Gahlaut 59; Mahipal Lomror 4/51) drew with Rajasthan 269 & 207/3 in 57 overs (Salman Khan 79; Tanay Thyagarajan 2/72). (PTI)

## Ferrari boss says Hamilton and Leclerc need to 'focus on driving and talk less'

**MILAN, Nov 11:** Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc need to "focus on driving and talk less," Ferrari executive chairman John Elkann warned Monday after the drivers failed to finish the Brazilian Grand Prix.

The results dropped Ferrari down to fourth in the Formula 1 constructors' standings and left Hamilton and Leclerc still winless this season.

Hamilton, who has been critical of his team season, called the weekend "a nightmare."

Leclerc said he was "not happy" and called his car "very slow" after struggling in sprint qualifying.

Hamilton had to retire midrace due to damage to his car, while Leclerc also went out with damage after getting caught up in a collision between Oscar Piastri and Kimi Antonelli.

Elkann addressed Ferrari's troubles on the sidelines of a sponsorship announcement between Stellantis and the Milan Cortina Winter Olympics.

"Brazil was a big disappointment but if we look at the season we can say that our mechanics are

actually winning the championship with the performances that they've made in terms of pole positions and pit stops," Elkann said. "There's no doubt that the car has improved."

"If we look at everything else, it's not up to standards. It's important that our drivers focus on driving and talk less."

Later Monday, Hamilton posted on Instagram about the Brazilian GP: "It wasn't the race we wanted. It's gutting, especially after some good progress, but we will move on. I back my team. I back myself. I will not give up. Not now, not then, not ever."

Ferrari will go winless this season if neither Hamilton nor Leclerc see the checkered flag at the last three races in Las Vegas, Qatar and Abu Dhabi.

"We have some big races remaining and it's not impossible to finish second," Elkann said, referring to the constructor's standings, where it's a tight race between Mercedes (398 points), Red Bull (366) and Ferrari (362). McLaren is far ahead in first with 756 points. (AP)

## Sumit Nagal seeks help from China embassy after visa rejection

**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** India's top-ranked tennis player Sumit Nagal on Tuesday sought urgent intervention from the Chinese embassy here after his visa application to travel to China for the Australian Open Playoff was rejected without any reason.

Nagal took to social media platform X to make his appeal, tagging the Chinese Ambassador to India and the spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy.

"Respected @China\_Amb\_India and @ChinaSpox\_India. I am Sumit Nagal, India's No.1 tennis player. I am supposed to fly to China soon to represent India at the Australian Open Playoff. But my visa was rejected without reason. Your urgent help would be much appreciated," Nagal wrote.

After losing his place in top-100, Nagal cannot enter the top events like Grand Slams as direct entrant and would depend on wild card entries or Qualifiers.

The 27-year-old from Jhajar, Haryana, is currently India's highest-ranked singles player, placed 275 in the latest ATP standings. He was scheduled to travel to Chengdu to compete in the Australian Open Playoff event, which will give the regional players a main-draw entry into the 2026 Australian Open.

There has been no immediate response from the Chinese embassy or tournament organisers regarding the issue.

If the matter is not resolved swiftly, Nagal would be forced to miss the event, which could hurt his chances to enter 2026 season's first Grand Slam.

Last year, he competed in Australian Open main draw, losing in the opening round and fell in the qualifying for Roland Garros and Wimbledon.

He played a crucial role in India's Davis Cup win over Switzerland, winning both his singles against lower-ranked players. (PTI)

## Shubhankar lying tied 6th in DP World Tour Qualifying School

**TARRAGONA (SPAIN), Nov 11:** Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma was placed tied sixth after the fourth round of the DP World Tour Final Stage Qualifying School at Infinitum's Lakes and Hills courses here.

With rounds of 70-69-66-67 he was 14-under but eight shots behind the leader, Zander Lombard. There are two more rounds left in the six round final stage of the Q-School.

Australian Connor McKinney (67) is solo second at 16-under, while the trio of Quentin Debove, Benjamin Follett-Smith and Matthew Baldwin are tied third at 15-under.

Sharma, who has had a difficult 2025 season in the DP World Tour this year has previously been ranked as high as 64th on OWGR. This year he missed 17 consecutive cuts after the Hero Indian Open held in March.

The season saw him lose his tour card and return to the Q School in a bid to retain playing privileges.

The 29-year-old who has previously won two titles on the DP

World Tour stated during the DP World India Championships that he has struggled with equipment changes through the year and has yet to find a combination that works for him. Things have looked better this week, though 36 holes remain to be played.

Lombard took a big step towards securing DP World Tour playing privileges for 2026 by jumping into a six-stroke lead on day four of Final Stage Qualifying School for the second time in his career as a player, the last time being in 2018.

Lombard was on a career high of 96th on the OWGR (Official World Golf Rankings) before he underwent an ACL reconstruction surgery that kept him out of the game until March this year. He stated that the hard work done during his recovery is starting to pay off.

The South African, who shared the overnight lead with Benjamin Follett-Smith of Zimbabwe, posted a 7-under 64 on the Lakes course to reach 22 under par for the week, six clear of his closest rival. (PTI)

## Inaugural edition of National Indoor Athletics C'ships in Bhubaneswar in January

**NEW DELHI, Nov 11:** The inaugural edition of the National Indoor Athletics Championships will be held in Bhubaneswar in January, the national federation said on Tuesday.

The state-of-the-art facility at Kalinga Stadium Complex in the Odisha capital will host the event, though the exact date is yet to be decided.

"The National Indoor Championships was on cards and we have incorporated it in the 2026 domestic calendar," Athletics Federation of India (AFI) President Bahadur Singh Sagoo said.

The addition of the National Indoor Championships for the first time in the athletics calendar is in line with the AFI bidding for the 2028 Asian Indoor Championships.

According to Sagoo, apart from National Indoor Championships, the AFI also plans to conduct separate indoor competition in pole vault (men and women) and heptathlon.



"The 2026 domestic calendar will be exciting," he added.

Events for the indoor heptathlon for men, to be held over two days, will be 60m, long jump, shot put, high jump, 60m hurdles, pole vault and 1,000m.

The first four events will be held on first day while the remaining three events on day two of the gruelling competition.

"The packed 2026 domestic calendar will feature close to 40 competitions. The calendar will be finalised shortly," Sagoo said.

"The main focus is to strengthen the domestic ecosystem," he added.

## German soccer wants compensation for developing players who switch to other nations

**BERLIN, Nov 11:** The German soccer federation (DFB) wants compensation when players opt to represent other countries after representing Germany at youth levels.

"It simply makes no sense to me why a player who has been coached primarily at his club for five years but also by the federation as a junior partner should be able to switch national associations for free," DFB managing director Andreas Rettig told news agency dpa on Tuesday.

German-born Juventus star Kenan Yildiz is a Turkish international, having played for Turkey's youth teams. Eintracht Frankfurt forward Can Uzun also turned down Germany in favor of Turkey.

Former Hertha Berlin forward Ibrahim Maza, now playing for Bayer Leverkusen, plays for Algeria after appearing for Germany at youth levels. German youth international Muhammed Damar and Nicolò Tresoldi are reportedly being courted by Turkey and Italy, respectively, and the Frankfurter Rundschau daily newspaper reported on Sunday that Nuremberg defender Fabio Gruber has chosen to represent Peru.

"We're currently checking whether there's a possibility of coaching compensation when players switch national associations, Rettig said. "This

issue has not yet been addressed extensively. But coaching must be worthwhile for both sides, the player and the coach."

Germany has long seen players with one or two parents born abroad opt to represent their country of their roots, while the country has also benefited from immigration as players such as Ilkay Gundogan, Mesut Ozil, Sami Khedira and Gerald Asamoah have contributed to the national team's success.

Cologne teenager Said El Mala was last week called up for Germany's World Cup qualifiers this week and at least 12 players in the latest squad could have chosen to represent other countries. The injured Jamal Musiala chose Germany after playing for England youth teams.

"In Germany 43% of children under five years of age hold dual citizenship. When they're 10 or 12 years older they can decide, do I prefer the (German) eagle or, for example, the (Turkish) crescent moon?" Rettig said.

"We analyzed the squad lists from the under-15s to the under-21s within the federation. The percentage there is significantly higher than the aforementioned 43%. There are age groups in which seven or eight players in the starting 11 have dual nationality." (AP)

## McIlroy seeks 7th Race to Dubai title to cap a year of unforgettable wins

**LONDON, Nov 11:** The Masters to complete the career Grand Slam. A home Irish Open. An away Ryder Cup.

It has been a year of unforgettable, career-defining wins for Rory McIlroy. There's a good chance it will get even better in Dubai this week in the Northern Irishman's final event of the 2025 season.

The No. 2-ranked McIlroy will look to be crowned Europe's No. 1 player for a fourth straight year when he competes in the European tour's season-ending World Tour Championship starting on Thursday.

If McIlroy holds off Marco Penge and Tyrrell Hatton — the only players in range of overhauling him — he will win the Race to Dubai title for the seventh time in his career and move within one of Colin Montgomerie's record haul.

Montgomerie won his season-long points titles — when it was called the Order of Merit — each year from 1993-99 and again in 2005.

McIlroy is tied on six with the late Seve Ballesteros, and remains committed to tailoring his schedule so he can play as many events on the European tour as possible while also working the PGA Tour calendar.

"There's a wonderful heritage to this tour. I think with the fractured nature of the men's professional game at the minute, this tour needs all of its stars to step up and play in the big events," McIlroy said.

"I understand that I am one of those people and I want to do my utmost to help in



whatever way that I can."

McIlroy said he was the happiest he has felt in a long time, on and off the golf course. He attributes some of that to stepping away from the wrangling at boardroom level brought about by the emergence of the Saudi-funded LIV Golf breakaway circuit.

From being the face of strident anti-LIV criticism, McIlroy is back to being just a golfer.

"I have a clear head and I'm out of all the political stuff in golf, basically, and I can just focus on playing and playing where I want to and making myself competitively happy by playing in the tournaments that I want to play," he said.

"And then having more time to make

myself personally happy with doing the things I want to do away from golf. Traveling with my family and showing my daughter different parts of the world and doing things like that I think is a very nice place to be in life."

**Stopping Rory**  
McIlroy leads the Race to Dubai standings. He is around 767 points ahead of second-placed Penge and around 1,720 points ahead of third-placed Hatton. There are 2,000 points on offer for the winner at the Earth Course.

A win obviously guarantees McIlroy the title, as would finishing second alone.

For Penge — a three-time winner on the tour this year — to overhaul McIlroy he either needs to win and hope McIlroy finishes

worse than second alone, or finish in a tie for second and for McIlroy to be down the leaderboard.

Hatton needs to win to stand any chance of an unlikely title.

**PGA Tour cards**

Penge's breakthrough season has already seen him lock down one of the PGA Tour cards on offer for the top 10 players in the Race to Dubai standings who are not otherwise exempt.

The next nine players currently in position are Kristoffer Reitan, John Parry, Adrien Sadder, Alex Noren, Laurie Canter, Li Haotong, Daniel Brown, Keita Nakajima and Jordan Smith.

**McIlroy award**

The European tour announced on Tuesday a new trophy — the Rory McIlroy Award — which will be presented to the player who performs best across all four majors in a season.

The inaugural award will be handed out next season and is in honor of McIlroy being the first European to complete the career Grand Slam.

"To have something named after you, that will be presented to future generations of players, is a huge honor and it is very humbling," said McIlroy, who has made himself ineligible to win the award.

"I hope," he added, "my success can inspire other DP World Tour members to chase and achieve their own dreams for years to come." (AP)

# Denish, Sibsankar salvage draw against Tripura


**RANJI TROPHY**

AGARTALA, Nov 11: Skipper Denish Das and senior batter Sibsankar Roy struck defiant centuries to help Assam salvage a draw against Tripura on the fourth and final day of their Ranji Trophy Group C match here on Tuesday.

Resuming on overnight 78 for 3 in their second innings and facing a huge deficit, Assam showed remarkable grit to bat through the day, ending at 367 for 7 when the teams agreed to call off play in the final session.

Captain Denish Das (103 off 197 balls)

anchored the innings with a composed century, guiding Assam out of trouble after a shaky start.

He found solid support from wicketkeeper Sumit Ghadigaonkar (54 off 161) as the duo steadied the innings with a 150-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

After Denish's dismissal, Roy took charge, batting fluently for an unbeaten 101 off 141 balls, which was decorated with 17 fours and two sixes.

His counterattacking approach ensured Assam not only avoided an innings defeat

**Brief Scores:**  
**At Agartala:**  
**Tripura:** 602/7 declared  
**Assam:** 238 and 367 for 7 (Following on) in 117.4 overs (Denish Das 103, Sibsankar Roy 101 not out, Sumit Ghadigaonkar 54; Ajay Sarkar 3/70, Swapnil Singh 2/88, Rana Dutta 2/34).  
**At Surat:**  
**Bengal 1st innings:** 474  
 Railways 222 & 132 in 55.5 overs (Bhargav Merai 26, Upendra Yadav 21; Shahbaz Ahmed 7/56, Rahul Prasad 2/41).

but also batted Tripura out of the contest. Lower down, Ayushman Malakar (21 not

out) provided valuable resistance as the visitors stretched their lead past 100 before stumps were drawn.

For Tripura, Ajay Sarkar was the pick of the bowlers, claiming 3 for 70, while Swapnil Singh (2/88) and Rana Dutta (2/34) also chipped in with wickets but couldn't bowl out Assam as the pitch eased out.

Earlier, Tripura had taken complete control of the match after piling up a strong first-innings total to enforce the follow-on, but Assam's second-innings fightback ensured the honours were eventually shared.

**Shahbaz shines with 7-for, Bengal thrash Railways**

In Surat, left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed produced a stunning seven-wicket haul as Bengal crushed Railways by an innings and 72 runs.

Resuming on 90 for 5, Railways were bundled out for 132 in 55.5 overs in their second innings, collapsing in the first session as Shahbaz ran riot with figures of 7 for 56 from 22.5 overs.

His relentless accuracy and sharp turn proved to be too much for the Railways middle and lower order.

Only Bhargav Merai (26 off 81 balls) and Upendra Yadav (21 off 63) showed some resistance, and once Shahbaz removed Merai and Yadav in quick succession, the end came swiftly.

Railways, forced to follow on after being bowled out cheaply in the first innings, had ended day three at 90 for 5, trailing by 114 runs. However, their hopes of taking the match into the final session evaporated as Bengal's bowlers maintained a stranglehold from the outset.

Right-arm pacer Rahul Prasad supported Shahbaz well with 2 for 41, while Mohammed Kaif chipped in with a wicket. (PTI)

## Vihaan Malhotra to lead India U19 A squad in upcoming triangular series

NEW DELHI, Nov 11: Rising talent Vihaan Malhotra was on Tuesday named captain of the India U19 A squad for an upcoming triangular series also featuring India B and Afghanistan's U19 teams.

Hyderabad's Aaron George will lead the India B U19 side in the competition that will be held at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence, Bengaluru, from November 17 to 30.

Malhotra was handed captaincy, even as his two superstar teammates Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Ayush Mhatre remain occupied with other engagements.

Wicketkeeper Abhigyan Kundu will be Malhotra's deputy in the three-nation tournament, while Vedant Trivedi has been named vice captain of the India U19 B squad.

Mhatre was not considered for selection as he is currently playing the Ranji Trophy, while Sooryavanshi was not considered as he is picked for the India A squad for the ACC Rising Stars Asia Cup.

All the three young players were part of the successful India U19 tour of Australia recently.

### Teams:

**India U19 A Squad:** Vihaan Malhotra (C), Abhigyan Kundu (VC & WK), Wafi Kachchhi, Vansh Acharya, Vineeth V.K., Lakshya Raichandani, A. Rapole (WK), Kanishk Chouhan, Khilan A Patel, Anmoljeet Singh, Mohamed Enaan, Henil Patel, Ashutosh Mahida, Aditya Rawat, Mohammed Malik.

**India U19 B Squad:** Aaron George (C), Vedant Trivedi (VC), Yuvraj Gohil, Mauliyarajsinh Chavda, Rahul Kumar, Harvansh Singh (WK), Anvay Dravid (WK), R.S. Ambrish, B.K. Kishore, Naman Pushpak, Hemchudeshan J, Udhav Mohan, Ishan Sood, D Deepesh, Rohit Kumar Das. (PTI)

## Accepted captaincy after Rizwan said he would step down: Shaheen



RAWALPINDI, Nov 11: In an interesting revelation, Pakistan's ODI captain Shaheen Shah Afridi has claimed that he only accepted the captaincy after his predecessor Mohammad Rizwan said he would step down.

"I took this responsibility from the Pakistan Cricket Board after discussing the matter with Rizwan," Shaheen told the media on Monday.

"Rizwan was the only person I had a discussion with and I asked him how he felt about me accepting the captaincy."

"Rizwan decided himself he

would make way for me and that is how things worked out," said Shaheen, who was also appointed national T20 skipper in 2023 but was dismissed after just one series in New Zealand.

Shaheen had taken over as the T20 skipper after Babar Azam resigned following Pakistan's poor run in the Cricket World Cup 2023. However, less than six months after the appointment, Shaheen was removed from the post with Babar being reinstated as the captain.

The left-arm pacer had led in only one T20 series -- a five-game

encounter against New Zealand away from home -- in this period. Shaheen said Rizwan had assured him of full support. He added that as captain he would back Babar and Rizwan as they were key players in the side with lots of experience.

"I have no ego and I talk to everyone for advice, even our former captains. I don't look at things that happened in the past," he said.

"Everyone has to take responsibility if you want to improve as a team," the 25-year-old said, adding, "You can't keep on saying Babar, Rizwan or Fakhar will do it, it is as a team we have to click and take responsibility."

"As far as Rizwan is concerned, he is Pakistan's top-scorer in one-dayers since 2023. We are trying to back players who are not in form so that they can do well in future matches."

"Babar can falter in one or two matches but he is in good touch and I hope he will score a hundred soon," he said.

Shaheen said that while the PCB had not given him a specific time frame for captaincy, he was looking forward to leading the side in the 2027 World Cup. (PTI)

## Aishwary wins silver in ISSF World Championships



CAIRO, Nov 11: Olympian Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar clinched the silver medal in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions after equalling the world record in the event's qualification at the ISSF World Championship here on Tuesday.

Aishwary shot 466.9 to finish second in the competition behind China's Yukun Liu (467.1) and ahead of France's Romain Aufrere (454.8).

Niraj Kumar, the other Indian in the final, shot 432.6 to end in fifth place.

Earlier in the day, the 24-year-old Aishwary equalled the world record to qualify for the final of the men's 50m rifle 3 positions event in the prestigious tournament.

Aishwary shot 597.40x in qualification to match the world record mark, while compatriot Niraj also advanced to the final with a score of 592. (PTI)

## South Africa tests crucial for WTC cycle: Siraj

KOLKATA, Nov 11: Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj is confident of putting up a strong show against defending World Test Championship (WTC) winners South Africa in the "crucial" Test series beginning here on Friday.

India, currently third in the WTC points table, drew their away series in England before beating the West Indies at home earlier in the cycle.

South Africa, on the other hand, began the defence of their WTC title with a 1-1 draw in an away Test series against Pakistan.

"This series is crucial for the new WTC cycle, especially since South Africa is the defending champion. While they drew 1-1 with Pakistan,

we're confident from our own good form, we created a positive environment, performed well in England, and won against the West Indies," Siraj said on JioStar.

Siraj was the standout performer for India in the gruelling five-match Test series against England, finishing as the leading wicket-taker with 23 wickets. He continued his fine form against the West Indies, claiming 10 wickets across two matches.

"Personally, I'm bowling with good rhythm and looking to make the most of it. Facing strong teams helps identify areas to improve, and I'm really excited for this challenge," he added. (PTI)

# Gill spends long session at nets; Jaiswal, Sai too sweat it out ahead of SA Test

KOLKATA, Nov 11: Transitioning from the shorter formats to the rigours of red-ball cricket takes time, and India captain Shubman Gill spent close to an hour and a half at the nets, fine-tuning his technique ahead of the opening Test against South Africa, starting here on Friday.

The Proteas arrive high on confidence, having fought out a hard-earned 1-1 draw in Pakistan last month under challenging conditions.

Gill, who struck a fifty and an unbeaten century in the two home Tests against the West Indies that India swept last month, has been searching for runs in white-ball cricket.

He managed just one score above fifty -- a 46 at Carrara Oval -- from eight innings across the ODIs and T20Is in Australia.

Back to leading the Test side, Gill battled with determination, keen to regain rhythm after a lean white-ball run.

Before the nets, head coach Gautam Gambhir and assistant coach Sitanshu Kotak were seen having a long chat with him near the High Court end, possibly discussing his approach.

Gill later joined his teammates for slip-fielding drills before padding up alongside Yashasvi Jaiswal for an intense net session.

Starting with spin, he faced Ravindra Jadeja and

Washington Sundar, playing mostly on the ground with occasional sweeps.

Moving to the pace nets, he faced Jasprit Bumrah for a few overs before Nitish Kumar Reddy and a few local club bowlers tested him with seam movement.

A support staff member then used a sidearm to deliver throwdowns from height, giving Gill extra bounce and pace.

After more than an hour in the side nets, he shifted to the central strip for another 30 minutes of throwdowns under the watchful eye of bowling coach Morne Morkel, who himself rolled his arm over generating sharp pace and bounce.

Fresh from scores of 67 and 156 for Rajasthan in the Ranji Trophy, Jaiswal also had a long stint at the central wicket, facing Morkel and throwdowns. The left-hander looked in fluent touch, driving and pulling with assurance.

### Spotlight on Sai and No. 3

Another batter to spend significant time at the nets was Sai Sudharsan, the Tamil Nadu youngster who managed just 84 runs in two unofficial Tests for India A against South Africa.

The team management continues to back him for the No. 3 slot, though he is yet to make it his own, with only a 61 against England in Manches-



ter and 87 versus West Indies at home to show in Tests so far.

His India A teammates -- KL Rahul, Jurel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj -- skipped the

optional practice joining the squad only a day earlier after a demanding A series in Bengaluru that concluded on Sunday.

But there was no such 'break' for Sai who batted with full intensity, facing pacers, spinners, and throwdowns at the centre strip.

The number three position remains a talking point, especially with Dhruv Jurel in prolific form.

There's also speculation that Jurel could feature as a pure batter, with Rishabh Pant set to return to wicket-keeping duties after injury.

Jurel, who averages 47.77 in Tests and notched his maiden ton against the West Indies, has been in red-hot first-class form -- three centuries in his last five matches, including twin hundreds in the second match against South Africa A.

Among pacers, only Bumrah turned up, keeping it light with spot bowling to two stumps for about 15 minutes, targeting the off stump.

In a relaxed mood, he also batted briefly and spent time interacting with teammates.

Bumrah had light strapping on his right knee but bowled under the supervision of Gambhir and Morkel.

### Focus on pitch

After nearly three hours of training, the team's think tank -- Gambhir, Kotak, Morkel, and Gill --

gathered at the centre wicket for a long pitch inspection.

Morkel and Gill checked firmness before summoning curator Suraj Mukherjee for a 15-minute discussion. Judging by their expressions, the management did not appear entirely pleased with the surface.

The pitch appeared brown with light grass patches.

In the two Ranji games here earlier this season, India pacer Akash Deep and veteran Mohammed Shami had struggled for assistance on the opening day before Shami's reverse swing turned things later.

CAB president Sourav Ganguly has already clarified that no request for a "rank turner" has been made by the team management.

South Africa boast of a balanced attack in both pace and spin.

If Kagiso Rabada and Marco Jansen spearhead the pace department, the spin trio of Keshav Maharaj, Simon Harmer, and Senuran Muthusamy were outstanding in Pakistan.

Harmer (13), Muthusamy (11), and Maharaj (9) shared 33 wickets between them in two Tests, with Muthusamy -- who also scored 106 runs -- being named Player-of-the-Series. (PTI)

## Our frustration and anger has turned into desperation: Indian footballers demand ISL revival



NEW DELHI, Nov 11: India's distressed football players issued a joint statement on Tuesday pleading with the administrators to get the currently paused Indian Super League season underway, saying that their "anger and frustration" has turned into desperation now.

The plea came after the All India Football Federation last week said it did not receive any bids for the commercial rights of the ISL after the Request for Proposal (RFP) on October 16, inviting bids for a 15-year contract to monetise the league's commercial and media rights.

"Where we are right now is not a delay anymore, it's a standstill for the coaches, fans, staff members, and players. We have worked too hard, sacrificed too much to let our season vanish in silence," said star defender Sandesh Jhingan in a video posted on his social media handles.

"The entire Indian football ecosystem are hanging in uncertainty. Dreams are paused. Future being questioned. Every day we wait, Indian football bleeds. We need action and we need it now," he asserted.

Several national team footballers like Sunil Chhetri and Gurpreet Singh Sandhu shared a text statement expressing similar sentiments.

"We, professional footballers who play in the Indian Super League, are coming together to make a plea, and more importantly to send the message that we stand united in our efforts to get the Indian Super League season underway. To put it simply, we want to play, and now."

"Our anger, frustration and distress has now been replaced by desperation. Desperation to play the game we love, in front of people who mean everything to us - our families, our fans," the statement read.

Chhetri also added on Instagram, "We are all standing shoulder to shoulder, willing to do whatever it takes to resurrect the sport we love." The statement urged the game's administrators to figure a way out of the current crisis which has prompted top clubs like Mohun Bagan to halt training.

"This is a plea to all those involved in running our sport in the country, to do whatever it takes to get the football season underway. India needs its competitive football now more than ever," it said.

"As for us, we remain committed, professional and ready to walk out of that tunnel and onto the pitch the moment we're told we can. All we ask of those running our beautiful game, to match our desperation with honest intent. We've found ourselves in a very dark tunnel for long. We could do with a little light," it added.

The AIFF Bid Evaluation Committee, headed by (retired) Justice Nageswara Rao and appointed on the orders of the Supreme Court, will submit a report on the bid fiasco to the top court, which is monitoring the entire process. Among the key features of the RFP were a waiver of franchisee fees for ISL clubs from the 2025-26 season, the introduction of a video support system (and subsequently VAR), and the implementation of promotion and relegation from 2025-26 as per the Supreme Court directive.

The new commercial partner would also have been responsible for match production with at least 11 cameras, marketing, media rights sales, and grassroots investment -- of which 70 per cent was to be distributed among ISL clubs and the rest to I-League teams.

The RFP further required the partner to fund grassroots development, ensure transparency in media rights allocation, and adhere to a salary cap of ₹ 18-crore per club starting from the 2025-26 season. The AIFF now faces a fresh challenge in securing a commercial framework for the ISL -- the country's top event that was launched in 2014 amid hopes of transforming Indian football's profile and revenue base.

The failure to attract bidders is likely to raise questions over the league's current commercial viability and the federation's ability to monetise the country's flagship football competition after its decade-long partnership with Football Sports Development Limited ended. (PTI)

## IPL auction to be held in Abu Dhabi

NEW DELHI, Nov 11: The Indian Premier League auction will be held in Abu Dhabi mid-December, a BCCI official told PTI on Tuesday.

It will be the third time in a row that the auction will be held overseas, following Dubai (2023) and Jeddah (2024). It is likely to be held on December 15 or 16.

"Abu Dhabi has been locked in as the auction venue," the official said. It would be a mini auction following the mega auction in Saudi Arabia last year. (PTI)