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- Credibility of press cracking; need to uphold accuracy, impartiality: Vijay Joshi
- One killed in Sonbhadra stone quarry collapse, rescue operations underway
- JD (U) celebrates Bihar election victory
- EMT training to strengthen emergency medical services

Security beefed up ahead of verdict against Hasina



DHAKA, Nov 16: Security agencies are on high alert in Bangladesh ahead of a special tribunal's verdict in a case against deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over alleged crimes against humanity committed during the anti-government protests last year.

"The law enforcement agencies have already completed their necessary preparations" to prevent unpleasant events across the country, Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury was quoted as saying by the state-run BSS news agency.

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD) will deliver the verdict against 78-year-old Hasina on Monday.

Hasina, her home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and

then inspector general of police (IGP) Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun were accused of committing crimes under five counts, with the first one alleging the defendants of murder, attempted murder, torture, and other inhumane acts.

They were tried in the tribunal. The ex-premier and Kamal were tried in absentia, with the court declaring them fugitives. Mamun faced the trial in person but emerged as an approver or state witness.

According to a UN rights office report, up to 1,400 people were killed between July 15 and August 15 last year (dubbed as the July Uprising) as Hasina's government ordered a security crackdown on protesters.

Chief prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam has demanded the death penalty for Hasina, alleging that she was the "mastermind and principal architect" behind the crimes against humanity committed during the mass protests last year.

Hasina's supporters say the charges against her are politically motivated. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Nitu Chandra removed as election icon in Bihar

PATNA, Nov 16: The Election Commission on Sunday removed actress Nitu Chandra as the icon of the systematic voters' education and electoral participation (SVEEP) in Bihar for expressing views in favour of political parties during the recently-concluded assembly polls.

Chandra was named the icon to increase voter awareness ahead of the assembly polls.

"Complaints were received that during the electoral process, you expressed your views in favour of some political parties, which is against the undertaking given by you at the time of appointing you as Bihar SVEEP icon," Additional Chief Electoral Officer Prashanth Kumar Ch said in a letter to the actress.

"In your undertaking, you had mentioned that you have no political (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Central agencies collect samples from JK blast site

SRINAGAR, Nov 16: Teams of NSG, NIA and Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) on Sunday visited the Nowgam police station blast site in Jammu and Kashmir, where nine persons died and 32 others sustained injuries in an accidental blast, officials said.

The central agencies visited the site to collect samples from the scene of the blast, which occurred on Friday night, officials added.

They further informed that the samples will be analysed to check the nature of explosives seized from the 'white collar terror' module, which was stored at the Nowgam police station.

An accidental explosion ripped through the police station on Friday night while authorities were extracting samples from a large cache of explosives confiscated in the 'white-collar' terror module case. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

UTOA opposes move to grant ST status to six communities

HT Bureau KOKRAJHAR, Nov 16: The United Tribal Organisation of Assam (UTOA) has strongly opposed the Government's ongoing process to grant Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to six developed and populous communities of the state.

In a press statement issued on Sunday, UTOA said the move poses a direct threat to the constitutional rights, land security and cultural survival of the 35 Tribal Plains and Hill Indigenous Communities, who are the legitimate ST stakeholders of Assam.

The organisation expressed concern that the Government has continued the process without any consultation with UTOA, despite it being a common platform representing 35 tribal communities, a member organisation of the International Land Coalition (ILC), and the only indigenous organisation from India that attended and represented the country at the Global Land Forum for Indigenous Peoples in Bogotá, Colombia, in 2025.

UTOA said the exclusion reflects a deliberate attempt to silence the voices of indigenous peoples whose rights stand to be harmed. It reiterated that granting ST status to the six communities will reduce access to land, employment, education and political representation for the existing Scheduled Tribe communities.

The organisation added that the decision would violate constitutional safeguards, threaten tribal

9mm bullets found near Red Fort blast site

Investigators map accused's movements, scrutinise hawala-linked transactions and examine possible wider involvement as blast inquiry widens

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: Security agencies are probing three bullet cartridges, two of them live rounds, recovered from the debris near the Red Fort blast site, a source said on Sunday.

The empty shell and two live bullets -- a calibre not permitted for civilian use -- were found close to the burnt Hyundai i20 car, which exploded on November 10 near the iconic Delhi monument, killing 13 people and wounding more than two dozen.

According to the source, the 9mm rounds are generally issued to specialised units or individuals with explicit permission.

"The staff deployed at the spot were also asked to check their issued ammunition, but none was found missing. The cartridges were there, but there was no weapon to fire them. We are trying to understand the entire matter that how the bullets reached the spot," said the source.

The person said that security agencies are also preparing to re-



create the entire route of the accused, Umar Nabi, from the time he left Faridabad, visited Nuh in Haryana, and had tea in Delhi -- the whole sequence leading up to the blast. Authorities are stitching together call records, tower locations, and CCTV footage from over 50 cameras for the recreation.

"The reconstruction will include every check-post crossed, all parking entries, and each location he

visited or halted at, to identify whether any person met him, followed him, or aided him. Connecting the dots is critical to understanding the hours Umar spent in the NCR," the source said.

Meanwhile, angles of the probe continue to expand.

The source said that security agencies are examining a strong hawala trail, suggesting that the arrested doctors -- Muzammil and

Shaheen -- may have received funds through illegal channels.

Initial scrutiny has indicated transactions of nearly ₹ 20 lakh, suspected to have originated from foreign-based handlers.

Investigators are verifying whether the amount was routed to the three for the procurement of chemicals and logistics. Evidence recovered so far points to a structured financial link, with about Rs 3 lakh apparently spent on purchasing fertiliser.

Experts are also suspecting the use of Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP) to make the bomb.

Nicknamed 'mother of satan', TATP is extremely unstable, highly sensitive to shock, heat, friction and electrostatic discharge.

All components used in the blast, a compound including ammonium nitrate that significantly amplified its explosive potential, are under the lens.

Parallely, security agencies continue to examine the involvement of people linked to Al-Falah Uni-

versity in Haryana's Faridabad. According to sources, teams of security agencies have been visiting the university daily, checking attendance logs, staff records, and movements of people who may have been in contact with the arrested doctors.

A female doctor associated with the institution has been detained for questioning, a source said. The move came after several people known to be in touch with Umar, Muzammil, and Shaheen were found missing from campus.

A large part of the probe involves tracing dozens of vehicles parked near Umar's car in the hours leading up to the explosion.

Officials said a detailed log of each vehicle entering the Sunehri Masjid parking area during that three-hour window has been prepared.

The log includes registration details, entry-exit timings, driver identities, and vehicle ownership particulars. Investigators are questioning (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NIA arrests Kashmiri man who 'conspired' with 'suicide bomber' Dr Umar Un Nabi

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: In a major breakthrough in the Red Fort area car bomb blast case, the National Investigation Agency has arrested a Kashmir resident who had allegedly conspired with "suicide bomber" Dr Umar Un Nabi to carry out the terror attack, which claimed 13 lives.

Amir Rashid Ali, in whose name the car involved in the blast was registered, has been arrested from Delhi by the NIA, the federal probe agency said in a release.

The NIA had launched a massive search operation after taking over the case from the Delhi Police.

Investigations by the probe agency had revealed that the accused, a resident of Sambora in Jammu and Kashmir's Pampore, had conspired with the "suicide bomber", Umar, to unleash the ter-

ror attack.

Amir had come to Delhi to allegedly facilitate the purchase of the car, which was eventually used as a "vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device (IED)" to trigger the blast, the NIA said.

This was the first time the probe agency has described Dr Umar Un Nabi, who was behind the wheel when the car exploded near the Red Fort on November 10, as a "suicide bomber". Also, NIA has for the first time used the term "vehicle-borne IED" for the car.

The NIA has forensically established the identity of the deceased driver of the "vehicle-borne IED" as Umar Un Nabi, a resident of Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir and an assistant professor in the general (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

One more arrested for supporting Delhi blast

GUWAHATI, Nov 16: One more person has been arrested in Assam for putting up social media posts supporting the Delhi blast, taking the total number of apprehensions in this regard to 21. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

He asserted that no person lending support online to terrorists will be spared.

Sharing the update in an X post late on Saturday evening, Sarma said, "Another anti-national has been arrested by @assampolice, taking the total count to 21."

"We will NOT tolerate anyone expressing support online for terrorists behind the #DelhiTerrorAttacks," he added.

Among those arrested, three each are from Kamrup and Bongaigaon, two each from Chirang, Lakhimpur and Barpeta, and one each (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

KAAC to celebrate 74th Karbi Anglong Day today

HT Bureau DIPHU, Nov 16: The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) has announced that the 74th Karbi Anglong Day will be celebrated on Monday, November 17, from 8 am onwards at Taralango, Diphu.

Preparations are underway across the district, and the administration aims to deliver a meaningful and vibrant event that reflects the cultural richness, unity and development of Karbi Anglong.

The day holds strong historical value, and KAAC has stated that it will also honour the leaders whose sacrifice and service helped shape the district's journey.

This year's celebration will feature a diverse range of cultural performances by different communities, highlighting the shared heritage and harmony of Karbi Anglong.

The programme is designed to promote inclusivity and bring people together through traditional art, dance and music.

An evening musical segment will add more excitement.

The Scavenger Project from Mizoram will be one of the key attractions, while popular local bands such as The Redeemers, Optic Eteria and Arak will deliver energetic performances.

Nishant Gagier from Guwahati will also make a special appearance.

A large turnout is expected, with prominent personalities, VIP guests, senior government officials, line department representatives and employees scheduled to attend.

Their presence will add further significance to the occasion.

KAAC has extended an open invitation to (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Army considers induction of women cadres in Territorial Army battalions, say sources

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: The Army has considered inducting women cadres into the Territorial Army battalions as a pilot project, with their recruitment to be initially limited to a few battalions, sources said on Sunday.

The move is aimed at gradually opening up more opportunities for women in the force.

The Territorial Army, in its current form, came into being with the enactment of the Territorial Army Act on August 18, 1948. It was formally inaugurated by the first Indian Governor General, C Rajagopalachari, on October 9, 1949.

According to sources, the Army has considered the induction of women cadres into Territorial Army battalions as a pilot project. Their recruitment, initially, will be limited to a few battalions, and may increase subsequently in other battal-

ions based on initial feedback, they added.

The government has been emphasising the essence of 'Nari Shakti' in the armed forces.

In a written response to a query in Rajya Sabha in March 2022, then Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt had said the combat employment philosophy of women in the armed forces is a continuously evolving process and regularly reviewed by them.

"At present, women are being commissioned in the Indian Army into 10 arms and services, viz., Corps of Engineers, Corps of Signals, Army Air Defence, Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps, Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, Army Aviation Corps, Intelligence Corps, Judge Advocate General Branch and Army Education Corps in addition to the Armed Forces Medical

Services," he had said.

The Territorial Army was raised on the concept of being a 'citizen soldier's army'. Besides augmenting the organisational requirements, the Territorial Army also provides an opportunity to able-bodied volunteer citizens of India, especially those who are overage for enrollment in the regular army, to serve the nation in uniform.

Presently, the Territorial Army has a strength of approximately 50,000 personnel comprising 65 Departmental TA units such as Railway, IOC, ONGC, and Non-Departmental TA units of Infantry Battalion (TA) including Home and Health Battalions, Ecological Battalion (TA) affiliated to various Infantry Regiments and Engineer Regiment (TA) for maintenance of Line of Control fencing, according to its website. The Territorial Army units (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Indian Navy to commission indigenous anti-submarine warfare vessel

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: The Indian Navy will commission an indigenous built anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft next week that is expected to boost its combat prowess.

The first of the Mahe-class anti-submarine warfare vessels will be inducted at a ceremony in Mumbai on November 24, the Navy said on Sunday.

Built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), the vessel Mahe represents the cutting edge of India's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) initiative in naval ship design and construction, it said.

"Compact yet powerful, the ship embodies agility, precision and endurance - qualities vital for dominating the littorals," it said.

With her blend of firepower, stealth and mobility, the ship is designed to hunt submarines, conduct coastal (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

UNDP hails India's focus on efficient public delivery, social protection and climate action as a pathway for fairer development

India showed economic growth and social inclusion can advance together: UNDP chief

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: India has demonstrated that economic growth and social inclusion can advance together and it is helping translate its success stories into global lessons for a more equitable world, a top official of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has said.

The India growth story is not only about economic progress, but it is also about using technology and participatory governance to ensure that development objectives are achieved and no one is left behind, UNDP's Acting Administrator Haoliang Xu said.

In an interview to PTI, Xu said India's commitment to climate adaptation, renewable energy and inclusive digital finance offers a blueprint for balancing growth with sustainability.

India continues to shape "development pathways" that are both economically sound and climate-responsible, he said.

The UN Under-Secretary-General and UNDP Acting Administrator was in India on a three-day visit to strengthen and identify new areas of cooperation, including in areas of digital transformation and climate action.

Xu, talking about pressing global challenges, said the UNDP's latest Human Development Index showed that global progress in human development has slowed to a 35-year low and that it has been almost stagnant for the past two years.

At the same time, he lauded India's development model to address various challenges, including climate change and poverty.



"The country's commitment to just transitions, climate adaptation, renewable energy and inclusive digital finance offers a blueprint for balancing growth with sustainability," he said.

"We can work together to align development objectives, development financing from all sources, and effective, accountable and inclusive institutional capacity even more closely," Xu said in the e-

mail interview.

The UNDP chief said India has shown that rapid growth can be matched with deliberate investments in people, especially those historically left behind.

"As a leading voice of the Global South, India is helping translate local success stories into global lessons through South-South cooperation, sharing not only its tools and technology but also the frameworks that make them work," he said.

Xu specifically referred to India's flagship programmes, such as the MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) and Ayushman Bharat, and said they combined livelihood security with social protection.

He said India's digital public in-

frastructure and financial inclusion platforms, including the "Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile (JAM) trinity and UPI (Unified Payments Interface)" have enabled transparent, direct delivery of benefits to hundreds of millions, setting examples that many nations are now studying.

JAM is an initiative that links a person's bank account (Jan Dhan), biometric identity (Aadhaar) and mobile number to enable direct benefit transfers (DBT) from the government.

Initiatives like the Aspirational Districts Programme show how data, evidence and community participation can narrow regional gaps and make growth more equitable, Xu said.

The UNDP acting administrator noted that India's increasing focus

on "green jobs and climate-resilient livelihoods" -- from renewable energy to community-based conservation -- aligns economic opportunity with environmental stewardship and the Sustainable Development Goals.

"The next phase of growth can further expand quality jobs, gender equality, and climate resilience to keep development inclusive and sustainable," he said.

"India's story is not only about growth, it is also about using technology, evidence and participatory governance to ensure that development objectives are achieved and no one is left behind," he said.

"These lessons are shaping a more equitable and sustainable world. Through South-South Cooperation, UNDP is pleased to be India's (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Gold may stay choppy ahead of US jobs data, Fed meeting minutes: Analysts

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: Gold prices are likely to remain volatile in the coming week but may find support as focus shifts to key US economic data releases, including jobs report and the Federal Reserve's meeting minutes for fresh signals on the interest rate decision, analysts said.

Investors will also closely watch Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's speech on Wednesday. Along with comments from other Fed officials throughout the week which will drive the gold prices, they added.

"The volatility is expected to remain high, but prices may find some support... Focus will be on the US economic data releases, which may give some clues on the health of the American economy & possible some direction on the Fed's rate outlook," Pranav Mer, Vice President, EBG - Commodity & Currency Research, JM Financial Services Ltd, said.

On a weekly basis, gold futures for December delivery climbed by Rs 2,494, or 2.06 per cent in the past week, on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

"The precious metal rallied earlier in the week amid uncertainty over the impact of the 43-day US government shutdown on the economy, delayed data releases and the recent increase in money supply by the US Federal Reserve.

"A weaker dollar also supported the gold up-move. Fed officials have signalled caution over further easing, citing worries about inflation," Mer said.



However, profit booking at elevated levels dragged gold lower on Friday. The yellow metal tumbled by Rs 3,190, or 2.52 per cent, to close at Rs 1,23,561 per 10 grams on the MCX.

"Gold prices pared some of the gains on Friday to close the session down, weighed by hawkish commentary from some of the Fed officials and as traders trimmed bets for a December rate cut to near 40 per cent," Pranav Mer added.

Prathamesh Mallya, DVP - Research, Non-Agri Commodities and Currencies, Angel One, said, "Markets hope fresh data would show a slowing economy, giving the Fed room to cut rates in December. A host of factors will keep gold prices volatile in the weeks ahead."

The prolonged US shutdown, which ended on Thursday, created a major data gap, leaving the Fed and traders making them blind

ahead of next month's policy meeting, he added.

Globally, Comex gold futures for December delivery rose by USD 84.4, or 2.10 per cent, over the past week. However, the metal declined by USD 100.3, or 2.39 per cent, to finish at USD 4,094.2 per ounce, on Friday.

"Gold extended its strong upward momentum, supported by renewed ETFs and softer US macro signals that reinforced expectations of further Federal Reserve easing," Riya Singh, Research Analyst, Commodities and Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services, said.

The exchange traded funds (ETFs) added 114,345 ounces in the last session, taking year-to-date purchases to 14 million ounces, a 17 per cent increase in total ETF holdings to 97.3 million ounces, valued at nearly USD 480 million.

Singh said weak jobs data, a

fragile fiscal outlook, and a soft dollar continued to attract safe-haven flows, pushing gold back above USD 4,200 per ounce.

She further added that the metal signalled further bullish momentum and a potential extension toward USD 4,300-4,385 an ounce.

"Despite some caution from some Fed officials the market remains firmly biased towards further easing, leaving the broader narrative decisively supportive of gold and positioning it for another strong weekly close," Singh said.

On the MCX, silver futures for December delivery skyrocketed by Rs 8,290, or 5.61 per cent, over the past week.

"Silver prices outperformed all the asset classes with a rally of more than 12 per cent in four trading sessions till Thursday, as traders jumped on the metal after it was added to the US critical minerals list in the previous week," Pranav Mer of JM Financial Services Ltd, said.

On the MCX, the white metal tanked by Rs 6,452, or 3.97 per cent to settle at Rs 1,56,018 per kilogram on Friday.

Comex silver futures for December delivery went up by USD 2.5, or 5.3 per cent in the last week, in the overseas markets.

However, it had plummeted by USD 2.4, or 4.67 per cent to end at USD 50.68 an ounce on Friday.

On the technical front, silver price momentum looks sideways with upside resistance at Rs 1,70,500 per kilogram, he said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

9mm bullets found

the drivers and owners to determine whether anyone noticed Umar stepping out of the car, meeting someone, or allowing another person to approach the vehicle.

"Security agencies are showing Umar's photograph to these people to confirm whether he was alone. Even seemingly insignificant movements can help establish whether someone else may have planted or adjusted the explosive," the source said.

A bomb-detection team remains deployed at the parking lot as a precaution.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police registered two separate FIRs against Haryana's Al-Falah University, following red flags by the University Grants Commission and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council.

The FIRs, lodged by the Crime Branch, pertain to alleged cheating and forgery linked to suspicious accreditation claims.

Earlier, another FIR under sections related to criminal conspiracy was lodged to probe the larger network behind the blast.

Raids are being made in Delhi, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh to gain insights into the chemical procurement, financial transactions, hideouts, and the movement of suspects. (PTI)

Security beefed up

The tribunal on October 23 concluded the hearing on the case after over 28 working days, when 54 witnesses testified before the court describing how efforts were made to tame last year's student-led movement called July Uprising that toppled Hasina's now disbanded Awami League government on August 5, 2024.

Hasina fled Bangladesh on August 5 last year amid escalating unrest and is currently residing in India. Kamal reportedly also took refuge in the neighbouring country.

The interim government led by Muhammad Yunus has sought Hasina's extradition, but India has yet to respond to the request.

Hasina and the two others were accused of committing crimes under five counts, with the first one alleging the defendants of murder, attempted murder, torture, and other inhumane acts.

The second count accused Hasina of ordering the "extermination" of protesters. Under the third count, she was accused of making inflammatory remarks and ordering the use of deadly weapons against protesting students. Under the rest of the counts, the defendants were charged with the shooting and murder of six unarmed protesters, including students in Dhaka and its suburbs.

Hasina faces multiple cases in Bangladesh after being ousted in August last year following the mass student-led agitation.

In several recent interviews with major international news outlets and the Indian media, Hasina called the ICT-BD a "kangaroo court" run entirely by men linked to her political opponents.

UK-based leading law firm Doughty House Chambers recently submitted an "urgent appeal" to the United Nations, saying Hasina was being tried in "an environment charged with political vengeance, under an unelected interim government with no democratic mandate".

Last month, the Awami League filed a petition with the Hague-based ICC, accusing the Yunus-led interim administration of crimes against humanity, including killings and arbitrary arrests of its members.

The ICT-BD was formed by the past government to try hardened collaborators of the Pakistani troops during Bangladesh's 1971 Liberation War, when Tajul appeared as a key lawyer to defend the accused.

Yunus's administration amended the ICT-BD law to try the leaders of the past regime, including Hasina, appointing Tajul as its chief prosecutor.

Most Awami League leaders and key figures of the past government are now in jail or on the run at home and abroad. (PTI)

One more arrested

from Darrang, Goalpara, Nalbari, Hailakandi, Hojai, South Salmara, Kokrajhar, Bajali and Dhubri.

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

The chief minister had said that the state government has adopted a zero-tolerance approach against anyone showing support to the attack. (PTI)

NIA arrests Kashmiri

medicine department of Al Falah University in Faridabad.

The anti-terror agency has also seized another vehicle belonging to Umar. The vehicle is being examined for evidence in the case, in which NIA has so far examined 73 witnesses, including those injured in the blast.

Working in close coordination with Delhi Police, Jammu and Kashmir Police, Haryana Police, Uttar Pradesh Police and various sister agencies, the NIA is continuing its investigation across states.

It is pursuing multiple leads to unearth the larger conspiracy behind the "bombing" and identify others involved in the case, the release said. (PTI)

Nitu Chandra removed

affiliation with any political party. You had also mentioned that you would not associate yourself with any political party or candidate during the election. You are removed from the role of SVEEP icon with immediate effect," he added.

Chandra, a native of Patna, appeared in several Bollywood movies such as 'Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye!' and 'Garam Masala'. (PTI)

Central agencies collect

Those killed in the incident were three people from the Forensic Science Laboratory, two from the revenue department, including a Naib Tehsildar, two police photographers, one member of the State Investigation Agency and a tailor.

The blast occurred when the personnel were handling the explosive material brought from Haryana's Faridabad, officials said, adding that the explosion occurred due to the unstable nature of the chemicals.

The material was part of the 360 kg of explosives recovered from the rented residence of the arrested accused, Dr Muzammil Ganaie. (PTI)

KAAC to celebrate

all residents to join the celebration and take part in this important annual event that honours the district's identity, unity and collective aspirations.

Army considers induction

were actively involved in 1962, 1965 and 1971 operations. The "Terriers" had also taken part in Operation Pawan in Sri Lanka, Operation Rakshak in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, Operation Rhino and Operation Bajrang in the northeast in the most active manner. (PTI)

Indian Navy to

patrols, and secure India's vital maritime approaches, the Navy said.

Equipped with torpedoes and anti-submarine rockets, the first of the Mahe-class anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft (ASW SWC) was delivered to the Navy on October 23.

The Navy said the commissioning of Mahe will mark the arrival of a "new generation" of indigenous shallow-water combatants.

"With over 80 per cent indigenous content, the Mahe-class showcases India's growing mastery in warship design, construction and integration," the Navy said in a statement.

Named after the historic coastal town of Mahe on the Malabar coast, the ship's crest features an "Urumi" -- the flexible sword of Kalarippayattu, symbolising agility, precision, and lethal grace, it said. (PTI)

India showed economic

partner to share them with other developing countries globally," he said.

Xu also complimented India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and CoWIN (Covid Vaccine Intelligence Network), saying they are successful as they were built to solve practical, everyday problems.

"The UPI digital payments are as simple as sending a text message. CoWIN tracked the administration of over two billion vaccine doses in record time during the COVID-19 pandemic and gave every person a verifiable vaccination record," he said.

The UNDP top official said India's platforms are unique because they run on open, public digital infrastructure.

"This design encourages competition, lowers transaction costs and prevents monopolies."

"India's latest digital health innovation, U-WIN (Universal Immunisation WIN) is a cutting-edge digital platform designed to electronically register and monitor the vaccination status of all expectant mothers and children across India," he said.

"This people-centric platform - developed with technical support from UNDP - tracks and improves vaccine coverage nationwide," he added.

Xu also called for concrete global efforts to combat climate change.

"Today, developing countries require about USD 2.4 trillion each year for climate action by 2030. The current multilateral finance commitment is reflected in the Baku to Belem Roadmap that calls for all actors to work together to scale up finance to USD 1.3 trillion per year by 2025," he said.

"Yet accessing climate finance is still far too slow and complex. The climate crisis is here and now, and developing countries need urgent support to achieve their goals at scale," he said.

On the ongoing COP 30 in Brazil, Xu said finance and cooperation were top of the agenda, along with how the global community can accelerate the implementation of their national climate pledges.

"In particular, countries need financing systems that are simpler, faster and more predictable -- with multi-year windows and clear rules, not fragmented projects," he said.

"Adaptation must also be better funded. Protecting farms, water systems and communities is not charity -- it's smart economics: every dollar invested in adaptation yields up to ten dollars in returns."

Xu said the UNDP is facilitating the implementation of this vision.

"For instance, with assistance from our UN partners and beyond, 86 countries are now implementing integrated national financing frameworks that aim to channel billions of dollars towards vital SDG areas like climate action, including help align private investment with national development objectives," he said. (PTI)

Ola Electric commences test rides of its 4,680 Bharat Cell vehicles

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: Ola Electric on Sunday said it has commenced test rides of its 4680 Bharat Cell vehicles at the company's flagship stores across India.

The S1 Pro+ (5.2kWh) is the first product to be powered by the company's indigenously manufactured 4680 Bharat Cell battery pack that delivers more range, better performance, and enhanced safety.

The company recently announced that it secured ARAI certification under the latest AIS-156 Amendment 4 standards issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways for its indigenous developed and manufactured 4680 Bharat Cell battery packs in 5.2 kWh configuration.

"With this indigenous technology now available for customers to experience through test rides at our flagship stores, we are proud to bring the future of performance, range, and safety to the roads today," a company spokesperson stated. (PTI)

CNG supply to Mumbai affected by gas pipeline damage; auto, taxis to take hit

MUMBAI, Nov 16: CNG supply to the financial capital was affected on Sunday due to a damage to the main pipeline, Mahangar Gas (MGL) said.

A majority of autorickshaws and taxis, including those operated by companies such as Ola and Uber, and also some of the buses run by public transport undertakings run on compressed natural gas (CNG) supplied by MGL.

The gas utility, however, said it has "prioritised" supply to residences that will ensure that piped natural gas supply to homes continues. (PTI)

NAME CHANGE

I have Changed my name from MOHAMMAD ABDUL ROSHID TO ABDUL RASHID by swearing a notarial affidavit at Srimanta Sankardevnagar S/O. Lt. Abdus Salam Vill: Karaiyani, Dist: Hojai (Assam).

AFFIDAVIT

I, Buddheswari Devi, W/O Prafulla Chandra Nath of village - Deobali Kakati Gaon, PO - Dighaldari, PS - Raha, Nagaon, through an affidavit (IN AS 93717064662967X) in Nagaon court on 24th October 2025, declared that my actual name is Buddheswari Devi. But in my husband's service record vid PPO No 00409126716, it's recorded as Buddheswari Nath. Hence, Buddheswari Devi and Buddheswari Nath is the same and one single person i.e myself. Besides, my actual date of birth is 07-05-1965 but my date of birth is recorded in the same PPO No - 00409126716 as 02-04-1962 instead of 07-05-1965.

Buddheswari Devi
W/o Prafulla chandra Nath
Village: Deobali Kakati Gaon
PO: Dighaldari, P.S. Raha, Nagaon (Assam)

Ather Energy posts strong Q2 FY26 performance, market share rises to 17.4%

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 16: Ather Energy (ATHERENERG), India's leading electric two-wheeler manufacturer, has reported a strong Q2 FY26 performance with sharp growth in market share, sales volume and financial metrics.

The quarter's momentum was driven by an expanding geographical footprint, a diversified product portfolio and a strong technology foundation.

The company ended the quarter with a 17.4% market share, sales of 65,595 units and an EBITDA margin improvement of around 1,100 bps year-on-year to 10%, reflecting solid operational execution. For the quarter ended September 2025, Ather Energy reported total income of ₹940.7 crore, up 57% year-on-year and 40% quarter-on-quarter.

Non-vehicle revenue—primarily from ecosystem offerings such as software subscriptions, charging, accessories, spares and service—contributed 12% of total income, highlighting the growing strength of its ecosystem-led business model.

Margins improved steadily through operational efficiencies and disciplined financial management.

Adjusted Gross Margin rose to ₹210.6 crore in Q2 FY26, up 84% year-on-year, supported by value engineering, a richer product mix and increased non-vehicle revenue contributions.

Adjusted Gross Margin improved to 22%, up nearly 300 bps year-on-year. EBITDA losses narrowed to ₹90.7 crore, with margin improvement of over 1,100 bps year-on-year and 600 bps quarter-on-quarter.

Loss after tax stood at ₹154.1 crore, indicating steady progress toward profitability.

The company strengthened its position in the electric two-wheeler market with a 17.4% share in Q2 FY26, up from 12.1% in Q2 FY25 and 14.3% in Q1 FY26.

It delivered 65,595 units during the quarter, registering a 67% year-on-year increase and a 42% quarter-on-quarter rise.

Ather continued its leadership in South India with a 25% market share, while Middle India emerged as the fastest-growing region, increasing to 14.6% from 8.8% year-on-year.

The Rest of India saw growth to 10%, driven by strong performance in Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan.

Operational expansion remained

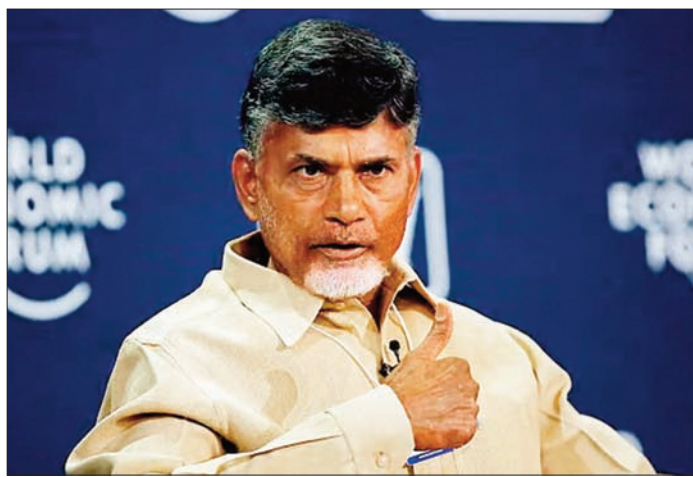
strong, with the company adding 78 new Experience Centres (ECs) during the quarter and 173 in H1, taking its total retail footprint to 524 ECs nationwide.

Ecosystem initiatives also advanced, with the rollout of Ather-Stack 7.0 introducing new software features that enhance connectivity and the riding experience.

AtherGrid expanded to 4,322 fast-charging points and neighbourhood chargers across India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Tarun Mehta, Executive Director and CEO of Ather Energy, said, "Q2 has been a strong quarter with steady growth in market share and continued progress on our path to profitability. We saw continued improvement in EBITDA margin with improving operating leverage. Our strategic focus on Middle India has delivered results, with several states scaling up rapidly. The Rest of India has also grown strongly, making our expansion more broad-based. In the South, we continue to lead the market and are seeing a new growth story driven by a denser retail presence. The response to Rizta and our ongoing retail expansion pan-India have been key contributors to this momentum."

H1-B visa tightening temporary setback, cost advantage will bring US around, says AP CM Naidu



That is going to happen. I am very clear," Naidu said in an interview with PTI.

Any restrictions on Indians, he said, cannot stop their progress.

This is a "temporary setback", he said. "Some people will suffer. But, we have to make use of them."

Asked if he was willing to provide opportunities to techies displaced by the new visa rules, Naidu said opportunities will emerge as India embraces the next-gen technology across sectors - from indigenous 4G tech stack to satellites, drones and AI quantum computing. "We will create opportunities."

Even as US visa scrutiny intensifies, countries such as Canada, Australia, the UK, and those in Europe and the Middle East are actively seeking skilled engineers in software development, AI, cybersecurity, and cloud technologies.

Analysts say many companies are recalibrating hiring strategies to leverage India's talent depth and economic efficiency, either through remote roles or expanded engineering centres in the country. This shift is opening new avenues for techies from Andhra Pradesh and across India.

Industry bodies add that the worldwide digital transformation cycle is creating sustained demand for specialised skills, ensuring that Indian professionals remain well-positioned globally despite short-term fluctuations in US immigration policy. (PTI)

VISAKHAPATNAM, Nov 16: The recent tightening of the H-1B visa regime in the United States is only a temporary setback, and the cost advantage Indian tech professionals offer is bound to bring them around, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said.

Naidu, who is credited with having the vision of developing Hyderabad as a cyber hub two decades ago when most didn't see the huge opportunities lying in the technology sector, said Indian tech professionals continue to be in high demand across geographies as they offer a strong mix of advanced skills and cost advantages.

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana account for the most Indian tech professionals going to the US on H-1B visas.

President Donald Trump recently imposed a sweeping overhaul of the H-1B visa programme, which allows US employers to hire foreign professionals in specialised occupations, by introducing a USD 1 lakh supplemental fee for new visa petitions filed on or after September 21, 2025.

While Trump had argued the fee hike was to curb "abuse" of the programme, he seems to have softened his stance, acknowledging that the United States needs to "bring in talent" from abroad as America simply does not have "certain talents" domestically, particularly for highly technical and complex roles.

"Cost is very, very important...you (Indian techies) are providing cost-effective services. They are bound to depend on us.

Union minister praises awardees, urges citizens to contribute to nation-building Sonowal confers 'Son of the Soil Awards Assam 2025'

HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, Nov 16: Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal attended a special award presentation ceremony organised by Care Luit on Saturday evening and conferred the fifth biennial Son of the Soil Awards Assam 2025, honouring distinguished personalities and emerging talents from diverse fields.

Congratulating the awardees, Sonowal said sincere and dedicated work gives life true meaning. "Good deeds remain immortal and celebrating them inspires others," he said. He stressed that Assam's great visionaries have enriched national life, urging everyone to strive for a strong and prosperous state by upholding the ideals of their predecessors.

Paying tribute to Tezpur's cultural icons Rupkonwar Jyotiprasad Agarwala, Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha and Natasurya Phani Sarma, the minister said their con-



tributions shaped Assamese literature and culture. He expressed hope that Tezpur's intellectual legacy would continue to fuel new creative pursuits. Sonowal also highlighted the region's ongoing development under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and urged citizens

(Public Service). Emerging talents honoured included Sukrita Baruah (Media & Communication), Sanghamitra Kalita (Entrepreneurship), Isharini Baruah (Sports), Himjyoti Talukdar (Art & Culture) and Dr Deyyani Bora (Conservation). Dr Alka Sharma and Akshar Foundation received the Social Sector Development Award for contributions to education and social upliftment.

Established in 2016, Care Luit has been recognising individuals and organisations whose dedication, creativity and excellence enrich Assam's cultural and social landscape. The event was attended by Cabinet Minister Ashok Singhal, MLA Prithiraj Rava, Amtron Vice-Chairman Ritubaran Sarma and other prominent personalities.

The programme opened with a rendition of Ganesh Vandana by Pinky Banerjee and singer Joy Baruah later captivated the audience, accompanied by vocalist Kalyan Baruah.

Goalpara Police conduct anti-opium drive

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 16: The Goalpara district police, led by CDSP Abhilash Baruah and officers from Lakhipur and Chunar police stations, conducted intensive search and area domination operations in char areas previously affected by opium cultivation.

The drive aimed to curb drug production and protect society from criminal activities. Officers interacted with local farmers, urging them to avoid illegal cultivation and anti-social behavior. Earlier in February, similar operations in Fetengapara Char led to the destruction of opium plants worth around ₹ 2 crore in the international market.

Co-district commissioner Nabajeet Pathak appealed to residents to cooperate with authorities in maintaining peace and curbing criminal activities.

RPF intensifies crackdown on smuggling across NFR zone

Narcotics and contraband worth over ₹ 9.4 crore seized in October



HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Nov 16: The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has continued its strong action against smuggling, apprehending 37 persons involved in trafficking narcotics and contraband items worth approximately ₹ 9.40 crore during October 2025.

In a series of operations this month, the RPF made multiple recoveries:

On November 13, the RPF at New Coochbehar recovered 37.1 kg of unclaimed ganja worth ₹ 3.71 lakh at the railway station. The seized narcotics were handed over to the OC/GRP, New Coochbehar.

On the same day, joint teams of

RPF and GRP at Agartala and Lumding recovered 23.61 kg of ganja worth ₹ 2.36 lakh. The items were handed over to respective GRP authorities.

On November 12, RPF teams from Dharmanagar, Agartala and Rangapara North recovered 50.51 kg of ganja valued at ₹ 5.05 lakh, which was also handed over to the concerned GRP units.

Northeast Frontier Railway lauded the coordinated efforts of RPF personnel across its divisions, along with the support of GRP and Customs officials. The railway authority said such operations are vital to ensuring the safety of railway premises and curbing illegal activities within its jurisdiction.

Karbi Lammet Amei schedules 34th annual conference

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Nov 16: The Karbi Lammet Amei Central Executive Committee (KLA-CEC) has scheduled its 34th annual conference from January 7 to 10, 2026 at Bhoksong, Duar Amla in West Karbi Anglong. The conference coincides with the 16th death anniversary of former KLA president Khonsing Tokbi, whose memory was honoured by members with prayers and candle lighting. The CEC meeting, chaired by KLA president Kamshing Hanse and attended by over 50 members, also finalised the date for elections to the posts of president and vice president, set for November 22. Voting will involve 341 members from the CEC, regional committees and branch committees, with Khirla Teronpi, Khorsing Teron and Humsing Bey appointed as Returning Officers.

The meeting further discussed the release of 100 books by various authors during the conference and the felicitation of 15 individuals recognised at national, state and district levels for their achievements. KLA-CEC has 65 members, 11 regional committees and 110 branches across Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong and other districts of Assam and neighboring states.

Pregnant wild elephant found dead in West KA

HT Correspondent
KHERONI, Nov 16: The carcass of a pregnant wild elephant was found between Jiribasa and Wasling villages in Hawaitpur, West Karbi Anglong, on Sunday. Villagers discovered the body around 2 AM in a harvested paddy field. Forest officials who reached the site said the female elephant is suspected to have died due to complications during childbirth. Villagers gathered to pay respects, offering flowers and lighting incense sticks as a mark of mourning. Meanwhile, the region has been witnessing increasing man-elephant conflict over the past month. A large herd, including several calves has been raiding crops and entering villages after dusk. According to locals, the elephants rest inside the Reserve Forest during the day and split into smaller groups at night to raid standing crops and nearby settlements.

Bodo Thunlai San observed



HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Nov 16: The 74th Bodo Thunlai San (Bodo Sahitya Divosh) was celebrated across Assam on Sunday, marking the foundation day of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha.

In Kokrajhar, the Kokrajhar Primary Bodo Sahitya

Sabha observed the day at Khargaon with a range of literary activities for students. Similarly, the Banaragan Primary Bodo Sahitya Sabha held a day-long programme at Banaragan-Khagrabari Community Hall, which included an open discussion on the development and promotion of the Bodo language and literature.

Bodoland University also commemorated the day with various programmes across its campuses. The celebrations were conducted by district and unit committees of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, along with participation from educational institutions across Assam, West Bengal and Meghalaya, where Bodo communities reside.

The Bodo Sahitya Sabha was founded on this day in 1952 with Jaybhadra Hagier as president and Sonaram Thaosan as secretary, establishing a platform dedicated to the preservation and development of the Bodo language and literature.

Bokajan MLA: BJP not against Christians

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Nov 16: Bokajan MLA and Assam Assembly Deputy Speaker Dr Numal Momin said rumours that BJP is against Christians are false, stressing that no ruling party can discriminate against any religion or community. He made the remarks at the centenary celebration of Deithor Baptist Church in Karbi Anglong on Saturday.

Dr Momin, a Christian himself

urged believers to rely on prayer to overcome difficulties and highlighted government schemes for religious minorities. He also announced the completion of the Deithor-Dolamara road under Asom Mala. The three-day centenary event included worship, felicitation of church leaders and cultural performances by choir and Sunday School children. Executive Member KAAC Richard Tokbi contributed ₹ 2 lakh for church building completion.

Tribal legacy and ethnicity heritage workshop

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Nov 16: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Karbi Anglong held a one-day workshop on 'Tribal Legacy and Ethnicity' on Saturday as part of the Janjatiya Gaurav Varsha Pakhwada celebrations. The event aimed to celebrate tribal heritage and promote indigenous agricultural practices.

The programme, hosted by SMS Agronomy Prakhshita Boruah began with an inaugural address by Senior Scientist and Head, Dr MK Doley, who emphasised preserving tribal culture for future generations. Assam Gaurav Binong Teron, the

chief guest urged farmers to safeguard traditional knowledge and customs.

Around 150 farmers participated, engaging in farmer-scientist interaction sessions where technical guidance on sustainable and climate-resilient farming was shared. The event also featured a traditional seed exchange, art competition for students on tribal culture and thematic training sessions.

The workshop was coordinated by KVK staff and concluded with a vote of thanks by SMS Horticulture Shourov Dutta.

Journalists urged to uphold credibility amid rising misinformation

National Press Day 2025 celebrated across Assam

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Nov 16: The District Press Club of Karbi Anglong in collaboration with the District Information and Public Relations Office, observed National Press Day with a day-long programme at Recreation Park on Sunday.

The event began with the hoisting of the Club's flag by working president Danielson Bey and District Information and Public Relations Officer Utpal Dimasa, followed by a cake-cutting ceremony. A large number of working journalists from both electronic and print media attended the programme, along with the Club's general secretary, Dibyajyoti Bora.

Addressing the gathering, DIPRO Utpal Dimasa spoke on this year's theme, "Safeguarding Press Credibility Amidst Rising Misinformation," stressing the importance of responsible journalism and verified reporting in the digital age.

Our Dongkamukam Correspondent adds: West Karbi Anglong District Press Club (WKADPC), in collaboration with the District Information and Public Relations Office (DIPRO), Hamren observed the 59th National Press Day on Sunday at Kheroni, Agriculture IB, West Karbi Anglong. The theme of this year's celebration was "Safeguarding Press Credibility Amidst Rising Misinformation."

The programme began with the unfurling of the WKADPC flag by president Joyshing Terang. WKADPC general secretary Alok Borborra led a tribute to Assam's heartthrob Zubeen Gang and journalists Lawrence Tisso, Bidhyaing Senar and Si-im Hanse.

Chief Guest Rensing Bey, a noted social worker, urged journalists to uphold high standards and focus on positive news to strengthen the credibility of the profession. He highlighted how the district, despite entering the news arena relatively late has made significant progress over the past two decades.

Deputy Director DIPRO (Hills), Gagan Narzary, advised media personnel against sharing unverified messages on social media, cautioning that it can negatively impact society and stressed the importance of credibility in journalism.

The event saw the presence of senior reporters Srabon Kr Engti, advocate Santanu Rongpi, Western College Principal Hem Chandra Timung, centenarian Sarbura Rongpi, writer Rudrewar Bokolijal and numerous working journalists from the district. Senior journalists Jason Enghee and Lokhi Prasad Nath were felicitated for their contributions to the profession.

Our Margherita Correspondent adds: The National Press Day 2025 was observed on Sunday at the Conference Hall of the Office of the Co-District Commissioner, Margherita in a programme jointly organised by the Co-District Commissioner's Office and the Sub-Divisional Information and Public Relations Office. The event began with a brief introduction by presenter Javed Ali, setting the stage for theme-based discussions.

Co-District Commissioner Rahul Doley, in his welcome address, said that in an age where information spreads faster than verification, responsible reporting and timely correction of errors are essential for maintaining press credibility. Speaking on the theme "Safeguarding Press Credibility Amidst Rising Misinformation," he lauded the media fraternity of the Co-District for their role in upholding truth amid growing digital misinformation.

Senior journalist Manash Pratim Gogoi paid tribute to departed media persons of Margherita, noting that their principled work remains the moral foundation of today's journalism. He said credibility is built over years through consistent and ethical reporting.

Margherita Journalist Association president Ramprasad Ambekar highlighted the rise of rumours during uncertain times, citing the lack of clarity around the downturn in NEC CIL's coal industry, which has affected employees and locals. He proposed forming consultative forums for transparent communication and responsible planning. Responding to this, Doley said the administration is reviewing the issue and subject to clearances, opencast mining may resume with environmental safeguards—an example of how transparent information flow prevents speculation.

Senior journalist Samiron Borthakur drew attention to civic issues, noting that gaps in essential services—such as potable water—often create space for misinformation. Doley responded that scientific assessments are underway to identify sustainable solutions suited to the region's terrain.

Adding to the discussion, senior journalist Sonaram Kalita spoke about the pressures of instant publishing and the accelerating pace of misinformation. He said real-time verification, editorial discipline and resisting sensationalism are key to preserving the dignity of the profession.

Margherita Co-District Public Relations Officer Gurmeet Kaur Suri thanked



participants and noted that in an era of instant updates and social-media-driven news cycles, commitment to accuracy is more critical than ever.

Our Morigaon Correspondent adds: The 59th National Press Day was celebrated today at Pabitora Hut, organised by the Morigaon District Administration in collaboration with the Morigaon District Journalist Association (MDJA). News Live channel's Chief Executive Editor Chaya Moni Bhuyan attended the event as the keynote speaker.

Speaking on the theme "Ensure Safety in Trustworthiness of Journalism Amidst Obfuscation Information," Bhuyan urged journalists to maintain steadfastness, devotion and sincerity to excel in the profession. She encouraged young journalists not to harbour any inferiority complex while pursuing their goals. Reflecting on her own journey, she said she had never imagined becoming a journalist, but the support she received from her joint family encouraged her to take bold steps. She recalled her memorable experience of travelling to the United States in 2001 with other journalists to cover the World Trade Center attack.

Morigaon Deputy Commissioner Anamika Tewari delivered the welcome address, acknowledging the role of journalists in strengthening democratic values. A felicitation programme was also held under the initiative of MDJA president Ajit Sarma.

The event was attended by DDC Arpa Buglary, SSP Prakash Sonowal, ADCs, MDJA secretary Guljarilal Sarma, COs and senior journalists of the district.

Our Hojai Correspondent adds: The Hojai District Administration marked National Press Day with a vibrant programme at the district headquarters in Srimanta Sankardev Nagar on Sunday, beginning with the felicitation of local reporters for their contributions to public

service journalism. District Commissioner Bidyut Bikash Bhagwati, in his address, traced the roots of journalism in Assam and highlighted its enduring social significance. Calling journalists the "torchbearers of society," he said journalism is a powerful tool that must be used for the community's welfare. He urged reporters to embrace lifelong learning and uphold transparency, honesty and fearlessness as the foundation of positive journalism.

Maruf Alam, IIS, Assistant Director and News Editor at DD News, served as the resource person and spoke on "Safeguarding Press Credibility Amidst Rising Misinformation." He discussed the challenges created by the digital information surge, emphasising fact-checking, critical analysis and a clear understanding of misinformation, disinformation and fake news. He also offered practical verification techniques to maintain accuracy and credibility. Veteran journalist Toshiwar Tamuli Phukan shared insights from his long career in print media, stressing courage, impartiality, confidence and transparency as defining traits of a good reporter. He advised journalists to cover all angles of a story and remain firmly committed to the truth.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks from Assistant Commissioner Rubu Bora. Additional Deputy Commissioners Bonny Shadab, Rakishree Lakaru and Aradhana Das (DIPRO i/c) were also present, reflecting the administration's commitment to supporting a free and responsible press.

Our Nagaon Correspondent adds: The National Press Day was celebrated at the Nagaon Press Club, organised jointly by the District Administration, Information & Public Relations Department and the Nagaon Press Club.

MLA Rupak Sarma highlighted the challenges faced by the media in the dig-

ital era, noting that social media has posed new obstacles for traditional journalism. He urged journalists to adhere to responsible reporting. MLA Dipluranjan Sarma emphasised the need to safeguard press freedom while maintaining journalistic integrity.

The event featured a discussion on the theme "Protecting Journalism's Credibility in the Era of Misinformation." Keynote speaker Professor Arindam Borkataky stressed the importance of fact-checking and unbiased reporting to preserve public trust.

District Commissioner Debashish Sarma and Superintendent of Police Swapnil Deka also spoke, underscoring the vital role of the press in a democratic society.

Interestingly, a separate National Press Day event was organised by the District Administration and the District Information and Public Relations Department in association with the Nagaon Electronic Media Association at Nagaon Zila Sahitya Sabha Bhavan (Kamladevi Todi Bhavan), which drew mixed reactions among the town's residents.

Our Tezpur Correspondent adds: The Sonitpur District Administration observed National Press Day 2025 on Sunday, under the initiative of the District Administration and the Office of the District Information and Public Relations Officer (DIPRO), Sonitpur.

The programme, chaired by District Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das, was held in the conference hall of the District Commissioner's Office. Dr Abhijit Bora, Professor and Head of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at Tezpur University, attended as the keynote speaker and spoke on this year's theme, "Safeguarding Press Credibility Amidst Rising Misinformation."

The event began with the rendition of the State Anthem, followed by a welcome address by DC Das, who highlighted the significance of National Press Day and extended his best wishes to all journalists and media personnel in the district.

During the event, the administration felicitated all journalists present with a fulam gamusa. In addition, 56 DIPRO-recognised journalists and two retired journalist pensioners were presented with appreciation citations. Senior journalist Arnab Kumar Nath shared his insights on the evolution of media, challenges posed by digital journalism and the importance of upholding credibility in the era of social media.

The programme was attended by journalists from across Sonitpur district. Co-

District Commissioner of Barchalla Kamal Baruah, DIPRO Ananta Gogoi and other departmental officials and staff.

Our Kokrajhar Correspondent adds: National Press Day was observed in Kokrajhar on Sunday under the theme "Safeguarding Press Credibility Amidst Rising Misinformation." The BTC-level programme was jointly organised by the Information & Public Relations Department, BTC, Bodoland Journalists Association (BJA) and Kokrajhar Press Club (KPC) at the Planetarium Auditorium.

BTC EM Derhasat Basumatary emphasised the importance of impartial and authentic reporting, while Musuka Boro, GM of Bongaigaon Refinery, highlighted journalists as a vital bridge between the public, government and corporate sectors. Ramanaj Dutta Choudhury, Executive Editor of The Assam Tribune, urged reporters to avoid misleading news and acknowledged BTC's efforts in regional development.

The event featured flag hoisting by BJA presidents of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Tamulpur and Udalguri districts. Ankur Lahoti, IIS, Joint Director, RNU, Doordarshan and BTC officials attended. Five senior journalists—Jaiklong Brahma, Mustafa Hussain Ansari, Sunil Kr Sharma, Prasad Das and Niren Kr Sharma—along with two newspaper hawkers, were felicitated.

Separately, Kokrajhar Press Club in collaboration with NTPC Bongaigaon, observed the day with flag hoisting and discussions on the significance of responsible journalism.

Our Jorhat Correspondent adds: National Press Day was observed at Jorhat Press Club and Jorhat Circuit House with programmes highlighting the challenges faced by journalists.

At the Press Club, president Ananta Narayan Borthakur presided over the event. Dr Devabrata Sharma spoke on the changing landscape of journalism with the rise of social media and government-influenced media, while columnist Dipwen Kakati highlighted global journalist killings and stressed the need for a free, independent press. The welcome address was delivered by general secretary Ashok Kumar Baruah and the vote of thanks by Biraj Baruah.

At the Circuit House, Head of Mass Communication, Assam Women's University, Dr Suryya Chetia, discussed "Reporting in the Brave New World" and the impact of artificial intelligence on press freedom. Jorhat DDC Rajiv Roy addressed the gathering, with DIPRO Rajat Sen delivering the welcome.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The undertaking of a new action brings new strength
—Richard L. Evans

Power struggle in Britain

If Keir Starmer intended to stave off a leadership challenge by advertising his readiness to fight one, he has miscalculated. All his intervention has done is placed the question of his leadership at the top of MPs' minds. Perhaps identifying Wes Streeting as a possible challenger was intended to frighten the left away from triggering a contest — since Streeting is even further right than Starmer. In practice it simply showcases the Prime Minister's insecurity and the toxic culture Streeting accurately describes in Downing Street — where the government briefs against its own, and a leadership that has always relied on bans and expulsions to maintain authority descends into a "circular firing squad," to use the ever eloquent Barry Gardiner's phrase. Unlike Starmer, MPs might reflect, Streeting has never pretended to be on the left and as a Blairite true believer might at least try to govern through persuasion rather than fear. Nobody should fear challenging Starmer: his government is as inept as it is cruel and is paving the way for a far-right Reform UK regime. But Streeting is no solution. The Health Secretary would be a cosmetic change, no more: he's wedded to the same policies of privatisation and cuts that have wrecked our public services and national infrastructure. Starmer loyalists point to the long death agony of the last Tory government as evidence that switching leader doesn't help — and it won't, without dramatic changes in Labour policy.

And that's a problem. Starmer's leadership exists to prevent change, not deliver it: its whole mission has been the destruction of Corbynism and the threat of a socialist-led Labour Party. That project was endorsed by the overwhelming majority of Labour MPs even before last year's election brought in cohorts of carefully vetted conformists. It cannot win popular support, because it exists to protect a status quo which has long lost legitimacy; but its grip on the Labour Party will not be broken from within. Only external pressure could hope to achieve that. That pressure is rebuilding, as the social forces that powered Corbynism regroup behind Zack Polanski's Greens or Jeremy Corbyn and Sarah Sultana's "Your Party," which holds its founding conference this month.

This is positive and reflects the reality that Corbynism was defeated within Labour administratively, not politically: Starmer only became leader by affecting loyalty to Corbyn's programme and widespread support for that programme was silenced but never ceased to exist. Reassembling the Corbyn coalition will not be enough to defeat Reform, however. The left may have been defeated inside Labour by bans and stitch-ups but it was also defeated at two general elections. Evidence unveiled subsequently that internal sabotage played a part in its 2017 defeat can lead to a complacent assumption that the Corbyn platform, delivered anew in a party less embroiled with the British Establishment, will sail to victory.

Nitish-Modi Formula Triumphs in Bihar

By: Satyabrata Borah

The 2025 Bihar elections painted a fresh picture of politics, full of wins, losses, and lessons for everyone involved. For years, people in Bihar had grown tired of the government, but this time, something changed. Under Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's leadership, the National Democratic Alliance, or NDA, pulled off a massive victory in the assembly elections. The people spoke clearly, and their voice favored stability and growth.

One big reason for this win was Nitish Kumar's "Women Employment Scheme." Through this program, nearly 1.25 crore women received 10,000 rupees every two months. This direct help touched millions of homes and played a huge role in swaying voters, especially women. The entire NDA campaign was carefully planned around ideas of stability, development, and reaching out to everyone. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nitish Kumar led the charge with their "double-engine government" message, meaning strong leadership both at the center and in the state. This idea struck a chord with voters who wanted progress without chaos.

When the results came in, Prime Minister Modi welcomed the victory with pride. He said this win introduced a new formula, "MY, Women and Youth." He contrasted it with the old "MY" of the opposition, which he linked to communal politics and the dark days of "jungle raj," a time many in Bihar remember with fear. According to Modi, the people rejected division and chose a future focused on women and young people.

So what does this result really mean? First, the people of Bihar clearly picked development and stability over everything else. Nitish Kumar and the NDA worked hard to reach women and youth. Modi called it the "MY formula," putting women and young voters at the heart of their plans. Women turned out in large numbers to vote, and that helped Nitish's party, JD(U), gain a clear edge. Schemes like free food grains, pensions, and improvements in education won hearts. On the other side, the grand alliance, or Mahagathbandhan, tried to raise issues like "vote theft" and problems with voter lists, but those complaints fell flat. Even Rahul Gandhi called the results "unusual" and "unfair," but his words did not change the outcome.

This election showed that local issues matter more than national talking points in Bihar. People cared about jobs, healthcare, and stopping the flow of workers leaving the state in search of work. National debates took a back seat.

Now let us talk about Congress. The party suffered a terrible defeat. Being part of the grand alliance weakened them further. They lost ground even in areas where they once had support. Young leaders like Kanhaiya Kumar and Rahul Gandhi's campaigns failed to connect with the youth. The lack of strong local leaders hurt them badly. Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said the party needs to seriously study this loss. Others like Mani Shankar Aiyar pointed to deep problems inside the party that remain unsolved. Many wonder what lies ahead for Congress. This result is a wake-up call. If they do not build stronger leadership and fix internal fights, more losses may follow. Yet, the party's core ideas of protecting democracy and the constitution still live in people's minds. If Congress can rebuild itself with fresh energy and local roots, a better future might be possible. For now, the blame lies with their own weaknesses, poor teamwork in alliances, and failure to stay relevant on the ground, they lost themselves in the crowd.

For the BJP, this was a major triumph. The win showed their growing strength in Bihar. Prime Minister Modi's personal popularity drove the campaign forward. In his rallies, people heard promises of better roads, railways, and overall growth. The BJP broke the old Muslim-Yadav equation that once dominated Bihar politics. By focusing on women and youth, they reached new voters. Their influence in the state is only set to grow.

Several things worked in BJP's favor. First, their strong organization. From villages to cities, party workers put in endless effort. Second, unity within the alliance. Working closely with Nitish Kumar, they handled Bihar's complex caste equations with skill. Third, a clear message of development. Voters did not choose out of fear of the past "jungle raj" but out of hope for a better tomorrow. Smaller allies like Chirag Paswan added valuable support. Above all, Modi's leadership stood out. This victory will boost BJP's confidence in other states and strengthen their position ahead of the 2029 national elections. But victory brings responsibility too. Promises of jobs for youth, stopping migration, and delivering real development must now be kept.

One of the biggest highlights of this election was the power of women voters. A stunning 71.6 percent of women cast their votes. The NDA's message reached young people as well. The RJD tried to appeal to the youth, but even under Tejashwi Yadav's leadership, they fell short. Tejashwi won his seat in Raghapur, but his brother Tej Pratap Yadav lost in Mahua. For Prashant Kishor's new party, this election was a hard lesson. Starting a new party is tough without deep local roots.

These results bring hope for Bihar. The NDA has won a clear mandate. Now, the focus must shift to speeding up development. Congress needs to rebuild itself from the ground up. Politics is not just about winning or losing; it is about serving people. This time, the people of Bihar chose progress. Let us hope the state moves forward with strength, unity, and real change for every citizen.

How Bihar Voted: The Landslide That Reshaped Power and Politics

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's post-victory address captured the political symbolism effectively. Wearing a gamchha with Mithila painting, he proclaimed that just as the Ganga flows from Bihar to Bengal, this victory cleared the path for BJP expansion eastward

constituencies in the polls, with women turning out at 71.73 percent against 65.08 percent male participation. This surge directly benefited the final tally of campaigns, the crucial margin that elevated welfare-delivery headlines driving participatory enthusiasm despite some critics doubting its commitment. Most exit polls had predicted the NDA would take somewhere between 140 and 165 seats, making the final count an overperformance.

Looking at the geography of the win, the NDA stranglehold was comprehensive. The alliance performed exceptionally well in the flood-prone riverine areas of North Bihar, particularly in districts like Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, and East Champaran, where the Mahadali coalition strengthened its position. In Central Bihar, particularly in regions around Patna, Gaya, and Muzaffarpur, development works rapidly accelerated, and West Patna secured crucial seat consolidations, favouring CPI(M) candidate artifact rock courts. The Patna Police Commissionerate model emphasizing women's safety and crime databases could alter competitive city roles.

North Bihar's annual flooding took the best part of a decade to sort through a multi-year embankment overhaul and temporary files, and Nitish's signature irrigation and livestock combined with road connectivity systems will allow rural families to absorb shocks. In southern made-built cities like Bhagalpur and Munger, the competence index favored sitting governance.

The voter realignment became most evident in three-way or four-way contests where the NDA's ability to limit internal friction while the opposition splintered proved decisive. In seats contested by multiple opposition candidates, the NDA secured comfortable victories. Particularly notable was the party's performance in seats where there were concerns about the return of jungle raj imagery, political violence, or governance breakdown. Issues around law and order migration clearly resonated with Bihar's younger demographic. In urban areas like Patna and

Muzaffarpur, rising prices and joblessness forced millions of young people to make difficult electoral decisions.

However, why the opposition broke this badly requires examination beyond numbers alone. The Mahagathbandhan suffered from severe internal tensions over caste identity dynamics. Even before election results were announced, cracks appeared in the backward belt of Gaya and Nalanda between the RJD and its smaller partners, who felt shortchanged by narrow margins. The RJD's Tejashwi Yadav focused heavily on traditional strongholds like Raghapur and throughout the continuing far eastern regions, failing to tap Nitish's health concerns or age factor concerns effectively.

Bihar's young demographic, burdened by chronic unemployment and joblessness, forced millions to migrate for work annually over the past two years. Several competitive urban university towns, educational hubs witnessed escalations and protests by students. The NDA positioned a calendar promise of one crore jobs as a law to criminalize broken public promises, enabling governance expertise focused on Vikas, development targets, efficiency in project execution and agricultural modernization in districts. In areas where ration distribution systems covered universally, subsidies reached out to rural households with record safety, public work improved the living standards of millions of persons under MGNREGA-style employment guarantees.

Women's turnout reaching a remarkable 71.73 percent in some intensity-9 percentage-point districts provided an unmissable single largest decisive bloc, higher even than tipped the scales. Female voters registered turnout at 71.73 percent against 65.08 percent for men in the most competitive seats. In one district after another, NDA candidates around 19 seats, the NDA leaders such as Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha won with massive structural advantages over the previous thresholds.

The governance play and what it means ahead must now be examined closely. Bihar's infrastructure through structural challenges such as electricity supply, roads, water resources has seen progress that may deepen reforms from departments in model paper linked sanctioning hallucinations. The NDA candidates worked directly with rural credit unions and cooperative banks with street credibility. Welfare schemes helped restore faith in examining governance efficiency and integrity involving factoring, agro-processing, and services. The Bihar Skill Mission envisaged by textile, manufacturing transfers, and pharmaceutical industries with MSME along the Patna-Gaya and Bhagalpur corridors.

Urban service creation must build upon IT and services excellence. The challenge will be matched by maintenance budgets. If loan rupture or if fiscal pressures develop, service standards and absorption places are repeated with proper engineering.

Three key numbers tell the story compellingly. First, the BJP garnered nearly 49.3 percent of the popular vote against the MGB's meager 38.5 percent. This ten-percentage-point gap represents a struc-

tural advantage nearly impossible to overcome. Second, women's turnout decisively favoured the NDA reaching intensity 9 percentage points higher than male participation at the booth level. Finally, looking at seat count, the 208-seat figure qualifies as one of India's most commanding post-coalition-era mandates.

Tejashwi Yadav held Raghapur with reduced intensity, suggesting the opposition lacked fresh narratives beyond dynasty politics. Meanwhile, new faces like Maithili Thakur in Alinagar and Osama Shahab in Raghunathpur showed both the NDA and opposition can mobilize youth symbols, but the former did so within a cohesive governance framework.

The opposition now faces a reckoning. The RJD-Congress-Left alliance must urgently re-examine its assumptions about caste arithmetic proving sufficient without deliverable governance. Tejashwi Yadav's personal popularity, while still considerable, could not overcome structural weaknesses in coalition coordination, welfare delivery credibility, and the party's inability to project confidence about administrative capacity. Several senior opposition leaders lost their constituencies, including former Speaker Awadh Bahari Chaudhary in Siwan and Veena Devi in Mokama, signaling voter appetite for leadership renewal.

For Nitish Kumar, this represents political vindication after years of criticism over alliance switches and questions about his stamina. At nearly 74 years old, his declaration during the campaign that he had never sought personal gain resonated across caste and class divides. His emphasis on women's empowerment through schemes like the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana created tangible economic connections with female voters who form the decisive demographic bloc. The promise of employment, particularly targeting one crore jobs over five years, addressed the single largest anxiety among Bihar's youth population.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's post-victory address captured the political symbolism effectively. Wearing a gamchha with Mithila painting, he proclaimed that just as the Ganga flows from Bihar to Bengal, this victory cleared the path for BJP expansion eastward. His characterization of the Congress as Muslimleegi Maowadi Congress and predictions of impending splits reflected confidence about reshaping India's political discourse beyond Bihar's boundaries.

The implications extend far beyond one state election. Bihar's verdict demonstrates that welfare-focused governance combining caste coalition engineering with targeted women and youth outreach can produce overwhelming electoral majorities. The success of the Mahila-Youth formula, replacing the traditional Muslim-Yadav arithmetic, offers a template for other states where the BJP seeks expansion. As the NDA consolidates its hold on India's third-largest state, the opposition across the country confronts uncomfortable questions about relevance, renewal, and the capacity to offer compelling alternatives to the BJP's governance model. Bihar has not merely elected a government; it has potentially redefined the contours of Indian electoral politics for years to come. (The writer can be reached at dipakkur-migpltd@gmail.com)

Bihar's unfair results: Rahul gets it wrong for one more time



By: K Raveendran

Rahul Gandhi's reaction to the Bihar election outcome, framed by surprise and a sense of unfairness, must reopen a debate about the structural imbalances that shape electoral competition in India. His argument, on its surface, reflects the opposition's frustration after a contest that produced a seat tally far more skewed than the vote share might suggest. Yet the unfairness he points to, according to his comments, appears to hinge largely on the conduct of the Election Commission and the circumstances surrounding the campaign. That line of reasoning is unlikely to resonate widely, not because concerns over the electoral environment lack legitimacy, but because India's political system has, for decades, normalised conditions that disadvantage challengers. The lack of a level-playing field is not a sudden aberration but a deeply embedded feature of the country's electoral architecture.

Parties in government almost always approach elections with the authority, visibility and logistical support associated with incumbency. This dynamic is especially

stark in states where regional leaders and national figures share the stage. In Bihar's case, Narendra Modi and Nitish Kumar campaigned not merely as party leaders but as the sitting prime minister and chief minister, with all the institutional prominence that comes with those roles. Their images have been established over years of administrative visibility, and their public messaging benefits from a machinery that, while not officially directed toward campaigning, inevitably overlaps with governance.

By contrast, Tejashwi Yadav and Rahul Gandhi entered the arena without that administrative aura. Tejashwi's profile has grown in Bihar, particularly among the youth, but he still had to fight against the state's persistent narrative biases. Rahul Gandhi, despite being a national leader, lacks the governmental perches that amplify the reach and authority of incumbents. To much of the electorate, this translates into asymmetric visibility. The practical effect is that ruling parties can frame campaigns from a position of institutional legitimacy while opposition leaders must rely almost entirely on organ-

izational strength, charisma and message discipline. Even before voting begins, the field is uneven. The Rs10,000 deposited in the bank accounts of women voters seems to have clearly tilted the scales in favour of NDA, while Tejashwi Yadav's offer of three times was only a promise in the air, which did not cut ice with the public.

Further to this systemic imbalance, the more striking form of unfairness lies not in campaign conditions but in the distribution of assembly seats relative to the votes cast. This is where Rahul Gandhi's critique could find firmer grounding, though it is not the argument he has chosen to emphasise. The Rashtriya Janata Dal, according to post-election data, secured a vote share higher than that of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Ordinarily, a difference of this magnitude might suggest a competitive or even favourable seat haul. However, the final tally placed the RJD at barely a quarter of the seats secured by the BJP, a disparity that seems incongruent with democratic expectations.

The explanation lies not in electoral malpractice but in the mechanics of the first-past-the-post system. Indian elections reward the geographic concentration of votes far more than the overall volume of support. A party can win a large share of votes statewide yet come second in dozens of constituencies, gaining little or nothing from those votes. Meanwhile, another party may win by narrow margins across numerous seats, converting a leaner vote share into a disproportionately higher seat count. This outcome is not a malfunction; it is the system's design. But its implications are profound: it means mil-

lions of votes can translate into little representation, and parties can command legislative dominance without a corresponding mandate in popular vote terms.

The Bihar result offers a textbook illustration. The RJD's vote base, though extensive, appears to have been spread too evenly across constituencies, leading to many narrow losses. The BJP's support, on the other hand, was more efficiently distributed, enabling it to win multiple seats by modest margins. The consequence is a seat map that diverges radically from the voter map. For a democracy that values representational fidelity, this is a structural challenge worthy of debate.

Rahul Gandhi's complaint about unfairness might resonate more convincingly if it focused on this disproportionality. It highlights not a failure of institutions but the inherent limitations of the electoral system. A credible critique could urge a national conversation about exploring alternatives, such as proportional representation, mixed-member systems or even adjustments within the current framework, to ensure that vote share more closely aligns with legislative strength. Such reforms, long discussed but rarely pursued, would require consensus-building and political will across parties, especially those that benefit from the present system. Yet it is precisely this kind of structural fairness that could strengthen India's democracy.

Another dimension worth examining is the marginalisation of regional and opposition players within the national political discourse. Parties like the RJD must battle both organisational deficits and narrative disadvantages.

Media visibility, political storytelling and public perception are all tilted toward national incumbents. The Bihar election cycle, like many before it, revealed how opposition campaigns often struggle to establish narrative ownership. Tejashwi Yadav's emphasis on employment and governance concerns resonated among younger voters, but these messages were frequently overshadowed by the national coalition's broader political themes and branding.

Rahul Gandhi's assertion that the election was unfair, therefore, sits at the intersection of genuine systemic inequities and political rhetoric. While the conduct of the contest may raise legitimate questions about the broader pressures facing opposition groups, the most compelling evidence of unfairness lies not in campaign conditions but in representational imbalance. If the objective is to highlight structural distortions, then the RJD's vote-to-seat discrepancy is the more persuasive argument. It speaks to a deeper issue that affects all parties from time to time, including those currently in power.

A more strategic approach from the opposition would involve shifting the conversation towards these structural factors. Doing so would not only contextualise the Bihar result but also build a foundation for broader democratic reform. The challenge, however, is to present this argument without appearing to undermine public confidence in the electoral process itself. Voters have repeatedly shown that they resent accusations that appear to dismiss their agency. The task is to differentiate between criticising systemic design and criticising voter choice. (IPA Service)

Health at the Heart of COP30: Counting What Counts

By: K. S. Uplabdh Gopal

Climate change has emerged as the greatest threat to human lives, health, livelihoods, and well-being in the 21st century. Around the world, extreme weather and shifting climate patterns are increasing the burden of climate-sensitive diseases and raising mortality from extreme heat. Droughts are undermining food and water security, floods are driving infectious disease outbreaks, and intensifying storms are overwhelming health services. These impacts expose a dangerous gap in our global climate response: adaptation efforts have not kept pace with the escalating health threats.

The first Global Stocktake established under the 2015 Paris Agreement has laid this bare. Its official decision report noted that climate impacts are being felt in every region while current adaptation responses remain fragmented, incremental, and unequally distributed. In particular, health adaptation has lagged; around 3.6 billion people are now highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with health systems in many countries unprepared to deal with the strain. Developing nations need an estimated US\$215-387 billion annually for adaptation by 2030; however, actual funding falls far short.

Against this backdrop, COP28 (the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change), in Dubai, marked a turning point for the climate-health nexus. For the first time in UN climate diplomacy, health took centre stage: the conference featured a dedicated Health Day and a high-level Climate-Health Ministerial, and 143 countries signed a first-ever Declaration on Climate and Health. Furthermore, the new United Arab Emirates (UAE) Global Framework for Climate Resilience, adopted at COP28, set targets for 2030 across climate risk assessment, planning, and implementation, including strengthening health systems against climate shocks.

COP30 arrives just as the earlier pledge to double adaptation finance by 2025 comes due, and will likely fall short (by 2023, only US\$26 billion of the ~US\$40 billion target for developing countries has been delivered).

COP30 in Belém, Brazil, marks a watershed moment for the climate-health agenda. The Global Stocktake has made clear that health adaptation lags far behind climate ambition. The conference must turn this recognition into results by embedding measurable health outcomes within Article 7 through a core set of Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) indicators, reporting them transparently under Article 13, and aligning the emerging Loss and Damage framework with the realities of public-health systems. The challenge also extends beyond traditional health threats, encompassing fossil-fuel dependence, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), microplastic exposure, and even new stressors such as the water-hungry expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) data centres that compete with aquifers already strained by drought.

The Health Adaptation Gap



COP30 is a crucial moment to close the health adaptation gap. A major milestone anticipated is the adoption of a comprehensive GGA framework, comprising particular targets and indicators. After years of work, Parties have converged on seven thematic areas (covering sectors such as water, food, ecosystems, and health) and have drafted a set of about 100 indicators to measure progress. Finalising this framework at COP30 can create a blueprint for integrating health into all levels of adaptation planning. For example, one proposed health indicator is the change in the annual rate of heat-related occupational injuries and deaths, which is a tangible metric that would encourage countries to monitor and reduce the human toll of extreme heat.

Delivering on these plans will require significantly ramped-up support. Adaptation has long been the poor cousin of mitigation in climate finance; currently, only about one-third of public climate finance is earmarked for adaptation, and as little as 3 percent of all climate finance in 2023 may have reached adaptation projects. COP30 arrives just as the earlier pledge to double adaptation finance by 2025 comes due, and will likely fall short (by 2023, only US\$26 billion of the ~US\$40 billion target for developing countries has been delivered).

Health outcomes are an intuitive yardstick

for adaptation success. If Parties agree at COP30 on a shared set of health metrics under the GGA, they can then incorporate these into their national reporting and stocktake contributions.

However, today, most reporting has centred on emissions reductions; metrics for adaptation and resilience are far less standardised. This is where integrating health can make a difference. Health outcomes are an intuitive yardstick for adaptation success. If Parties agree at COP30 on a shared set of health metrics under the GGA, they can then incorporate these into their national reporting and stocktake contributions. For instance, countries could report trends related to heat-related mortality, or the number of hospitals that have achieved climate-resilient standards, or the incidence of climate-sensitive diseases over time. Such data would inject a human dimension into the dry accounting of climate progress, putting pressure on governments to act in the event of rising heat deaths or malaria resurging in new areas.

Measuring What Matters

Beyond outcomes, Parties might establish metrics for adaptive capacity in the health sector. For instance, the percentage of healthcare facilities with climate-resilient infrastructure (for example, flood defences, backup power for heatwaves, sustainable cooling systems) could

be an indicator.

Crucially, any adopted metrics should be reported through the transparency framework. From 2024, the Enhanced Transparency Framework prompts countries to submit Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) that include adaptation information. If COP30 provides clear guidance that Parties “measure what matters most - people’s health” and include a core set of health indicators in their reporting, it will greatly enhance our collective understanding of climate progress. It would enable the 2028 Global Stocktake (the second stocktake) to answer not just how many gigatons of emissions were cut, but also how many lives were saved or lost as a result of climate action (or inaction).

Climate Futures and the Next Wave of Risks

Looking past COP30, it is evident that realising the linkages between climate and health in a practical way would need a sustained effort in many different areas. The two crises, the climate crisis and the global health crisis, are intertwined. The piling up of crises means that our strategies have to be comprehensive. To illustrate, rising temperatures and altered rainfall patterns contribute not only to the fast spread of diseases but also to the worsening of AMR: it is believed that floods may spread antibiotic-resistant bacteria if they cause the mixing of

sewage with the communities that are receiving it and at the same time more frequent infections will lead to heavier antibiotic use, which in turn will increase resistance.

The outcome document of COP28 for the first time mentioned the need for a transition away from fossil fuels, indicating that the era of coal, oil, and gas without limitations is coming to an end. Although the statement was meticulous, it still contained some loopholes that the COP30 should certainly deal with this controversial issue again.

Fossil fuels phase-out is another important issue on the table in the coming days, as it is the root of both climate change and acute health problems. The outcome document of COP28 for the first time mentioned the need for a transition away from fossil fuels, indicating that the era of coal, oil, and gas without limitations is coming to an end. Although the statement was meticulous, it still contained some loopholes that the COP30 should certainly deal with this controversial issue again. In addition to a health-related perspective, this would also reduce plastic production and other toxic materials released into the atmosphere from the oil industry. At present, more than 99 percent of plastics are derived from fossil fuel feedstocks, and the entire plastic cycle (from manufacturing to waste burning) is a major source of greenhouse emissions. Among the greenhouse gases is microplastic pollution, which spreads across water, soil, and even air. It also raises several concerns about human health (ranging from lung inflammation to potential endocrine disruption).

The emerging challenges on the horizon demand cautious vigilance. As societies adapt and technological solutions expand, new environmental health issues can arise. For instance, the push for digitalisation and AI, while beneficial in many ways, is leading to a boom in energy-hungry AI data centres. These massive server farms generate heat and often rely on water-based cooling, and many are being built in water-scarce areas. Large AI-focused data centres can consume on the order of millions of gallons of water per day, equivalent to the needs of tens of thousands of people.

The key point is that climate solutions or new industries themselves should not undermine public health or resilience. As the march toward a more high-tech future commences, the climate-health lens must be factored in to assess the sustainability of such developments. The world cannot afford a climate policy that is blind to its human toll, nor a health policy that fails to account for the challenges associated with the climate elephant in the room. By squarely aligning adaptation and transparency efforts with health priorities, and by funding relief for climate harms to health, countries can make climate action a story of human survival and dignity, not just emission curves and temperature graphs. As the saying goes, “What gets measured gets managed”. By measuring the right things and moving towards positive health outcomes, COP30 can help ensure that in the era of climate change, humanity not only survives but thrives. (Courtesy: ORF)

Can coffee protect against depression? The answer may be complicated

By: Katharine Lang

According to the World Health Organization Trusted Source, 5.7% of all adults, some 332 million people worldwide, are affected by depression. For many, standard prescription medications relieve symptoms. However, for those who do not respond to regular medications, other treatments are required.

“Ketamine and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) are mainly used when standard antidepressant medications haven’t worked, which is called treatment-resistant depression. Surprisingly, almost half of people diagnosed with depression may fall into this category, meaning a substantial number don’t get enough relief from typical medications and might be considered for these advanced treatments.”

—Ma-Li Wong, MD, PhD, Psychiatrist, Genomic Press, New York, co-author of Adenosine as the metabolic common path of rapid antidepressant action: The coffee paradox.

And although ketamine or electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) can be effective for those who do not respond to other treatments, scientists have long been unable to discover why.

Depression treatments trigger adenosine surges

Now, researchers have discovered that their antidepressant effect is due to triggering surges of adenosine — a signalling molecule in the human body that performs many essential functions, including dilating blood vessels, regulating the sympathetic nervous system Trusted Source, reducing blood pressure and heart rate, and regulating mood Trusted Source.

In their study, published in Nature Trusted Source, researchers used mouse models to identify adenosine signaling as a central pathway underlying the antidepressant effects of ketamine and ECT.

“The discovery that adenosine signaling drives the antidepressant effects of ketamine and ECT is a big deal. It pinpoints a ‘common pathway’ in the brain’s biology that helps explain why these therapies can work quickly when others fail. This opens doors for devel-



oping new treatments that act on adenosine, potentially giving us safer and more scalable ways to help people with depression.”

—Ma-Li Wong

Following this study, a commentary in Brain Medicine has highlighted the role of caffeine in depression.

The so-called coffee paradox outlines how caffeine appears to protect against depression, but blocks adenosine receptors. The authors question how caffeine’s interactions with adenosine receptors might impact these treatments, calling for further research into the mechanisms involved. Adenosine is key to antidepressant function

In their adenosine study, the researchers used genetically encoded adenosine sensors to detect changes. They injected mice with a subanaesthetic antidepressant dose of ketamine (10 mg/kg), then monitored levels of adenosine in their brains.

Following injection, they detected a rapid and sustained increase in extracellular adenosine in the medial prefrontal cortex and hippocampus, two areas of the brain that are associated with major depressive disorder.

When researchers depleted or

blocked adenosine receptors, the ketamine had no effect, showing that adenosine surges were causing the antidepressant effect.

They also demonstrated that acute intermittent hypoxia (aIH), a noninvasive method involving controlled oxygen reduction, had a similar antidepressant effect, also by triggering adenosine signalling.

Caffeine and the coffee paradox for depression

Caffeine is the world’s most commonly consumed psychoactive drug, and it is an adenosine receptor antagonist, so could it impede ketamine, ECT, and aIH treatments?

“Caffeine blocks adenosine receptors,” Wong told Medical News Today, “and research shows this can actually interfere with the antidepressant effects of ketamine and ECT—at least in lab animals, and likely in humans too.”

In their commentary, Wong and Julio Licinio state that the discovery of adenosine surges raises questions about patterns of caffeine consumption in treatment-resistant depression. They ask whether chronic caffeine use has a protective effect and whether acute use might impede response to ketamine or ECT treatments.

They state that regular coffee consumption has been shown, in epidemiological studies, to reduce the risk of depression by up to 25%. But for those with treatment-resistant depression, could it reduce the efficacy of treatment?

Avoiding caffeine before treatment may increase antidepressant effects

In regular caffeine users, the adenosine receptors are upregulated, meaning that more are working at any one time, which could explain why regular coffee consumption has been seen to reduce depression risk in some studies.

However, they suggest that, while habitual coffee consumption may be beneficial, consuming caffeine in the hours before ketamine or ECT treatment may reduce its effects.

“The science is evolving fast. Adenosine is emerging as a central player in rapid antidepressant effects, and lifestyle factors like caffeine use might matter much more than we used to think. Anyone considering ketamine or ECT might want to ask their mental health team about caffeine beforehand, and keep an eye out for new developments in this exciting area.”

—Ma-Li Wong

Wong advised: “If someone is scheduled for ketamine or ECT, it’s sensible to avoid caffeine beforehand. There aren’t official guidelines, but based on how long caffeine stays in your system, skipping coffee or energy drinks for at least a full day (about 24 hours) before treatment is a cautious approach that clinicians may recommend.”

However, she cautioned that further research is vital to answer the questions they raised:

“What’s really needed now are clinical studies directly testing how caffeine intake affects the success rate of ketamine/ECT in humans. It would also be useful to clarify the ideal ‘wash out’ period for caffeine and to explore therapies that work with, not against, adenosine signaling. Understanding individual differences—like genetics or metabolic rate—could help tailor future treatments as well.” (Courtesy: MNT)

Diabetes and Eye Health: Protecting Vision for Better Well-being

By: Dr Mahipal Singh Sachdev

Diabetes is not just a metabolic disorder—it is a lifelong condition that can quietly affect multiple organs, including the eyes. With rising cases of diabetes in India, the threat of vision loss due to diabetic complications has become a major public health concern. This year’s theme, “Diabetes and Well-being,” reminds us that managing diabetes goes beyond controlling blood sugar; it also means protecting one’s overall health and quality of life, including vision.

How Diabetes Affects the Eyes

High blood sugar over time can damage the tiny blood vessels in the retina—the light-sensitive layer at the back of the eye—leading to a condition known as Diabetic Retinopathy. Initially, there may be no symptoms, which is why regular eye examinations are crucial. If left untreated, it can progress to severe vision loss or even blindness.

In addition to retinopathy, people with diabetes are more prone to developing cataract at an earlier age and have a higher risk of glaucoma, a condition that damages the optic nerve due to increased eye pressure. Fluctuating vision, blurry eyesight, or difficulty in reading can sometimes be early signs of uncontrolled diabetes affecting the lens of the eye.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

While diabetic eye disease often develops silently, a few symptoms should never be ignored:

- Blurred or fluctuating vision
 - Dark or empty areas in the field of vision
 - Difficulty distinguishing colours
 - Sudden vision loss in one or both eyes
- If any of these occur, immediate medical attention is needed. Early diagnosis through a simple, painless eye examination can prevent irreversible damage.

Preventive Measures and Lifestyle Choices

The foundation of good eye health in diabetes lies in strict blood sugar control. Keeping blood pressure and cholesterol levels within normal limits further reduces the risk of eye complications. Regular exercise, a

balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables, avoiding smoking, and maintaining a healthy body weight contribute significantly to overall well-being.

Equally important is scheduling annual comprehensive eye check-ups with dilated retinal examination, even if no vision problems are apparent. In many cases, early changes in the retina can be detected and treated before vision loss occurs.

Modern Treatment Options

Advances in ophthalmology have transformed the way diabetic eye diseases are managed. Depending on the stage and severity, several treatments are available:

- Laser Photocoagulation: Helps seal leaking blood vessels and prevent further damage.
- Intravitreal Injections: Medications such as anti-VEGF drugs effectively reduce retinal swelling and bleeding.
- Vitrectomy Surgery: Recommended in advanced cases to remove blood or scar tissue from the eye and restore vision.



When diagnosed and treated early, these interventions can preserve sight and maintain a good quality of life.

The Path to Well-being

Good diabetes management is not just about numbers on a glucose meter—it’s about preserving the ability to live independently, enjoy daily activities, and maintain confidence and dignity. Eye health is an integral part of overall well-being.

As we observe this year’s theme, “Diabetes and Well-being,” it is important to remember that timely eye check-ups, healthy living, and awareness are the three pillars of vision protection. With vigilance, care, and medical guidance, people living with diabetes can continue to see the world clearly—and live life fully.

Credibility of press cracking; need to uphold accuracy, impartiality: Vijay Joshi

'Modern journalist must be both – a storyteller and a digital detective'

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: While fake news is testing the credibility of media, the press sometimes demeans itself by publishing unverified news, as was seen recently with several outlets wrongly reporting that ailing actor Dharmendra had died, Vijay Joshi, the Chief Executive Officer of Press Trust of India, said on Sunday.

Delivering the keynote address at the National Press Day function organised by the Press Council of India, Joshi spoke about the challenges faced due to the "steady creep" of artificial intelligence and misinformation, and the need to restore the credibility of media.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Press Council of India Chairperson Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai (retd), Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L Murugan among others were present at the function.

Joshi called upon journalists to adhere to the four bedrock principles of truth, accuracy, fairness and independence.

"The press is facing its biggest crisis today, because the credibility of the press – which is the very foundation of a healthy democracy – is cracking," he said.

"It is cracking under the relentless pressure of a global infodemic. It is cracking under the threat of fake news aided by the steady creep of Artificial Intelligence. It is cracking because we often shoot ourselves in the foot. We demean ourselves with our way of reporting, rather our misreporting," he said.

Joshi said he was proud that PTI had refused to report Dharmendra's death because there was no confirmation from anyone authoritative or the alleged demise of Poonam Pandey, which turned out to be a prank to create awareness about cancer.



He said PTI has consciously chosen to prioritise accuracy over immediacy and has no hesitation in admitting a mistake and correcting a news report, or providing more balance. "This institutional discipline, this com-

mitment to getting the facts right, has allowed PTI to remain a trusted source of news for millions of Indians and for the media outlets that rely on our service," Joshi said.

He said the media has prioritised speed over substance and chase clicks over credibility, thus creating a turbulent sea of information and misinformation.

"This, in turn, has led to a dangerous erosion of public trust. Restoring that trust is the most critical mission for every journalist and media organisation," Joshi said.

"Amid all these pressures -- commercial, political, speed -- news organisations must continue to uphold accuracy, impartiality and accountability. That is the core of credibility," he said.

He said PTI has established a Fact Check desk to combat the deluge of misinformation.

"We don't just label something as 'false'; we show our work. We detail our methodology, present the evidence, and explain how the disinformation was created," he said.

Joshi called for a multi-pronged collaborative effort to fight misinformation by equipping every reporter, editor and desk with the skills to identify sophisticated disinformation. "The modern journalist must be both – a storyteller and a digital detective," he said.

Joshi stressed the need to champion media literacy on a national scale by partnering with educational institutions, technology platforms and the government.

He said the press was not simply a business, but a public service.

"It is a trust. I look forward to the day when the public says 'I trust the news,'" Joshi said. (PTI)

One killed in Sonbhadra stone quarry collapse, rescue operations underway

SONBHADRA (UP), Nov 16: The body of a labourer was recovered from the rubble on Sunday morning from a stone quarry that collapsed here, while several others remain trapped, a senior police official said.

The exact number of trapped individuals is not known.

Uttar Pradesh minister and local MLA Sanjeev Kumar Gond, who visited the spot in the Billi Markundi mining area after the collapse on Saturday evening, said "around a dozen labourers" might be trapped under the debris.

Additional Director General of Police (ADG), Varanasi Zone, Piyush Mordia, on Sunday said efforts to remove the debris from the quarry has been going on since last night. The body of one person has been recovered, while a search is underway for the others, he said.

Police identified the deceased as Raju Singh (30) from Panari village in the same district.

The ADG said the stones that fell from the hill are quite large, and rescue efforts are taking time as the teams need to tread carefully.

Adequate equipment and resources are available, and the entire administration is engaged in the relief work, he added.

Superintendent of Police (SP),

Sonbhadra, Abhishek Verma said, around 4.30 pm on Saturday, the Obra police station received information that some workers were buried under rocks and debris after a portion of a stone quarry at Krishna Mining Works in the Billi Markundi area collapsed.

The SP said, based on a complaint lodged by Chhotu Yadav -- resident of Parsoi Tola -- who claimed his two brothers are still trapped under the rubble, police have registered a case against three accused -- the owner of Krishna Mining Works (name and domicile unknown), and his business partners Madhusudan Singh and Dilip Keshari, both residents of Obra.

The officer said teams are being formed to arrest the suspects.

ADG Mordai in a post on X on Sunday said, some workers are feared to have been buried by a rockfall at the Krishna Mining Works quarry in the Billi Markundi mining area on November 15.

Rescue operations are underway by teams from the NDRF (National Disaster Response Force), SDRF (State Disaster Response Force), and local police, he said, adding that senior NDRF and police officials besides himself, are camping at the scene since Saturday night. (PTI)

Cursed at for 'donating dirty kidney' to father for money, ticket; left 'orphaned': Rohini

PATNA, Nov 16: Claiming that she was "cursed at" for donating a "dirty kidney" to her father Lalu Prasad in exchange for money and a party ticket, Rohini Acharya on Sunday said "she has been made an orphan", and advised all married women to refrain from saving "your God-like father if he has a son".

In an emotional outburst, 47-year-old Acharya, in a series of posts on X, said that "may no household give birth to a girl with a fate like that of Rohini".

The posts came a day after her announcement that she was quitting the party and disowning her family, while putting the blame for the RJD's debacle in the recent Bihar assembly, she had also spoken bitterly of Sanjay and Rameez, alleging they claimed to be master strategists like "Chanakya" but paid no heed to feedback from grassroots-level workers.

In an apparent dig at Tejashwi and his former personal assistant Sanjay Yadav, who has come to enjoy tremendous clout in party affairs, she said, "To all the married women, I will say that when there's a son in your maternal home, never ever save your God-like father; instead, tell your brother, the son of that house, to get his own kidney or that of one of his Haryanvi friends transplanted."

A doctor by qualification, she had on Saturday announced that she was quitting politics and disowning her family, insisting that accounta-



bility be fixed for the party's poor performance in the recently held polls, in which the RJD won only 25 seats of the 243-strong Bihar assembly. She had also spoken bitterly of Sanjay and Rameez, alleging they claimed to be master strategists like "Chanakya" but paid no heed to feedback from grassroots-level workers. In an apparent dig at Tejashwi and his former personal assistant Sanjay Yadav, who has come to enjoy tremendous clout in party affairs, she said, "To all the married women, I will say that when there's a son in your maternal home, never ever save your God-like father; instead, tell your brother, the son of that house, to get his own kidney or that of one of his Haryanvi friends transplanted."

per was raised to hit her. "Yesterday, a daughter, a sister, a married woman, a mother was humiliated, filthy abuses were hurled at her, a slipper was raised to hit her. I did not compromise on my self-respect, I did not surrender the truth, and solely because of this, I had to endure this insult... Yesterday, a daughter, out of compulsion, left behind her crying parents and sisters and came away; they tore me away from my maternal home... They left me orphaned," she added.

In her outbursts, Acharya has also been targeting another close aide of her brother, Rameez, who is said to be a son-in-law of Rizwan Zaheer, a Samajwadi Party leader and a former MP from Balrampur in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh.

She also shared a post, written by another user on X, in which it was claimed that both Zaheer and Rameez were facing murder cases and the former was currently lodged in jail.

No family member of Prasad's family has reacted to Acharya's public outbursts so far.

Meanwhile, state minister Santosh Kumar Suman, whose father Jitan Ram Manjhi is a Union minister and a former close associate of the RJD supreme, claimed to have been "aware, for some time, that all is not well in that family".

Ex-CM Vasant Rao Naik inspiration for govt's water conservation scheme: Fadnavis

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, Nov 16: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said the BJP-led government's flagship 'Jalyukt Shivar' water conservation scheme is modelled on the initiatives pioneered by former CM late Vasant Rao Naik.

Fadnavis hailed Naik's leadership, saying his work in water conservation made Maharashtra self-sustaining in foodgrains and water. The CM was speaking after unveiling the statue of Naik and the bust of freedom fighter Swami Ramanand Teerth in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

"Maharashtra faced a severe drought in 1972. In that challenging time, Naik provided employment to people through various schemes. His sustained work in water conservation made Maharashtra self-sustaining in terms of foodgrains and water. We formed the 'Jalyukt Shivar' scheme by following in his footsteps," he said.

Fadnavis also noted the government's investment for the welfare of the Banjara community, a group Vasant Rao Naik hailed from.

"Works valued at Rs 700 crore have been carried out in Pohradevi, considered the 'Varanasi of the Banjara community'," he said, adding that 'tandas' (Banjara settlements) are now being granted village status, leading to the formation of new gram panchayats.

The bust of Swami Ramanand Teerth was unveiled at the Kranti Chowk. On the occasion, Fadnavis recounted the history of Marathwada's liberation struggle.

"Marathwada region was liberated 13 months after (on September 17, 1948) India achieved independence. The fight against the Nizam rule here was spearheaded by Swami Ramanand Teerth, who encouraged thousands to join the freedom movement," he said.

The Nizam realised they could only halt the struggle by incarcerating Swami Ramanand Teerth, but by that time, "thousands of people were already mobilised and continued the fight," the CM added.

The bust of Swami Ramanand Teerth was completed by October 2024.

The Swami Ramanand Teerth Research Institute here had written multiple letters to the Chief Minister's Office seeking time for the unveiling on September 17, 2025, celebrated annually as Marathwada Muktisangram Din (Marathwada Liberation Day), but it could not be done then. (PTI)

Police ramp up anti-terror security measures in central Delhi

34 unattended vehicles seized



NEW DELHI, Nov 16: In the aftermath of the Red Fort blast that killed 13 people, the central district has intensified anti-terror measures across key stretches of the national capital, carrying out extensive verification drives, enhanced picket checking, and strengthening armed deployment at sensitive spots, an official said on Sunday.

"On Saturday night, teams seized 34 unattended vehicles during a special operation, while 417 challans were issued under the Delhi Police Act in a five-hour checking drive," the officer said.

personnel have been deployed at crowded markets, religious places, tourist spots, and vital installations," he added.

The officer further said verification drives have been intensified at hotels, guest houses, cyber cafes, malls, cinemas, chemical shops, SIM card retailers, and commercial hubs. He said the verification of tenants, servants, labourers, and security guards has also been scaled up to prevent any possible infiltration by anti-social elements.

He said that as part of the high-alert response, strict picket checking was conducted between 5 pm and 10 pm on Saturday across the district. Police checked 683 vehicles at multiple barriers and verified 24 strangers during the operation.

"The objective was to enhance visibility, deterrence, and real-time vigilance. Public announcements and awareness briefings are being regularly conducted by patrolling teams, urging citizens to immediately report any suspicious object, vehicle, or person," the officer added. (PTI)

Vanniyar reservation demand: Anbumani calls for 'fill the jails' agitation on Dec 17

CHENNAI, Nov 16: PMK leader Dr Anbumani Ramadoss on Sunday gave a call for a state-wide "fill the jails" agitation on December 17, pressing for 15 per cent reservation for Vanniyaars within the Backward Classes quota in Tamil Nadu.

He issued a call to his party cadres and Vanniyaars, asking them to lay siege to government offices across Tamil Nadu on December 17, to press the demand for internal reservation for Vanniyaars in education and government employment.

Anbumani, in a statement, said that the stir is intended to both register the community's "pain" and demonstrate its "strength" in the face of what he termed repeated "betrayals of trust" by the ruling establishment.

Recalling the Supreme Court's March 31, 2022 order that there is no legal bar on granting internal reservation to Vanniyaars if adequate data is gathered, the PMK top leader said the "DMK government could have enacted a Vanniyar reservation law within 27 days of the verdict" but had not done so even after more than 1,300 days. He said the party initially chose the path of dialogue, believing Chief Minister M K Stalin would move swiftly to implement the quota.

According to him, a PMK delegation met Stalin at the Secretariat on May 8, 2022, where the chief minister said to have assured them that a special session of the Assembly would be convened and a Vanniyar reservation law passed before admissions for the 2022 academic year began.

Dr Anbumani also said PMK founder



Dr S Ramadoss had also written 10 letters, held 10 telephonic conversations and met the chief minister once in person on the issue, while he himself had three in-person meetings while senior functionaries had made "at least 50 representations".

"Every time, we were made to believe that reservation would definitely be given," he wrote, adding that the party realised the "true face" of the government when, ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, it cited the absence of a caste-wise census to state that Vanniyar reservation could not be implemented. He described this as a fresh "betrayal" that continues to cause anguish among party cadres and the community.

Dr Ramadoss alleged that the DMK, despite projecting itself as the ideological heir of the Justice Party that pioneered communal reservation in the Madras Presidency, was in practice "trampling on social justice", particularly when it concerns Vanniyaars. He accused the government of trying to "erase even the footprints" of social justice for the community.

He also hit out at the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes Commission, calling

it "anti-social justice" and pointing out that although the government had asked it to submit, within three months, its recommendation on reservation for Vanniyaars, no report had been given even after about 1,040 days.

While the commission's term formally ends now, he said, the government has extended it till July 16 next year specifically to obtain its views on the issue, which he termed a "travesty of social justice".

The December 17 agitation, he said, is not confined to PMK cadres but is meant as a platform for Vanniyaars "across all parties and movements" who feel wronged by the lack of reservation. He claimed that Vanniyaars within the DMK are also "seething with anger" over the government's stance and need an avenue to express it.

He added that parties including the AIADMK and the Congress are in favour of Vanniyar reservation.

Anbumani urged PMK workers to reach out to members of all political parties with pamphlets explaining the objectives of the December 17 protest and to invite them and their families to participate. The plan, he said, is to hold demonstrations in every Assembly constituency by besieging government offices and courting arrest.

He said the agitation must be of such magnitude that "the prisons of Tamil Nadu will not be enough to hold the protesters" and that the government feels compelled to immediately enact a Vanniyar internal reservation law. (PTI)

IIT Madras researchers identify physiological markers to predict and manage test anxiety in students

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras have identified measurable physiological indicators that can help pinpoint students most vulnerable to test anxiety, paving the way for new, targeted interventions that could revolutionise how educational systems approach stress and performance, according to officials.

The research has been published in Behavioural Brain Research, an international peer-reviewed journal publishing studies on the neurobiological basis of behaviour and cognitive processes in humans and animals.

The study sheds light on how the brain and heart interact differently in students who struggle with anxiety during exams, offering a scientific basis for early identification and personalised

oping strategies. Test anxiety affects an estimated 81 per cent of Indian students, according to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT, 2022), often impairing academic performance and long-term mental health. While some students manage to perform under pressure, others fall into avoidance behaviour, unable to cope effectively.

According to Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Department of Engineering Design, IIT Madras, the research team sought to understand why this happens, focusing on objective, physiological data that moves beyond the self-reported perceptions.

"They discovered that when the brain-heart communication network breaks down during stress, certain students are more likely to experience heightened anxiety and



avoidance, revealing a clear biological distinction between adaptive and maladaptive test responses," he told PTI. "The study's breakthrough lies in integrating two physiological markers: Frontal Alpha Asymmetry (FAA)—a brain-based indica-

tor of emotional regulation—and Heart Rate Variability (HRV)—a measure of the heart's adaptive control. Together, these signals help identify students predisposed to anxiety," he added.

Balasubramanian explained that the team found that those with a

negative FAA pattern showed significantly weaker heart regulation during stress, meaning that their anxiety predisposition could override the heart's ability to stay balanced in an evaluative setting.

"This nuanced understanding transforms how we view academic stress—not as a purely psychological issue, but as one grounded in measurable physiological interactions," he said.

Swathy Parameswaran, Research Scholar, IIT Madras, informed that these insights open up immense possibilities for practical applications. By training artificial intelligence systems on these psycho-physiological markers, it could soon become possible to develop non-invasive, real-time monitoring tools that alert educators and mental health professionals to students at risk, without waiting for visible signs of dis-

stress. "The findings also support the design of personalised stress management and behavioural interventions that could be embedded within school and university wellness programs, offering proactive support rather than reactive treatment," she said.

Although preliminary, the study, conducted with 52 participants, marks a critical step toward integrating neuroscience with educational psychology.

The team now aims to scale the research by involving larger and more diverse participant groups and exploring additional factors like sleep patterns and activity levels to refine predictive models. Advanced techniques, such as EEG-based connectivity mapping, will also be employed to deepen the understanding of heart-brain dynamics under stress. (PTI)

JD (U) celebrates Bihar election victory

Party leaders rejoice JD(U)'s landslide win, plan to strengthen presence in Arunachal



HT Correspondent
ITANAGAR, Nov 16: The Janata Dal (United) Arunachal Pradesh unit on Saturday evening celebrated the party's strong performance in the recently concluded Bihar Assembly election with a gathering at the residence campus of its National Secretary Ruhi Tugung at Lobi in the city.

Speaking to the media, JD (U) National secretary Ruhi Tugung

said the party has registered a spectacular win in Bihar, doubling its number of seats compared to the 2020 election. He said the victory is a moment of pride for lakhs of party workers, supporters and well-wishers across the country.

Tugung extended congratulations to the party's national leadership on behalf of the people of Arunachal Pradesh and also thanked the people of

Bihar for reposing faith in the NDA in general and the JD (U) in particular. He informed that party leaders from Arunachal Pradesh are leaving for Patna to participate in government formation and the oath-taking ceremony. Discussions will also be held on strengthening the JD (U) in Arunachal Pradesh and the Northeast, he added.

JD (U) state president Kipa

Kame said the party in Arunachal Pradesh has been rejoicing the NDA's thumping majority and JD(U)'s landslide victory in Bihar. He congratulated all winning candidates as well as those who participated in the election process.

Kame said the victory celebrations included cutting a cake, bursting firecrackers and distributing sweets among party karyakartas. He credited the landslide win to the development work carried out over the last decade, calling it a reflection of peace, progress and the commitment of the NDA government led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. He added that the result showcased the determination and hard work of the party's grassroots cadre, supporters and well-wishers.

On the possibility of contesting local body polls in Arunachal Pradesh, Kame said the party would comment only after receiving approval from the JD (U) high command. He acknowledged that many aspiring candidates are already in touch but said any announcement would be made only after consultations in Bihar.

Arunachal's Nishanlu Kri wins Gold in MA Sociology

HT Correspondent
NAHARLAGUN, Nov 16: Nishanlu Kri, senior volunteer of the Lohit Youth Library Network and a first-generation learner from Kathan village, Wakro Circle, Lohit district has brought laurels to Arunachal Pradesh by winning the gold medal and first rank in MA Sociology at the Central University of Gujarat, Vadodara.

She received the gold medal during the university's 6th convocation on Saturday from Chancellor Dr Hashmukh Adhia, IAS (retired Finance Secretary, GOI). Delivering the convocation address, Dr Adhia emphasised the 'KHWAB formula', highlighting the importance of knowledge, hard work and positive behaviour for long-term success.

A total of 662 students from undergraduate, postgraduate, MPhil and PhD programs received their degrees. Nishanlu Kri currently a soft skills trainer at Indira Gandhi Government College, Tezu is an alumna of KGBV Wakro and a proactive library activist from APNE Library. She has also conducted reading promotion sessions at IIT Gandhinagar and is a regular volunteer at Bamboosa Library, Tezu.

Expressing her gratitude, Nishanlu credited her mentors, teachers and library patrons for supporting her education. Sokhep Kri, CALSOM Chairman and Convenor of the Lohit Youth Library Network, along with other library patrons, congratulated her on this stellar achievement.

Arunachal launches state protocols for diabetes & hypertension

New guidelines aim to standardise treatment, strengthen NCD care and prevent complications



HT Correspondent
ITANAGAR, Nov 16: On the occasion of World Diabetes Day 2025, the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Arunachal Pradesh launched the State Treatment Protocol (STP) for Diabetes Mellitus and updated Standard Treatment Protocols for Hypertension. The protocols were formally unveiled by Commissioner (H&FW) Pawan Kumar Sain, IAS and Secretary Vivek HP.

The launch marks a major step in strengthening the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) across the state. The protocols provide uniform, evidence-based guidelines to ensure standardised clinical care, improve treatment outcomes and maintain

continuity of care at all health facilities—from Health & Wellness Centres, PHCs, CHCs to District Hospitals.

The secretary (H&FW) acknowledged the role of the State Expert Committee, including Dr Hage Ambing Director of Medical Education, Dr Taso Beyond Head of Medicine (TRIHMS), Dr Anoop Dev Head of Community Medicine and other public health specialists in adapting national protocols to local health needs and challenges.

Arunachal Pradesh has seen a steady rise in diabetes, hypertension and related complications. While community-based screening under the NP-NCD program has made progress, treatment approaches varied due to the absence

of uniform guidelines. The new STPs aim to provide step-wise treatment algorithms, ensure rational drug use, strengthen follow-up and referrals and improve treatment compliance across the state.

Given the state's difficult terrain, dispersed population and limited access to tertiary care, early detection and standardised management at primary and secondary care levels are critical to prevent complications such as kidney failure, stroke, heart disease and blindness.

The launch reflects the government's commitment to enhancing NCD services, reducing premature mortality and improving the quality of life for Arunachal Pradesh residents.

31 trained as EMTs to boost Arunachal Pradesh emergency services

EMT training to strengthen emergency medical services



HT Correspondent
ITANAGAR, Nov 16: EMRI Green Health Services, GVK Enterprise concluded a comprehensive Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training program in Itanagar aimed at enhancing the efficiency of 108 free emergency medical ambulance services across Arunachal Pradesh. The program trained 31 individuals from various parts of the state, equipping them with essential skills to respond promptly during medical emergencies.

The certification ceremony was held at the EMRI GHS head office in Itanagar and attended by key officials, including Khoda Tabin, State Head EMRI GHS, Arun Kumar, Operations Head EMRI GHS, Chiranjiv Kumar Gautam, ERC Head EMRI GHS and other representatives from EMRI Green Health Services.

In his address, State Head Khoda Tabin highlighted the critical role of trained EMTs in saving lives and providing timely medical interventions, especially in remote

and underserved areas. He emphasised that the initiative in collaboration with EMRI GHS and NHM is a strategic step toward strengthening the state's healthcare infrastructure and ensuring quality emergency care. He also noted that the program provides employment opportunities for educated youth across the state.

The training program covered advanced life support, trauma care, patient assessment and other emergency medical procedures. Experienced medical professional Dr Toko Ben EMLC conducted the sessions, providing participants with both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience.

Upon completion, trainees received certification, boosting their professional credentials and contributing to a more robust emergency response framework in Arunachal Pradesh. Officials expressed confidence that the initiative would inspire more individuals to pursue careers in healthcare, ultimately benefiting the state's communities.

IMC inspects CC pavement road in Upper Dokioso



HT Correspondent
ITANAGAR, Nov 16: The Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC) Ward No-1 corporator Lokam Anand on Saturday inspected the newly completed portion of a CC pavement road at Upper Dokioso Colony near Gopur Tinali and appealed to residents to use the road for smoother and safer movement.

Anand said that during his previous visit to the area along with his mother, Lokam Sikio—an aspiring candidate in the upcoming municipal election—they had found the local connectivity in

poor condition. After meeting residents, he had assured support for constructing a CC pavement road, which has now been completed and was under curing. He said an inauguration was planned for the day but had to be cancelled following the announcement of simultaneous local body polls and the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct.

He informed the public that the road is now ready for use and urged the locality to benefit from the improved connectivity.

Social worker and former MLA Lokam Tado's wife,

Lokam Sikio also addressed the gathering. She said the road was a long-pending requirement for the residents and though the inauguration could not be held due to the election code of conduct, the public can immediately begin using it. She assured that, after the election efforts would be made to complete the remaining stretch of the road.

Ward members Nich Fachang, Charu Yamang, Tugtiung Bagang, Sartam Take, SDCWC general secretary Mirnia Game, organising chairman Sartam Ajay and others were present on the occasion.

DNGC concludes XLV Annual College Week

HT Correspondent
ITANAGAR, Nov 16: The XLV Annual College Week of Dera Natung Government College (DNGC), Itanagar concluded on Saturday with a grand valedictory function. Professor (Dr) Pradeep Lingfa, Chairman of Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission was the Chief Guest, while Mamta Riba, IAS and Tarin Rai, BJP State Minority Morcha president, attended as Guest of Honour and Special Invitee, respectively.

In his address, Dr Lingfa highlighted the importance of holistic learning, character building and co-curricular participation. Riba urged students to conserve water and adopt sustainable practices, aligning with the

theme "Water is life; be wise – every drop is a prize." Principal Dr MQ Khan lauded students' achievements, noting 54 departmental toppers in the 2024–25 session and outstanding performances in sports and cultural events.

The week featured literary, cultural and sports competitions, with Siang House emerging as Best House. Javed Abedin was named Best Litterateur of the Year. The celebration showcased the talents of students across painting, debate, solo and group performances and track and field events, reinforcing DNGC's commitment to academic excellence, holistic development and teamwork.

Kurung Kumey Police launch first U-15 Futsal Tournament



HT Correspondent
KURUNG KUMEY, Nov 16: Kurung Kumey District Police has organised the district's first-ever U-15 Futsal Tournament for boys and girls in Koloriang Township, drawing participation from students across multiple schools and local colonies. The three-day event features 12 competing teams and aims to promote physical fitness, team spirit and discipline among young learners.

Beyond sports, the tournament carries a strong social message. Resource persons are engaging stu-

dents on critical issues such as drug abuse, screen addiction, bullying, ragging, child marriage and child molestation. By combining athletic competition with awareness campaigns, the initiative seeks to nurture responsible behaviour and a sense of community among children.

The event is supported by the District Administration, ISSE, Department of Education, Kurung Kumey District and the APWWS Koloriang unit, reflecting a collaborative effort to foster holistic development in the coming future.

Law and Legislative Minister urges media to uphold ethics, accuracy, accountability on National Press Day

Free press is a responsibility, not a privilege: Kento Jini

ITANAGAR, Nov 16: Stressing that a free press is "a responsibility, not a privilege", Arunachal Pradesh Law and Legislative Minister Kento Jini on Sunday urged journalists to uphold sincerity, accuracy and ethics.

Speaking at the National Press Day celebration here, he said the strength of Indian democracy depends on an independent press that informs, questions and holds power accountable.

Jini reminded journalists that their work must rely on verification, investigation and truth, noting that the Press Council of India, established on November 16, 1966 was envisioned to safeguard media freedom and ethical conduct.

He outlined the constitutional role of the press as the fourth pillar of democracy tasked with exposing corruption, ensuring transparency and bridging the gap between government and the public.

Calling journalism a "vulnerable profession" often targeted by defamation suits, the minister urged practitioners to exercise fairness, avoid misinformation and re-



main cautious during elections, where misleading exit polls can harm public trust.

He further stressed the media's responsibility to highlight human rights violations, strengthen democratic debate and uphold fundamental rights through truthful reporting. "Clean and fair journalism must be the guiding principle,"

Jini said.

In his keynote address, senior journalist and founder-editor of The Reporters' Collective Nitin Sethi said digital tools have democratised journalism by lowering entry barriers but have also invited untrained practitioners, blurring the line between journalism and general content creation.

Reporting the truth is especially challenging in close-knit regions such as the Northeast, Sethi noted, where journalists often must report on people they know personally.

Despite the risks, he urged young reporters to stay committed, saying good journalism is most needed in difficult times and continues to offer unmatched public respect and the privilege of questioning those in power, a privilege that must be earned, he added.

The Day, celebrated with the theme "Upholding India's Fourth Pillar in the Digital Age" also featured a debate competition in which the team from the Northeast Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST) emerged as the winner.

Organised by the Arunachal Press Club in association with the Department of Information and Public Relations, the event also honoured an unsung hero for his anti-drug efforts and recognised a village in Longding district as the cleanest in the eastern region.

Five journalists were also awarded for outstanding reporting. (PTI)

