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THE HILLS TIMES

www.thehillstimes.in

Voice of the hills people

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM GUWAHATI & DIPHU

Vol. No. II Issue No. 255 RNI-ASSENG/2023/86488 GUWAHATI, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2025 PAGES 8 PRICE ₹ 8

Modi, Shah, Nadda, Himanta attend swearing-in ceremony
26 ministers also take oath ● Portfolios yet to be announced

Nitish becomes Bihar CM for record 10th time

PATNA, Nov 20: Bihar's longest-serving Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was on Thursday sworn in for a record 10th term here at a grand ceremony, attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, CMs of several NDA-ruled states, and senior alliance leaders.

Kumar was administered the oath of office by Governor Arif Mohammed Khan at the Gandhi Maidan, where a massive makeshift stage was erected for the ceremony, also attended by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda, both of whom had arrived in Patna on Wednesday night.

Along with 74-year-old Kumar, 26 ministers took the oath of office: 14 from the Bharatiya Janata Party, eight from Janata Dal (United), two from Lok Jan Shakti Party (Ram Vilas), and one each from Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) and Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM).

The ministers included Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, both deputy CMs in the previous government, who have been elected as the BJP's leader and deputy leader, respectively, following the polls that were swept by the NDA, which got 202 seats in the 243-member assembly.

Out of 26, five ministers in the new Nitish cabinet are Dalits — one each



from BJP, LJPRV, and HAM, and two from JD(U). Eight ministers belong to the upper castes, including four Rajputs. Three Yadavs have also been accommodated in the new cabinet, which is a mix of senior coalition leaders and new entrants, with the focus on caste and regional balance.

The portfolios to the ministers were not immediately allocated.

"Congratulations to Shri Nitish Kumar Ji on taking oath as Bihar's Chief Minister. He is an experienced

administrator with a proven track record of good governance for many years. My best wishes to him for his tenure ahead," Modi wrote on X.

Modi, who had told voters during the campaign that he would "return for the swearing-in of an NDA government", delighted the crowd when he lifted his trademark 'gamchha' and swirled it above his head, a gesture that has become a signature of the 75-year-old leader.

The Prime Minister also posted on

Himanta congratulates Nitish

GUWAHATI, Nov 20: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday congratulated Nitish Kumar on taking oath as Bihar Chief Minister for a record 10th time.

"Heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to honourable Shri @NitishKumar Kumar Ji on taking the oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar," Sarma said in a post on X.

"Under the guidance of the esteemed Shri @narendramodi ji and the strong leadership of Nitish ji, Bihar is moving towards new heights of progress and transformation; heartfelt best wishes on this historic occasion of taking the oath!" he said. (PTI)

X: "Congratulations to Shri Samrat Choudhary Ji and Shri Vijay Sinha Ji on becoming Deputy Chief Ministers of Bihar. Both leaders have worked extensively at the grassroots in serving people. Best wishes to them."

Leaders of several NDA-ruled states, including TDP chief and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, and BJP satraps Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh), Himanta Biswa Sarma (Assam), Devendra Fadnis (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Guv reviews flood protection initiatives in Dhemaji



HT Bureau
 GUWAHATI, Nov 20: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya visited Dhemaji on Thursday and chaired a review meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's Office to assess flood protection measures and various development initiatives underway in the district.

District commissioner Rahul Suresh Javir presented a detailed report on Dhemaji's flood preparedness, focusing on flood behaviour, socio-economic impacts on vulnerable communities, year-wise embankment performance and the status of ongoing schemes.

He also highlighted the

initiatives of the Dhemaji Water Resources Division aimed at strengthening long-term resilience.

The Governor appreciated the district administration for its proactive approach to managing floods.

He took note of the work carried out by Central and State agencies in research, data collection and coordination with local authorities.

Acharya said that a comprehensive action plan is being prepared to find a sustainable and permanent solution to the district's recurring flood issues.

He reviewed progress of several Raj Bhavan-led initiatives, including Governor Assam Amrit Sarovars,

Sadbhavana Sangat and GAPPY.

Emphasising community engagement, he stressed the importance of arranging the broadcast of Prime Minister's Mann Ki Baat at Amrit Sarovar sites to encourage public participation.

He also called for collaborative efforts in cleanliness drives, plantation work and Nasha-Mukti campaigns to build a progressive and socially responsible society.

Noting the changing river courses and dry riverbeds during lean seasons, the Governor suggested exploring their potential for ecotourism.

The District Commissioner informed him about initiatives such as the Missing Youth Festival, Jiyadhul Eco-Tourism and night camping facilities, which have boosted local tourism and supported livelihoods through the growth of homestay networks.

After the review meeting, the Governor visited the Jiyadhul River to inspect the closure works of the avulsion channel near the upstream of the Samarajan Bridge on the left bank.

BTC admin to take fresh land patta initiative



HT Correspondent
 KOKRAJHAR, Nov 20: The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) held a crucial executive meeting on Thursday at the BTC Secretariat auditorium in Kokrajhar under the leadership of BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary.

Several significant resolutions aimed at improving land administration, strengthening departmental functioning and enhancing grass-

roots governance were adopted. A major highlight of the meeting was the council's decision to initiate a fresh process for distributing land pattas across the BTC region.

Before issuance, a large-scale verification exercise will be undertaken to ensure transparency and accuracy.

As part of this process, a comprehensive survey will identify the exact extent of khas land and en-

croached land within the area. Officials said the survey would determine how many families currently reside on government land and how many are living on encroached land while carrying out cultivation.

Land pattas will be issued only after this detailed assessment is completed.

To ensure smooth and timely execution of the land-related processes, the BTC decided to appoint 200 retired employees from the Revenue and Land Department. Their experience is expected to accelerate survey operations and verification work.

In another important move, the executive body resolved to approach the chief minister for full-fledged staffing across all 39 departments under the council.

The proposal will be finalised and submitted to Dispur for necessary approval.

The council also decided to set up a Block (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

PURTHIMI AKEMANG 2.0
 Land pattas distributed to indigenous residents in Korkanathi

HT Bureau
 DIPHU, Nov 20: The Purthimi Akemang 2.0 programme was successfully held on Thursday at the Haberman Rongphar Playground in Korkanathi under the MAC Constituency, where free land pattas were distributed to indigenous residents.

Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang, attended the event as chief guest.

He was accompanied by MLA Darsing Ronghang, KAAC Chairman Raju Tisso, KAAC Executive Member Ritesh Enghee and Roland Killing, president of the BJP East Karbi Anglong District Committee, among others.

Addressing the gathering, CEM Ronghang reaffirmed KAAC's commitment to ensuring that no eligible beneficiary is left out. He announced (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Red Fort blast: NIA takes custody of three doctors, preacher

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday took custody of three doctors and a preacher who were arrested in connection with the November 10 car blast outside the Red Fort in which 15 people were killed.

Muzammil Ganaie, Adeel Rather and Shaheena Saed as well as Maulvi Irfan Ahmed Wagay had earlier been arrested by the Jammu and Kashmir police. The anti-terror probe agency took them into custody in Srinagar following production orders from the district sessions judge at the Patiala House court here, according to a statement from an NIA spokesperson.

"They had all played a key role in the terror attack that killed several innocent persons and left many others injured, as per NIA investigations," the spokesperson said.

With their custody shifting to the NIA, which formally took over the case on November 11, the number of people booked in connection with a 'white collar' terror plot has gone up to six.

The NIA has already arrested two people -- Amir Rashid Ali and Jasir Bilal Wani alias Danish.

Dr Umar-un-Nabi, who was driving the explosives-laden i20 that detonated outside the Red Fort, had allegedly bought the car in Ali's name. Wani was arrested after it emerged that Umar had been trying to "brainwash" him to becoming a suicide

bomber, officials said. He was not persuaded but is alleged to have agreed to participate as an over-governor worker for the banned terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed.

PTI had earlier reported that the sophisticated terror module spearheaded by a group of doctors had been actively scouting for a suicide bomber since last year with Umar being the alleged key planner.

Officials said Adeel's interrogation pointed to Umar being a "hardcore radical" who insisted that a suicide bomber was essential for their operations. It was after that that Srinagar police sent a team to Qazigund in south Kashmir and detained Wani.

Wani admitted during his questioning that he had met the "doctor module" in October last year at a mosque in Kulgam, Kashmir, the officials said.

In April this year, Wani backed out of the plan to become a suicide bomber, citing his poor economic condition and the belief that suicide was forbidden in Islam, they said.

Those arrested are alleged to be at the centre of the terror module busted by Jammu and Kashmir police along with their counterparts in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. Investigations led to the Al Falah university in Faridabad where 2,900 kg of explosives was recovered. It all started on the intervening night of October 18-19, when (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Experts call for better tools, training and cyber defence systems

GUWAHATI, Nov 20: Cybersecurity experts on Thursday stressed the need for India to scale up investments in tools, training and defence systems as technology has become a decisive weapon in modern warfare, with battles now being fought on computers and networks.

Speaking at the second conference on Cyber Security, Digital Forensics and Intelligence organised by the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), United Service Institution of India's Brigadier Vivek Verma (Retd) said the national target of creating 5 lakh cybersecurity professionals in five

years was insufficient.

He called for integrating cybersecurity into school curricula, military academies, and for the creation of a dedicated cyber services cadre.

"China invests USD 1.8 billion annually in military AI, while the US utilises Project Maven. India, on the other hand, invests only USD 50 million per year, creating asymmetry," he said.

NIELIT Director General M M Tripathi said in an "AI versus AI world", India needs skilled manpower to tackle cyber forensic and security issues. "Skilled workforce is a national (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Assam Police HQs, all SSP offices illuminated with blue light on World Children's Day

GUWAHATI, Nov 20: The Assam Police headquarters, Guwahati Police Commissionerate, SSP offices, and all police stations were illuminated with blue light on Thursday on the occasion of World Children's Day.

"Every year, from November 14 to November 20, we observe 'Child Rights Week' through a series of activities aimed at reinforcing our dedication to protect and promote children's rights," Director General of Police (DGP) Harmeet Singh said.

The illumination of all Assam Police buildings in blue on November 20 marks the culmination of this week-long programme and serves as a public declaration of our commitment, Singh said.

Senior officers of the Assam Police Headquarters were also present on the occasion.

As part of the global celebration of World Children's Day on November 20, all major infrastructure and buildings of the Assam Police, including the DGP office, the Guwahati Police Commissionerate, all SSP Offices, and police stations across the state, were illuminated in blue.

This striking visual display formed part of the worldwide "Go Blue" campaign, symbolising solidarity with children and a commitment to upholding their rights.

This initiative is organised under the aegis of the Assam Police Shishu Mitra Programme, one of the largest child-friendly policing programmes in India, anchored by Assam Police in partnership with UNICEF and UTSAH. The "Go Blue" campaign encourages governments, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Guv not bound by aid, advice of council of ministers in reserving bill for president's consideration: SC



NEW DELHI, Nov 20: The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that the governor has discretion while exercising options under Article 200 for referring a bill passed by the state assembly to the president for consideration, or for returning it to the legislature with his comments and is not bound by aid and advice of council of ministers.

In its unanimous verdict, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice B R Gavai, however, held that the governor has no option to withhold a bill simpliciter.

The bench also comprising Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, P S Narasimha and A S Chandurkar said, "...the Governor has no option to withhold a Bill simpliciter. Therefore, it is not that the discretion so conferred, allows a situation wherein the Governor could frustrate a Bill in perpetuity."

"The three clear options that he has, is to grant assent, withhold assent and return the Bill to the legislature for reconsideration, or reserve the Bill for consideration

of the President. He can exercise his discretion in choosing any of these three options, having given due regard to the aid and advice tendered by the Council of Ministers, and keeping in mind his duty — to protect and defend the Constitution," the bench said.

Answering the presidential reference in which President Droupadi Murmu has sought opinion of the top court, the bench said it is conscious that a government run within the four corners of a written Constitution, must be responsible.

"Having already held that the Governor does not have powers simpliciter to withhold, we find that the Governor has discretion in the context of referring a Bill for the consideration of the President, or for returning the Bill to the Legislature with his comments.

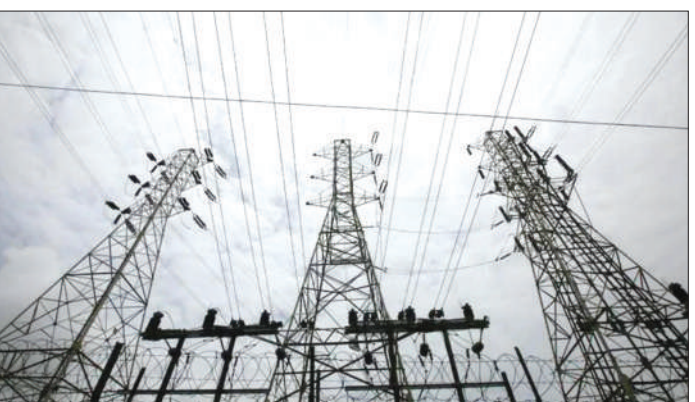
"We do not think that this interpretation confers any unfettered powers on the Governor. In fact, it does not in any way deviate from the concept of a responsible constitutional (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Rising temperatures have consistently increased electricity demand predominantly'

Heatwave-linked surge in power demand may deepen India's fossil-fuel dependence: Report

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: Record-breaking heatwaves are directly fuelling a surge in electricity demand, thus increasing the country's dependence on fossil fuel, a new study released on Thursday has warned, calling for urgent investment in renewable energy storage and smart grid infrastructure to break India's "heat-power trap".

The report, 'Breaking the Cycle' -- jointly published by Climate Tends and Climate Compatible Futures -- shows that the number of heatwave days with temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius spiked sharply over the last decade, with 14 states recording a 15 per cent increase in summer heat inten-



sity between 2015 and 2024. India's annual average temperature in 2024 was 0.65 degrees Celsius higher than the 1991-2020 baseline. As temperatures climbed, electricity demand rose in tandem -- with heatwave conditions alone adding nearly nine per cent to India's peak power demand during April-June 2024, leading to 327 million tonnes of CO2 emissions, the report said.

Consumption of fossil-based power during summer months over the past decade contributed 2.5 gigatonnes of CO2, it added.

"Rising temperatures have consistently increased electricity demand predominantly for cooling needs, resulting in further dependence on fossil fuels," said Dr Manish Ram, CEO of Climate Compatible Futures.

"Meeting the summer demand

surge with fossil fuels has worsened emissions and air pollution. It's important to break this cycle to avoid disproportionately impacting vulnerable communities," he said.

Despite rapid growth in renewable energy from 84 GW (gigawatt) in 2015 to 209 GW in 2024, coal remains India's dominant power source. Fossil-fuel capacity increased from 195 GW to 243 GW in the same period.

While renewable energy generation increased 121 per cent over the decade, fossil-based power output grew by 50 per cent.

The report highlighted that regions already facing harsh summers are (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Govt says 26 e-commerce players declare they are free from dark patterns; asks others to comply

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: As many as 26 top e-commerce companies, including Zepto, BigBasket and Zomato, have given an undertaking that their platforms are free from misleading claims and unfair trade practices which constitute 'dark patterns', the government said on Thursday.

The Centre, which is keeping a close watch on e-commerce platforms for any potential violation of dark patterns, said it would take action against such practices to protect consumer interests.

In a statement on Thursday, the Department of Consumer Affairs informed that as many as 26 leading e-commerce platforms have "voluntarily submitted self-declaration letters" confirming compliance with the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023.

Zepto, Zomato, Swiggy, Jiomart and BigBasket are among these 26 e-commerce platforms.

Dark patterns involve using design and choice architecture to deceive, coerce, or influence consumers into making choices that are not in their best interest. They encompass a wide range of manipulative practices, such as drip pricing, disguised advertising, bait-and-switch, and false urgency.

The department described the self-declaration as a significant step towards protecting consumer interest in the digital marketplace.

According to the statement,



these 26 e-commerce players have conducted internal self-audits or third-party audits to identify, assess and eliminate any presence of dark patterns.

"All 26 companies have declared that their platforms are free from dark patterns and do not deploy any manipulative user interface designs," the department said.

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) said these declarations would encourage other companies to adopt similar self-regulation.

The government has been working to curb these practices that mislead or manipulate consumers.

The Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023, which were notified on November 30, 2023, identify and prohibit 13 dark patterns.

These are: False Urgency; Bas-

ket Sneaking; Confirm Shaming; Forced Action; Subscription Trap; Interface Interference; Bait & Switch; Drip Pricing; Disguised Advertisements; Nagging; Trick Wording; SaaS Billing; and Rogue Malwares.

In June this year, the CCPA issued an advisory asking all e-commerce platforms and online service providers to conduct a mandatory self-audit within three months to detect and eliminate dark patterns.

Some of the e-commerce platforms that have self-declared their platforms are free of dark patterns include Pharm Easy, Zepto Marketplace, Flipkart Internet, Myntra Designs, Walmart India, MakeMyTrip (India), BigBasket (Innovative Retail Concepts), and JioMart (Reliance Retail).

The other leading e-commerce platforms that have self-audited to eliminate dark patterns include Zomato, Swiggy, Blinkit, Page Industries, William Penn, Cleartrip, Reliance Jewels, Reliance Digital, Netmeds, Tata Img, Meesho, Ixigo, MilBasket, Hamleys, Ajo, Tira Beauty (Reliance Retail Ltd), Duroflex Pvt. Ltd and Curaden India.

"Every business operating in India's digital space must recognize that manipulative practices are short-sighted strategies that harm both consumers and businesses in the long run," the CCPA added.

The department said that consumers have been educated to identify dark patterns and report them. These have been through the National Consumer Helpline (NCH), social media campaigns, informative videos, and outreach programmes.

Such consumer complaints are being systematically addressed, and enforcement action is being contemplated wherever necessary.

The CCPA is maintaining a close watch on potential violations and would not hesitate to act against errant platforms, it added. (PTI)

Purabi Milk Booth inaugurated at Nehru Park

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 20: Northeast India's largest dairy cooperative brand, Purabi, has expanded its retail network with the inauguration of a new milk booth near Nehru Park, Guwahati. This is the first booth launched under its partnership with the Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA), aimed at providing convenient access to high-quality dairy products for park-goers, morning walkers, students and residents.

The booth was inaugurated by Cooperation Minister Jogen Mohan in the presence of Anant Lal Gyani, IAS, secretary, cooperation, along with senior officials from GMDA and Purabi. GMDA has allotted three locations in the city for Purabi's prefabricated milk booths.

Following the Nehru Park launch, two more booths — one near Shradhanjali Kanan on RG Baruah Road and another near Atal Udyan in Adabari — will open soon. Speaking at the event, Minister Mohan praised the collaboration between Purabi and GMDA, highlighting its role in strengthening Assam's dairy ecosystem.

He referred to chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's Assam Dairy Development Plan, which aims to expand organised cooperative milk handling capacity to 10 lakh litres per day. He said that the launch of such booths aligns with this broader vision for sectoral transformation.

A GMDA official expressed satisfaction with the collaboration, noting that the kiosks would enhance citizen convenience while ensuring access to quality food.

Purabi products are produced by West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd. (WAMUL) and marketed by North East Dairy and Foods Limited (NEDFL), a joint venture between the Government of Assam and the NDDB.

Stock markets surge for 2nd day on firm global trends, fresh foreign fund inflows

MUMBAI, Nov 20: Benchmark Sensex climbed 446 points while Nifty closed above the 26,100 level on Thursday, extending their gains for the second consecutive day on buying in oil & gas and select financial shares and fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 446.21 points or 0.52 per cent to settle at 85,632.68. During the day, it surged 615.23 points or 0.72 per cent to hit a 52-week high of 85,801.70.

The 50-share NSE Nifty also hit its 52-week high of 26,246.65 during the day before closing at 26,192.15, reflecting gains of 139.50 points or 0.54 per cent over the previous close.

A rally in global peers helped indices scale their year-high levels intra-day, analysts said.

Among Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Tech Mahindra and Axis Bank were the major gainers.

However, Asian Paints, HCL Tech, Titan and Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards.

"Indian equities rose on optimism around India-US trade talks and progress on phase-1 agree-



ments, boosting overall market sentiment. Global cues also remained strong, led by tech-driven gains following solid earnings. Fresh FII inflows and strength in large-cap sectors such as Auto, Financials, and IT supported the upbeat trend," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said that Indian markets finished on a strong note, with the Nifty closing decisively above the key psychological barrier of 26,100.

The upmove was led by heavyweights in oil & gas, particularly Reliance Industries, along with solid contributions from private-sector lenders such as HDFC Bank and the Bajaj twins, as well as select automobile stocks, Ponmudi R said.

The BSE smallcap gauge dipped 0.17 per cent and midcap gauge declined 0.13 per cent. (PTI)

Among sectoral indices, energy climbed the most by 0.59 per cent, followed by financial services (0.49 per cent), capital goods (0.34 per cent), auto (0.28 per cent), bankex (0.28 per cent), industrials (0.27 per cent) and oil & gas (0.24 per cent).

Consumer Durables, telecommunication, IT, teck and realty were the laggards.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled higher while Shanghai's SSE Composite index ended lower. European markets were quoting higher. US markets ended in positive territory on Wednesday.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Wednesday. They bought equities worth ₹ 1,580.72 crore in the previous trade, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) also bought stocks worth ₹ 1,360.27 crore on Wednesday.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 0.83 per cent to USD 64.03 per barrel.

On Wednesday, the Sensex jumped 513.45 points or 0.61 per cent to settle at 85,186.47. The Nifty climbed 142.60 points or 0.55 per cent to 26,052.65. (PTI)

SAIL's Bokaro plant inks licencing pact with DRDO lab for tech transfer

RANCHI, Nov 20: SAIL's Bokaro steel plant on Thursday said it has signed a licencing agreement with DRDO's Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory (DMRL) for transfer of technology.

By this pact, Bokaro steel plant will utilise the technology to manufacture special steel used in defence applications.

"By this agreement, DRDO grants a non-inclusive licence to utilise the technology for the manufacture of DMR 249A steel sheets for naval applications in India and sell to Indian armed forces and other government agencies," the company said in a statement.

The licencing agreement for transfer of technology (LAToT) was received from DRDO's DMRL Director Dr R. Balamuralikrishnan in Hyderabad in the presence of senior defence officials. The LAToT was received by Sunita Minz,

SS Panigrahy, and Rahul Tiwari, representing the steel maker. The licence agreement is dedicated to the shared vision, hard work, commitment and unwavering pursuit of excellence of the Bokaro steel plant fraternity, the company said. Bokaro steel plant executive director (works) Priya Ranjan hailed this development as a significant step forward towards fulfilling the requirements of the country in the defence sector.

He said that Bokaro steel plant will continue to

play its role in this sector through the development of special-grade steels. SAIL, Bokaro steel plant and DRDO's DMRL are responsible for the development and manufacture of complex metals and materials required for modern warfare and weapon systems, he said.

They have closely worked hand in hand to "develop DMR 249A steel for naval applications and produced over 46,500 tonnes of this steel in the past 18 years since 2007", according to the official. (PTI)

We do not target any level of rupee; depreciation due to demand for US dollar: RBI Guv Malhotra



NEW DELHI, Nov 20: Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Thursday said the central bank does not target any level of rupee, and the recent depreciation of the domestic currency against the US dollar is due to demand for the green-

back. The governor also said that the Reserve Bank has "very good" buffers of foreign exchange reserves, and there is no need for concern on the external sector.

Delivering the VKRRV Memorial Lecture at the Delhi School of Economics, Malhotra also said the foremost priority of the RBI is to ensure financial stability in the system, and the central bank is trying to simplify regulations, where possible, while maintaining necessary safe-

guards and guardrails.

Replying to a question on depreciation of the rupee against the dollar, he exuded confidence that India will have a "good trade deal" with the US, and that would relieve the pressure on the country's current account balance. He said the recent depreciation of the Indian rupee is trade-related and due to US tariff issues.

"We do not target any level. Why is the rupee depreciating? (It) is because of the demand...It's a financial instrument, and there is a demand for dollars, and if the demand for dollars goes up, the rupee depreciates; if the demand for rupee goes up, dollar comes down, then it appreciates," Malhotra said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Heatwave-linked surge

also encountering the sharpest stress on the power grid. Central and eastern states, including Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh saw an average of 50 heatwave days annually over 2014-2024.

Northern states such as Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana experienced the steepest rise in summer temperature. Heat is also intensifying in regions previously considered moderate. Uttarakhand recorded a jump from zero heatwave days in 2023 to 25 in 2024, with its summer temperature rising 11.2 per cent. Ladakh saw a 9.1 per cent rise. The study noted that the heat-power feedback loop hits rural and low-income populations hardest, exposing them to both heat stress and energy supply disruptions.

Existing socioeconomic disparities are compounded by inadequate cooling, patchy access to electricity and poor infrastructure resilience, it said.

Dr Ram said states facing heat-driven spikes "must urgently expand renewable energy and storage capacities to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels", adding that, even renewable energy-heavy states are now seeing the limits of solar and wind power integration without adequate storage and flexible grid systems.

Aarti Khosla, Director of Climate Trends, said heatwaves and power shortages "can no longer be treated as separate crises". "The only durable way out is to urgently upgrade our grid, invest in storage and enable flexible, climate-resilient electricity systems," she said. "Without these investments, every summer will lock us deeper into fossil dependence, worsening public health impacts. Breaking this cycle is an equity imperative."

The analysis of Heat Action Plans (HAPs) across India revealed critical gaps: only four states, three cities and one district currently incorporate renewable energy-based backup systems such as solar power or battery storage into their heat preparedness frameworks, the report stated.

It called for integrating energy planning with climate adaptation, including renewable backup systems, demand forecasting and urban cooling strategies to strengthen resilience during extreme heat events.

Recent studies by Ember and CREA (Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air) cited in the report show that India could avoid new coal expansion by meeting its 2032 capacity targets, and peak coal power generation would decline if India adds 50 GW of renewable capacity annually until 2035. (PTI)

Guv not bound by aid

government," it said Referring to the 2016 verdict of a five-judge Constitution bench, the top court said it was in agreement with the view affirmed in the Nabam Rebia case that Article 200 of the Constitution confers discretionary powers on the governor and does not find any "compelling reason" to deviate from this position.

It said that the April 8 verdict in Tamil Nadu case which fixed timelines for the governor and the president to accord assent to bills passed by assembly and prompted the presidential reference, the bench said the view on discretionary powers of governor expressed in it were based on a partial reading of earlier judgments of apex court. In its 111-page verdict, the bench said that the Constitution does not explicitly state in which provisions discretion is contemplated for the governor to exercise and this court has read discretion into the function of the governor under the Constitution by way of its judgments.

"Our usage of the word 'function' is done so deliberately, in contradistinction to 'power' because a function carries with it, implicitly, a constitutional obligation. Thus, we are of the considered opinion that the Constitution requires the Governor, in exercise of his 'function' use 'discretion' in certain circumstances, given the manner in which our constitutionalism is practised, or worked," it said. Referring to various provisions in the Constitution on lawmaking, the bench said the act of 'having been reserved', is a function that can be performed by the governor alone, to the exclusion of others and it is neither in the hands of the legislature nor the executive.

"The Governor is the sole authority to reserve a Bill for the consideration of the President under Article 200. For a moment, if it is assumed that there is no discretion, then even if advice is tendered contrary to the written text of the Constitution, the Governor will be bound by such advice.

"If that be so, the Governor and the President ultimately fail in their duty to protect and defend the Constitution because the President's power of assent is hinged on the Governor's power to reserve the Bill for the consideration of the President," the bench said. (PTI)

Assam Police HQs,

organisations, and communities around the world to light up landmarks and public spaces in blue on World Children's Day. The colour blue represents a dedication to a world where every child is safe, healthy, educated, and loved. The campaign aims to raise global awareness about children's rights and to inspire collective action to ensure every child's well-being, Singh said.

World Children's Day is a globally recognised occasion to advocate for children's rights and wellbeing, reminding societies everywhere of the importance of nurturing and protecting the next generation, he added.

Meanwhile, Child Rights activist Miguel Das said survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) often remain under a strict veil of legal confidentiality, which limits their opportunities to engage with inspiring and motivating individuals. Das, founder of the Child Rights organisation 'UTSAH', said that as one of the very few organisations working closely on CSA, they felt that this World Children's Day was the right moment to create an opportunity to empower these children. "We organised a motivational and interactive session specifically for Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) victims supported by the organisation under the framework of the POCSO Act", he said. Das said that they invited renowned fitness coach Ruchi Barah to lead an empowering session for the children, and she engaged with the children on important topics, including physical health, fitness, personal protection, and resilience building and on the importance of "Never Giving Up".

"Given the significant emotional and mental health challenges that CSA victims face, the interaction was aimed at providing constant support, inspiration, and empowerment to help them reclaim confidence and hope", he added. (PTI)

Experts call for

security asset. There is no alternative to collaboration. We need to take high-end skilling programmes to students and utilise existing labs and ecosystems optimally," Tripathi said, stressing the need for Indian certification systems in cybersecurity. The two-day event, "Cyber Secure Bharat: Fortifying India's Digital Future", has been organised by NIELIT Assam and Nagaland under the Union Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), in association with Assam Police and Gauhati University. The event is also supported by Assam government's IT Department and the United Service Institution of India. NIELIT signed three MoUs at the event with Pragjyotishpur University, Girijananda Choudhury University and K K Handique State Open University (KKHSOU) for starting skilling courses in IT, electronics and bioinformatics. (PTI)

Red Fort blast

posters of the banned JeM surfaced on walls just outside Srinagar city. The posters warned of attacks on police and security forces in the Valley. Three people -- Arif Nisar Dar alias Sahil, Yasir-ul-Ashraf and Maqsood Ahmad Dar alias Shahid -- were arrested after CCTV footage showed them pasting the posters.

During interrogation, they named former paramedic turned preacher Maulvi Irfanas the one who had supplied the posters. He was arrested. This was the thread that led to the unravelling of the plot. It was his interrogation that finally led investigators to Al Falah university and the group of Kashmiri doctors.

The first person to be arrested was Ganaie from Faridabad. Then Saheed too from the town. Later, Adeel Rather was picked up from Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh. (PTI)

Land pattas distributed

that for those who could not receive land pattas under Purthimi Akemang 2.0, the administration is preparing to launch Purthimi Akemang 3.0 to guarantee equitable access for all Karbi people and other tribal communities. He also highlighted key development priorities, including boosting the rural economy, addressing unemployment, improving village road connectivity, enhancing educational infrastructure, and developing playgrounds and other essential public facilities. The programme concluded on an optimistic note, marking another milestone in KAAC's continued efforts toward regional development.

BTC admin to

Development Officer (BDO) office in each of the newly created Assembly constituencies under the BTC. This step aims to strengthen grassroots administration and improve service delivery in rural areas.

BTC chief Hagrama Mohiary said the decisions taken in the meeting would usher in positive reforms in land management and departmental operations, ultimately ensuring better governance for the people of the Bodoland Territorial Council.

Nitish becomes Bihar

(Maharashtra), Mohan Yadav (Madhya Pradesh), and Rekha Gupta (Delhi) attended the ceremony. With a tally of 89 out of 243 seats, the BJP, which emerged as the single largest party, had the lion's share of 14 ministers in the new cabinet. Besides Choudhary and Sinha, other BJP leaders who took the oath included Mangal Pandey, Nitin Nabin, and Surendra Prasad Mehta, all of whom were ministers in the previous government. State BJP president Dilip Jaiswal, who had resigned from the cabinet nearly two years ago in keeping with the party's 'one person, one post' policy, was back in the council of ministers.

Another minister who is back after a break is Narayan Prasad. He had lost his post in 2022 when the chief minister abruptly quit the NDA. He was not re-inducted upon the JD(U) supremo's return to the BJP-led coalition last year. The party has also brought in fresh faces like Shreyasi Singh, a professional shooter of international fame, who has been elected from Jamui for a second consecutive term.

Other BJP leaders who will enjoy a ministerial berth for the first time are --Arun Shankar Prasad, Dr Pramod Kumar, Lakhendra Kumar Raushan, Sanjay Singh Tiger, and Rama Nishad.

Another notable inclusion is Ram Kripal Yadav, a former Union minister who lost the Patliputra Lok Sabha seat last year but was elected from Danapur in the assembly polls.

From the JD(U) quota, all the inductees were ministers in the previous government, including Zama Khan, the lone Muslim MLA in the NDA. Others who took oath, included Bijendra Yadav, Shrawon Kumar, Vijay Kumar Choudhary, Leshi Singh and Madan Sahni, Sunil Kumar, and Ashok Choudhary.

The NDA also comprises smaller allies like LJPRV, HAM, and RLM, led by Union ministers Chirag Paswan, Jitan Ram Manjhi, and Rajya Sabha MP Upendra Kushwaha, respectively.

From HAM, Santosh Suman, Manjhi's son and party president, was re-inducted.

LJPRV ministers include Sanjay Kumar Paswan of Bakhti, an associate of the late Ram Vilas Paswan, and Sanjay Kumar Singh, who defeated Tej Pratap Yadav in Mahua. Although the RLM has won four seats, the MLAs, including Kushwaha's wife Snehlata, who won the Sasaram seat, the party is represented in the cabinet by the founding president's son Deepak Prakash, who is at present not a member of either house in the state legislature. Besides the CM, Dilip Jaiswal, Dr Pramod Kumar, Ashok Choudhary, and Santosh Suman are members of the state legislative council. The maximum number of ministers permissible for the state cabinet, including the CM, is 36. In the outgoing government, the BJP had 15 ministers, JD(U) 12, including CM Nitish Kumar, Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) had one, and one minister who was an Independent candidate. (PTI)

LOOK OUT NOTICE



The above photograph of Azadi Khatun (18 yrs.) D/O Md. Mofiz of village Agyathuri, PS Hajo, District Kamrup(R), who was missing from her house on 19-06-2025 at about 8.10 PM.

The description roll of the victim/missing girl is as follows:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Name | - Azadi Khatun |
| 2. Complexion | - Swarthy |
| 3. Height | - 4 feet 5 inch |
| 4. Age | - 18 Yrs. |
| 5. Wearing | - Jeans Pant and Yellow colour Kurta |
| 6. Hair | - Black and long |
| 7. Language Know | - Assamese / Hindi |

Please take all out efforts to trace out the missing person and if found intimate this office (Kamrup PCR. 60269-00747, E-Mail- sp-kamrup@assam-police.gov.in) at the earliest for taking follow up action from this end. This refers to Dakara OP MMR No. 04/2025 Dated 21-06-2025.

Sd/-
Addl. Superintendent of Police, (Crime)
Kamrup ::: Amingaon.

Vaccination, sterilisation and awareness campaigns under Supreme Court directive

Diphu administration launches anti-Rabies and stray dog control drive

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 20: The Director of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, Government of Assam has instructed District Nodal Officers, Veterinary Officers and staff across 14 districts, having 50,000+ human population in those Municipalities including Diphu Municipal Board in Karbi Anglong district to implement the Anti-Rabies Vaccination (ARV) and Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme as per the Animal Birth Control Rules 2023. The programme will be conducted in association with local bodies and NGOs under the Rabies Control Programme.

A meeting on the ARV and ABC programmes was held at the conference hall of the District Veterinary Officer (DVO) Office in Diphu on Thursday. The meeting was chaired by Dipanjit Baruah, Under Secretary, KAAC and attended by Dr K K Das (DVO), Dr Hongbari Ingtri, Sub-Divisional Veterinary Officer (SDVO), Dr David Bordoloi (District Nodal Officer, Rabies Control Programme), Dr Monika Tissopi, Veterinary Officers and representa-



tives from the Diphu Municipal Board.

The meeting began with an overview of the Supreme Court directive (Writ Petition (Civil) No 5 dated 07/11/2025), which mandates the removal of stray dogs from public institutional premises, including schools, hospitals and bus stations, alongside vaccination and sterilisation. Dr Monika Tissopi presented the current status of ARV and ABC initiatives, highlighting activities across all 14 wards under the Diphu Municipal Board.

Key decisions include involving all Town Committees in ward-level awareness camps, identifying stray dogs and constructing a dog pound at the earliest with funding provided by the Diphu Municipal Board. A proposal for a comprehensive household census to count dogs was also approved. Vaccinated dogs will be marked with colored bands, collars or stickers to distinguish them from unvaccinated or stray animals.

The meeting emphasised that the

ABC programme will prioritise neutering and spaying of stray dogs. Operational challenges were discussed, including inconsistent availability of medicines and equipment. Participants suggested procuring tranquillizer guns and other handling tools with formal requisitions to be submitted to the Municipal Board.

Awareness campaigns will be conducted in schools and at the community level, involving the Veterinary Department, Medical Department, Social Welfare Department and District Administration. The Municipal Board will also display banners and distribute leaflets on rabies prevention, stray dog management and responsible pet ownership across all wards. Awareness camps are set to begin next week. The meeting concluded with an emphasis on inter-departmental coordination, community participation, transparency and timely action to meet the targets set by the Supreme Court. Attendees included Diphu Municipal Board officials, engineers, veterinary officers and representatives from KAAC.

Wild elephants raid agricultural fields, children afraid to go to school

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Nov 20: Two herds of wild elephants have been sheltering for several days in sugarcane fields, ripe paddy plots and vegetable farms in Belbari and Mailoo Raisen under the Southern Forest Range of West Karbi Anglong, creating widespread fear and disrupting daily life. Farmers and villagers say the continuous presence of the herds has turned the area unsafe, especially during early morning and night hours.

The elephants have been raiding crops both day and night, causing extensive destruction to standing paddy, sugarcane and vegetables just as farmers were preparing for harvest. Several farmers have reportedly lost their entire season's produce overnight. "We are guarding our fields the whole night with torches, firecrackers and drums, but the elephants still come. We are helpless," said a farmer from Belbari No 02 village.

The situation has become partic-

ularly distressing for schoolchildren, with many refusing to attend classes due to fear of sudden elephant encounters on village roads. "Children are terrified. No one knows when and from which direction the elephants will appear," a resident said. Villagers have expressed strong resentment over what they allege is inaction by the Southern Range Forest Office. Despite repeated complaints, locals say no substantial effort has been made to drive the herds back towards the Lumding Reserve Forest in neighbouring Hojai district. According to residents, forest personnel visit briefly but leave without initiating effective measures.

It has also emerged that the same elephant groups had caused similar problems in the Kheroni area for nearly one and a half months before moving to the present location, raising concerns over the forest department's long-term strategy to address recurring human-elephant conflict

in the region.

The affected farmers have demanded immediate deployment of trained elephant-driving teams—such as hulla parties, kunki elephants or monitored firecracker units—to safely push the herds back into the Lumding Reserve Forest. They also sought prompt assessment of crop and property damage, speedy compensation as per government norms and installation of solar fencing or other permanent mitigation measures in chronic conflict zones of the Southern Range under the Hamren Forest Division.

Until concrete action is taken, hundreds of families in Belbari and Mailoo Raisen continue to spend sleepless nights guarding their fields and homes. Residents have urged the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam to intervene urgently before the situation escalates into a major tragedy.

NABARD holds special programmes for cooperatives

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 20: As part of the observance of Cooperative Week, the District Development Manager of NABARD, Rajendar Pernu, organised two special programmes for cooperatives in Nagaon district. The events, titled 'Cooperation among Cooperatives for Non-Credit Cooperatives' and 'Promotion of Micro Credit through Cooperatives for Women SHGs/JLGs', were attended by ARCS-Kaliabor Probin Borah, Apex Cooperative Bank branch manager Niranjani Ch Das, Chairman of Bholaguri Satra SSL Montu Baruah, among others. Addressing the participants, Rajendar Pernu stated that NABARD is observing Cooperative Week in alignment with the national agenda, guided by the theme Cooperatives, as vehicle for Atmanirbhar Bharat. He highlighted a number of initiatives of the Ministry of Cooperation aimed at realising the vision of 'Sahkar-se-Samridhi', strengthening the cooperative movement, expanding its grassroots presence and transforming cooperatives into vibrant multi-business enterprises. Emphasising the need for sustainable development of cooperatives in the district, Pernu called for coordinated functioning between credit and non-credit cooperatives. He said credit cooperatives can significantly contribute to micro-credit delivery through group financing models. He advised Bholaguri Satra SSL to consider preparing an inclusive Family Credit Plan for all its members and support them through credit and related services. He also shared the Government of India's targets of tripling the cooperative sector's contribution to GDP by 2034, bringing 50 crore active members into the cooperative fold, increasing cooperative societies by 30 per cent and establishing at least one cooperative society in every village.

Police seize 2 kg Morphine, 3 arrested

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, Nov 20: Karbi Anglong police recovered 2 kg of morphine worth ₹ 2 crore from a car (AS 09 K 7808) at Dillai. Three people—Pritom Englang (Diphu), Rupsing Bongrung (West Karbi Anglong) and Mohammad Hakim (Bihar) were arrested and Rs 1 lakh in cash was seized.

Two Home Guards, Kisno Das and Maising Tokbi who intercepted the drugs, reportedly refused a bribe of ₹ 50,000 and ensured the contraband was seized.

FM reviews flagship schemes in Chirang

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Nov 20: Finance Minister Ajanta Neog chaired a review meeting at the District Commissioner's office in Kajalgaon, Chirang on Thursday. She assessed the progress of various state government flagship schemes in the district and emphasised timely completion, quality standards and adherence to guidelines.

The meeting was attended by Bijni MLA Ajoy Kumar Ray, Sidli-Chirang MLA Nirmal Kumar Brahma, Chirang DC Jatni Bora and heads of various line departments.

AAUBC pledges to work for all Brahmins in Assam

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Nov 20: The All Assam United Brahmin Council (AAUBC) on Wednesday held a meeting at Prajapati Bibah Bhawan, BG Road, where the newly formed Sivasagar District Committee office-bearers were felicitated. Presiding over the meeting, AAUBC president Manoj Kr Borthakur said the organisation would work for all Brahmins in the state, irrespective of linguistic backgrounds, while also promoting goodwill among all communities.

Rajendranath Borthakur, president of the Sivasagar District Committee, said the responsibility entrusted to them could be carried forward only with collective support. Women's wing president Ruma Goswami pledged ethical and dedicated efforts for the upliftment of the community.

HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Nov 20: District Commissioner Munindra Nath Ngatey, ACS, convened a meeting with political parties followed by a press briefing on Thursday to outline the Election Commission of India's directives for the special revision of the electoral roll in Assam with the final voter list slated for publication on February 10, 2026. ADC (Election) Shaurya Sharma and Election Officer Hitesh Baro, ACS were also present.

The Election Commission has notified that January 1, 2026 will serve as the qualifying date for the revision exercise. The DC informed that house-to-house verification by BLOs, rationalisation and rearrangement of polling stations and removal of discrepancies in the electoral roll or EPIC will take place from November 22 to December 20, 2025. Training of election officials and printing of documents and circulars is scheduled between November 18 and 21, 2025.

Preparation of Formats 1 to 8 and the integrated draft roll with reference to the January 1 qualifying date will be carried out between December 21 and 26, 2025. The integrated draft electoral roll is set for publication on December 27, 2025.

Filing of claims and objections, along with their disposal will be conducted from December 27, 2025 to



January 22, 2026. Dates for special camps to facilitate claims and objections will be announced later, the DC said. Disposal of claims and objections will be completed by February 2, 2026.

The checking of health parameters of the roll, obtaining the Commission's approval for final publication, updating the database and printing of supplements will be completed by February 6, 2026, before the final publication on February 10, 2026.

The integrated draft electoral roll of the Dima Hasao constituency—113-Haflong (ST) LAC—will also be published on December 27, 2025 at the District Election Office, Haflong and in all designated polling stations. Voters may contact the official helpline or visit the NVSP portal and BLO App for assistance.

NFR GM inspects redeveloped Kamakhya station

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 20: Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), conducted a thorough inspection of the redeveloped Kamakhya and New Coochbehar Railway Stations in West Bengal on Wednesday. He was accompanied by Divisional Railway Manager Devendra Singh and senior officials from NFR Headquarters and the Alipurduar Division.

At Kamakhya, the GM inspected all three platforms, the 12-metre wide foot overbridge, lifts, circulating areas, waiting halls, lounges, parking area, Station Master's room and ticket counters. The review focused on passenger amenities, safety measures, cleanliness and overall upkeep of station assets. He also held a meeting with representatives of the local MP, MLA, business organisations, public interest groups and interacted with the media.

At New Coochbehar station, the GM reviewed operational and passenger facilities including the Station Superintendent and Station Master's panels, combined crew lobby, crew running room, waiting halls, retiring room, dormitory and the station's circulating area. The inspection aimed to ensure that passenger-centric infrastructure is maintained efficiently and in line with operational requirements.

The inspection across both stations is part of NFR's efforts to strengthen service delivery, improve operational efficiency and enhance the travel experience for passengers. The redevelopment of Kamakhya station under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) underscores Indian Railways' commitment to modern infrastructure and improved passenger amenities.

9th All Karbi Anglong Inter-College Cultural Competition

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 20: The third day of the 9th All Karbi Anglong Inter-College Karbi Cultural Competition at Joying Doloi Auditorium featured vibrant performances of traditional and contemporary dances, songs and cultural activities by student troupes from colleges across Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong.

Retired IAS officer and North Eastern Council member Longki Phangoche urged students to preserve and promote Karbi language, culture and traditions. The Karbi Lokajanong Aikyaya (KLJA) submitted a memorandum through Phangoche requesting an annual grant of ₹ 15 lakh under NEC/DoNER to support cultural promotion and youth development, which Phangoche assured would be considered.

The event included poem recitations, marriage songs, extempore speeches, modern and traditional dances, quizzes, debates and traditional sports such as sling, tug of war and top spinning. Former KAAC Executive Member and Karbi Anglong Congress president Raton Engti and several party leaders also attended.

P&RD contractual employees stage protest in Darrang

HT Correspondent

MANGALDAI, Nov 20: Contractual employees of Darrang district working under the Panchayat and Rural Development (P&RD) Department staged a sit-in demonstration on Wednesday in front of the office of the Chief Executive Officer of Darrang Zilla Parishad.

In a statement, the protesters said they have launched a series of democratic protests seeking solutions to long-pending issues faced by contractual staff.

They alleged that employees appointed on a contractual basis under the P&RD Department have been deprived of their basic rights.

Workers engaged as Computer Assistants, Gram ozgar Sahayaks, Gram Panchayat Coordinators, Accredited Engineers and Programme Managers in various Gaon Panchayats and Development Blocks said they are compelled to serve on meagre monthly salaries, making it difficult to sustain their families.

The organisation stated that despite multiple meetings with senior officials to find redressal, no meaningful action has been taken.

Consequently, the All Assam Panchayat & Rural Development Contractual Employees Council has announced a continuous strike



and sit-in protest until their demands are fulfilled. The employees are demanding job security up to 60 years of age, implementation of equal pay for equal work, extension of all government benefits and an increase in monthly remuneration.

DC conducts surprise inspection of markets, seals unhygienic factory

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 20: In a surprise operation, Nagaon District Commissioner Debashish Sarma on Wednesday inspected the Morikolung fish market, Barbazar vegetable market and several sweet outlets in the town, accompanied by the Food Safety Officer, Fisheries Officer and a mobile laboratory team.

During the inspection, fish samples were collected from the Morikolung market to test for the presence of formalin. The team also visited the paikari vegetable market at Barbazar, where samples of vegetables were taken to check for pesticide residues.

The DC later inspected a sweet factory owned by Biju Ghosh at Morikolung and found sweets being prepared in unhygienic conditions. Authorities sealed the factory on the spot.

'Manuh Ho Manuh Ho' pays tribute to Ambikagiri Rai Choudhury at Howly Rasa Festival

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Nov 20: A special cultural programme titled "Manuh Ho Manuh Ho", showcasing the prose, poetry and songs of Asom Kesari Ambikagiri Rai Choudhury, was held on Tuesday evening at the main stage of the 98th Howly Rasa Festival. The event was organised by the Asam Sahitya Sabha in collaboration with the Howly Raas Mahotsav Committee and the Howly branch of the Sabha.

The programme began with floral tributes to Ambikagiri Rai Choudhury, Bihagi Kobi Raghunath Choudhary, Bharat Ratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika and celebrated artist Zubeen Garg, led by Asam Sahitya Sabha vice-president Padum Rajkhowa in the presence of Dr Sanjib Kumar Sharma, secretary of the Sabha's Guwahati office and other dignitaries.

In his welcome address, Hemen Das, president of the 98th Howly Raas Mahotsav Celebration Committee, said the festival—set to complete its centenary in two years—has long served as a platform of unity beyond caste, creed and language. He said the festival, which began modestly, has



grown into a major cultural celebration that upholds national responsibilities and described the current programme as a reflection of that ethos.

Asam Sahitya Sabha vice-president Padum Rajkhowa, after inaugurating the session, underlined the humanistic philosophy of Ambikagiri Rai Choudhury, urging individuals to embrace true humanity. Principal Secretary of the Sabha, Debojit Bora, reiterated the Sabha's dedication to its national duties and said the event aimed to bring the ideals of Ambikagiri, along with the contributions of Raghunath Chaud-

hary, Bhupen Hazarika and Zubeen Garg, closer to the younger generation. Eminent litterateur Dr Paramananda Majumdar, editor of 'Surabhi', spoke extensively on Ambikagiri's vision for social harmony among the Assamese people.

Assam Cabinet Minister for Public Health Engineering, Jayanta Malla Baruah, Urban Development Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary and MLA Charan Boro attended the programme and were felicitated by the Rasa Mahotsav Committee. Both ministers conveyed greetings to devotees and

festival attendees.

Several senior members of the Asam Sahitya Sabha were present, including Gobinda Kalita Convenor of the Sabha Corpus Fund, organisational secretary Dimbeswar Pathak, drama subcommittee convenor Dhrubajyoti Sarma, executive member Gobinda Chandra Talukdar and Ananga Kumar Nath vice-president of the Mother Tongue and State Language Implementation Subcommittee. Yuba Sangsad member Mintu Das, cultural subcommittee co-convenor Syed Abu Matlib, noted drama director Manik Ahmed, Barpeta Zilla Sahitya Sabha secretary Pradip Das, former office-bearers Ganesh Nath and Ramkrishna Talukdar, Howly Sahitya Sabha president and National Award-winning teacher Nripendra Pujari and secretary Nripen Das were also in attendance.

The evening featured vibrant performances of songs and dances based on Ambikagiri Rai Choudhury's works by artist Kaushik Das of Barpeta and his group. The event concluded with a vote of thanks offered by Howly branch Sahitya Sabha secretary Nripen Das.

গোহাৰি

ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় আইনসেৱা প্ৰাধিকাৰী তথা অসম ৰাজ্যিক আইন সেৱা প্ৰাধিকাৰীৰ নিৰ্দেশত দৰং জিলা আইনসেৱা প্ৰাধিকাৰীৰ উদ্যোগত দৰং জিলাত অহা ১৩-১২-২০২৫ ডাৰিখে ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় লোক আদালত অনুষ্ঠিত কৰা হ'ব। উক্ত ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় লোক আদালতৰ জৰিয়তে ব্যক্তিগত আদালতসমূহত আপোচযোগ্য বিভিন্ন গোচৰ, যেনে- কৌজাৰী গোচৰ, দেৱানী গোচৰ, পৰিবাৰিক গোচৰ, মচৰ দুৰ্ভোগ্য সম্বন্ধীয়া গোচৰ, চেক ব্যক্তিগত গোচৰ, ৰাজহ সংক্ৰান্তীয় গোচৰ আদিৰ বাহেৰীয়া ধৰণতীয়া নিৰপত্তি ব্যৱস্থা কৰা হোৱাৰ উপৰিও বেংকৰ লেন-দেন (চুপ) সম্বন্ধীয়া গোচৰ, টেলিফোন বিপ, পিন্ডা, মালু সম্পৰ্কীয় বিবাদসমূহা নিৰপত্তি ব্যৱস্থা কৰা হোৱাৰ বাহেৰীয়া সূৰিধাৰ্হে উক্ত গোচৰসমূহৰ আৱণ্টীয়া শুদানিৰো ব্যৱস্থা কৰা হোৱাৰ। এই ধৰণৰ শুদানী বা লোক আদালতৰ সুযোগ গ্ৰহণ কৰি দৰং জিলাৰ জাননীভ্ৰাৱ লোকসকলে উল্লেখ দিয়া মন্তব্য যোগাযোগ কৰি নিৰপত্তিৰ সুৰিধা ল'ব পাৰে। জাননী লামালেও ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তিয়ে দৰং জিলা আইন সেৱা প্ৰাধিকাৰীৰ কাৰ্যালয়ত যোগাযোগ কৰি নিৰপত্তিৰ সুৰিধা ল'ব পাৰে।

যোগাযোগৰ ঠিকনা: দৰং জিলা আইন সেৱা প্ৰাধিকাৰীৰ কাৰ্যালয়, দৰং জিলা কোচাৰামৰ সন্নীপত।

দূৰভাৱ : ০৩৭১-৩৩৫৭৩৪৮
মোবাইল নং: ৬৯০১২৮১৬২৫,
WhatsApp No : ৯৮৬৪১২৬৬৩২
Email: gilsadarrang@gmail.com

১৩ ডিচেম্বৰ, ২০২৫ ডাৰিখে অনুষ্ঠিত হ'বলগীয়া ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় লোক আদালতত সমূহ দৰংবাসীয়া সংযোগিতা কামনা কৰা হ'ল।

সচিব
জিলা আইন সেৱা প্ৰাধিকাৰী,
দৰং, মঙলপৈ

DIPR /D/HLT/222/21-Nov-25

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Change is the end result of all true learning.
-Leo Buscaglia

Draft Shram Shakti Niti and workers

Nearly 2.7 million workers have been locked out of the digital framework of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MGNREGA), the only employment guarantee scheme for the poor rural workers, between October 10 and November 14, 2025. Their names have been ultimately deleted from the MGNREGA database, rendering the jobless, which is unkind cut of all. Draft Shram Shakti Niti 2025, if accepted, is likely to digitally lock out millions of workers both in urban and rural areas, the experts have warned. The Union Ministry of Labour have published the Draft of the Shram Shakti Niti 2025 - National Labour & Employment Policy of India on October 8, and invited the stakeholders, institutions, and members of the public to submit their feedback, comments, and suggestion within 20 days by October 27, 2025. Internet Freedom Federation (IFF) had submitted its objection warning that the digital framework without protection may lock out informal workers, rural labourers, and migrant workers from the employment system of the country. The deletion of names of 2.7 million MGNREGA workers in just one month, has vindicated the IFF's objection, and this is just beginning even under the older digital framework being implemented by the Union Government. During this period only 10.5 lakh additions were made. The deletion coincides with the Union Government's making e-KYC (electronically know your customer) process mandatory, purportedly to weed out ineligible beneficiaries, and to put break on corruption.

Verification of the MGNREGA job cards is a continuous process and the onus is on the State governments and ultimately, the gram panchayats, to carry this out. One thing which they did not say that it was the digital framework which is used to prevent workers from getting jobs under the scheme, and allegation that has been raised by the MGNREGA workers organisation ever since it was launched in May 21, 2021 as pilot project, using the National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) app. It was made mandatory for all workites, except individual beneficiary scheme) from January 1, 2023. There have been many rules under which works are denied to MGNREGA workers. According to the rules, job cards must be renewed every five years.

The current deletion of the name of workers is the outcome of implementation of all these digital frameworks, without providing protection to genuine workers. Union government has very big plan under the Draft Shram Shakti Niti 2025, to bring all workers in the country under digital framework. IFF, in their submission, has warned that the digital framework without taking into account the ground reality, may lock out large number of workers from employment system of the country. Government's intention to use AI-driven job matching may create another level of problems to workers.

Winning perception battle against Bangladesh is the main task of Narendra Modi at G-20 summit

By: Nitya Chakraborty

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be attending G20 summit at Johannesburg on November 22 and 23 amidst the diplomatic crisis for India over the Bangladesh demand for deportation of the ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from her shelter in India. On November 17, the International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh indicted Hasina on charges of acting against humanity and ordered death penalty to the Awami League supremo for her alleged crimes.

Though Bangladesh is not a member of G20 and Pakistan is also not attending, Bangladesh officials have already briefed the Dhaka based ambassadors of the western nations as also the other countries of the Global South and West Asia. Pakistan has got a big opportunity to defame India on this occasion. There is a concerted campaign in the international diplomatic world by Bangladesh focusing on India's refusal so far to hand over Sheikh Hasina to the Yunus government as per their demand. The issue is sure to be raised at the G-20 summit by some Muslim nations.

That is why Indian Prime Minister has to be prepared fully with fool-proof documentary evidence that the ICT set up by the Bangladesh Government to go into charges against Sheikh Hasina was a sham. The ICT had no legal sanctity and from the beginning, the process of the ICT violated all the established norms of functioning of such tribunals. Indian officials are sufficiently equipped to challenge the Bangladesh version on Sheikh Hasina and refuse deportation of the Awami League leader who is again active from Indian soil and is in fact leading the latest campaign against the chief of the interim government in Bangladesh.

Narendra Modi has got one advantage. US President Donald Trump has boycotted the G-20 summit by alleging that South Africa was harassing the whites and the South African President Cyril Ramaphosa is encouraging the racists. Though, the South African President has denied the allegations and trump could not give any proof, Trump decided that the US would not be represented by any. So there will be no official from the US for the first time in G-20 summit. Significantly, the next G20 summit is scheduled to be hosted by the USA in 2026 in Miami. The latest stance of Trump has led to uncertainty in G-20 summit circles about the holding of the next summit in Miami in USA. There are reports that the 2026 summit may be rescheduled to some other country if Trump continues with his present stance.

Apart from Trump, the Chinese President Xi Jinping and the Russian President Vladimir Putin will not be at the summit but both the countries will be represented at the next highest level. All other leaders of the western nations are attending including British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Frederick Merz, Italian Prime Minister G Meloni and Canadian Prime Minister Michael Carney. The interesting point is that while Trump is boycotting the Johannesburg summit on the issue of attacks against the Whites, the original Whites who settled in South Africa, the Britishers, are not complaining. The British PM Starmer kept mum on Trump's allegations. It was against the British whites, the African National Congress fought and most of the Whites who are staying in South Africa are of British origin, but PM Keir Starmer did not share the politically motivated allegations by Trump against the South African President. As a result, the USA is now isolated from the other western nations on this issue.

The absence of Trump at the summit has made the Indian Prime Minister tension free as he has been avoiding facing one on one meeting with Trump in the recent months following the US-India tariff war and the four day India-Pakistan short war in May this year. PM might use his full time during the two days of the summit in having bilateral discussions with the member countries heads apart from attending the sessions of the summit and conveying India's perspective on the issues facing the world in general and global South in particular. Already in 2023, Indian PM hosted the G-20 summit in New Delhi. India is the country with the strongest economy among the developing democratic nations. The Global South members including the host South Africa will look for what the Indian PM says in his address in the context of the continuing tariff war between India and the USA and worsening of personal relations between Narendra Modi and Donald trump.

Prime Minister is expected to have bilateral meetings with the new Japanese Prime Minister and the Canadian Prime Minister Michael Carney. In recent days, India's relations with Canada have improved. The foreign minister of Canada Anita Anand visited India recently and had meeting with the Indian PM apart from the external affairs minister Dr. S Jaishankar. But still the delicate issues of Indian involvement in hit actions in Canada remain. A bilateral meeting may help in removing some of the misapprehensions still damaging India-Canada relations. (IPA Service)

India's Bureaucratic Paradox

Why paying peanuts costs billions

The establishment of India's Eighth Pay Commission has reignited a contentious debate that strikes at the heart of the nation's economic and administrative challenges. Former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai will lead this commission alongside Bangalore professor Pulak Ghosh, tasked with determining compensation for India's vast government workforce. The announcement comes with familiar refrains about fiscal prudence and economic sustainability, yet the underlying tensions reveal a far more complex story about development priorities, administrative efficiency, and the true cost of maintaining a functioning state apparatus.

The fundamental question posed by critics echoes through India's policy corridors: why should the government increase salaries when private sector compensation remains stagnant and the broader economy faces headwinds? This seemingly straightforward query masks layers of nuance that deserve careful examination. The previous pay hike increased benefits by 23.5 percent, a figure that generated considerable controversy and accusations of preferential treatment for government employees. Critics argue that these periodic salary increases function as political rewards rather than economically justified adjustments, particularly galling when they occur during periods of broader economic stagnation.

The metaphorical framework deployed by skeptics carries particular sting. Characterizing government servants as already having "earned and thrown peanuts to the monkeys" suggests a system where benefits have already been distributed liberally, perhaps excessively so. The implication is clear: the so-called monkeys are already well-fed, and further provisions represent unnecessary indulgence rather than justified compensation. This rhetorical framing, however inflammatory, reflects genuine frustration among segments of Indian society who perceive government employment as a privileged enclave insulated from market forces and economic realities.

Yet this critique confronts uncomfortable demographic and comparative realities. India employs 1,622.8 government servants per 100,000 citizens, a ratio that appears substantial until placed in international context. The United States employs 7,681 government workers per 100,000 citizens, more than four times India's ratio. Even within India's federal structure, stark disparities emerge. Gujarat maintains just 582.87 government employees per 100,000 population, while Bihar employs 1,174.62, and Uttar Pradesh reaches 890.67. These variations suggest not administrative bloat but rather under-staffing, particularly in states struggling with development indicators.

The employment density becomes even more revealing when examining specific states. Madhya Pradesh's ratio stands at 3,820.62, Nagaland at 3,658.68, and Sikkim at an extraordinary 6,093.39 government servants per 100,000 residents. These figures indicate that certain states, particularly smaller or more remote ones, require proportionally larger administrative apparatuses to deliver basic services across challenging terrain and dispersed populations. The national average masks this heterogeneity, creating false impressions of bureaucratic excess where capacity gaps actually predominate.

The wage structure itself merits examination beyond simplistic narratives. Government revenue collection departments face particularly acute challenges, with salary increases limited to 15.13 percent over recent periods, far below the 23.5 percent average increase. Railway workers received 13.18 percent raises, while central government employees on average

saw increases of 7.2 percent. These modest adjustments hardly suggest profligate spending, particularly when inflation erodes purchasing power. The differential treatment across departments reveals an administration struggling to balance fiscal constraints against retention needs, hardly the picture of indiscriminate generosity toward government workers.

The broader economic context complicates simple narratives about affordability and priority. India's government expenditure hovers around 27 percent of GDP, with administration constituting approximately 9.6 percent in the previous quarter. These figures, while substantial, remain within reasonable bounds for a developing democracy attempting to provide services across a subcontinent-scale territory to 1.4 billion citizens. The comparison with defense spending at 14.5 percent of GDP and manufacturing at 13.9 percent provides perspective on relative priorities and fiscal allocations.

The infrastructure deficit argument carries particular weight when considering development imperatives. Critics correctly note that permanently elevated salaries consume resources indefinitely, while infrastructure investments like roads, power plants, schools and hospitals generate ongoing economic returns and development benefits. This represents a genuine tension in resource allocation. However, the dichotomy between salary expenditure and infrastructure investment oversimplifies budgetary realities. Infrastructure projects require not just initial capital but ongoing maintenance and operation, which itself demands qualified, adequately compensated personnel. Underpaying the workforce responsible for delivering education, healthcare, and social services effectively undermines the very development objectives that infrastructure is meant to

serve.

The employment structure reveals further complexity. Government employment encompasses three broad tiers. Central government directly employs approximately 190 lakh persons. State governments together employ 38 lakhs, while all sub-national government units combined employ 70 lakhs. Quasi-government agencies account for 58.14 lakhs, and local government employs 20.53 lakhs. These numbers, totaling roughly five persons per thousand citizens, suggest that India operates with a remarkably lean administrative apparatus by international standards. The notion that this represents bureaucratic bloat becomes increasingly difficult to sustain when examining comparative data and considering the scope of services expected from government.

The distributional consequences of compensation policy extend beyond individual employees to broader economic effects. Government salaries, unlike many forms of public expenditure, immediately enter circulation within the domestic economy. These wages fund consumption, generate demand for goods and services, and support local economies, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas where government employment often represents the primary source of formal sector income. The multiplier effects of salary expenditure differ fundamentally from infrastructure spending, which may involve significant import content and benefit concentrated industries rather than broad-based consumption.

The institutional quality argument deserves serious consideration. Chronically undercompensating government servants creates predictable pathologies: difficulty attracting talented individuals to public service, retention problems as qualified personnel migrate to better-paying private sector opportunities, and potential corruption as underpaid officials supplement inadequate salaries through irregular means. The IIM Ahmedabad study

finding that government sector pay distributions exceed private sector equivalents by 23.5 percent requires contextualization. This comparison typically ignores selection effects, benefits packages, job security, and the reality that private sector compensation concentrates at higher levels while government pay structures show greater compression, with relatively higher floor wages but lower ceiling compensation.

The fiscal sustainability concerns, while legitimate, must balance against the imperative of maintaining functional state capacity. India's development challenges, from educational deficits to healthcare gaps to infrastructure needs, all require effective administrative implementation. Chronically underfunding the personnel system responsible for delivering these services represents false economy, potentially costing far more in foregone development than is saved through salary restraint. The Eighth Pay Commission faces the delicate task of calibrating compensation levels that attract and retain necessary talent without creating unsustainable fiscal burdens or deepening public resentment about perceived bureaucratic privilege.

The peanuts and monkeys metaphor, intended dismissively, inadvertently illuminates genuine tensions in India's development trajectory. The question is not whether to feed the monkeys but rather how to build administrative capacity sufficient to address the nation's formidable challenges. Getting this balance wrong, in either direction, carries consequences measured not in budget lines but in development outcomes affecting hundreds of millions of lives. The Eighth Pay Commission's deliberations will ultimately reflect fundamental choices about the kind of state India aspires to build and the price it is willing to pay for effective governance. (the writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

Old age and Family responsibility

By: Himanshu Ranjan Bhuvan

The trajectory of human life is an unchanging and continuous process that begins with the innocence of childhood, passes through the abundance of youth, gradually reaches the pinnacle of maturity, and finally arrives at old age, a repository of stability and experience. This final stage is not merely a time of physical decline; it is accompanied by profound mental and social transformations. Old age is that phase where the essence of a long life's journey—its experiences, successes, and failures—is realised, and new bridges of duty and responsibility are built among family members. Those who once served as the primary driving force of the family, shouldering economic and social burdens, now require care and support. This transition tests the true strength of familial bonds, where love, respect, and human values are genuinely reflected. The family's responsibility toward old age is not confined to the formalities of service and care; rather, it is a deep commitment to ensuring the elderly's self-respect, independence, and mental peace. Due to the growing complexities of society, the rise of nuclear families, and economic pressures, fulfilling this responsibility has become increasingly challenging. Consequently, profound questions have arisen regarding the moral framework of the family and societal obligations. Therefore, a comprehensive, philosophical, and reflective analysis of the challenges of old age and the family's responsibility toward it has become one of the most important subjects of contemporary social discourse.

Understanding the physical and mental decline associated with old age is the first and most crucial step in fulfilling family responsibilities. Physically, bodily functions gradually diminish with age, making even the simplest tasks difficult. Weakened bones, joint pain, heart and respiratory problems, and reduced immunity force the elderly to depend on others for daily activities. This sense of dependency creates deep frustration and a loss of self-confidence in their minds. From a mental and emotional perspective, old age is a highly sensitive period. Retirement from professional life creates a void from the loss of previous social roles and identity. The grief of losing a life partner, friends, or peers, combined with the loneliness caused by physical weakness, mentally exhausts them. The resulting stress can lead to insomnia, anxiety, or depression. Family members must accept this decline not merely as a medical condition to be treated but as a natural and inevitable part of human life. Beyond ensuring proper medical care, nutritious food, and a comfortable lifestyle, they must also prioritise the elderly's mental well-being. To meet their emotional needs, it is essential to speak openly with them, listen attentively to their experiences, and treat them as valued family members. In this regard, the family's responsibility is to persistently strive, with empathy and sensitivity, to alleviate the physical and mental suffering of the elderly. Through this, they can spend the final phase of their lives with dignity and peace. Without this deep understanding and commitment, addressing the true challenges of old age is impossible.

A subtle analysis of intergenerational relationships within the family carries philosophical and sociological depth in the context of old age. In the traditional joint family system of the past, intergenerational bonds were a strong institution where the elderly held a respected position as family elders and sources of wisdom. Their experience, traditional knowledge, and moral teachings guided younger members on life's path. However, due to increasing societal dynamism, migration for employment, and the rise of nuclear families, cracks have appeared in these intergenerational relationships. Influenced by modern education, globalisation, and economic ambitions, the new generation has distanced itself from the traditional lifestyles and values of the elderly. This has created a wide gap in thought, lifestyle, and perspective between generations, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. In this complex situation, the fam-

ily's responsibility is to bridge these gaps with tolerance and mutual understanding. For this, younger members must value the life experiences and contributions of the elderly and learn traditional and cultural values from them. At the same time, the elderly must accept the changes in modern society and respect the independence and new ideas of the younger generation. Rebuilding these intergenerational relationships requires conscious effort and meaningful dialogue. These bonds can be strengthened through the exchange of family traditions, old stories, and life lessons. Including the elderly in family decision-making processes and making them feel they remain an integral and important part of the family is extremely necessary. Only through fulfilling this profound relational responsibility can sincerity and respect among family members endure forever.

Discussing the financial and practical challenges in fulfilling family responsibilities toward old age from a realistic perspective is essential. With advancing age, the increasing health issues of the elderly have made medical expenses sky-high. Long-term care, specialised medicines, and frequent hospitalisations create a significant financial burden for middle-class families. Many elderly people, unable to save adequately or secure pensions during their working lives, become entirely dependent on their children for medical and daily needs. This financial dependency places immense pressure on younger family members, who must balance expenses for their own children's future with the care of the elderly. Beyond financial challenges, lack of time for elderly care is a major practical problem. Working younger members, preoccupied with long hours and careers, often cannot provide full-time care and companionship to elderly parents. As a result, external help or services become necessary for elderly care, which is again considerably expensive. To face these dual challenges, the family's responsibility is to prepare a well-thought-out and organised plan. This plan should include proper utilisation of prior savings for the elderly, availing government social security schemes, and equitably sharing financial responsibilities among family members. Practically, family members can share care duties or schedule time alternately to ensure companionship for the elderly. Utilising modern technology, such as home healthcare services or tele-medicine, can reduce both time and cost. These practical and financial responsibilities should not be viewed merely as obligations but as reflections of family love and unity—this is the call of the time.

In Indian civilisation, and particularly in Assamese society, service and respect toward elderly parents are sacred duties and the moral foundation of the family. This culture creates a deep sense of responsibility across generations, where serving parents is considered a dignified and spiritual act for children. The elderly are regarded as the family's foundation, without whose blessings and guidance no auspicious work begins. However, under the influence of the current neo-liberal society that emphasises individualism, consumerism, and rapid economic progress, these traditional moral bonds are gradually weakening. The spread of the notion "my life, my decisions" among the younger generation has begun to treat responsibility toward the elderly as optional or even a burden. Consequently, the growing prevalence of old-age homes and instances of neglect of the elderly within families are signs of societal moral decay. To confront this serious moral challenge, family members must re-evaluate and strengthen cultural values. The family's responsibility is to teach children respect, empathy, and a service-oriented attitude toward the elderly from a young age, which they can learn by witnessing elderly care at home. This moral education will help shape them into responsible citizens with humane values in the future. The moral foundation of caring for the elderly must be strengthened—in return for the sacrifices they made for the family throughout their lives, providing them security, dignity, and love in their final years is the true expression of social justice and morality. Only through a deep realisation of this moral obligation and the continuous commitment of family

members can the essence of responsibility toward old age be truly expressed.

Preserving the self-respect, independence, and dignity of the elderly in old age is a thoughtful, sensitive, and extremely delicate aspect of family responsibility. As physical weakness or memory decline forces the elderly to depend on others for daily tasks, a deep fear of losing control arises in their minds. This dependency can wound their self-respect, as they begin to feel like a burden or unnecessary member of the family. Often, in the name of safety, family members excessively intervene in the elderly's personal decisions, which can be deeply painful for them. In this regard, the family's responsibility is to follow a subtle and balanced path between protection and independence. This means ensuring their physical safety while respecting their right to make their own life decisions as far as they are capable. Allowing them to choose food, clothing, or daily routines according to their preferences helps maintain their confidence and dignity. Moreover, keeping the elderly mentally healthy by involving them in meaningful and active tasks is crucial. Seeking their help in small family matters based on their past knowledge and experience or encouraging their hobbies is appropriate. These actions help them feel they are still valuable to the family. Family members respecting the elderly's personal space and time is also part of dignified treatment. Treating them with love and empathy and paying attention to their feelings and thoughts is the most effective way to preserve their independence and self-respect. Only through fulfilling this mental and emotional responsibility can the elderly be helped to spend the final phase of life with dignity and joy.

In modern society, where the number of nuclear families is increasing and economic compulsions force younger members to live far from the elderly, it is not appropriate to leave the entire responsibility of elderly care solely on individual families. This is a collective social and national responsibility. The government's duty is to create a strong social safety net for the elderly. This includes expanding senior pension schemes, ensuring free or very low-cost quality medical services, and providing medicines at affordable prices. Additionally, the government can encourage families caring for the elderly through financial incentives or tax relief, enabling them to fulfil this responsibility more easily. At the societal level, local communities and non-governmental organisations can play an important role in keeping the elderly socially active and engaged. Arranging social centres, day-care services, and recreational programmes for the elderly can protect them from loneliness and allow family members more time to focus on their work. These measures somewhat lighten the burden of full-time care on families. In this regard, every conscious citizen of society also has a responsibility to remain aware of the rights and dignity of the elderly and to raise their voice against neglect or mistreatment of the elderly. Only through this joint effort—where the personal love of the family, social support, and the state's policy commitment come together—can every elderly person in old age be ensured a dignified, safe, and happy life.

The relationship between old age and the family is an eternal and profound bond of life. In this evening phase of life, the family's responsibility is not limited to providing physical care to the elderly; rather, it is a deep commitment to preserving their spiritual peace and dignity. Through fulfilling this responsibility, family members learn an elevated lesson in morality, empathy, and human values. The process of serving the elderly helps younger members realise the transience of life and the eternal value of relationships. Old age is the repository of the family's history, experience, and tradition, which it is the supreme duty of the new generation to preserve with respect and love. Even amidst current complex challenges, creating a loving, safe, and dignified environment is the greatest responsibility of the family. Through fulfilling this responsibility, the foundation is laid for building a healthy, ethical, and cultured society.

Denial of economic reality by Trump imperils Republican Party's 2026 mid-term prospects

By: Ashok Nilakantan Avers

Nearly a year into President Trump's second term, the political math has become unforgiving. His approval rating has collapsed to levels not seen since the chaotic final months of his first presidency. Congressional Republicans face a double-digit deficit heading into next year's midterm elections.

And perhaps most ominously for the GOP, the erosion is coming from within—Trump's own voters are abandoning him over the one issue he promised to fix: the cost of living.

The latest Fox News poll (generally considered to be favourable to Trump) shows Trump's overall approval at 41%, with economic approval at a career low of 38%. But that survey is hardly an outlier. An NPR/PBS News/Marist poll released this week put his approval at just 39%—the lowest of his second term—while a Reuters/Ipsos survey showed it at 38%, down nine points since January. An AP-NORC poll found only 33% approve of his management of the federal government, down from 43% in March.

The consistency across polling is striking. So is the trend: Trump began his second term in January with 47% approval. Ten months later, he's underwater by 15 to 20 points depending on the survey. Among Republicans, his support has cratered from 91% to 79% in Emerson College polling, and from 92% to 86% in the Fox News survey—a fracture in the base that historically portends midterm catastrophe.

"Nearly one year after he was elected, President Trump's approval has flipped," said Spencer Kimball, executive director of Emerson College Polling. What's most revealing isn't just the overall decline but where it's concentrated: among the non-college white voters, independents and working-class families who powered his 2024 comeback and now report feeling economically squeezed once again.

The proximate cause of Trump's collapse is straightforward: Voters believe prices have risen significantly since he took office, and they're blaming him for it. The Fox News poll shows 85% of Americans say grocery prices have increased in the past year—with 60% saying they've risen "a lot." Seventy-eight percent report higher utility bills. Two-thirds cite increased healthcare and housing costs. Even on gasoline, where Trump once enjoyed political dominance, 54% say prices have climbed.

These perceptions cut across party lines. Republicans, Democrats and independents all report feeling the pinch. Among voters earning under \$50,000 annually, 79% rate their personal finances negatively. Young voters, Black and His-

panic Americans, and non-college workers—demographics Trump targeted with his populist message—express significantly more economic distress today than a year ago.

What makes these numbers politically lethal is that 42% of Trump's own 2024 voters now hold him responsible for current economic conditions. That figure represents a remarkable crack in partisan loyalty: In a polarized era when Republicans typically rally around their president, more than two in five Trump supporters are publicly acknowledging that his policies have failed them.

"People are struggling to afford necessities and blaming those in charge," said Republican pollster Daron Shaw. "What's unusual is seeing Republicans lose political ground on a problem they used to dominate."

For congressional Republicans, the numbers are apocalyptic. The NPR/PBS News/Marist poll shows Democrats holding a 14-point advantage on the generic congressional ballot—the largest gap since November 2017, at the same point in Trump's first term. Democrats went on to win 40 House seats the following year.

Independents currently favour Democrats by 33 points, a stunning reversal from a year ago when the parties were tied on the congressional ballot. The Emerson poll found 44% of Democrats report being "very enthusiastic" about voting in 2026, compared with far lower Republican motivation. Democrats also lead Republicans on the core economic issues that matter most to voters: affordability, healthcare costs and wages.

Republicans maintain advantages on border security, illegal immigration and crime—but these issues rank far below cost-of-living concerns in voter priorities. When asked what Trump's top priority should be, 58% of voters in the NPR poll said lowering prices. No other issue came close. "The American people—it's our pockets that are getting ripped apart," said Nicole Stokes, a Dallas voter who supported Trump last year but now questions his priorities.

Columbia University political scientist Robert Shapiro noted that Trump's approval "did not improve with his success in the Gaza peace settlement and in the destruction of a significant portion of Iran's nuclear capability. He and the Republicans are not in a strong position heading into the next election year."

Which raises the central question: Why is Trump doubling down on policies that are manifestly failing him politically? Three explanations present themselves, none mutually exclusive.

First, Trump genuinely doesn't understand how tariffs, supply-chain disruptions and trade tensions affect consumer prices. His public statements suggest he views tariffs as a cost imposed



on foreign countries rather than on American consumers and businesses. When pressed on inflation, he reflexively blames Joe Biden, despite now being a year into his own term.

This explanation is supported by Trump's admission that "campaign advisers told him prices were the most important issue" but "he always felt it was really immigration." If the president fundamentally misread what voters cared about, he may be misreading the wrong policy agenda entirely.

Second, Trump is psychologically incapable of admitting error or changing course. Having campaigned on tariffs and "America First" trade policy, he cannot acknowledge that these policies are contributing to the very inflation he promised to eliminate. To do so would require conceding that his critics were right—an admission his personality structure makes nearly impossible.

Senior Republican officials privately describe the White House as resistant to economic data that contradicts the president's narrative. "He hears what he wants to hear," one GOP governor said on condition of anonymity. "Telling him the tariffs are hurting working families is like telling him water isn't wet."

Third, Trump and his inner circle inhabit an information bubble where their policies are working. They point to strong job numbers and corporate profits while ignoring household economic pain. They cite anecdotal evidence of

manufacturing reshoring while dismissing systematic polling showing voter discontent.

In this view, Trump isn't lying about his policies working—he genuinely believes they are. He's convinced that if he stays the course, voters will eventually recognize his economic genius. The problem is that voters are experiencing the opposite reality, and their patience has expired.

The political peril extends beyond national polling. At least 34 governors have warned the White House that federal tariffs, supply-chain bottlenecks and infrastructure costs are straining state budgets. Even reliably Republican states that supported Trump by double digits now report that elevated prices have exhausted reserve funds built during the post-pandemic boom.

Energy-dependent states cite price volatility linked to the administration's export restrictions. High-cost housing markets in California, Nevada, Arizona and Florida say the affordability crisis has accelerated in 2025. Midwestern manufacturing states report job market uncertainty as firms struggle to reconcile Trump-era tariffs with automation investments. "Our voters were promised relief," a senior Republican governor said. "They're getting the opposite."

The government shutdown that consumed much of the fall deepened the damage. Sixty-two percent of voters disapproved of Trump's handling of the crisis, and 45% of families reported experiencing hardship. The shutdown drained

whatever political goodwill remained from Trump's second-term honeymoon.

Trump does have time to recover. A year before midterm elections, three to five points of approval can make the difference between losing 20 House seats and losing 40. The president has reportedly mused about sending \$2,000 government checks to most Americans—a transparent bid to buy back voter support. But political gravity is unforgiving. Trump has never cracked 50% approval in office. He's currently at 40% or below in most surveys. The historical pattern is clear: When a president's approval drops below 45%, his party gets wiped out in midterms. Trump crossed that threshold in November and shows no sign of reversing course.

The administration argues that inflation inherited from Biden will eventually ease as tariffs take effect and domestic investment intensifies. That may be true. But voter perception trails economic reality by months or years. What matters politically isn't where the economy is heading—it's where voters think it's heading. And right now, they think it's heading in the wrong direction. "What's very striking," Shapiro observed, "is that Trump's approval rating did not improve" with foreign policy success. "He and the Republicans are not in a strong position heading into the next election year."

The tragedy for Republicans is that Trump's economic wounds are self-inflicted. Unlike external shocks such as pandemics or financial crises, tariff policy is a choice. Trade tensions with allies are a choice. Prioritizing immigration crackdowns over cost-of-living relief is a choice.

Trump had the political capital in January to pursue a different agenda. He could have focused relentlessly on lowering prices through deregulation, energy policy and targeted interventions. Instead, he pursued the policy preferences that felt right to him, even as polling data screamed that voters wanted something else.

Whether driven by ignorance, ego or self-delusion, the result is the same: Trump is committing what looks increasingly like political suicide, and taking congressional Republicans with him. The 2026 midterms are still a year away, but the polls suggest Democrats are positioned for their best performance since the Tea Party wave election that swept Republicans from power in 2018.

For a president who obsesses over poll numbers and winning, Trump seems remarkably blind to the electoral disaster he's creating. That may be the most mystifying aspect of all: He's doing this to himself, and he either doesn't know it or doesn't care. Either way, the Republican Party is likely to pay the price. (IPA Service)

Breaking Free: India's trade dependence trap

By: Satyabrata Borah

India has come a long way since independence. In the early years our trade basket was tiny and painfully narrow. We exported tea, jute, cotton textiles, spices and a few minerals, and imported almost everything else: machinery, oil, chemicals, even everyday items like paper and bicycles. The country lived under constant fear of a balance-of-payments crisis. Every few years the foreign exchange reserves would dip dangerously low, and the government would get begging to the IMF with a long list of promises to cut imports and push exports.

Seventy-five years later the picture looks very different on the surface. India is now the world's fifth-largest economy. We send mobile phones, refined petroleum, pharmaceuticals, software services and diamonds to every corner of the globe. Our total merchandise exports crossed 450 billion dollars in 2023-24 and services added another 340 billion. Yet when you scratch the surface, an uncomfortable truth stares back at us: we still depend far too much on a handful of countries and a handful of items, and the dependence is growing rather than shrinking.

Start with the import side. Roughly forty percent of everything we import comes from one country: China. Phones, telecom gear, laptop parts, active pharmaceutical ingredients, solar panels, toys, even festive lights for Diwali now carry the "Made in China" tag. When the pandemic hit and Chinese factories shut down for a few weeks in early 2020, Indian industries from automobiles to pharmaceuticals suddenly discovered they had no spare parts or raw materials. Production lines stopped, prices shot up, and the government scrambled to find alternatives that simply did not exist in sufficient quantity.

Oil is the second big worry. India imports more than eighty-five percent of the crude oil it consumes. A single day of tension in the Strait of Hormuz or a new sanction on a supplier can send petrol and diesel prices soaring, empty the foreign exchange kitty and push inflation through the roof. Even when the global price falls, we remain at the mercy of a few exporting nations and their political moods.

On the export side the story is only slightly better. Petroleum products (mostly refined fuel), gems and jewellery, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods and IT services make up almost two-thirds of our earnings. If global oil prices crash, if rich countries cut spending on diamonds, if America and Europe slow down their drug purchases or tighten the visa rules for software engineers, a huge chunk of our export income can vanish almost overnight. We

felt this pain in 2023 when jewellery demand dropped and IT hiring in the West slowed down. Thousands of jobs were affected and the rupee weakened sharply.

The bigger danger is that this narrow base is not widening fast enough. Most new factories that open in India still assemble imported parts rather than make those parts themselves. A mobile phone may carry the label "Made in India", but the display, the processor, the camera module and even the tiny capacitors inside still come from abroad. We have become brilliant at the final screwdriver stage, yet the real value and the real technology stay outside our borders.

This excessive dependence hurts us in three quiet but powerful ways. First, it makes the Indian economy unusually vulnerable to shocks that originate thousands of kilometres away. A trade spat between Washington and Beijing, a drought in Canada that affects fertiliser prices, a war in the Middle East, any of these can hurt Indian families faster than most of us realise. Second, it limits our bargaining power. When one country supplies forty percent of your imports, you cannot afford to upset them too much, no matter what they do. Third, it keeps high-paying research and design jobs abroad. The profits from innovation flow to foreign shareholders while India earns only the modest wages of assembly workers.

So what needs to change? The answer is not to shut the doors and go back to the old days of sky-high tariffs and empty shelves. That experiment was tried and it failed spectacularly. Instead, India needs a gentle but firm structural shift in the way it trades with the world.

The first step is to diversify partners. We have started signing deeper trade agreements with countries like Australia, the UAE and the United Kingdom, and we are talking to the European Union and Canada. These agreements are not just about lower tariffs; they are about building trust so that supply chains can slowly move away from a single dominant supplier. At the same time we must keep the doors open to China for things we genuinely cannot make at reasonable cost for a few more years, but we must never again allow one country to hold forty percent of our import bill.

The second step is to climb the value ladder. Instead of only refining someone else's crude oil, we should aim to design and produce the chemicals and specialty materials that go into batteries, semiconductors and aerospace parts. The government's Production Linked Incentive schemes are a good beginning, but they need to be wider and deeper. Companies that set up full-fledged research centres,

not just assembly lines, should get extra rewards.

The third step is to look seriously at Africa and Latin America, two continents we have almost ignored as trade partners. Africa is hungry for affordable medicines, vehicles, railway equipment and renewable energy solutions, all things India is now good at making. Latin America has minerals we need and a growing middle class that wants Indian pharmaceuticals and two-wheelers. A few focused trade missions and better shipping connections can open entirely new baskets for both exports and imports.

The fourth step is to bring small businesses into global trade. Today most of India's exports come from a few thousand large companies. Millions of tiny workshops that make handicrafts, garments, spices, organic foods and handmade jewellery stay out of the game because paperwork and logistics are too complicated. One Nation One Export Portal, simpler finance and district-level export hubs can change that within five years.

None of this will happen overnight. Building new supply chains takes time, patience and a lot of quiet coordination between government, industry and universities. But every year we delay, the dependence deepens and the risks grow. The world is entering a phase where countries are rethinking whom they buy from and whom they sell to. India has a rare window to reshape its trade portfolio before the new lines are drawn permanently.

Imagine an India twenty years from now that imports its electronics from Vietnam, Taiwan and South Korea in roughly equal measure, its oil from the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, its rare earths from Australia and Africa, and its machinery from Germany, Japan and an increasingly capable domestic industry. Imagine an India that earns foreign exchange not just from software engineers and diamond polishers but from electric vehicles, green hydrogen equipment, advanced pharmaceuticals and world-class defence products. That India would still be open to the world, still welcoming investment and ideas from everywhere, but it would no longer tremble every time a single supplier sneezes.

The journey from excessive dependence to balanced interdependence is not glamorous. It will not make dramatic headlines. Yet it may well be the most important economic task of this decade. If we get it right, the next generation of Indians will grow up in a country that trades confidently with the whole planet instead of hanging on to the decisions of a few. That is a future worth working for, one supply chain, one trade agreement, one new factory at a time.

'From village to Global : The flight of Dr Satyavan Saurabh's pen'

By: Dr Satyavan Saurabh

The soil of India has always given birth to writers who have given new direction to society, culture, and ideas. Among these, Dr. Satyavan Saurabh is a talented, hardworking, and sensitive writer who has enriched Hindi literature and social thought through his writings. Coming from a rural background like Haryana, establishing a national identity is not easy, but Dr. Saurabh has made it possible with his indomitable spirit, dedication, and literary commitment.

Early life and education
Dr. Satyavan Saurabh was born on March 3, 1989, in Barwa village, Bhiwani district, Haryana. Born into a humble rural family, Satyavan Saurabh's childhood was filled with struggles, but he never gave up. He had a penchant for writing from an early age. He began displaying his literary talent at a very young age. At the age of 16, while studying in grade 11, he wrote his first collection of poems, "Yaadein." This collection not only demonstrates the maturity of his writing but also proves his thoughtful and creative nature from the very beginning. During his studies, he worked hard to secure a position in government service and continued his education alongside his job. He earned a master's degree in political science and later enrolled for a Ph.D. He accomplished all this while working full-time and managing family responsibilities, a feat unusual for any ordinary person.

Literary works and style
Dr. Satyavan Saurabh's literary works are extremely diverse and profound. His works encompass topics such as social concerns, human sensibilities, nature, children's literature, contemporary politics, and culture. Dr. Satyavan Saurabh's writing is a unique confluence of sensitivity, society, and creativity, where words not only register their presence but also reach the soul, touching the depths of the mind. Over the years of my literary journey, my works have attempted to give words to the suffering of farmers, the silent pain of women, the laughter of children, and the changing shadows of society. My published works include emotional poetry collections like "Yaadein" (Yaadein and various verse compositions like "Titli Hai Khamosh", "Kahta Hai Kurukshehra", "Darpan Mein Darpan" (Crack in the Mirror), and "Chuppiyon Ki Smell" (Fragment of Silence), which touch the innermost core of society.

Children's literature, such as "Kagaz Ki Naav," "Pragyan," "Bal Pragyan," "Chalo Kahani Sunde," and "Adhunik Bal Paheliyan," dedicated to children's imagination, morality, and sensitivity, have played a role in shaping the new generation. Hindi essays like "Kudrat Ki Peer," "Khedhi-Baadi Aur Kisani," and "Kisani," focusing on environmental and agricultural issues, along with the English essay "Issues and Pains," based on contemporary issues, broaden my ideological expression. The short story collection "Faisla" and the Haryana poem "Bol Mhari Mati Meri Mitti" (My Soil) express diverse experiences of society and life in words. The simplicity of language and the depth of emotion in these works are striking. Through couplets, he not only carried forward the legacy of traditional Hindi poetry but also infused it with a contemporary touch.

Editorial writing and ideology
Not only in creative literature, Dr. Satyavan Saurabh is equally active and influential in editorial writing. He has written outspoken articles on pressing issues of society and

politics. His writings clearly reflect clarity, balance, and depth of thought. His pen does not merely wander in fantasy, but is deeply concerned with ground realities. His articles have been published in prestigious magazines and news media such as 'Jai Vijay', 'Ravi Var', and 'Ugta Bharat'. He has also made significant contributions to the field of children's literature. His children's poems have been translated into Rajasthani and are compiled in the collection 'Bal Battisi'. This work demonstrates the linguistic and cultural reach of his works.

Honor and recognition
Dr. Satyavan Saurabh has been honored with numerous national and international awards for his literary contributions. Some of the most prominent are: Pt. Pratap Narayan Mishra National Young Literary Award (2023) – This award was presented to him by the Bhaurao Deoras Seva Trust, Lucknow, for his couplet collection "Titli Hai Khamosh." His short story "Faisla" was included among the 125 best short story writers from India and abroad in the national short story collection "Damakte Lambe." The Mahatma Gandhi Award – This award was jointly presented to him and his wife, Priyanka Saurabh, for their outstanding contributions in the field of independent journalism and literary writing. These honors clearly demonstrate that Dr. Saurabh's writings are not only literary but also of social and national importance.

Inspiring struggle
Dr. Satyavan Saurabh's life journey is not just that of a literary figure, but also the inspiring story of a struggling youth. Despite his rural background, limited resources, and financial struggles, he not only attained an education but also carved a strong niche for himself in the fields of literature and service. He has emerged as a role model not only for himself but also for future generations of young people. His life teaches us that with curiosity, self-confidence, and determination, no goal is impossible.

Personality and attitude
Dr. Saurabh's personality is calm, humble, and thoughtful. He always advocates for positive change in society. His writings are imbued with humanism, tolerance, and social reform. He believes that a writer is not just a magician of words, but also a guide to society. Therefore, his works not only entertain but also inspire readers to reflect, reflect, and become aware.

New projects and future plans
Dr. Saurabh is currently working on several new literary projects. He is dedicated to popularizing children's literature and plans to organize workshops and motivational sessions to inspire young people to write. He is also working to disseminate literature to every village through digital media.

Private life
Dr. Satyavan Saurabh's family life is also filled with simplicity and inspiration. His wife, Priyanka Saurabh, is also a writer and journalist. Together, they work for social awareness and women's empowerment.

The rising sun of young literature
Dr. Satyavan Saurabh's life and literary contributions are a source of inspiration for today's young generation. He has proven that no matter the circumstances, if one's intentions are strong and actions are true, success is inevitable. His writings reflect society, are deeply thoughtful, and offer a vision of tomorrow. The contributions of this young writer, who has given Hindi literature a new lease of life, will prove even more significant in the times to come.

ED files chargesheet against Robert Vadra in UK-based Sanjay Bhandari case



NEW DELHI, Nov 20: The Enforcement Directorate has filed a chargesheet against businessman Robert Vadra, husband of Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in a money laundering case linked to UK-based arms consultant Sanjay Bhandari, official sources said.

The prosecution complaint has been filed before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court here, they said.

This is the second money laundering chargesheet against Vadra. In July, he was chargesheeted by the ED in a money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in a land deal in Haryana's Shikohpur.

Vadra, 56, has been questioned by the ED in the Bhandari-linked case in the past.

Bhandari, whose extradition re-

quest has been turned down by a UK court, was declared a fugitive economic offender by a Delhi court in July.

The 63-year-old arms consultant fled to London in 2016 soon after the Income-Tax department raided him in Delhi.

The ED filed a criminal case against Bhandari and others under the PMLA in February 2017, taking cognisance of the I-T department chargesheet filed against him under the anti-black money law of 2015.

The chargesheet in his case even as it has been probing Bhandari's links with Vadra related to a house located in London.

Vadra has denied that he owned any London property directly or indirectly. (PTI)

Cartridges of AK rifles recovered from Kashmir Times' Jammu office

JAMMU, Nov 20: The State Investigation Agency of the Jammu and Kashmir Police raided the office of the Kashmir Times here on Thursday for allegedly promoting activities against the country and recovered cartridges of AK rifles and some rounds of pistol, among other things.

Officials said that SIA sleuths conducted a thorough search of the newspaper's premises and computers after a case was registered against the publication and its promoters.

In the raid, the SIA seized cartridges of AK rifles, some rounds of pistol and hand grenade pins, among other items, they said.

The promoters of the publication are likely to be questioned, they informed.

Reacting to the raid, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Singh Choudhary said action should follow only in cases where wrongdoing is established and not for the sake of pressure.

"If they have done something wrong, then action should be taken...if you do it only to (build) pressure, then that will be wrong", Choudhary told reporters here. (PTI)

Bihar's double-engine govt will work with more energy to realise PM's vision: Shah

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday extended greetings to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, his deputies and all ministers on taking oath, and said this double-engine government will work with even more energy to realise the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a message posted on 'X', Shah expressed gratitude to the people of Bihar for expressing their faith in "the development and good governance" carried out by the NDA for the past 20 years.

"Heartfelt best wishes to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar ji, Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary ji,

Vijay Sinha ji, and all ministers of the Council of Ministers on taking the oath," he said.

"This double-engine government will work with even more energy to realise the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's 'Developed Bihar' and to reach development works to all sections of society," Shah said.

JD(U) president Nitish Kumar was on Thursday sworn in as the chief minister of Bihar for a record 10th time at a grand ceremony, with Modi and Shah among those who were present at the swearing-in.

"The gathering today of lakhs of people from every corner of Bihar at

Severe setback to India's diplomacy: Congress on US panel's 'Pak success' claim in report

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: The Congress on Thursday described a US commission report mentioning "Pakistan's military success over India" in a four-day clash as "yet another severe setback" to India's diplomacy and asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ministry of External Affairs would register their objections to it.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also took a swipe at the government over US President Donald Trump repeating his claim about stopping the India-Pakistan conflict.

He said the US President has once again trumpeted for the 61st time the claim that he "brought an end to Operation Sindoor by threatening to impose tariffs of 350 per cent on India".

The party's communications in-charge said the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission has just submitted its annual report to the US Congress. The commission set up jointly by the US Senate and House of Representatives has 12 independent members, Ramesh pointed out.

"The 2025 Annual Report is almost 800 pages long. The sections on pages 108 and 109 are simply astonishing and beyond understanding. It describes the Pahalgam terror attack of April 2025, orchestrated by Pakistan as an 'insurgent attack'," Ramesh said.

"It speaks of 'Pakistan's military success over India' in the four-day clash," he said on X.



"President Trump has claimed 60 times (so far) that he had halted Operation Sindoor. The PM has kept completely quiet. Now comes this report of the US-China Economic and Security Commission of the US Congress that is simply unacceptable to India," Ramesh said.

Will the prime minister and the MEA register their objections and protest, he posed.

"Our diplomacy has suffered yet another severe setback," Ramesh claimed and shared the screenshot of the relevant pages of the report on X.

"China's role in the May 7-10, 2025, clash between Pakistan's and India's militaries drew global attention as Pakistan's military relied upon Chinese weaponry and reportedly leveraged Chinese intelligence. During the clash, triggered by India's response to a deadly in-

surgent attack that killed 26 civilians, both countries attacked targets farther into one another's territories than at any time in 50 years," the report said.

It went on to say, "Pakistan's military success over India in its four-day clash showcased Chinese weaponry. While characterisation of this conflict as a 'proxy war' may overstate China's role as an instigator, Beijing opportunistically leveraged the conflict to test and advertise the sophistication of its weapons, useful in the contexts of its ongoing border tensions with India and its expanding defence industry goals."

In another post, Ramesh took a swipe at the government over Trump repeating his claims that he stopped the conflict between India and Pakistan.

"Hours after an independent

commission set up by the US Congress issued a report claiming that Pakistan achieved 'military success over India' during Operation Sindoor, the President of the US has once again trumpeted for the 61st time the claim that he brought an end to Operation Sindoor by threatening to impose a 350 per cent tariff on India.

"He did this yesterday as well, during a US-Saudi Arabia conclave where the Saudi Crown Prince was also present," Ramesh said.

The Congress leader's remarks came over Trump's remarks that he settled tension between India and Pakistan after threatening the two countries with 350 per cent tariffs. Trump also claimed that Prime Minister Modi had called him to say "we're not going to go to war".

Trump has repeated the claim over 60 times that he "helped settle" tension between India and Pakistan in May this year, even as India has consistently denied any third-party intervention.

"I'm good at settling disputes, and I've always been. I've done very well with that over the years, even before this. I was talking about the different wars... India, Pakistan... they were going to go at it, nuclear weapons," Trump said on Wednesday.

Speaking at the US-Saudi Investment Forum attended by visiting Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman, Trump said that he told the two nuclear-armed neighbours that they "can go at it,

but I'm putting a 350 per cent tariff on each country. No more trade with the United States."

Claiming that both India and Pakistan told him not to do it, Trump said he told them, "I'm going to do it. Come back to me and I'll take it down. But I'm not going to have you guys shooting nuclear weapons at each other, killing millions of people and having the nuclear dust floating over Los Angeles. I'm not going to do it."

Trump then said that he was "all set" and told Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent that he would put a 350 per cent tariff to settle the conflict, and added that if the countries stopped the war, "we'll make a nice trade deal", as they are in the midst of the negotiations for the trade deal.

"No other president would have done that... I used tariffs to settle all these wars, not all of them. Five of the eight were settled because of the economy, because of trade, because of tariffs," Trump said. "I did this."

He added that Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called him and thanked him in front of White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles for saving millions of lives.

Trump then claimed that he "got a call from Prime Minister Modi saying, 'we're done'". I said, "You're done with what?" Trump claimed that Modi replied, "We're not going to go to war."

The US president claimed he then thanked Modi and said, "Let's make a deal." (PTI)

CM Siddaramaiah dismisses 'November revolution' reports, calls it 'media creation'

CHAMARAJANAGAR (KARNATAKA), Nov 20: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday dismissed reports of a 'November revolution', calling the term a "media creation".

He emphasised that his position has been strong from the beginning and will continue to remain so in the future.

Speculation had been circulating about a possible leadership change in Karnataka, suggesting that Siddaramaiah could step down to make way for his deputy, D K Shivakumar, as the next CM. Some had labelled the potential change as the 'November revolution'.

"It is you (media) who coined the term. You cooked up this 'revolution'. Hence, there is no 'kranti' (revolution) or 'bhranti' (confusion). We have been given a five-year tenure to rule. After five years, elections will take place and we will win once again," Siddaramaiah told reporters here.

The chief minister reiterated that the people have entrusted Congress with power for five years.

"People have given us the

mandate to rule for five years. We will make a sincere effort to fulfil the five guarantees (Gruha Lakshmi, Shakti, Gruha Jyothi, Anna Bhagya and Yuva Nidhi) we have promised," he said, declining to comment on power-sharing discussions.

When asked whether he would remain in office for the full five years, Siddaramaiah said, "What does it mean? These are unwanted discussions. I had told the party high command that two-and-a-half years had to pass, after which a cabinet reshuffle could be considered. It was only after that that these discussions about power sharing started."

When asked if a date has been fixed for the cabinet reshuffle, he said Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge is in discussion with Congress MP Rahul Gandhi.

Regarding the 2028 Assembly elections, he said, "Let them (polls) approach."

On how many budgets he would present, Siddaramaiah added that he would continue to do so as long as the people wished.

Addressing a superstitious be-

lief that sitting CMs visiting Chamarajanagar lose power midway, Siddaramaiah said, "I do not believe in superstition. For me, visiting Chamarajanagar, Mysuru, or Bengaluru is the same. I will visit all 31 districts of the state."

He explained that his visit to Chamarajanagar was meant to challenge the superstition and send a message to those who said sitting chief ministers should avoid the district.

"My position has only strengthened. It has been strong from the beginning and will continue to remain strong in the future," he added.

On the issue of power sharing, Siddaramaiah reiterated that Congress has been given a five-year mandate and his government will make a sincere effort to fulfil the five promises it has made.

Speaking about robbers who decamped with ₹ 7 crore in Bengaluru on Wednesday, the chief minister said, "We have got clues. The car has already been recovered. We will identify the dacoits and arrest them at any cost." (PTI)

Kashmir Times slams raids, calls accusations 'an attempt to silence independent journalism'



JAMMU, Nov 20: The Kashmir Times management on Thursday sharply criticised the reported raids on its Jammu office, terming the allegations of activities inimical to the state a coordinated attempt to suppress an independent media institution.

The State Investigation Agency of the Jammu and Kashmir Police raided the office of the Kashmir Times here on Thursday for allegedly promoting activities against the country and recovered cartridges of AK rifles and some rounds of pistol, among other things.

In a joint statement issued on social media, Editors Prabodh Jamwal and Anuradha Bhasin said, "The reported raids on our office in Jammu, the baseless accusations of activities inimical to the state and the coordinated crackdown on the Kashmir Times are yet another attempt to silence us." "Criticising the government is not the same as being inimical to the state. In fact, it is the very opposite. A robust, questioning press is essential to a healthy democracy. Our work of holding power to account, investigating corruption, amplifying marginalised voices strengthens our nation. It

does not weaken it," they said.

The editors said Kashmir Times, founded in 1954 by Ved Bhasin, has consistently upheld independent journalism. "We have chronicled the region's triumphs and failures with equal rigour. We have given voice to communities that would otherwise go unheard. We have asked difficult questions when others remained silent," they said.

They alleged that the organisation was being targeted for continuing to pursue independent reporting. "We are being targeted precisely because we continue to do this work. In an era when critical voices are increasingly scarce, we remain one of the few independent outlets willing to speak truth to power," the statement added. Calling the allegations "an intimidation tactic", the editors said, "The accusations levelled against us are designed to intimidate, to delegitimise, and ultimately to silence. We will not be silenced."

The duo urged authorities to withdraw the charges and stop the alleged harassment. "We call on the authorities to immediately cease this harassment, withdraw these unfounded allegations, and respect the constitutional guarantees of press freedom," they said while appealing to media colleagues, civil society, and citizens to stand in solidarity.

They reiterated that journalism is not a crime. "Accountability is not treason. And we will continue to inform, investigate, and advocate for those who depend on us. The state may have the power to raid our offices. But it cannot raid our commitment to the truth."

The editors added that although the newspaper's print edition was suspended in 2021-22 following "relentless targeting", Kashmir Times continues to operate digitally, and all its work remains publicly accessible on its website. (PTI)

Belgium's supreme court to hear Mehul Choksi's appeal against extradition on Dec 9

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: The case of fugitive diamond trader Mehul Choksi challenging his extradition will come up for hearing before Belgium's supreme court -- the Court of Cassation -- on December 9, officials said on Thursday.

Choksi has challenged before Belgium's top court an October 17 ruling of the Antwerp Court of Appeal that upheld India's request for his extradition while terming it "enforceable".

In response to queries by the PTL, Advocate-general Henri Vanderlinden said the Court of Cassation will hear the case on December 9.

The Court of Cassation only checks the decision of the court of ap-

peal "on legal aspects" such as whether the court of appeal correctly applied the legal dispositions, and whether they follow the right procedure, he told PTI.

"So, new facts or evidence cannot be placed," he said.

"The proceedings are, in essence, a written one. As a rule, all cases are heard. If the court refuses to admit the appeal, it will be on legal grounds, for example, the person who filed the complaint did not have the legal competence to do so," Vanderlinden explained.

He said the parties must convey their complaints in writing "on the moment" they appeal to the court.

"They cannot add any other complaints after that moment. During the hearing, they can develop those complaints, but nothing else," he said, giving details about the procedure in the Court of Cassation.

On October 17, a four-member indictment chamber at the Court of Appeals in Antwerp did not find any infirmity in the orders issued by the pre-trial chamber of the district court on November 29, 2024, terming the arrest warrants issued by a Mumbai special court in May 2018 and June 2021 as "enforceable", allowing Choksi's extradition.

The Court of Appeals had ruled that Choksi, the main accused in a Rs-

13,000 crore PNB scam, faces "no risk" of being denied a fair trial or subjected to ill-treatment if he is extradited to India.

Of the total scam amount, Choksi alone has siphoned off Rs 6,400 crore, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has alleged in its chargesheet.

Choksi, who escaped to Antigua and Barbuda in January 2018, days before the scam was detected, was spotted in Belgium, where he had purportedly sought treatment.

India sent an extradition request to Belgium on August 27, 2024, based on arrest warrants issued by the special court in Mumbai. (PTI)

Over 80 pc of Indians with disabilities lack health insurance: NGO white paper

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: More than 80 per cent of Indians with disabilities remain uninsured, and over half of those who apply are often rejected without explanation despite legal safeguards meant to ensure equal access to health coverage, a new white paper released on Thursday has found.

The report, titled "Inclusive Health Coverage for All: Disability, Discrimination and Health Insurance in India", was launched by the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) at a roundtable attended by policymakers, insurers, and disability rights advocates.

Drawing on a nationwide survey of over 5,000 persons with disabilities across 34 states and union territories, the study warns that "deep systemic inequities" continue to block nearly 16 crore disabled Indians from both public and private insurance schemes.

According to the findings, 80 per cent of respondents had no health insurance,

while 53 per cent of those who applied said their applications were rejected.

Many reported being turned away solely because of their disability or pre-existing conditions, with particularly high denial rates among persons with autism, psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, and blood disorders such as thalassaemia.

The report noted that these practices persist despite constitutional protections, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and repeated directives from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

Researchers also flagged unaffordable premiums, inaccessible digital platforms, and a widespread lack of awareness about available schemes as major barriers to coverage.

Speaking at the launch, Manmeet Nanda, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, said the government was working to strengthen assistive technology and im-



prove coordination across ministries.

"IRDAI's role, along with the Min-

istry of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, needs to be very strongly converged and coordinated because this is not a single ministry's game," she said, adding that insurers could be mandated to meet annual disability coverage targets monitored through digital dashboards.

She also offered to integrate the Unique Disability ID database with insurance processes to track rejections and streamline access.

Calling the findings a "moral and constitutional challenge", NCPEDP Executive Director Arman Ali said the continued exclusion of persons with disabilities from affordable insurance "is more than a systemic failure; it is a violation of rights".

"Even as the government expands Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY) to cover all senior citizens aged 70 and above, persons with disabilities remain conspicuously excluded despite facing equal, if

not greater, health vulnerabilities," Ali said.

"There is no principled or policy justification for this gap... India cannot be burdened with the generational 'cost of exclusion' of people with disabilities," he added.

The white paper recommended immediate inclusion of all persons with disabilities under Ayushman Bharat without age or income criteria, aligning with the government's 2024 expansion for senior citizens. Other key proposals include enhanced insurance coverage for mental health, rehabilitation and assistive technologies, the creation of a dedicated Disability Inclusion Committee within IRDAI, standardised and non-discriminatory premiums across private insurers, and mandatory accessibility in all insurance processes.

It also urged expanded awareness programmes for insurers and healthcare staff to ensure disability-sensitive service delivery. (PTI)

APSCU celebrates Golden Jubilee, CM Khandu lauds cooperative movement

50 years of empowering members across agriculture, handloom, dairy and rural enterprises



HT Correspondent
ITANAGAR, Nov 20: The Arunachal Pradesh State Cooperative Union (APSCU) concluded its weeklong Golden Jubilee celebrations on Wednesday, marking 50 years of the cooperative movement in the state. Chief Minister Pema Khandu attended as the Chief Guest and extended greetings to members, functionaries and stakeholders for their dedicated service since APSCU's inception in 1975.

In his address, the Chief Minister traced APSCU's journey from its origins in 1969 during the

NEFA era to its present network of 1,449 cooperative societies with over 2.2 lakh members engaged in agriculture, handloom, dairy, artisanal sectors and other rural enterprises. He acknowledged the transformative role cooperatives have played in improving livelihoods, particularly in remote areas with limited institutional support. Khandu praised the 27-district revival tour undertaken by APSCU's Chairman and team between December 2024 and April 2025, during which they engaged with over 87,500 cooperative

members and 1,500 LAMPS/PACS units. The tour highlighted gaps in cooperative awareness, infrastructure deficiencies in district unions and the absence of cooperative banking in several areas.

Calling the Golden Jubilee a "turning point," the Chief Minister assured full government support for revitalising the cooperative sector. While refraining from making public announcements due to the model code of conduct for local body elections, he assured that requests submitted in a mem-

orandum by APSCU would be addressed after the elections.

He stressed that strengthening cooperatives is vital for achieving 'Atma Nirbhar Arunachal', urging APSCU to evolve into an autonomous, professional apex institution capable of guiding policies, ensuring transparency, empowering women and youth and creating sustainable rural wealth. He emphasised the importance of training, market research and member sincerity for the sector's growth.

Highlighting the role of cooperatives in a five-year plan for self-reliance in milk, eggs, fish and meat under the High Level Task Force of the Ministry of DoNER, Khandu noted that cooperative societies would be central to achieving these targets by 2030.

The Chief Minister thanked all past and present leaders of APSCU, District Cooperative Unions, LAMPS, PACS, employees, farmers, artisans, SHGs and entrepreneurs for sustaining the cooperative movement over five decades. He added, "The coming years must witness APSCU emerging as a robust, modern and people-centric institution. With renewed policies and infrastructure, I am confident that APSCU will lead Arunachal Pradesh into a new era of cooperative-led growth."

Khandu inaugurates 48th Yonex-Sunrise Junior National Badminton Championship

428 young shuttlers from 32 states and UTs compete in week-long event



HT Correspondent
ITANAGAR, Nov 20: Arunachal Pradesh witnessed a historic sporting milestone on Thursday as Chief Minister Pema Khandu inaugurated the Yonex-Sunrise 48th Inter-State, Inter-Zonal & Junior National Badminton Championship 2025 at Itanagar. The championship organised by the Arunachal State Badminton Association (ASBA) under the aegis of the Badminton Association of India (BAI), features participation from 428 top young shuttlers representing 32 states and Union Territories.

Highlighting the prestige of the event, Khandu noted the presence of the Indian Junior Badminton Team, which recently clinched a Bronze Medal at the 2025 Junior World Badminton Championships held in Guwahati. In his address, he welcomed athletes, coaches, of-

icials and BAI representatives, describing the championship as a "historic moment" for Arunachal Pradesh and reaffirming the state's commitment to nurturing sporting talent.

The Chief Minister emphasised that the tournament will determine India's top teams in doubles, mixed doubles and individual events. He praised India's achievements in badminton from Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu to emerging stars like Lakshya Sen and acknowledged the Northeast's contribution to the sport, recalling Olympian Deepankar Bhatnagar's achievements in the 1992 and 1996 Olympics. He also lauded BAI president Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma for strengthening India's global badminton standing.

Khandu highlighted Arunachal Pradesh's ongoing sports infrastructure development, including

the state-of-the-art DK Badminton Academy on a 20,700 sq m campus, featuring 15-20 world-class courts. He requested BAI to allot more national and international tournaments to the state once the facility becomes operational.

Addressing the young athletes, the Chief Minister said, "This championship is more than a competition, it is a celebration of India's sporting future. Play with honour, discipline and passion. Respect your opponents and celebrate sportsmanship. Arunachal Pradesh stands with you, cheering for your dreams."

The championship marks a defining moment in the state's sports development agenda, supporting Arunachal Pradesh's mission to strengthen sports culture, provide opportunities for youth and prepare athletes for national and international excellence.

Focus on awareness, enforcement and child safety reforms NCPCR rescued 2,300 children across India in six months: Official



ITANAGAR, Nov 20: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has said that in the past six months, it disposed of around 26,000 cases and rescued more than 2,300 children across the country.

Division head for Juvenile Justice, POC SO and special cells of NCPCR, Paresh Shah, however, said that child rights violations are not mere statistics and each case represents a story of a child and a family.

Effective action by officials determines not only the lives of children but the future of the country, he said.

Shah stated that both the Central and state governments are committed to safeguarding every child in Arunachal Pradesh, but stressed that strong laws alone are not enough without robust monitoring, awareness and coordinated enforcement.

The assertion came during a state-level conference on gaps and challenges in the implementation of key child rights legislations held here recently.

"Child rights violations are not mere statistics, and each case represents a story of a child and a family. Effective action by officials determines not only the lives of children but the future of the country," a statement quoted him as saying in the conference.

Shah noted that the Commission had, in the past six

months, disposed of around 26,000 cases, rescued over 2,300 children and repatriated more than 1,000 children to their home districts, supported by new technology-driven systems introduced at NCPCR.

He said the focus ahead includes mental health support for children, AI tools to combat Child Sexual Abuse Material and new strategies to address ground-level challenges in implementing key child protection laws.

Shah emphasised that the responsibility for realising the government's child rights commitments rests on all stakeholder from officials and school authorities to law-enforcement agencies and civil society.

He underlined the need for continuous capacity building and awareness generation, stating that officials must be trained, citizens sensitised through multiple platforms and frontline workers supported through regular workshops.

Arunachal Pradesh SCPCR chairperson Ratan Anya presented a situational analysis of the state's child protection systems, flagging multiple gaps in safety, monitoring and reporting.

Citing recent incidents in the state, she said they expose 'critical weaknesses' in existing mechanisms despite strong legal frameworks.

She also highlighted challenges in investigating POC SO cases, lack of awareness among stakeholders, inadequate systems to combat child trafficking and child labour, poor implementation of anti-tobacco provisions under COTPA and insufficient monitoring of residential schools.

Anya recommended more awareness campaigns by NCPCR and requested the Education Department to initiate sustained audits of schools.

State Education Commissioner Amzad Tatak urged district officials to take school safety requirements seriously and conduct audits as mandated under the NCPCR manual on safety and security of children in schools. He said a task force headed by the Chief Minister Pema Khandu had been formed to strengthen child rights mechanisms within the school system and described the conference as an important intervention at a critical time. (PTI)

CM lauds SEIL programme as pillar of national integration

ITANAGAR, Nov 20: Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Thursday hailed the Students' Experience in Inter-State Living (SEIL) initiative as a wonderful platform for national integration, noting that the decades-old programme continues to play a transformative role in shaping young minds and strengthening emotional bonds across India.

Khandu recalled the origins of the initiative, launched by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) in the mid-1960s and paid heartfelt tribute to PB Acharya, former governor of Arunachal Pradesh, for his influential contribution to its growth in the state.

"We fondly remember Late Shri P B Acharya Ji, former Governor, whose early efforts and guidance greatly strengthened SEIL activities in Arunachal Pradesh," Khandu said in a post on X, highlighting Acharya's lasting legacy in promoting cultural exchange and national unity.

Emphasising the enduring relevance of SEIL, the chief minister said inter-state exchange programmes deepen mutual understanding and foster lifelong friendships among students.

"Such exchanges enrich young minds, build lifelong bonds and reaffirm the unity that defines our nation," he said.

"Wishing all SEIL participants the very best for their journey ahead," he said, reiterating the state government's support for initiatives that nurture youth engagement, cultural immersion and the spirit of national integration. The SEIL programme annually brings students from across India to interact, live and learn in diverse cultural settings, with Arunachal Pradesh being one of its most significant destinations over the years. (PTI)

Khandu congratulates Nitish Kumar on 10th term as Bihar CM

ITANAGAR, Nov 20: Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Thursday congratulated JD (U) chief Nitish Kumar on taking oath as Bihar CM for a record 10th time.

"Congratulations to Shri Nitish Kumar ji on once again taking oath as the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar," Khandu said in a post on X.

Extending his wishes to the new deputy chief ministers, he added, "Heartiest best wishes to Shri Samrat Choudhary ji and Shri Vijay Kumar Sinha ji on being sworn in as Deputy Chief Ministers."

While BJP leader Samrat Choudhary and JD(U)'s Vijay Kumar Sinha were sworn in as ministers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on X that they were appointed as deputy CMs.

"Congratulations to Shri Samrat Choudhary Ji and Shri Vijay Sinha Ji on becoming Deputy Chief Ministers of Bihar. Both leaders have worked extensively at the grassroots in serving people. Best wishes to them," Modi wrote on X. The chief minister emphasised that Bihar's progress will continue under the strong backing of the NDA and the leadership of Modi.

"With the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, and the unwavering support of the BJP and NDA partners, I am confident that Bihar will continue to stride ahead in development, stability and good governance," Khandu said in another post.

Earlier in the day, JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Bihar for the 10th time at a grand ceremony held at Gandhi Maidan in Patna. Along with him, 26 ministers also took oath, 14 from the BJP, 8 from the JD(U), 2 from the LJP(RV), 1 from HAM and 1 from the RLM. (PTI)

One-day IPR awareness workshop held at NIT



HT Correspondent
NAHARLAGUN, Nov 20: A one-day workshop on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) was organised on Wednesday at the NIT Arunachal Pradesh TEL Center by the Patent Information Centre (PIC), Arunachal Pradesh State Council for Science and Technology in collaboration with the institute.

The programme commenced with an inaugural address by Director Mohan V Aware, who highlighted the growing significance of patents and IPR in academic research and innovation, emphasising the need for researchers to safeguard their ideas and contribute to national development.

CD Mungyak, Director-cum-Secretary and Dr Tage Taki, Chairman of the State Council for Science and Technology, spoke on the role of patents in research and encouraged faculty and scholars to actively engage in patent filing to strengthen the innovation ecosystem of the state.

The technical session was conducted by IP professional Sidharth

Deb Nath from PDTCS, Guwahati, who provided hands-on training on patent searching, filing procedures and overall patenting processes. Participants were introduced to practical tools and strategies to identify patentable ideas and navigate formalities involved in securing intellectual property rights.

A total of 97 participants, including faculty members, research scholars and students, attended the programme. Participants engaged actively throughout the sessions and responded positively to the practical demonstrations and discussions.

The workshop concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr Saikat Kumar Jana, Coordinator of the IPR Cell of NIT Arunachal Pradesh and Terpo Ronya, Coordinator of PIC Arunachal Pradesh, acknowledging the support of PIC and commending the enthusiasm of attendees. The programme successfully enhanced awareness on IPR issues and motivated the academic community to pursue innovation with a stronger understanding of patent processes.

Stakeholders' workshop focuses on livelihoods, infrastructure and eco-tourism

Jemeithang in Tawang set for development as Aspirational Model Village

HT Correspondent

TAWANG, Nov 20: As part of NITI Aayog's collaboration with the Government of Arunachal Pradesh under the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP), Jemeithang in Tawang district has been identified for development as a Model Village. A stakeholders' consultation workshop was organised near the historic Gorzang Stupa, in coordination with the District Administration and the Indian Army.

The workshop aimed to develop a comprehensive roadmap for Jemeithang's transformation, focusing on livelihood enhancement, infrastructure improvement and promotion of eco-tourism. The NITI Aayog delegation was led by Maj Gen K Narayanan (Retd), Programme Director, while the District Administration team was headed by Deputy Commissioner Namgyal Angmo, IAS. The Indian Army was represented by Colonel HS Dhillon, Deputy Commander, Jemeithang Brigade.

Maj Gen Narayanan highlighted Jemeithang's natural beauty and peaceful environment, commending the younger generation for preserving local culture and traditions. He reaffirmed NITI Aayog's commitment to supporting the village's emergence as a key tourist destination and encouraged stakeholder inputs for its development.

Deputy Commissioner Angmo outlined ongoing

initiatives under the Aspirational Block framework, noting active participation from self-help groups and communities. She highlighted the village's tourism potential, including cultural assets such as the Gorzang Kora festival and local heritage sites.

Dr Darpajit Sengupta, State Nodal Officer of NITI Aayog, elaborated on the Aspirational Blocks Programme and the Aakansha initiative. Assistant Commissioner Jemeithang, Deewan Mara, presented insights into the region's demographics, infrastructure and socio-economic landscape. Colonel Dhillon shared details on Army-led community projects, dual-use infrastructure, BRO coordination and civil-military cooperation.

Dr Rajiv Bhartari, NITI Aayog Non-Resident Fellow, stressed eco-sensitive planning for fragile mountain terrain, watershed management and use of local materials for nature-based development solutions. Representatives from WWF, Gaon Burah of Shocksens village Sangey Tsetan and local youth representative Tenzin Tsongyal Gyamo also contributed suggestions.

The workshop marked a key step toward transforming Jemeithang into a self-sustaining, vibrant Model Village, reflecting the collaborative spirit of the community, administration and national institutions.



DCO reviews pre-test census works in East Siang

HT Correspondent

PASIGHAT, Nov 20: Dr Pooja Pandey, IAS, Director of Census Operations (DCO) cum Joint Registrar General (CRS) Arunachal Pradesh, conducted an inspection of the Civil Registration System (CRS) unit in Pasighat on Tuesday and reviewed the ongoing Pre-Test House Listing Operation covering selected wards of Pasighat Municipal Council from November 10 to 30.

Accompanied by Kasep Tayom, ADES cum Additional District Registrar (CRS)/Additional District Census Officer, Dr Pandey emphasised the importance of accurate and reliable data collection in the pre-test phase, a preparatory exercise for the fully digital Census 2027.

During the visit, the DCO interacted with enumerators and supervisors, taking feedback on challenges faced during the Pre-Test House Listing Operation. Officials noted that training had been provided to field staff for efficient data collection using specially designed mobile applications.

England desperate to end Ashes drought in Australia as series starts today

PERTH, Nov 20: The build-up to the Ashes series starting Friday began at the end of July 2023 following one of the more acrimonious test cricket series between England and Australia.

Ben Stokes and his England lineup won that test at The Oval in South London but it wasn't enough to reclaim the Ashes from the Aussies, who won the first two tests and drew the fourth in a five-match series to retain the old urn.

Cue to Perth Stadium, Day 1 of a possible 25 spanning seven weeks and five cities.

There are some big questions in play. Can an aging, understrength Australia continue an unbeaten run in home Ashes tests that dates to the 2010-11 series?

Can Stokes inspire an end to that long drought for England?

Can Joe Root, the world's No. 1-ranked test batter, finally post an Ashes century in Australia?

The English

Stokes knows the record: 13 losses, two draws and no wins in England's last 15 tests Down Under. He's thinking more about the 2010-11 squad that beat the Australians 3-1.

"I've come here absolutely desperate to get home on that plane in January as one of the lucky few captains from England who have come here and been successful," he said. "A lot has been spoken of about the history and how it has gone for England — this is our chance to create our own."

In a bid to break the drought, England is likely to start a pair of express pace bowlers in conditions expected to suit them. Jofra Archer is primed to do well in Australia and 35-year-old Mark Wood recovered from a minor hamstring strain to be including in the 12-man match squad for the first test.

"He's flying," Stokes said of Wood, who took 17 wickets in the last Ashes series in Australia. "He's



had all his injury troubles and all that kind of stuff ... but he's been bowling for a long, long time.

"He has always been someone who can just hit the ground running in a game. And he's bowling rapid, which is good."

The Aussies

Australia captain Pat Cummins and fellow pacer Josh Hazlewood will be missing the first test because of injuries, leaving Australia's attack without half of its frontline bowlers.

The remaining half — left-arm fast bowler Mitchell Starc and off-spinner Nathan Lyon — are

confident that the team can win on what is expected to be a fast, bouncy pitch in Perth. Brendan Doggett is set to make his test debut alongside fellow fast bowler Scott Boland, making it the first time the men's test XI will contain two players with Australian Indigenous heritage.

"Good to see the depth in the squad," Starc said. "We know what Scotty Boland can do, ... (and) Doggie's coming off a hot streak at the moment."

Cameron Green's fitness to bowl means he'll fill the allrounder spot and Australia can give opening batter Jake Weatherald a test debut at the age of 31.

The flow-on means Marnus Labuschagne will return at No. 3, with stand-in skipper Steve Smith at No. 4 and allrounder Beau Webster has been cut from the lineup.

"Beau came into international cricket and lit it up immediately, so I think it's a really tough one on him," Smith said. "He's the one that misses out unfortunately."

"But I think with Marnus, when he's batting at his best at No. 3, it makes us a very, very good cricket side."

Smith's role

The 36-year-old Smith will lead Australia for the third time this year and the seventh time since his era as full-time captain ended with the Sandpapergate scandal in 2018.

He filled in as skipper the last time England toured Australia in 2021-22, after Cummins was forced to isolate for the Adelaide test during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"He's a lot more relaxed as a person all round," Starc said of his longtime teammate. "Even the times that he's captained since, when he's had to fill in for Pat, it's a different approach."

"He's still that competitive beast, and still wants to be the best, and still will leave no stone unturned. But I think he's finding a few outlets to actually switch off from time to time ... and just not be cricket 100% of the time."

Squads

Australia: Jack Weatherald, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith (captain), Travis Head, Cameron Green, Alex Carey, Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Brendan Doggett, Scott Boland.

England (from): Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (captain), Jamie Smith, Brydon Carse, Gus Atkinson, Jofra Archer, Mark Wood, Shoab Bashir. (AP)

Yusuf Pathan inaugurates new Cricket Academy of Pathans centre in Dibrugarh



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 20: The Cricket Academy of Pathans (CAP) has expanded its footprint in Northeast India with the inauguration of its 38th centre at Sansys Smart School in Dibrugarh, Assam.

This marks CAP's second centre in the region, reinforcing its aim to provide world-class cricket training and mentorship to aspiring young players. The centre was inaugurated by former Indian cricketer and CAP co-founder Yusuf Pathan, whose presence inspired the budding cricketers gathered for the occasion.

Pathan said the academy aims to help India evolve from a sport-loving to a sport-playing nation and assured that the new centre would provide young cricketers in Assam the guidance and technical foundation needed to pursue their ambitions.

CAP has trained over 16,000 students and enabled more than 475 players to feature in major domestic tournaments including the Ranji Trophy and the IPL.

Three CAP-trained players represented Rajasthan in the recent Vinoo Mankad Trophy.

Managing Director Harmeet Vasdev said the academy is focused on identifying talent in tier-II and tier-III cities, where promising players often lack professional training.

He added that the new Dibrugarh centre would use advanced tools such as Stance Beam to provide real-time performance analytics.

CAP has also partnered with high-performance sportswear brand Ten X You to ensure comprehensive sponsorship support for its students.

Another upcoming partnership with a leading national foundation will introduce a pan-India scholarship programme aimed at ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder deserving players from accessing top-tier training.

The academy plans to open over 25 new centres across the country, with upcoming launches in Hyderabad, Berhampur, Madhubani, Karim Nagar and Kolkata.

ASEB FC storms into final of ID Cup Football Tournament

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 20: Assam State Electricity Board Football Club (ASEB FC) has entered the final of the 77th All India Invitation Prize Money Independence Day Cup Football Tournament organised by the Nagaon Sports Association.

In the second semifinal match held at Saraibahi playground on Thursday, ASEB FC defeated Trinayan Oshthi 3-1.

The Electricity Board team led 2-1 at halftime, with goals from Bikash Kumar Bodo and Papu Deori. Hiteswar Hazarika netted the third goal in the second half, while Bishnu Bordoloi scored the lone goal for Trinayan Oshthi.

Liverpool's Premier League title defense is in disarray but benign fixture run could change that



LONDON, Nov 20: Three months in and it has already been a season of highs and lows for Liverpool.

A run of five straight wins to start the team's Premier League title defense. Then a streak of four consecutive losses.

Before the international break, an impressive 1-0 victory over Real Madrid in the Champions League was celebrated as some sort of revival. That was immediately shot down in a dispiriting 3-0 defeat at Manchester City — a result Arne Slot has had to stew over for the past two weeks.

An eight-point deficit to league leader Arsenal certainly isn't insurmountable, yet — on current form — the gap is more likely to widen than close.

It appears to be time for the English champions to start playing like one, beginning with a home match against Nottingham Forest on Saturday.

That kicks off a benign run of end-of-year fixtures for Liverpool, with matches against West Ham, Sunderland, Leeds, Brighton, Tottenham, Wolves and Leeds again to come up to Jan. 1.

If the Reds cannot find some form over the next six weeks, then hopes of retaining the league title for the first time since 1984 might be over.

Key matchups

The standout game sees Arsenal host Tottenham in the north London derby on Sunday.

Arsenal's run of 10 straight wins — and eight successive clean sheets — was brought to an end with a 2-2 draw at Sunderland before the break for internationals.

Tottenham has won just one of their last meetings since December 2020.

Manchester City plays before then, at Newcastle in Saturday's late game, and can reduce the gap to one point with a win.

Players to watch

Man City striker Erling Haaland's hot streak doesn't look like ending. Another four goals for Norway over the past week has taken his tally to 32 in just 20 games in all competitions for club and country.

He has failed to score in just two of those matches.

Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker has missed the last six weeks because of a hamstring injury but looks set to return for the game against Forest, replacing Giorgi Mamardashvili.

That should help to shore up Liverpool's creaky defense, which has conceded 17 league goals so far. Only seen teams have let in more after 11 games.

Out of action

Arsenal defender Gabriel Magalhaes sustained a thigh injury while playing for Brazil last week and looks set for time on the sidelines. The center back has been a rock at the back for the Gunners — and a huge threat at set pieces — so he will be a big miss, though they have decent back-up options in summer signings Cristhian Mosquera and Piero Hincapié.

Benjamin Sesko is set to be missing for Manchester United after injuring his knee in the draw at Tottenham in their last game before the international break.

United isn't blessed with many striker options after letting Rasmus Hojlund join Napoli on loan. So manager Ruben Amorim may have to deploy an attacking midfielder, like Mason Mount, Mathews Cunha or Bryan Mbeumo, up front — something he has done already this season — as United looks to build on its five-match unbeaten run.

Off the field

There was a managerial appointment during the international break, with Rob Edwards taking over at last-place Wolverhampton.

Edwards, who played for Wolves from 2004-08 and was born nearby, has a big job on his hands. The team has gone 15 consecutive league games without a victory — 11 of which have been this season, leaving Wolves on just two points and already eight points from safety already.

Edwards joined from second-tier Middlesbrough and has previous Premier League experience with Luton Town, which he couldn't keep up in its one season back in the top flight.

His first game as Wolves manager is at home to Crystal Palace on Saturday. (AP)

Mahit wins silver in 50m rifle prone

TOKYO, Nov 20: Indian rifle shooter Mahit Sandhu won silver in 50m prone event with a world record in qualification for her third medal in the ongoing 25th Summer Deaflympics here on Thursday.

Mahit shot 246.1 in the finals to secure the silver medal while Eliska Svobodova of Czechia won the gold, with a score of 247.2.

Hungary's Mira Zsuzsanna Biatovszki won bronze with a score of 225.0. The other Indian shooter in the finals, Natasha Joshi finished in eighth position, going out after a shoot-off.

In the finals, Mahit was in fourth position after the completion of 14 shots. She moved into bronze-medal contention after the next series of two shots, overcoming Violeta Lykova of Ukraine and remained in the same position until the completion of 20 shots.

Mahit then hit a 9.8 and 10.2 in the next series, but a 9.4 and 9.8 from the Hungarian shooter ensured the Indian moved up into silver position. Mahit then finished the finals with scores of 10.0 and 10.7, but could not match up to Svobodova's total score as the Czech shooter also hit both her final shots in the 10s.

Earlier in qualification, Mahit created a new world record by finishing the six series with a score of 619.7, while Natasha Joshi booked her place in the finals in seventh place with a score of 611.6.

India have now taken their medal tally to 12 in shooting at Tokyo with Mahit contributing three of them. She had earlier won gold in the 10m mixed team event and a silver in the 10m individual event. (PTI)

BENGALURU, Nov 20: The Guwahati pitch is an uncharted territory for both India and South Africa, but former opener Akash Chopra reckons that the home side still holds a slight advantage because of its prior experience of playing on such surfaces.

Now a cricket-pundit, Chopra also backed Sai Sudarshan to bat at crucial number three slot, if skipper Shubman Gill misses out due to neck spasm.

India are looking to level the two-match series after losing the Kolkata Test by 30 runs, but playing at the ACA Stadium, a first-time Test venue, provides them a unique challenge.

"No one has any idea how cricket will be played in Guwahati because it is a new Test venue. Of course, first-class cricket has already happened there, and we have seen some big turn during the recent Women's World Cup matches," Chopra, a JioStar expert, said during a Media Day ahead of the second Test.

"So, if you are playing there for the first time, be it Shubman Gill or Sai Sudarshan or Rishabh Pant the pitch is as good for them as it is for Temba Bavuma or Ryan Rickleton. So, it is a challenge for both the teams," he added.

But the former India batter had little doubt that home advantage cannot be taken away from India.

"But we are still playing in India. We grew up playing on these kind of surfaces. Yes, Guwahati might be a different one. But the soil must have come from somewhere in India.

Gill set to undergo fitness test on Friday



GUWAHATI, Nov 20: India captain Shubman Gill, who has not trained due to a neck spasm sustained during the first Test against South Africa, will undergo a fitness test on Friday in a last-ditch attempt to be available for the second game, batting coach Sitanshu Kotak has indicated.

Gill developed the spasm on the second day of the opening Test and

'We are monitoring Rabada and will take a call in next 24 hours'

GUWAHATI, Nov 20: South Africa's bowling coach Piet Botha has not ruled out Kagiso Rabada's participation in the second Test against India, starting here from Saturday, despite the lead pacer's absence from training on Thursday. Rabada, one of the world's finest fast bowlers and the South African pace attack's lynchpin, missed the opening Test in Kolkata after suffering a rib injury during a training session ahead of the match.

"We are monitoring Kagiso Rabada and we will take a call in the next 24 hours," Botha told reporters on the pacer's participation in the second Test.

Guwahati is hosting a Test match for the first time

hasn't returned to the nets since. While his chances remain slim, the BCCI sports science team is waiting as long as possible before taking a final call. The second and final Test begins on Saturday.

"See, he is definitely recovering really well, because I also met him yesterday," Kotak said ahead of a practice session that Gill skipped.

"Now, the decision will be taken tomorrow evening, because the physios and doctors have to decide whether, even if he is fully recovered, there's a chance of the spasm recurring during the match. That is very important."

"If there is a doubt, then I am sure he will rest for one more game because it won't help the team otherwise. A player like Shubman, and he's the captain so any team would miss him," Kotak added.

While acknowledging the impact of Gill's absence, Kotak expressed confidence in the bench strength.

"But if he is missing out because of injury, we have batters and plenty of good players. They are professionals; they should come and perform for the team," Kotak said.

"We all wish he plays, but if he doesn't, we will definitely have a

good replacement and maybe the wicket replacement in will score a hundred."

In the first Test in Kolkata, Dhruv Jurel batted at No. 4 in the second innings, and Kotak did not rule out that option again, though he stressed that combinations would only be discussed after Gill's fitness test.

"Jurel batted at No. 4, so he is one option. But until we know about Shubman, there is no point discussing who will play," he said.

"Once we know, and once we see the wicket tomorrow, we will think about the best combination."

Kotak summed up the significance of Gill's absence in the first Test with pointed clarity.

"In the last game, nobody discussed much about what our chances would have been had Shubman batted in both innings," he said.

"The second innings may not have even mattered. If in the first innings he had batted and we had one partnership, with a 100-run lead, we would have been fine. That's not an excuse, but a reality that he couldn't bat in two innings." (PTI)

and the pitch at the Barsapara Stadium is an uncharted territory for both teams. "The wicket (in Guwahati) we are told is a good batting track. But a lot of difference happens in terms of whether you keep grass or not. With two days left we will have to wait to see whether it starts turning earlier," Botha said of the track.

The South Africa bowling coach is also hopeful of off-spinner Simon Harmer, one of the heroes of the visitors' memorable win in the first Test at Eden Gardens, spinning a web around the Indian batters in the final game of the short series while also ruling out any issue with his fitness. (PTI)



"So, you would want to continue with him (Sudharsan) and see where he goes because when you are looking at number 3, a very important batting position in Tests, you need to first prioritise the batting capabilities and not just the skill but also the temperament and also the patience and the ability to bat and be there for longer period of time."

The 48-year-old also backed Sudharsan, who was benched in the first Test for Axar Patel, to get a longer rope.

"That is why you should look for a purist and specialist (at No. 3) who has only one

job to do that. So, if this is what we are hoping from Washington as a batter, fair enough. But it just feels that the last 6 months or 7 months were absolutely futile. We didn't really gain anything from it.

"And what message will you give to Sudharsan that you know, we gave you a chance, you scored the runs but now we have a change of heart and we are going in some other direction. Again, that consistency is something that you really want to have," he said.

Since Gill's injury, talks have been centred around the need to manage the workload of the Indian skipper, who now plays all the three formats.

But Chopra did not exactly concur with the thought.

"I asked this question to Gautam before the Test match against the West Indies. His point was that if you need workload management, then skip the IPL. If you don't want to lead because leading the IPL team puts too much pressure, then don't lead. And while playing for India, if you are fit, you are not mentally fatigued."

"And as a batter, I can also second the opinion that when you are going through a good form, you really want to maximise. Because you never know when the bad form hits you and where the next one is going to come from."

So, if there is no fitness concern per se and if there is no mental burnout concern that is very individual-specific, you stay with them and you play as much as you can, as often as you can," he signed off. (PTI)