

**6** **NATION**

● Indian Navy commissions anti-submarine warfare vessel INS Mahe to boost coastal defence

● Beloved Hindi cinema star Dharmendra dies at 89

**7** **NE**

● 'Arunachal Rang Mahotsav is a celebration of art, courage, human connection'

● People with vested interests trying to create rift between BJP, Tipra Motha: Pradyot

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## ZUBEEN DEATH PROBE

# Panel extends date for submitting statements till December 12

GUWAHATI, Nov 24: The one-man commission probing the death of singer Zubeen Garg has extended the date for recording statements and submission of evidence till December 12, officials said on Monday.

The commission, headed by Justice Soumitra Saikia, had begun recording statements and receiving evidence in connection with the incident from November 3.

The earlier deadline was November 21, but it has now been extended, the commission's member-secretary Aroop Pathak said.

In a notice issued on Friday, Pathak stated that all having knowledge of the facts and circumstances relating to the above incident can submit their statements by way of a duly notarised affidavit



till December 12 from 10.30 am to 4 pm on all days except Sundays.

"All persons, intending to furnish their statements before the Commission must also furnish a

list of documents in support of the facts stated in the affidavit by them, on which they propose to rely upon along with the originals or true (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Himanta condoles Dharmendra's death

GUWAHATI, Nov 24: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma condoled the death of veteran actor Dharmendra who breathed his last in Mumbai on Monday.

"Deeply saddened by the passing of legendary actor Dharmendra ji. An era of Indian cinema ends with him — his charm, humility & larger-than-life persona touched millions", the chief minister posted on 'X'.

"My condolences to his family members & countless fans. May his soul attain Sadgati. Om Shanti", Sarma said.

Dharmendra, born Dharam Singh Deol in Punjab in 1935, enjoyed a remarkable six-decade career, featuring in over 300 films and headlining classics such as 'Sholay', 'Chupke Chupke', 'Satyakam', 'Anupama', 'Seeta Aur Geeta' and many others.

He was widely celebrated for his versatility across action, romance and comedy.

The actor, who would have turned 90 on (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Assam strengthens police infrastructure to ensure safer communities: Himanta

GUWAHATI, Nov 24: Assam is steadily strengthening its internal security framework with major investments in police infrastructure, as part of a broader push to ensure safer communities across the state.

Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday highlighted the government's ongoing efforts, stating that while others merely make promises, Assam is focusing on real, visible progress on the ground.

Sharing an update on social media platform X, the chief minister said the state was "building stronger police infrastructure to ensure safer communities," underlining that development in the law and order sector remains a key priority for the government.

According to the update, 16 new police housing projects and five modern commando battalions are currently under development in different parts of Assam.

The new housing projects are aimed at improving living condi-

tions for police personnel and their families, ensuring better morale and operational readiness.

At the same time, the raising of modern commando battalions reflects the government's emphasis on combating organised crime, insurgency threats, and other security challenges through highly trained and well-equipped forces.

"These initiatives are not just about buildings or facilities; they are about creating an ecosystem where our police force can function more efficiently and effectively. With modern stations, improved equipment and enhanced training, we are delivering protection and peace to the people of the state," Sarma stated.

He further added that robust police infrastructure plays a crucial role in strengthening public confidence, deterring criminal activity and ensuring a swift response in emergency situations.

Over the past few years, the state

# Justice Surya Kant takes oath as 53<sup>rd</sup> CJI

New CJI to remain in office for nearly 15 months

NEW DELHI, Nov 24: Justice Surya Kant, who has been part of several landmark verdicts, including on abrogation of Article 370 removing Jammu and Kashmir's special status and Bihar electoral rolls revision, took oath as the 53rd Chief Justice of India on Monday.

He succeeds Justice B R Gavai. President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath to Justice Kant at a brief ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

He took the oath in Hindi in the name of God.

Justice Kant was appointed as the next CJI on October 30 and will remain in the post for nearly 15 months. He will demit office on February 9, 2027 on attaining the age of 65 years.

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among the senior lead-



ers who attended the ceremony.

Soon after being sworn in, Justice Kant went up to Prime Minister Modi to greet him.

Later, in a post on X, Modi shared pictures of the swearing in ceremony.

"Attended the oath taking cere-

mony of Justice Surya Kant as the Chief Justice of India. Best wishes to him for his tenure ahead," the prime minister wrote.

A customary group photograph was also clicked with President Murmu, Vice President Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Modi, CJI

Kant, former CJI Gavai and Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal posing for the camera.

Former vice president Jagdeep Dhankhar was also present and was among those who greeted the new CJI on assuming office.

Justice Gavai, who demitted office of the CJI on Sunday, hugged his successor.

Born on February 10, 1962 in Hisar district of Haryana to a middle-class family, Justice Kant went from being a small-town lawyer to the country's highest judicial office, where he has been part of several verdicts and orders of national importance and constitutional matters. He also has the distinction of standing 'first class first' in his Master's degree in law from Kurukshetra University.

Justice Kant, who penned several notable judgments in the Punjab and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Ex PDCK leader thanks leaders for progress on Karbi Peace Accord



HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 24: Former militant leader Songjit Engti Kthar of the People's Democratic Council of Karbi Longri (PDCK) on Sunday thanked Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC)

Chief Executive Member Tuliram Ronghang for taking steps to implement the 2021 Karbi Peace Accord.

The Peace Accord, signed on September 4, 2021, between the Centre, the Assam government and six Karbi militant organisa-

tions—including KNLNF, PDCK, UPLA and three factions of the KPLT—had committed to various measures for long-term peace and development in the region.

Addressing a press conference at Hotel Hambi, Kthar said the state Cabinet's recent decision to create the Karbi Welfare Autonomous Council was in line with Clause 3.6 of the Accord.

The proposed council is meant for Karbis residing outside Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts.

"We have learned that the Bill for the new council will be introduced in the Winter Session on November 25," he said.

Kthar expressed gratitude to the chief minister and the KAAC for their time-bound implementation of the Accord's provisions.

"At the time of signing, they promised that all clauses would be implemented, and this is visible on the ground. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## CM distributes cheques to 32,787 women beneficiaries in Rangia under MMUA

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 24: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday distributed cheques of ₹10,000 each to 32,787 beneficiaries of the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA) in Rangia Legislative Assembly Constituency as part of the government's continued push towards women-led entrepreneurship.

Of the total beneficiaries, 30,665 are from rural areas and 2,122 from urban areas of Rangia LAC.

At the event, the chief minister paid tributes to Bir Lachit Borphan on his birth anniversary and urged the younger generation to draw inspiration from his courage and dedication to Assam.

Speaking on the scheme, Sarma said MMUA was conceptualised in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of enabling three crore women across India to become 'lakhpati didis'.

He said the State aims to provide seed capital to 32 lakh women by January next year.

Under the three-stage financial assistance structure, beneficiaries who productively use the first instalment of ₹10,000 will qualify for ₹25,000 as the second instalment and ₹50,000 as the third.

The chief minister highlighted success stories from Rangia, including Namita Kalita of Manikanchan SHG, who sustains her livelihood through a food business earning about ₹12,000 monthly, and Babita Choudhury of Sowarshiri SHG, who earns ₹15,000 per month.

He said three thousand more women in Rangia LAC will be included under Orunodoi soon.

Currently, 33,784 families in the constituency benefit from the scheme, while 40,178 families have received free LPG connections and 4,376 girl students are covered under the Nijut Moina scheme.

Several dignitaries, including Environment and Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, MPs Bhubaneswar (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## CM inaugurates Shantiram Lahkar Park, statue

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 24: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday inaugurated the Shantiram Lahkar Park in Ward No. 4 of Rangia town, honouring the region's first freedom fighter and one of its earliest modernisers.

During his visit, the chief minister unveiled a life-sized statue of Shantiram Lahkar installed inside the park and released a book dedicated to his legacy.

He also inaugurated a newly built clock tower within the park premises.

Sarma said the memorial serves as a tribute to Lahkar's contribution to the freedom movement and to Rangia's development.

He added that the park would inspire future generations to appreciate the sacrifices made by the region's freedom fighters.

The inauguration formed part of the chief minister's day-long engagements in Rangia.

## CM pays tribute to legendary Ahom commander Lachit Barphukan

GUWAHATI, Nov 24: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday offered tributes to legendary Ahom Commander Lachit Barphukan who had defeated the Mughals in the famed Battle of Saraihat in 1671, on the occasion of Lachit Divas.

"Lachit Barphukan's life is a timeless lesson in courage, patriotism and unshakeable duty to the motherland", the CM said after offering floral tributes at Rangia in Kamrup district.

His valour continues to inspire every generation to 'stand tall for our nation and on Lachit Divas, I offer my heartfelt Shradhdhanjali to the legendary son of Aai Asomi (Mother Assam)", he said.

Lachit Borphan is a symbol of courage and an 'immortal identity of Assam's pride', Sarma said.

"We are carrying forward the legacy of his valor and leadership by establishing a police academy, a memorial, including his contribution in school curriculum and a world-class training institute in his name", he said.

His legacy of valour continued to inspire generations and it still does today, Sarma said.

"On Lachit Day, we pay homage to that brave war-



rior who did not let the nation bow", he added.

Meanwhile, more than 1,300 youth, dressed as Lachit Barphukan in traditional attire of the warriors and carrying the 'hendang' (Ahom sword), gathered at Pakamura Field in Jamugurihat of Sonitpur to celebrate the day and took up a 15-km symbolic boat procession on the occasion.

World Cup-winning woman cricketer Uma Chetry and bodybuilders Mahadev Deka, Bijit Gogoi and Pankaj Bora were felicitated (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Visiting scribes in Guwahati seek to pay homage to Zubeen Garg during city's first Test match

GUWAHATI, Nov 24: As Guwahati hosts its maiden Test match, many visitors arriving in the city to watch the live cricket action are also taking the opportunity to pay their respects to Assam's cultural icon Zubeen Garg, who died in Singapore a couple of months ago.

A number of sports journalists from across the country who are in the city on assignment for the match are making the most of their visit to understand what many describe as the "phenomenon called Zubeen".

"I must confess that I was not very aware of Zubeen until after his death. I knew a couple of his Hindi songs and thought of him as another good singer. But the spontaneous public outpouring of grief after his demise made us take note of the person he was," RUPESH SINGH, a Delhi-based journalist with a leading Hindi daily, said.

The 52-year-old singer-composer died while swimming in the sea in Singapore on September 19.

Assam Police has formed a Special Investigation Team to probe the circumstances leading to his death.

Singh said he first sensed the magnitude of Garg's fandom when lakhs turned up to pay their last respects.

A podcast by a well-known journalist, he added, helped him understand the emotions better.

"I understood the phenomenon called Zubeen after watching the podcast. And when I landed in Guwahati two days before the match, the first things that struck me were his photos everywhere and the cab driver starting a conversation referring to him," he said.

Singh visited Garg's cremation ground at Sonapur on the outskirts of Guwahati on his first day in the city.

"It was an overwhelming experience. The sheer love for the man can be felt there," he said.

Kolkata-based Sourav Modak, another scribe who visits Guwahati regularly to cover sports, said he is also looking forward to visiting the cremation site.

"I had been in Guwahati once since Zubeen died, but was on a very tight schedule. This time, I have made plans to pay my respects by visiting the cremation site," he said. While many (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 3 youths detained in Kharsang while preparing to join ULFA-I

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 24: Security forces have detained three youths in Kharsang, Arunachal Pradesh, for allegedly preparing to join the banned ULFA (Independent).

Officials said the trio had been in contact with self-styled ULFA(I) leader Arunodoy Dohotia before their detention.

The three have been identified as Nabutam Baolary, Jayanta Konwar and Monjit Neog, all residents of Maithong village under Kakopathar in Assam's Tinsukia district.

Sources said the youths had been hiding in Kharsang for the past five days, awaiting instructions to formally join the outfit.

"We have detained them and are interrogating the trio to trace their communication links and identify the network involved in attempting to recruit them," an official said. Security (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Narayanan infers two types of basic education

Students should be more than 'bookworm', should work on overall personality, says ISRO chief

CHENNAI, Nov 24: Students should not be merely a "bookworm", they should also work on overall personality development, ISRO Chairman V Narayanan said on Monday.

Narayanan was attending a High Level Expert Committee and New Syllabus Design Committee meeting organised by Tamil Nadu to facilitate revision of the state curriculum at the Anna Centenary Library.

The meeting was led by Tamil Nadu's School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the



meeting, Narayanan stressed the need for value-based education.

"There are two types of education. One is intellectual-based education. You study Mathematics, Science... and score high marks. But value-based

overall personality development that is important," the ISRO chief said.

Narayanan, who did his early schooling in a government school in Tamil Nadu, also said it really does not matter where one is schooled.

"How you study, how you grow, that is important. Otherwise, from where, which school, that is not important. Wherever one studies, if they study well, they can grow well," he added.

He underscored that it is also important to look beyond conventional fields. "About 40 years ago, if you asked any student, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

# India, Canada agree to resume FTA talks: Goyal

**NEW DELHI, Nov 24:** India and Canada have agreed to resume negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with an aim to increase the two-way trade to USD 50 billion by 2030, according to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

An FTA or Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has many strategic elements to it and it is a demonstration of the trust between the two countries, Goyal said here at an event on Monday.

The pact would give confidence to investors, businesses of both sides, he said.

"We have agreed to begin negotiations on a high-ambition CEPA and double the trade between the two nations by 2030," he said, adding the two countries are natural allies and do not compete with each other.

The strengths of India and Canada can become a force multiplier for businesses and investors, Goyal said.

"There is a lot that we can learn from Canada and a lot we can offer Canada. There is a lot of potential on critical minerals, critical minerals processing technologies. There is a good possibility on nuclear energy - particularly with our engagement with Canada on Uranium supplies," he said, adding, "we can diversify our supply chains on both sides".

In 2023, Canada had paused negotiations for an FTA with India.



The India-Canada relations hit rock bottom following then Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in 2023 of a potential Indian link to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. India had dismissed Trudeau's accusation as "absurd".

In March 2022, the two countries had re-launched negotiations for an interim agreement, officially dubbed as Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA).

Over half a dozen rounds of talks have been held on the trade pact so far.

Normally in a trade agreement, two countries significantly reduce or eliminate customs duties on the maximum number of goods traded between them. They also liberalise norms for promoting trade in services and attract investments.

India's exports to Canada rose

9.8 per cent to USD 4.22 billion in 2024-25 from USD 3.84 billion in 2023-24. Imports, however, dipped 2.33 per cent to USD 4.44 billion in the last fiscal year from USD 4.55 billion in 2023-24.

The renewed vibrancy in ties between the two countries followed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's talks with his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney on the margins of the G7 summit at Canada's Kananaskis in June.

Bilateral trade in goods and services between India and Canada stood at USD 18.38 billion in 2023.

There are about 2.9 million Indian diaspora and over 4,27,000 Indian students in Canada.

To give an impetus to trade ties, Goyal has held two rounds of discussions with Canada's Minister of

Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development Maninder Sidhu.

Sidhu was here recently. Both the ministers co-chaired the India-Canada Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment (MDTI) meeting here earlier this month.

"We can focus on emerging technologies like AI (artificial intelligence) with data centres, quantum computing, machine learning, all new age technologies where India has very strategic benefits to offer for investors looking to leverage on the AI emerging technologies," Goyal said.

He stressed the need to translate dialogue between the two countries into concrete outcomes.

The minister also asked for having actionable outcomes, a game plan, a sectoral roadmap, and measurable progress.

"We must activate the CEO forum and resume the forum in the first quarter of 2026 because business to business contact will help governmental relations," Goyal said, adding that the ACITI (Australia-Canada-India Technology and Innovation) partnership should be taken forward with all seriousness.

"We could look at joint innovation," he said, adding there is a need to identify focus areas where both sides can enhance collaborations such as critical minerals, critical energy, aerospace and defence capabilities, and manufacturing in India. (PTI)

## Rupee jumps 50 paise against US dollar

**MUMBAI, Nov 24:** The rupee rebounded sharply by 50 paise to settle at 89.16 against the greenback on Monday, due to US dollar selling by banks and importers amid a dip in global crude oil prices.

Besides, suspected RBI intervention also supported the domestic currency, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened strong at 89.46 and moved in the range of 89.05 and 89.50 during the day. It eventually settled at 89.16, up 50 paise from its previous close.

The rupee had plunged 98 paise to close at its lifetime low of 89.66 against the US dollar on Friday.

In the steepest fall in over three years, the domestic currency nosedived 98 paise to finally settle at 89.66 against the American currency. The previous biggest one-day fall was recorded at 99 paise against the dollar on February 24, 2022.

"The rupee gained the most among the Asian currencies on likely intervention from the central bank and MSCI index rebalancing related flows. However, the trend and bias remain weak for the rupee amid foreign fund outflows, widening trade deficit and stronger dollar index against the major

currencies," Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said.

Meanwhile, Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, slipped 0.78 per cent to USD 62.07 per barrel in futures trade.

"The RBI opened the dollar lower at 89.15 by selling in NDF (non-deliverable forward) markets... and kept it in a range of 89-89.30 for the day as the market was wary of RBI selling," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was marginally down by 0.02 per cent at 100.15.

On the domestic equity market front, the Sensex declined 331.21 points to settle at 84,900.71, while Nifty fell 108.65 points to 25,959.50.

Foreign institutional investors sold equities worth Rs 4,171.75 crore on a net basis on Monday, according to exchange data.

India's forex reserves jumped USD 5.543 billion to USD 692.576 billion during the week ended November 14 due to a steep increase in the value of gold reserves, the RBI said on Friday. (PTI)

## Royal Stag Barrel Select unveils sleek new look with redesigned bottle

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 24:** Royal Stag Barrel Select, a premium brand from Pernod Ricard India, on Sunday introduced a revamped identity with a taller and sleeker bottle design aimed at reinforcing its philosophy of discernment and craftsmanship. The brand said the upgraded look features a premium clear-on-clear label—claimed to be a first in its category—along with an endorsement from Master Blender Kevin Balmforth to underline the product's authenticity.

Each bottle continues to be crafted with the brand's 'Triple Select Promise', which brings together select Indian grain spirits, select Scotch malts and maturation in select American oak barrels.

Pernod Ricard India said the refreshed design aligns with Royal Stag Barrel Select's long-standing philosophy of "Crafted for the Select Few", representing consumers who value refinement, informed choices and high-quality craftsmanship.

Joydeep Basuroy, GM-Marketing, Pernod Ricard India, said the new design embodies the brand's core attributes of authenticity and a progressive spirit.

"With the Triple Select Promise, we reaffirm our commitment to craftsmanship and differentiation at every step—from an exceptional blend to the innovative new design. It's a tribute to those who make discerning choices and strive for distinction," he said.

The company said the redesigned packaging aims to offer an elevated experience that resonates with consumers' evolving tastes and aspirations.

*Contd. from Page 1...*

## Students should be more

"What do you want to be?", he or she would say 'doctor', or 'engineer', one or two people would say 'collector'. They didn't know about other fields. But for a nation to transform into a developed nation, it must develop in all fields - be it the arts field, or sports," said Narayanan.

He pushed for a syllabus that is current and future-ready.

It should incorporate "new things" like Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, but the teachers should also be trained in these new developments.

"At the meeting, we discussed all these. This is a good activity that the Tamil Nadu government has undertaken. This will help the students of Tamil Nadu for the next 10 years," said the ISRO chief. (PTI)

## Visiting scribes in Guwahati

have discovered the range of Garg's musical compositions only over the last two months, some visiting scribes said they have been fans of his songs for years.

"There are so many songs in lesser-known Hindi films that have been overlooked. Listening to those over the years made me appreciate Zubeen as a singer. Of course, now I'm rediscovering him as a person," another Delhi-based journalist said, humming a Zubeen number while typing updates from the third day of the Test.

Local journalist Partha Chakraborty said several visiting reporters with whom he has built ties over the years have asked him for details on reaching Garg's cremation ground.

"Earlier, visiting journalists would go mainly to the Kamakhya temple. This time, the interest in Zubeen is clearly visible," he said.

"They want to not only visit his cremation site but are also trying to get a better understanding of what has led to the mass outpouring after his death," Chakraborty added. (PTI)

## 3 youths detained in

forces have stepped up operations along the Assam-Arunachal border following the incident.

In a related development, ULFA(I) self-styled Major General Arunoday Dohotia and his PSO Franchis Axom surrendered before security forces on Sunday morning at Pangsau Pass along the Indo-Myanmar border.

The surrender is being seen as a major setback for the outfit and a significant boost to ongoing peace and counter-insurgency efforts in the region.

## CM pays tribute

on the occasion. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and J P Nadda also paid their tributes to the legendary warrior.

On November 24 each year, Lachit Divas (Lachit Day) is celebrated in Assam to commemorate the heroism of Lachit Borphukan who led the Ahom army to victory at the Battle of Saraihat on River Brahmaputra. (PTI)

## CM distributes cheques

Kalita and Dilip Saikia, and MLAs Bhabesh Kalita and Suman Haripriya, were present at the programme.

## Ex PDCK leader

We request that the remaining clauses also be taken up soon," he said. Leaders of all six former militant groups were present at the press conference.

## Himanta condoles Dharmendra's

December 8, was ailing for a while and was in and out of a Mumbai hospital, with the family finally deciding to continue his treatment at home earlier this month.

Dharmendra is survived by his wife Prakash Kaur, Hema Malini, sons Sunny and Bobby Deol, and daughters Vijeta, Ajeeta, Esha and Ahana. (PTI)

## Panel extends date

copies of such documents in their possession or control and shall also state the name(s) and address(es) from whom the remaining documents may be obtained," the notice stated.

The commission headed by a sitting judge of Gauhati High Court was constituted by the Assam government to inquire into the facts and circumstances leading to the unfortunate death of Zubeen Garg in Singapore on September 19.

The commission will also ascertain the sequence of events in the period preceding and following the incident and also examine whether there were any lapses, acts of omission or commission, or negligence on the part of any individual, authority, or institution connected with the incident.

The commission will also ascertain whether any external factors, including the possibility of foul play, conspiracy, or unlawful acts, contributed to or were connected with the incident.

Garg died while swimming in the sea in Singapore on September 19. (PTI)

## Justice Surya Kant

Haryana HC, was appointed the chief justice of Himachal Pradesh HC on October 5, 2018.

His tenure as an SC judge is marked by verdicts on the abrogation of Article 370, free speech and citizenship rights.

The judge was part of the recent presidential reference on the powers of the Governor and President in dealing with bills passed by a state assembly.

He was part of the bench that kept the colonial-era sedition law in abeyance, directing that no new FIRs be registered under it until a government review.

Justice Kant also nudged the Election Commission to disclose the details of 65 lakh voters excluded from the draft electoral rolls in Bihar while hearing a batch of petitions challenging the poll panel's decision to undertake Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voters list in the poll-bound state.

In an order that emphasised grassroots democracy and gender justice, he led a bench that reinstated a woman sarpanch unlawfully removed from office and called out the gender bias in the matter.

He is also credited with directing that one-third of seats in bar associations, including the Supreme Court Bar Association, be reserved for women.

Justice Kant was part of the bench that appointed a five-member committee headed by former top court judge Justice Indu Malhotra to probe the security breach during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Punjab in 2022, saying such matters required "a judicially trained mind".

He also upheld the One Rank-One Pension scheme for defence forces, calling it constitutionally valid, and continues to hear petitions of women officers in the armed forces seeking parity in permanent commission.

Justice Kant was on the seven-judge bench that overruled the 1967 Aligarh Muslim University judgment, opening the way for reconsideration of the institution's minority status.

He was also part of the bench which heard the Pegasus spyware case and which appointed a panel of cyber experts to probe allegations of unlawful surveillance, famously stating that the state cannot get a "free pass under the guise of national security". (PTI)

## S&P pegs India's FY26 GDP growth at 6.5 pc; tax cuts, lower interest rates to drive consumption

**NEW DELHI, Nov 24:** S&P Global Ratings on Monday projected India's economy to grow 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal year and 6.7 per cent in the next, saying tax cuts and monetary policy easing will give a boost to consumption-driven growth.

India's real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have grown at the fastest pace in five quarters at 7.8 per cent in the April to June period of current fiscal year. The official data for Q2 (July-September) GDP growth estimates is scheduled to be released on November 28.

"We anticipate that India's GDP will grow by 6.5 per cent in fiscal year 2026 (ending March 2026) and 6.7 per cent in fiscal 2027, with risks evenly balanced. Domestic growth remains robust, driven by strong consumption, despite the impact of US tariffs," S&P said in its Economic Outlook Asia-Pacific report.

The RBI has projected India's GDP growth in the current fiscal year at 6.8 per cent, better than 6.5 per cent expansion in last fiscal year.

S&P further said if India can secure a trade agreement with the US, it will reduce uncertainty and enhance confidence, which would boost labour-intensive sectors.

"Lowered goods and service tax (GST) rates will support middle-class consumption and complement income tax cuts and interest rate reductions introduced this year. These changes are likely to make consumption a greater driver of growth compared with investment, in this fiscal year, and the next," S&P added.

The Government in Budget for 2025-26 fiscal year has hiked 1-T rebate to ₹ 12 lakh, from ₹ 7 lakh, which gave tax relief of ₹ 1 lakh crore to the middle class.

Besides, the RBI in June had cut key policy rates by 50 basis points to a 3-year low of 5.5 per cent.

Further, effective September 22 the GST rates on about 375 items were slashed making mass consumption items cheaper. S&P further said the spike in the effective US tariff on India is weighing on the expansion of export-oriented manufacturing in the country.

But there are signs the US may lower tariffs on Indian products.

"The US's new approach to trade policy is causing governments and firms to spend time and money on negotiating for exemptions, consequently diverting attention from efforts to raise productivity," S&P added. (PTI)

## Sensex drops 331 pts, Nifty ends below 26,000 on profit-taking

**MUMBAI, Nov 24:** Benchmark Sensex declined by 331 points and Nifty closed below the 26,000 mark on Monday amid last-minute selling by cautious investors and foreign fund outflows.

Paring early gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 331.21 points or 0.39 per cent to settle below 85,000 at 84,900.71. During the day, it dropped 521.81 points or 0.61 per cent to 84,710.11.

The 50-share NSE Nifty fell by 108.65 points or 0.42 per cent to 25,959.50. The index opened on a positive note and moved in a narrow range for most of the session, but a sharp decline in the final half hour dragged it lower.

Among Sensex firms, Bharat

Electronics, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv and Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles were the major laggards.

However, Tech Mahindra, Asian Paints, Infosys, Adani Ports, Sun Pharma and HDFC Bank were the gainers.

In Asian markets, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled in positive territory while South Korea's Kospi ended lower. Equity markets in Japan were closed for a holiday.

Markets in Europe were trading in the green. US markets ended higher on Friday.

"After a range-bound positive session, the market closed with a decline in the last half hour, led by

Monday expiry, as Nifty-50 indices could not survive above the key threshold of 26,000. Investor sentiment remained cautious, in anticipation of key event risk like delays in finalizing the interim US-India trade agreement.

"Nonetheless, selective buying in IT stocks offered some support. On a brighter note, global markets remain optimistic, fueled by renewed expectations of a December Fed rate cut, prompted by downside risks to US employment data," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Broader market sentiment was weak as the BSE smallcap gauge dropped 0.83 per cent and midcap index declined 0.27 per cent. (PTI)

## IIMCIP inks MoUs to boost NE startup ecosystem



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 24:** The IIMCIP Calcutta Innovation Park (IIMCIP) on Monday signed three Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Assam Skill University (ASU), IIT Guwahati and IIT Guwahati BioNEST, and The Assam Royal Global University to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem in the North-East.

According to IIMCIP, the agreements aim to expand incubation capacity, promote skill development and support the growth of early-stage ventures in the region through a collaborative, multi-institutional framework.

IIMCIP Chairman Ajay Jain said the partnerships would help consolidate the North-East's "innovation

value chain" by bringing together academic institutions, industry expertise and incubation support under a single ecosystem.

"This unified effort ensures that talent across the region—whether in classrooms, research labs or early-stage ventures—has access to mentorship, networks and opportunities needed to build impactful, scalable enterprises," he said.

He added that the collaborations reaffirm the organisation's belief that the North-East can develop into one of the country's most vibrant innovation corridors.

The aim is to build a pipeline that supports students, researchers and entrepreneurs from early ideation to advanced prototyping and eventual market readiness.

## Mobile users may be held liable for misuse of SIMs

**NEW DELHI, Nov 24:** Mobile subscribers may be held liable if a SIM card procured in their name is found to have been misused for cyber fraud or other illegal activities, an official statement said on Monday. The Department of Telecom (DoT) in the statement advised citizens to be cautious and avoid using mobile devices with tampered IMEI numbers.

It also warned against buying or using procured or assembled devices like modems, modules, SIM boxes which have configurable or tampered IMEIs; procuring SIM cards through fake documents, fraud, or impersonation; and transferring or handing over SIM cards procured in their name to others who may misuse them.

"Citizens should be aware that using devices with tampered IMEI numbers, procuring SIM cards through fraudulent means, or transferring or giving their SIM cards to others who misuse them for cyber fraud can result in serious legal consequences. The original user may also be held liable as an offender in cases where SIM cards procured in their name are subsequently misused," the statement said. The department has advised subscribers to not use mobile applications or websites that modify Calling Line Identity (CLI) or other telecommunication identifiers. The Telecommunications Act, 2023 has provision to impose stringent penalties for tampering with telecommunication identifiers including IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) number of mobile handsets and other devices. (PTI)

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## Report expected to provide insights into the 1979-85 Assam Movement

# Non-govt panel's report on Assam Agitation to be tabled in assembly: CM



**GUWAHATI, Nov 24:** The Assam cabinet decided that the report of a non-government commission, formed at the behest of civil society organisations to look into incidents of violence during the anti-infiltration Assam Agitation will be tabled in the assembly, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

He claimed that it would be the first time a report from a commission formed by non-government agencies would be tabled in the assembly, when it meets for a five-day session starting Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference after chairing a meeting of the council of ministers on Sunday, Sarma said, "The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) has said that the report of the Justice (Retd) T U Mehta Commission, which was formed by Mukti Jujaru Sammilan and the agitators, should be made public so that people can

get to know all sides," he said.

The chief minister said the cabinet has approved the tabling of the non-government commission report, making it the first time that the findings of a privately constituted committee will be placed in the House.

"We have also decided to place copies of the report of the Tewary Commission, which was constituted in 1983 to look into the incidents of violence that year," he said.

The six-year-long Assam Agitation had culminated with the signing of the Assam Accord in August 1985, though the problem of illegal migrants, over which the movement took place, continues to persist in the state.

Sarma said that though the Tewary Commission report was tabled in 1987 by then-CM Prafulla Kumar Mahanta of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), only one copy of the report

was sent to the Speaker.

The AGP was the political offshoot of the Assam Gana Sangram Praishad, which was a signatory to the tripartite Accord along with AASU and the central government.

"On Tuesday, we will be providing copies to all MLAs and others too," the chief minister said.

"Technically, both reports are public, but copies were not distributed," he pointed out.

Sarma further maintained that though the Tewary Commission was formed by the Congress government, the report was "generally neutral and compiled through much hardship".

"Congress thinks there are provocative things in the report and that the BJP will gain politically. But there is nothing of the kind. It is just a historic piece that will be lost to time if the copies are not made public. It is an academic exercise," he said.

He criticised the current Congress leadership as being "hollow and immature" for trying to resist the publication of the report of a commission formed under their party helmed by Indira Gandhi at the Centre and Hiteswar Saikia, father of the incumbent leader of opposition in the assembly at Dispur.

"The report has some negative things on AASU, but they say let it come out. New generations will learn a lot of things of the situation then... It is a crime against humanity to hide history," Sarma added.

The chief minister further said the cabinet also approved about 27 Bills that will be placed in the assembly, including allotment of land to tea garden workers, regulation of fees of private educational institutions run by minority communities and the setting up of a philanthropic university by Azim Premji Foundation. (PTI)

## Prominent citizens urge Assam govt not to politicise 1983 Nellie massacre report

**GUWAHATI, Nov 24:** As the Assam government prepares to place copies of the Tewary Commission Report on the 1983 Nellie massacre in the Assembly later this week, prominent citizens on Sunday cautioned against politicising the findings and urged authorities to address the persistent issue of illegal migration in the state.

Speaking at a discussion organised by digital media platform, "The Crosscurrent", which accessed the report through the Right to Information Act, panellists noted that the report did not attribute a communal colour to the incidents, with many cases being sporadic in nature.

The Commission of Enquiry on Assam Disturbances 1983, headed by retired IAS officer TP Tewary, was constituted on July 14, 1983, to investigate the violence in the state that year.

The final report was submitted to the then-Congress government in May, 1984, with the next Asom Gana Parishad-led government tabling it in the Assembly in 1987.

A recent Cabinet decision of the BJP-led government, of which AGP is a partner, stated that hard and soft copies of the report would be circulated in the Assembly during the upcoming session.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, however, has said the House will not discuss the report.

A release issued by the platform said the report mentions 8,019 incidents that took place in the state in 1983, in which total of 2,072 people were killed.

As many as 2,26,951 people were rendered homeless and 2,48,292 people were forced to take shelter in relief camps in the 1983 violence.

Speaking as a panellist, former Arunachal Pradesh Governor Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa said the government of that time should have constituted a judicial commission to inquire into the violence.

Why was the responsibility of the inquiry given to a chief secretary-level officer from outside the state remains a question even today, he said.

Rajkhowa, a former Assam chief secretary, pointed that the report does not mention how so many incidents of violence could occur when the state was

under President's rule.

He maintained that had this Commission's report been made public 40 years ago and action taken on its basis, at least some resolution of the problems could have been achieved.

Participating in the discussion, senior advocate Santanu Barhakur pointed that the background to the Tewary Commission is 'immigration'.

The Commission was formed in the context of the situation created by illegal immigration.

If only select portions of the report are discussed, it could create a seriously adverse reaction, he maintained.

Instead of 'politicising' this report, the government's primary responsibility should be to remove the fears and anxieties that have arisen among the people of Assam regarding immigration, Barhakur contended, adding that effective implementation of the recommendations under Clause 6 of the Assam Accord could be one step in that direction.

Clause 6 provides for various Constitutional safeguards for indigenous people of the state, which is part of the accord signed in August 1985 at the end of a six-year-long anti-infiltration movement.

Veteran journalist Bedabrata Lahkar, who reported on the Nellie massacre, said "at that time the entire administrative machinery was preoccupied with conducting the elections".

He further said that as mentioned in the Tewary Commission report, the 1983 violence did not have any specific communal character.

"I myself saw that in Mangaldoi, the reasons for the incidents were different, while in Gohpur, the causes of conflict were different again. Many people think this was a communal clash, but in reality nobody really knew where and why violence was erupting," he said. He claimed that the clashes followed no single fixed pattern, with the administration failing to stop the violence.

Lahkar added that the questions raised since 1978, which led to the Assam Agitation, remain unresolved even today, which is why many parts of the Tewary Commission report continue to be relevant. (PTI)

## Bodoland University hosts exhibition celebrating indigenous arts and heritage

**HT Correspondent**  
**KOKRAJHAR, Nov 24:** Bodoland University concluded a week-long Exhibition of Indigenous Art & Crafts, Handloom Traditions and Food Culture on Monday, drawing widespread participation from artisans, students, scholars, performers and visitors from across India and Bhutan. The event was organised under Project EMWSSAA with support from the North Eastern Council (NEC), Ministry of DoNER and in collaboration with TRIFED.

The exhibition highlighted regional craftsmanship, local cuisines, eco-friendly products and live cultural performances, fostering cultural exchange and appreciation of the North East's rich heritage.

The Janajatiya Gaurav Divas cum Inaugural Session saw Rabinar Narzary, MLA and Education Minister of BTC, as Chief Guest, with dignitaries including PS Aleng General Manager, TRIFED NER, Colonel David L Khojoi 135 Infantry Battalion, Dawa Penjor General Secretary, BIFA, Bodoland University VC Prof BL Ahuja and Registrar Dr Subung Basumatary in attendance. The evening featured a colourful fashion show by Aronai Entertainment showcasing a fusion wedding ensemble, followed by musical performances from Dr P Gogoi and

team and the band The Family Tree. An Artisan Empanelment Drive was conducted by TRIFED on November 17, 2025 and exclusive sessions on "Oral and Written Histories: Indigenous Arts, Weaving, Ecological Crafts, Food Traditions & Languages" were held on November 19 in collaboration with the North East India History Association (NEIHA). Eminent historian Dr JB Bhattacharjee, retired professor from NEHU, emphasised the need to document and preserve traditional knowledge systems.

The valedictory session, led by Dr Zothanchinghi Khiantge, included words of appreciation from international academic Prof Peter Birkelund Anderson of Kobenhavns University, Denmark, as well as remarks from Dr Gayatri Dekadoli, Dr Faguna Barmahalia and Dr Birphung Narzary. Artisans also presented gifts to the university representatives. The exhibition concluded with an open mic night featuring songs, poetry and traditional dances, highlighting the community's cultural pride and creativity.

Project EMWSSAA with NEC and TRIFED's support, continues to promote indigenous economies, cultural literacy and community-driven knowledge sharing across the North East.

## RPF recovers 174 phones and 146 returned to owners across divisions

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 24:** The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway has recovered 174 mobile phones to date using the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) portal, strengthening its efforts to enhance passenger security and ensure quick restoration of lost belongings.

With passengers reporting missing or stolen phones through the Rail Madad App, NFR's Cyber Crime Wing uses the Department of Telecommunications' CEIR platform to trace devices more efficiently. Major divisions including Katihar, Alipurduar, Rangiya, Lumding and Tinsukia have played key roles in these recoveries, resulting in a significant number of phones being reunited with their owners.

Across the divisions, RPF personnel have handed over 146 recovered mobile phones to rightful owners, while several cases were transferred to the Government Railway Police as per procedure. Katihar and Lumding have recorded strong performances in owner returns, whereas Alipurduar transferred the highest number of recovered devices to GRP. Phones that could not be immediately linked to owners are being safely stored at respective RPF posts pending verification.

NFR officials stated that the systematic use of technology ensures accountability and transparency in managing passenger property. The RPF has urged passengers to promptly report the loss of mobile phones or valuables through RPF posts or the Rail Madad helpline to enable faster recovery. The Northeast Frontier Railway reiterated its commitment to maintaining a secure and passenger-friendly travel environment across its network.

## Woman killed, another injured in elephant attack

**HT Correspondent**  
**NAGAON, Nov 24:** A woman was killed and another seriously injured after two wild elephants attacked them during a morning walk at Rangolmukh near Kathiatoli in Nagaon district on Monday.

The victims, Ripu Mani Das and Madhabi Das were confronted by the elephants when they were out early in the morning. Ripu Mani Das died on the spot from her injuries, while Madhabi Das was rushed to hospital and is reported to be out of danger.

A herd of elephants is believed to have descended from the Kandali hills to graze on paddy fields and has reportedly been creating panic in the area for more than two weeks.

Local residents have urged the forest department to take immediate steps to drive the herd back to the forest and demanded compensation for the family of the deceased. The incident has triggered shock and concern among villagers, who are seeking swift action to prevent further tragedies.

## Lachit Divas celebrated across Assam

*Tribute to Ahom hero Lachit Borphukan with ceremonies to honour his legacy*

**HT Correspondent**  
**SIVASAGAR, Nov 24:** Bir Lachit Borphukan College marked Lachit Divas on Monday with a daylong programme that began with educationist Dipali Chaliha lighting the ceremonial lamp before the statue of Lachit Borphukan. Inaugurating the meeting, Chaliha said students and teachers must continue to regard the Ahom general as a symbol of heroism and patriotism.

College principal Dr Pankaj Hazarika, in his welcome address, urged everyone to work with dedication for the uplift of the Assamese community, drawing parallels with the resilience of the Jewish people. Prof Navajyoti Sharma anchored the programme and led the chorus singing.

Guest speaker Prof Pabitra Bora of SPP College, Nami noted that debates over the historical presence of Bagha Hazarika were secondary to the fact that 18 Hazarikas assisted Lachit Borphukan during the Battle of Sarighat. He added that the recently discovered human remains near Nagaon could possibly belong to some of the 10,000 soldiers who perished in the Battle of Alaboi.

Prof Boloram Das of Gargaon College emphasised the importance of remembering the military brilliance of Lachit Borphukan and Aton Buragohain, whose leadership defeated the Mughal forces led by Ram Singh at Sarighat.



Former Commerce College principal Kartick Dutta released the souvenir, while Manoj Kr Borthakur garlanded the statue. The event was attended by Dipali Neog, Bibhuti Chetia, Arnob Changmai, Manjumala Sharma, Dhruvajyoti Borthakur, Aparajita Sharma, Dr Santanu Buragohain, Pinki Das, Jintu Saikia, Daisiryani Saikia, Khirao Bora, Asabuddin Ahmed and Purna Phulkonwar. Dr Simanta Barua offered the vote of thanks.

**Our Tezpur Correspondent adds:** The Assam Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chitra Parishad (AJYCP) observed Lachit Divas in Tezpur with tributes at Assam's first statue of Lachit Borphukan, installed in 1987 by the Sonitpur district committee. Tezpur MLA Prithiraj Rabha, District Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das and former AJYCP leaders, including Santanu

Baruah, Jatin Bora and Leela Bora, paid homage at the statue in front of Nehru Maidan.

Former AJYCP president and Chief Advisor Rana Pratap Baruah urged renaming Nehru Maidan as Lachit Bakori and called for justice for singer Zubeen Garg. He highlighted AJYCP's ongoing commitment since 1978 to honor Assam's national heroes and uphold Lachit Borphukan's values.

DC Das described Lachit as "the embodiment of Assamese courage" and praised the community's progress inspired by such figures. The programme began with AJYCP flag hoisting by district advisor Mrigul Kumar Sarma.

Meanwhile, Maharshi Vidya Mandir celebrated Lachit Divas with processions, songs, dances, speeches, and dramatizations of Lachit's valor under Principal Rekha Jaiswal's guidance.

## 4th volume of Imran Shah's writings released



**HT Correspondent**  
**SIVASAGAR, Nov 24:** The fourth volume of Padmashree awardee and former Asom Sahitya Sabha president Imran Shah's writings was released on his 93rd birthday at a function held at his Dhai Ali residence on Saturday. The event drew a large gathering of well-wishers, admirers and family members.

The volume was formally released by Sivasagar University vice chancellor Dr Mahadev Patgiri, Jagannath Baruah University vice chancellor Dr Jyoti Prasad Saikia, former Asom Sahitya Sabha vice president Padmashree Prahlad Tasha and former Sivasagar College professor Ghana Hazarika. Several organisations, including Sivasagar Jila Sahitya Sabha, Rangpur Sahitya Sabha and Arunodoi Sahitya Sabha, felicitated the renowned poet, storyteller, footballer and former professor on the occasion, wishing him good health and a long life. Expressing his gratitude, Shah said he had nothing special to add on the day but urged young people to study with sincerity so they can contribute meaningfully to society while pursuing their individual aspirations.

## Over 15,000 fans attend Northeast's first major Comic Con

# Guwahati Comic Con debuts with high-octane pop culture celebration

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 24:** The inaugural edition of Guwahati Comic Con concluded on Sunday with an energetic display of pop culture, creativity and fandom, drawing more than 15,000 visitors over two days at the Arjun Bhogeshwar Baruah Sports Complex. Presented by Maruti Suzuki Arena and powered by Crunchyroll, the maiden event became a vibrant gathering point for comic readers, illustrators, creators, cosplayers, anime enthusiasts and pop culture fans from across the Northeast.

The second day featured a packed lineup, including a special session marking 45 years of Amar Chitra Katha and discussions on its cultural legacy. It also saw the launch of World of Butterfingers Vol 2 by Khyrunnisa A and Abhijeet Kini, along with the debut of

"Where We Left Off", an indie comic addressing climate reality by Nikhil Kamath and Kini. A Wingstar activity by Tinkle added an interactive element for younger participants.

Legendary Archie Comics creator Bill Golliver hosted an artists' session, engaging the audience with live sketching and storytelling. A musical tribute to singer Zubeen Garg by Once Fly Rock left attendees emotional, while stand-up comedian Anirban Dasgupta delivered a crowd-pleasing set. Artist EPR Iyer closed the performance lineup with a powerful mix of rap, poetry and social commentary.

The event wrapped up with what organisers described as Guwahati's biggest cosplay showdown—the Indian Championship of Cosplay 2026: Guwahati Qualifier. Cos-



players showcased detailed portrayals of characters ranging from Red Hood and Deadpool to popular anime icons such as Mao Mao (The Apothecary Diaries), Zenitsu

(Demon Slayer) and Amane Misa (Death Note). Characters like Anya (Spy x Family), Aglaea (Honkai: Star Rail) and Capitano (Genshin Impact) also made ap-

pearances. Arshy Deori, cosplaying as Nikke won the qualifier round, taking home a ₹ 50,000 prize along with merchandise and a spot in the national championship.

With Guwahati Comic Con closing its debut edition, the excitement now shifts to the Delhi Comic Con scheduled from December 5 to 7. Comic Con India CEO Shefali Johnson said the overwhelming response from fans made the maiden edition unforgettable, highlighting the warmth and creativity of the Northeast's pop culture community.

NODWIN Gaming co-founder and MD Akshat Rathee described the event as a long-awaited milestone, calling Guwahati Comic Con the beginning of a sustained commitment to nurture the region's talent and passion for pop culture.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

One that would have the fruit must climb the tree.  
—Thomas Fuller

## SC advisory under Article 143

Though the advisory opinion given by the five-judges Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India under Article 143 of the Constitution of India is not binding, it is likely to have far reaching implications influencing the future conducts of the Executive, the Judiciary, the Governors, and the President of the country, apart from the political conducts of the ruling parties in the states and the Centre. It is simply because, the Supreme Court's opinion carries significant weight of a constitutional authority. The judgement on the Presidential Reference that sought clarification around whether judiciary can set timelines for the President and Governors of the States to act on bills. The reference was made in the context of an earlier judgement of April 11, 2025 of a Division Bench of the Supreme Court comprised of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan in the State of Tamil Nadu vs the Governor of Tamil Nadu and others. The Division Bench had set a guideline including timeline for governors for actions on bills passed by the Legislature of the State. It is important to mention here that the Constitution Bench had already clarified that it was only giving an "advisory opinion" under Article 143, but not functioning as an appellate body over its earlier division-bench, that had fixed a timeline of 3-months, and failure to comply with the timeline would result in a deemed assent.

The Constitution Bench reasoned that such usurpation of powers of the Governor or President violates the constitutional separation of powers. It said that the Governor's discretion under Article 200 is justiciable to some extent, but with limits. The Governors cannot withhold assent indefinitely, but the Court won't micromanage how fast exactly assent must be given via rigid time-bound orders. Nevertheless, the Bench also underscored that Article 361, relating to immunity of Governors, does not completely shield the Governor from judicial review in respect of assent power. However, the Constitution Bench said that the actions of President or Governors with respect to a bill cannot be agitated before Court. Action before court or judicial review will lie only when the bill becomes law. It also clarified if the Governor does not act within a reasonable timeline under Article 200, then constitutional court can exercise limited judicial review.

By rejecting strict timeline, the Constitution Bench restores a significant measure of discretion to Governors and the President. It will give more breathing room to them in handling the legislations sent to them for assent. Although the Court allows some judicial scrutiny, its refusal to mandate strict timelines may limit remedies for states that feel blocked by the Governor's inaction. States may find it harder to force the hand of their Governor.

# Brindabani Bastra: Assam's sacred silk

Brindabani bastra is one of the most beautiful and sacred textiles ever woven in India. People also call it Vrindavani vastra, which means the cloth of Vrindavan, the holy land where Lord Krishna spent his childhood. This extraordinary piece of cloth was created almost five hundred years ago in Assam, in the far east of India, and it still amazes everyone who sees it today. The story of this cloth is a story of deep devotion, amazing skill, and the magic of art that can carry an entire world inside a few metres of fabric.

Long ago, in the sixteenth century, a great Vaishnava saint named Srimanta Sankardev lived in Assam. He wanted every person, rich or poor, high caste or low caste, to feel close to Lord Krishna. At that time most religious pictures and stories were kept inside temples and only priests or rich people could see them. Sankardev thought this was not right. He believed that Krishna's love was for everyone. So he found many new ways to bring Krishna's stories to ordinary people. He wrote beautiful plays called Ankiya Naat, started a form of dance and drama called Bhaona, and created prayer halls called Namghar where everyone could sit together and sing Krishna's name. Among all these gifts he gave to the people, the Brindabani bastra stands as the largest and most breathtaking.

Sankardev and his favourite disciple Madhavdev decided to make something never seen before. They wanted to weave the whole life of Krishna on a single piece of cloth. Imagine trying to paint an entire book on one long scroll, but instead of painting, they used threads. The cloth they planned was twelve layers thick in some places because they used so many colours and threads to create depth and shadow. When finished, the complete bastra was more than sixty metres long, that is longer than two cricket pitches placed end to end. It was made of fine mulberry silk produced by a special worm found only in Assam, the muga silkworm. Muga silk has a natural golden shine that never fades, even after hundreds of years. In sunlight it glows like liquid gold.

The master weaver who actually wove this miracle under the guidance of Sankardev and Madhavdev was a man named Chahni Konwar. Day after day, month after month, he sat at his loom with twelve to fifteen young boys helping him. They used more than sixty shuttles at the same time to carry different coloured threads across the cloth. Every small figure, every leaf, every wave in the Yamuna river was carefully woven, not embroidered later. That means the picture grew at the same time as the cloth itself. There are no stitches



on the back side, only smooth silk. This technique is called lampas weave and it needs perfect timing and endless patience.

When you walk along the cloth and look closely, you feel as if you are walking through Krishna's life. The story starts from the moment Krishna is born in a prison in Mathura. You see King Kans sitting on his throne, angry and afraid because a voice from the sky told him that his sister's eighth child would kill him. Then you see baby Krishna being carried secretly across the Yamuna river in a basket by his father Vasudev while a terrible storm rages. The great snake Shesha spreads his hoods to protect the child from the rain. A little further, Krishna grows up in Gokul with Yashoda and Nanda. You can see him stealing butter with his friends, sitting on Yashoda's lap while she combs his curly hair, or playing the flute under a kadamba tree while cows listen quietly.

As you keep walking, the scenes become more exciting. Krishna lifts Govardhan hill

### DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Satyabrata Borah

from Indra's anger. Rain falls in thick silver threads woven with shining silk. Krishna dances on the hoods of the terrible snake Kaliya who was poisoning the Yamuna river. The wives of Kaliya beg Krishna to spare their husband's life. In another part, Krishna plays *Holi* with Radha and the gopis, throwing bright red and yellow colour that seems to fly out of the cloth even today. The famous *Rasa* dance is there too, where Krishna multiplies himself so that every gopi feels he is dancing only with her. You can almost hear the ankle

bells and the sweet sound of the flute.

What makes the bastra even more special is the way the artists showed nature. Peacocks spread their feathers in blue and green that look real enough to touch. Elephants, deer, and monkeys play among lotuses and flowering trees. The Yamuna river flows across many panels, sometimes calm and sometimes stormy. Birds fly in perfect formation. Every leaf has tiny veins, every flower has delicate petals. The weavers used only six or seven basic colours, red, yellow, green, blue, cream, black, and the golden muga itself, yet they created hundreds of shades by mixing threads cleverly.

Sankardev wanted this cloth to be used in a special way. During his plays, actors would hold it up behind the stage like a giant curtain. As the story moved forward, different parts of the cloth would be shown to the audience. People who had never travelled outside their village could suddenly see Mathura, Vrindavan, Gokul, and the forests where Krishna played. For many, this was the first time they ever saw pictures of the gods they loved so much. Tears would roll down their cheeks because they felt Krishna was standing right in front of them.

Sadly, the complete sixty metre cloth does not exist in one piece anymore. Over the centuries it was cut into smaller sections. Some parts were taken away by collectors, some were given as royal gifts, and some simply wore out with time. Today the longest surviving piece, about twelve metres, is kept safely in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Another beautiful portion is in the Calico Museum in Ahmedabad. A few smaller fragments are in Paris and in private collections. In Assam itself,

people are very sad that the largest part of their greatest treasure is far away.

Yet the magic of Brindabani bastra lives on. In Assam, skilled weavers still try to copy small sections of it. Young boys and girls learn the old songs that Sankardev wrote while the cloth was being woven. In Namghars on special days, people unroll modern copies of the bastra and explain every scene to children. Scholars keep studying the tiny details and discover new stories hidden inside. For example, in one corner you can find Sankardev and Madhavdev themselves drawn as small figures watching Krishna's dance, as if they are saying thank you to the Lord for giving them the power to create this wonder.

The cloth teaches us many things. It shows that art can be prayer. When the weavers sat at the loom, they were not just making a beautiful thing, they were praying with every thread. It shows that ordinary materials like silk and colour can become immortal when they carry love inside them. Most of all, it shows that Krishna's love crosses every boundary. A piece of cloth born in a small village of Assam travelled across oceans and centuries and still makes hearts melt wherever it goes.

If you ever get a chance to stand in front of even a small piece of Brindabani bastra, do not rush. Stand quietly. Look at baby Krishna smiling in his mother's lap. Listen to the silence of five hundred years. You will feel that time has stopped and that somewhere the flute is still playing softly by the banks of the Yamuna. That is the real miracle of this golden cloth woven with devotion. It does not simply show Krishna's life, it brings Krishna's presence close to us, even today, even tomorrow, as long as there are eyes to see and hearts to love.

## Nationalism and Politics in Assam



By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Nationalism for the Assamese people is not merely an emotional reaction or a transient political slogan; rather, it is a profound historical foundation, a cohesive cultural consciousness, and an enduring intellectual force born of geopolitical challenges. This force has played an indispensable and decisive role in shaping every political equation of the state, questions of social cohesion, and the trajectory of economic development. The concept of this nationalism reflects the commitment of Assam's people to preserving their distinct identity and dignity, a commitment grounded in the inclusive and assimilative foundation of their culture. Every major or minor decision in the current political landscape, every question of development, and every effort to protect cultural distinctiveness—all have their roots in this deep national consciousness. The evolution of this consciousness has been extremely complex and multi-layered, as various communities searched for a common identity. This journey has at times been inspired by ideals of independence and at other times shaken by struggles arising from demographic pressure and economic disparity. It is this eternal struggle that forms the core spirit of Assamese nationalism—a struggle that is not merely about the transfer of political power but has transformed into a continuous effort to ensure the cultural survival and future security of the Assamese nation. Precisely because of this profound intellectual depth, Assamese nationalism has always functioned as a driving force in the political sphere, compelling political parties to align their ideologies and programmes with the aspirations of the people.

From a historical perspective, the depth of nationalism in Assam is rooted in the ideals of the six-hundred-year-

long independent rule of the Ahom kings. That administrative system sowed the seeds of a powerful national entity and pride that transcended linguistic, religious, and tribal divisions, seeds that later became the foundation of modern national consciousness. The Ahom administration brought diverse tribes and linguistic groups under a common administrative and cultural framework, giving rise to the concept of a collective Assamese society in which every smaller entity received its due dignity and place. The independence of that era instilled in the Assamese mind a lasting sense of statehood and the notion of sovereign control over their own land, providing a psychological foundation for later resistance against outsiders. Yet when British colonial power annexed the territory in 1826, Assam lost its political and economic independence. British administration transformed the region into a structure controlled by outsiders, initiating widespread exploitation of Assam's natural resources while local people were pushed to the margins in administration and economy. When colonial authorities attempted to diminish the status of the local language and culture, the Assamese society for the first time experienced a deep fear of losing its identity, and from that fear emerged an organised resistance. As a result, the Assamese middle class and intelligentsia waged an intellectual and social struggle through literary movements to preserve and re-establish their language and literature. This movement forged a collective and cohesive Assamese identity, which became the primary foundation of modern political nationalism. This constructive struggle paved the way for a common goal and consciousness that would later give birth to a powerful political movement.

After independence, Assamese nationalism acquired a new, more confrontational and complex dimension

that was no longer confined to demands for cultural protection; its primary causes were demographic crisis and deep dissatisfaction with central government policies. Uncontrolled and massive migration from neighbouring countries and other parts of India in the decades following Partition profoundly affected the state's demographic structure and the economic balance of its society. These demographic pressures, combined with complaints that Assam received no fair price for its natural resources under central economic policies, that industrialisation lagged behind, and that unemployment grew rampant, created a deep sense of deprivation and discontent within the national consciousness. The perception of economic disparity and population pressure gave birth to a new kind of nationalism that was not merely emotional but placed greater emphasis on asserting political, economic, and social rights. Against this backdrop arose the prolonged mass movement centred on the core demand of detecting and deporting foreign nationals—the highest and most comprehensive manifestation of this nationalism. The movement intensified the perception that the very existence of the Assamese nation was under threat, resulting in a powerful political and social struggle for the rights of indigenous people, cultural protection, and opposition to illegal immigration. This struggle completely altered the subsequent political trajectory and helped create a historic document. This very issue gave birth to the massive and sensitive process of preparing the National Register of Citizens, a process that deeply touched the life of every citizen in the state. The militant spirit of nationalism continues to exert unrelenting pressure on political leadership to fulfil their promises and prioritise national interests.

The spread of the Assam Movement

and the consequent rise of regional political parties represented a direct political expression of nationalist consciousness. When the people realised that national political parties could neglect Assam's regional interests for the sake of broader national interests, they chose the regional forces born of the movement as their independent political platform. These parties represented national pride and promised to present the people's hopes and aspirations powerfully on the national stage. They sought to win voters' hearts by applying nationalism as a political ideology and became partners in power. Yet with the passage of time, after assuming the responsibilities of governance, these regional forces often failed to fully implement nationalist demands due to administrative challenges, economic constraints, and conflicts with the central government. They frequently faced failure when attempting to translate the emotional rhetoric of the movement era into practical government policy. Consequently, the foundation of nationalist politics began to weaken, frustration steadily grew among the public, internal conflicts and divisions appeared among regional forces, the political landscape of Assam became more complicated, and the path was cleared for national political parties to return to the centre of power in the state.

This internal division exposes one of the deepest and most complex aspects of Assamese nationalism—its multi-ethnic and multi-lingual character. Within the broader concept of the greater Assamese nation, the state's various tribal and linguistic communities live with their own distinct languages, cultures, and identities. Among these communities too, a separate consciousness of self-identity and demands for dignity arise. Because mainstream Assamese nationalism has sometimes been unable to fully encompass these smaller identities, those communities have launched movements for their own autonomous governance, political rights, and protection. These tribal people created powerful political platforms demanding recognition of their distinct identity, language, and regional autonomy, thereby challenging the notion of unity of the greater Assamese nation. These internal conflicts present a picture of a fractured nationalism in which the recognition and dignity of various smaller national identities become more important than a singular, overarching national identity. As a result, autonomous councils were formed in the state and the process of decentralisation of power began, with the aim of honouring the self-identity and political aspirations of every community. Maintaining a delicate balance among these multi-dimensional nationalist forces remains the most difficult challenge of contemporary Assamese poli-

tics. For political leadership, this situation necessitates a sensitive and far-sighted stance that can protect the dignity of every group.

Language and culture have always played a pivotal role as the core foundation of Assamese nationalism. The Assamese language is not merely a medium of communication; it is the soul and symbol of Assamese pride, and questions regarding its status and expansion have always given rise to political conflict. From the colonial period to the present day, the demand for preservation and establishment of this language has remained the focal point of nationalist movements. Yet at present, the commitment of other tribal and linguistic communities to their own languages and their demands for preservation pose a new challenge to establishing Assamese as the official language of the state. For a stable political environment, it is essential to maintain the primacy of Assamese while simultaneously working in parallel for the dignity and development of all tribal languages. The influence of nationalism is equally evident in the cultural sphere. Assam's folk culture, traditions, and heritage are politically utilised, thereby strengthening nationalist sentiment. However, efforts to create a common cultural platform by giving due respect to the diversity within this cultural heritage have not yet been fully successful. The absence of cultural equality and harmony sometimes intensifies internal conflicts and challenges the concept of national unity. Moreover, the course of Assamese nationalism has been profoundly influenced by the policies and positions of central political forces. New national laws, constitutional amendments, and especially decisions regarding the distribution of natural resources frequently create conflict between Assam's regional interests and nationalist sentiments. Central government policies concerning the state's natural resources, hydroelectric projects, and industrial development have instilled a sense of deprivation among the Assamese people. This perception of deprivation reinvigorates nationalist movements and inspires demands for greater power and autonomy from the centre. These conflicts are not merely political; they are deeply economic and psychological, because the people of Assam feel that they have the primary right over their own resources and that the central government has failed to accord those rights due respect. This very issue creates an eternal conflict between nationalist forces and central authority. Although border security, inter-state boundary disputes, and growing militancy increase the need for central intervention, they also raise fears of threats to regional autonomy, resulting in a difficult political equation.

In recent times, Assamese nationalism has faced a new struggle to maintain its existence and relevance amid the influences of globalisation and modern technology. The revolution in information technology, easier communication with the rest of the world, and economic liberalisation have given a new direction to the aspirations of the younger generation. They seek not only to remain bound by the struggles and emotional rhetoric of the past but also demand promises from political leadership for a better life, employment opportunities, and economic progress. This changed mindset has compelled political parties to introduce a new kind of flexibility in their programmes. The nationalism that previously took only a militant form has now become linked with demands for economic self-reliance and fair distribution of resources. This attraction toward economic development and higher living standards has forced political parties to adopt practical paths of development rather than merely speaking of ethnicity, land, and hearth. Furthermore, the impact of recent national policies and laws has compelled a redefinition of the concept of Assamese nationalism. Responses to processes such as the National Register of Citizens and special national laws make it clear that Assamese nationalist sentiment remains deeply affected by the issue of outsiders and that political stability in the state is impossible without its resolution. In this new equation, the success of political parties depends on how well they can connect the emotions of old militant nationalism with the realities of present-day development and economic progress.

The future of Assamese nationalism depends on liberating it from narrow emotional rhetoric and transforming it into a positive, creative, and comprehensively development-oriented ideal. For this transformation, political leadership must recognise the distinct identities of all communities in the state, grant them equal dignity and rights, and lay the foundation for a common and cohesive Assamese society. Rather than remaining confined to raising voices only against outsiders, this nationalism must work internally for social justice, economic equality, and good governance. Only by giving importance to fundamental issues such as education, health, and employment and improving the living standards of every citizen can nationalism establish its relevance and legitimacy. For a strong and stable Assam, it is absolutely essential that the present political forces remain committed to tradition while being far-sighted toward the future and sensitive to collective interests. It is through this path of harmony and progress that the politics of Assam will be able to create a new history—one that will always seek a delicate balance between the protection of national identity and political stability.

# Time to Refresh India's Inflation Basket

By: Satyabrata Borah

Imagine walking through a bustling market in Mumbai or a quiet village bazaar in Punjab, haggling over the price of tomatoes or rice. For most Indians, these everyday moments are a snapshot of life, where the cost of basics like food and fuel can make or break a month's budget. Now picture this: the official number that tracks those rising costs, the Consumer Price Index or CPI, is based on what people were buying back in 2012. That's over a decade ago, when smartphones were novelties, online shopping was just taking off, and a family meal didn't involve ordering groceries via an app. In a country that's changed so much, relying on yesterday's shopping list to measure today's inflation feels like using an old map to navigate a new city. It's no wonder people feel the pinch more than the numbers suggest. India urgently needs to revise its CPI to make it a true mirror of modern life, and the recent data drop for October 2025 shows just how pressing this is.

Let's start with what the CPI really is, in plain terms. Think of it as a shopping basket filled with the things an average Indian household buys: rice, vegetables, rent, school fees, petrol, even a haircut or a bus ticket. Economists weigh these items based on how much people spend on them, then track how prices change over time. If the total cost of that basket goes up by 5 percent from last year, that's the inflation rate. It's not just trivia; this number guides big decisions. The Reserve Bank of India uses it to set interest rates, deciding if loans get cheaper to boost spending or pricier to cool down prices. Governments tie salary hikes for workers and pensions

to it, and even welfare schemes like dearness allowances depend on these figures. When the CPI is off, it's like steering a massive economy with foggy headlights, risking wrong turns that hurt everyone from farmers to factory workers.

The latest numbers hit like a plot twist in a familiar story. In October 2025, India's CPI inflation plunged to a mere 0.25 percent, the lowest in over a decade. Food prices, which make up nearly half the basket, actually fell by 3.7 percent year on year, dragging the whole index down. Sounds like great news, right? Cheaper groceries mean more money in pockets. But hold on. Dig a little deeper, and it's clear this low figure is more smoke and mirrors than reality. Last October, food inflation was scorching at 9.7 percent, thanks to supply glitches and weather woes. That sky high base effect made this year's numbers look artificially tame, even as vegetable prices started creeping up in local markets by late 2025. Families aren't celebrating; they're still grumbling about bills that don't match the headlines. Surveys by the RBI itself paint a starker picture: in September 2025, people reported feeling 7.4 percent inflation in their daily lives. That's a chasm between what folks sense at the checkout counter and what the index claims. When official stats whisper calm but wallets scream stress, trust erodes, and policymakers scramble in the dark.

Why has this gap widened to a gulf? The root lies in the CPI's outdated bones. Its base year is 2012, frozen in time when India was a different beast. Back then, a typical household spent about 46 percent of its budget on food and drinks, a hefty chunk reflecting our agrarian roots and love for home cooked meals. Fast forward to 2025, and lifestyles have



flipped. Urban millennials order sushi via Zomato, rural families stream movies on Jio, and even elders consult doctors online. The 2023 Household Consumption Expenditure Survey shows food's share has shrunk to around 39 percent in rural areas and even less in cities, while spending on health, education, and digital services has ballooned. Yet the CPI clings to old weights, giving cereals a whopping 9.67 percent sway, as if we're still rationing dal in the 80s. Items like air conditioners, e bikes, or OTT subscriptions? Barely a blip, or missing altogether. And housing? It's based on outdated urban rents collected twice a year, ignoring the rental boom in booming suburbs or the free government flats many now

call home.

This mismatch isn't harmless. It distorts everything. Take monetary policy: the RBI's committee meets in December 2025 to mull rate cuts, eyeing that suspiciously low 0.25 percent. Cut too soon on faulty data, and inflation could rebound like a boomerang, hitting the poor hardest. Delay, and growth stalls, jobs vanish. Wages suffer too; millions of government employees and pensioners await dearness allowance hikes tied to CPI, but if the index underplays real costs, their raises lag, squeezing fixed incomes. Then there's the public trust factor. When a Delhi autowallah pays 20 percent more for cooking gas but hears inflation is near zero, he doesn't blame veggies; he blames the system. In a democracy like ours, that breeds

cynicism, making it tougher to rally support for tough reforms.

The anomalies don't stop at weights. The methodology needs a refresh to capture India's digital pulse. Prices for flights or trains now fluctuate on apps, not just counters, yet the CPI scouts markets manually. E-commerce giants like Amazon could feed real time data on everything from diapers to data packs, but they're sidelined. Freebies under schemes like PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana flood homes with zero cost grains, yet the index treats them as paid market buys, skewing food inflation low. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, or MoSPI, is pondering zero pricing for these, but debates rage: include them to reflect true affordability, or exclude to avoid

muddying market signals? Housing gets another overhaul; the current index lumps in fancy government quarters, inflating urban figures. A proposed shift to actual rents, collected monthly nationwide, would ground it in reality, especially with post-pandemic rent hikes.

Experts have sounded the alarm for years, but 2025's data lit a fire. The Hindu called it an urgent update, warning that without quick fixes, the RBI risks basing billion dollar calls on relics. Economists like those at IDFC First Bank argue a new basket would tame headline volatility by dialing down food's dominance and amping up stable services. International benchmarks back this: in the US, food is just 13 percent of CPI; here, it's double, making our inflation swing wildly with monsoons or truckers' strikes. Updating isn't rocket science; its routine elsewhere, with base years refreshed every five to ten years. India's last big shift was in 2012, and even then, it took ages. Now, with the economy eyeing a \$5 trillion dream, accurate gauges are non negotiable.

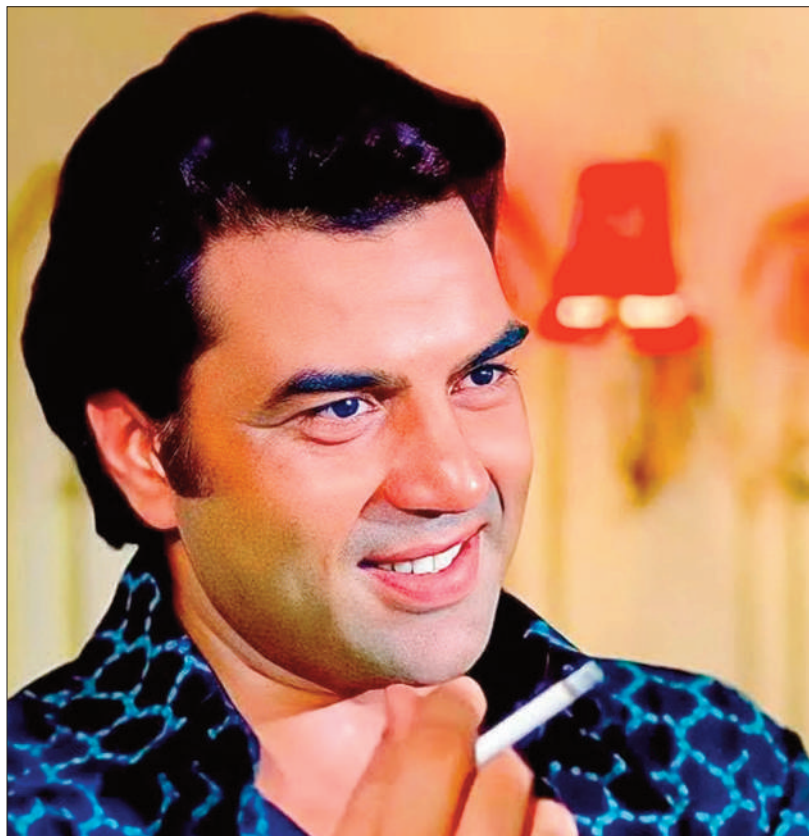
So, what's the path forward? MoSPI has a plan, and it's ambitious. They're eyeing 2024 as the new base year, drawing weights from the fresh 2023-24 Household Consumption Survey for a snapshot of today's spender. The basket expands: hello, airfares from IndiGo apps, Netflix plans, even e rickshaw charges. Weights shift dramatically; food drops by up to 8 points, freeing space for health (up from 5.9 percent) and transport (boosted for urban commuters). Rural urban splits get sharper, with village voices louder in the mix. Data collection goes high tech: GST portals for unorganized sector prices, UPI trails for daily spends, and partnerships with

Flipkart for gadget costs. For free PDS grains, a hybrid approach: zero price in the base but track market alternatives to gauge choice. This isn't tweaking; it's a rebuild, with new software to crunch numbers faster and fairer.

The timeline? MoSPI promises the revamped series by April 2026, the first quarter of the next fiscal year. That's soon enough to influence the RBI's 2026 roadmap and wage revisions. But urgency calls for speed: pilot tests now, stakeholder chats open, and no election year delays. Imagine the payoff: an RBI that trusts its data to ease rates without fear, workers whose pay slips match market pain, and citizens who nod at news, not scoff. A modern CPI could even spotlight green shifts, weighting solar panels or organic produce higher as India greening up.

Of course, challenges lurk. Collecting rents from a million homes monthly? Daunting, but doable with apps and local nets. Balancing freebie impacts without gaming the system? Tricky, yet essential for equity. And ensuring rural data isn't drowned by urban buzz? Critical, since 65 percent of us live outside metros. Get it right, though, and this revision becomes a cornerstone of Viksit Bharat, proving stats can serve the street.

Revising the CPI isn't about fancy equations; it's about honoring the real India, the one where a mother in Kerala budgets for her kid's coding class alongside idlis, or a farmer in Haryana eyes diesel costs for his tractor. We've outgrown the 2012 basket; it's time to fill one that fits. Do it now, and we'll just measure inflation, we'll master it, paving smoother roads for growth, fairness, and that elusive sense of economic ease. The market's waiting, haggling included.



By: Dipak Kurmi

The curtains have fallen on one of Indian cinema's most illustrious careers. Dharmendra, the man affectionately called "Dharamji" by millions, passed away on November 24, 2025, at the age of 89 in Mumbai. His death came just fourteen days before his 90th birthday, ending a remarkable journey that spanned over six and a half decades in the Hindi film industry. The loss has left a void in Bollywood that seems impossible to fill, as India mourns the departure of its beloved "He-Man."

Dharmendra Kewal Krishan Deol was born on December 8, 1935, in Nasrali, a modest village in Ludhiana district, Punjab. His father, Kewal Krishan, worked as a headmaster at Government Senior Secondary School in Lalton Kalan, Ludhiana, where the young boy received his early education. Growing up in the village of Sahneval, Dharmendra's childhood was steeped in traditional Punjabi values and simple living. He completed his matriculation from Phagwara in 1952, when Punjab's educational institutions fell under Panjab University, Chandigarh. Nothing in his humble beginnings suggested that this village boy would one day become one of the most handsome and successful actors in Indian cinema history.

By 1952, Dharmendra married Prakash Kaur before venturing into the film world. This union gave him four children—two sons, Sunny Deol and Bobby Deol, who would follow their father's footsteps into acting, and two daughters, Vijeta and Ajeeta. His entry into films came through winning Filmfare magazine's nationally organized new talent award, which prompted his move from Punjab to Mumbai. Though the film he was initially promised never got made, destiny had grander plans for him.

Dharmendra's film debut came in 1960 with Arjun Hingorani's romantic drama "Dil Bhi Tera Hum Bhi Tere." The film failed to create waves at the box office, but it marked the beginning of an extraordinary career. His first real suc-

cess arrived in 1961 with "Shola Aur Shabnam," followed by acclaimed performances in "Anpadh" in 1962 and Bimal Roy's "Bandini" in 1963, which earned the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi. These early films showcased his natural acting ability and screen presence.

The year 1964 proved transformative. Starring opposite Rajendra Kumar and Saira Banu in "Aaye Milan Ki Bela," Dharmendra played the antagonist with such conviction that he earned a Filmfare Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor despite not being the hero. The same year brought "Haqeeqat," Chetan Anand's powerful war drama based on the 1962 Sino-Indian War. The film's success and its iconic patriotic song "Kar Chale Ham Fida" established Dharmendra as a serious actor capable of carrying heavy dramatic material.

His transformation into a bonafide star came in 1966 with "Phool Aur Patthar," where he starred alongside the legendary Meena Kumari. The film topped box office charts and earned Dharmendra his first Best Actor nomination at Filmfare. That year alone, he appeared in several hits including "Mamta," "Devar," "Anupama," and "Aaye Din Bahar Ke." His performance in "Anupama" was so nuanced that he received special recognition at the 14th National Film Awards.

By 1968, Dharmendra had become a major star. The mystery thriller "Shikhar" and spy thriller "Ankhen" both emerged as blockbusters, with "Ankhen" becoming the year's highest-grossing film. During this period, when superstar Rajesh Khanna's meteoric rise caused career setbacks for many established actors, Dharmendra remained unshaken. His performance in Hrishikesh Mukherjee's "Satyakam" in 1969 is still considered his finest work—a portrayal of moral integrity that won the film a National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi.

The 1970s witnessed Dharmendra's ascent to superstardom. In 1970, he delivered four major hits and began his legendary on-screen partnership with Hema Malini. Their chemistry in films like

## Dharamji: A legend who defined Bollywood's golden age

"Tum Haseen Main Jawan" and "Sharafat" captivated audiences. However, 1971's "Mera Gaon Mera Desh" truly defined his career trajectory. The film became an All-Time Blockbuster and established Dharmendra as Bollywood's premier action hero, fundamentally shifting the industry's focus from romance to action cinema.

The momentum continued with 1972's "Seeta Aur Geeta," where his pairing with Hema Malini created magic once again. These back-to-back successes catapulted him to the number one position among Hindi film stars, officially earning him superstar status. The year 1973 stands as possibly his best year professionally, with an astonishing string of hits including "Loafer," "Jheel Ke Us Paar," "Jugnu," "Yaadon Ki Baaraat," and "Kahani Kismat Ki." Notably, "Yaadon Ki Baaraat," written by Salim-Javed and directed by Nasir Hussain, is recognized as Indian cinema's first true masala film.

Then came 1975 and "Sholay"—the film that would define an entire generation's cinematic experience. Directed by Ramesh Sippy and starring Dharmendra alongside Amitabh Bachchan, Sanjeev Kumar, and Hema Malini, the film released on August 15, coinciding with Indian Independence Day. Initial

reviews were lukewarm and the first two weeks saw poor returns, but word-of-mouth transformed everything. From the third week onwards, "Sholay" became a phenomenon. It recorded an estimated 15 to 18 crore footfalls, making it the highest-grossing Indian film in terms of audience attendance—a record that stands even today. The film achieved 60 golden jubilees across India and ran continuously at Bombay's Minerva Theatre for over five years. Dharmendra's portrayal of Veeru, the lovable rogue who could make audiences laugh and cry within moments, became iconic.

The late 1970s and 1980s saw Dharmendra maintain his box office dominance. "Dharam Veer" in 1977 sold 32 million tickets in the Soviet Union alone. In 1987, he achieved an unprecedented feat by delivering eight successful films in one year, including "Hukumat," the year's highest-grossing film, and "Aag Hi Aag." This remarkable achievement, combined with his seven hits in 1973, made him the only actor in Hindi cinema history to twice deliver seven or more successful films in a single calendar year.

His personal life mirrored the drama of his films. After moving to Bombay, Dharmendra married actress Hema Malini despite already being married to Prakash Kaur. This controversial second marriage sparked rumors about religious conversion, though Dharmendra consistently maintained his Hindu faith. His professional and personal relationship with Hema Malini, spanning 31 films to-

gether, became one of Bollywood's most celebrated partnerships. They had two daughters—Esha Deol, who became an actress, and Ahana Deol, who worked as an assistant director.

As the 1990s brought younger stars to prominence, Dharmendra's leading man roles diminished. However, he made a strategic transition to character roles in the late 1990s. His appearance in Sohai Khan's "Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kya" in 1998 marked this shift successfully. In 2007, he delivered powerful performances in "Life in a Metro," "Apne" (where he acted alongside both his sons), and the cult classic "Johnny Gaddaar," proving his acting talent remained sharp.

The 2020s demonstrated that Dharmendra's appeal was timeless. His role in Karan Johar's 2023 film "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani" moved audiences deeply. The film grossed over ₹3.5 billion worldwide and won the National Film Award for Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment. His tender performance, particularly his rendition of "Abhi Na Jao Chhodkar," reminded viewers why they fell in love with him decades earlier. In 2024, he appeared in "Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya" alongside Shahid Kapoor and Kriti Sanon, which became a commercial success. His final film, "Ikki," a war drama about Second Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal, is scheduled for posthumous release on December 25, 2025.

Beyond acting, Dharmendra proved himself a successful producer. He established Vijayta Films in 1983, launching it with "Betaab," which introduced his son Sunny Deol to audiences and became 1983's second highest-grossing film. In 1990, he produced "Ghayal," also starring Sunny, which won seven Filmfare Awards including Best Film and a National Film Award. His 1995 production "Barsaat" was the costliest Indian film of its time, made specifically to launch his son Bobby Deol and Twinkle Khanna. Against all odds, this debut film became a superhit—a feat never repeated with newcomers.

Dharmendra also entered politics, serving as a Member of Parliament representing Bikaner, Rajasthan, from 2004 to 2009 for the Bharatiya Janata Party. Though criticized for poor attendance as he preferred focusing on films and farming, this stint showed his diverse interests. He judged the third season of "India Got Talent" in 2011, helping the show achieve record ratings. In 2023, he made his television acting debut playing Salim Chisti in "Taj: Divided by Blood."

The honors he received throughout his life reflected his immense cultural impact. The 1997 Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award ceremony saw him become emotional, noting that despite his successful career, he never won Best Actor. Presenting the award, Dilip

Kumar famously remarked that his only complaint to God would be why he wasn't made as handsome as Dharmendra. In 2012, India honored him with the Padma Bhushan, the nation's third-highest civilian award.

What distinguished Dharmendra wasn't merely his striking looks, though he was voted among the world's most handsome men in the mid-1970s. His versatility allowed seamless transitions between intense dramas like "Satyakam," light comedies like "Chupke Chupke," action spectacles like "Sholay," and romantic films. His screen presence combined physical strength with emotional vulnerability, creating a unique masculine ideal.

Industry colleagues consistently praised his humility. Salman Khan stated Dharmendra was the only person besides his father whom he consistently followed, admiring him even more than Dharmendra's own sons did. Jaya Bachchan revealed on "Koffee with Karan" that she was so starstruck meeting Dharmendra, whom she called a "Greek god," that she hid behind a sofa. Zeenat Aman called him her favorite co-star, praising both his looks and humble nature, while Madhuri Dixit described him as one of the most handsome persons she'd ever seen onscreen.

His final years brought health challenges. Between 2015 and 2020, he faced recurring issues including back pain and muscle strain requiring occasional hospitalization. In 2025, he underwent corneal transplant surgery. On October 31, 2025, breathing difficulties landed him in Breach Candy Hospital's ICU, though he was discharged after stabilization. On November 10, he was readmitted with respiratory issues, his condition becoming critical enough to require ventilator support.

The period surrounding his death was marked by confusion. On November 11, 2025, false reports of his death spread across social media and news channels, prompting condolences from Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and lyricist Javed Akhtar. His wife Hema Malini and

daughter Esha Deol quickly dismissed these rumors, condemning such irresponsible reporting. Discharged on November 12, Dharmendra returned to his Juhu home, where family members hoped for his recovery. However, twelve days later, on November 24, 2025, he passed away, plunging the nation into genuine mourning.

Karan Johar posted an emotional tribute calling it "the end of an era," writing that Dharmendra would always remain a bonafide legend whose absence left a hole that could never be filled. Family members and Bollywood celebrities gathered at Pawan Hans Crematorium in Mumbai, dressed in white mourning attire, to pay final respects.

Dharmendra's legacy in Indian cinema remains unmatched. Over 65 years, he worked in over 300 films, holding the record for the highest number of hit films in Hindi cinema. Box Office India listed him in their "Top Actors" rankings eighteen times between 1968 and 1987, with him topping the list four consecutive years from 1972 to 1975. His work shaped what it meant to be a Hindi film hero—dignified, emotionally accessible, and fundamentally decent.

He is survived by his first wife Prakash Kaur, sons Sunny and Bobby Deol, daughters Vijeta and Ajeeta, second wife Hema Malini, and daughters Esha and Ahana Deol. His grandson, Bobby's son, bears the name Dharam in his honor.

Dharmendra wasn't just a movie star—he was an emotion, an era, a symbol of Hindi cinema's magical golden age. His journey from a Punjabi village to becoming one of Indian cinema's most enduring icons exemplifies talent, perseverance, and art's transformative power. Though Indian cinema has lost one of its brightest stars, his films remain cultural treasures, capturing an era when heroes were kind, love was earnest, and cinema made people believe in the impossible. Dharamji's legend will remain eternal—forever the He-Man of our hearts. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmi@rediffmail.com)



# Indian Navy commissions anti-submarine warfare vessel INS Mahe to boost coastal defence

MUMBAI, Nov 24: The Indian Navy on Monday commissioned INS Mahe, the first of the Mahe-class anti-submarine warfare shallow-water craft, which will form the first line of coastal defence, integrating seamlessly with larger surface combatants, submarines, and aviation assets.

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi was the chief guest here at the commissioning ceremony of INS Mahe, marking the new generation of indigenous shallow-water combatants - sleek, swift and resolutely Indian.

INS Mahe's commissioning not only marks the induction of a potent new platform to the country's maritime order of battle, but it also reaffirms India's maritime capability to design, construct and field complex combatants with indigenous technologies, Gen Dwivedi said.

The commissioning will significantly augment the Indian Navy's ability to ensure near-seas dominance, strengthen the coastal security grid and safeguard India's maritime interests across the vast expanse of the country's littoral waters. It also reaffirms the Navy's steadfast transformation into a builder's Navy, the one that designs, constructs and sustains its own combat platform, he added.

An official said this was also the first time that an Army chief was present at the commissioning of a



naval ship.

Following the ceremony, Gen Dwivedi also awarded the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Commendation to the Navy personnel who played a key role in the commissioning of the ship, a rarity which will become more frequent in the days to come as the level of synergy among the three forces increases, the official added.

The Indian Navy plays an important role in the neighbourhood as well as in the global environment in far-off lands where the Army's efforts can play both a supplementary and a complementary role in soft and hard diplomacy, Gen Dwivedi said and referred to it as smart diplomacy.

power, stealth and mobility, it is designed to hunt submarines, conduct coastal patrols, and secure India's vital maritime approaches.

Fitted with advanced weapons, sensors, and communication systems enabling it to detect, track, and neutralise sub-surface threats with precision, the ship can sustain prolonged operations in shallow waters and features technologically advanced machinery and control systems, the Navy said.

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

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

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

Named after the historic coastal town of Mahe on the Malabar coast and a former French colony, the ship's crest features an 'Urumi' -- the flexible sword of Kalariyappattu, symbolising agility, precision, and lethal grace, it added.

The ship's mascot, the Cheeta, embodies speed and focus, while the motto "Silent Hunters" reflects the ship's stealth, vigilance, and unyielding readiness. (PTI)

With the ship's blend of fire-

## Synergy is armed forces' strength, Op Sindoer its apt example: Gen Dwivedi

MUMBAI, Nov 24: Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Monday said the strength of armed forces lies in synergy and Operation Sindoer is an apt example of this.

He was speaking during the commissioning of INS Mahe, the first of the Mahe-class anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft, in Mumbai.

"The strength of our armed forces lies in synergy," General Dwivedi said.

The sea, land, skies form the single continuum of national security and together the Army, Navy and the Air Force form the trinity of India's strategic strength. In the age of multi-domain operations, the country's ability to act in concert from the depths of the ocean to the highest frontier will determine the security influence of the In-

dian republic, he said.

The Indian armed forces, he further said, are in operation in every domain, from Ladakh to the Indian Ocean, from information warfare to joint logistics.

"Op (Operation) Sindoer was an apt example of this (the synergy of the armed forces)," the Army chief said.

India carried out military action under Operation Sindoer targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack in April, which claimed the lives of 26 persons. The Indian Army has launched a series of initiatives under an overall umbrella of transformation in which jointness and integration are important pillars, recognising that modern conflicts will be multi-domain, hybrid and require united national

strength, Gen Dwivedi said.

An official said this was also the first time that an Army chief was present at the commissioning of a naval ship. Following the commissioning of INS Mahe, Gen Dwivedi also awarded Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Commendation to the Navy personnel who played a key role in the commissioning of the ship, a rarity which will become more frequent in days to come as the level of synergy among the three forces increases, the official added.

The Indian Navy plays an important role in the neighbourhood as well as in the global environment in far-off lands where the Army's efforts can play both a supplementary and a complementary role in soft and hard diplomacy, Gen Dwivedi said and referred to it as smart diplomacy. (PTI)

## Sidda vs DKS: Pro-Shivakumar MLAs fly to Delhi, will continue if high command decides, says CM

BENGALURU, Nov 24: As the Siddaramaiah versus D K Shivakumar battle for the Chief Minister's post in Karnataka intensifies, more MLAs supporting the latter are dashing to Delhi in an apparent bid to hold parleys for his elevation while the incumbent said on Monday that he will continue in the top post if the party high command decides.

With six MLAs from the Shivakumar camp landing in Delhi and more likely to join them, besides those who had already visited the national capital, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the high command takes the ultimate call on the leadership change, and that it should be accepted by himself as well as his deputy.

"We will abide by the high command decision. If they decide I should continue (as CM), I will continue. Ultimately, whatever the high command decides, I should accept it. Shivakumar should also accept it," Siddaramaiah told reporters here. Asked if Shivakumar would become the CM, he said, "When I have said the high command will decide, you are asking me the same thing again."

The veteran leader's remarks came amidst supporters of Shivakumar, also the state Congress chief, flying to Delhi.

At least six legislators backing deputy CM Shivakumar landed in the national capital on Sunday night to meet Congress leaders, even as a rumoured power-sharing agreement between the top two leaders in 2023 has only fuelled the speculations. As the Congress government completed its 2.5 years of term on November 20, there have been speculations that there may be a CM change, which is being referred to by some as the "November revolution" in light of the power-sharing agreement between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar when the party won the 2023 Assembly polls. Incidentally,

former KPCC chief and Home Minister G Parameshwara has also thrown his hat in the ring, amid calls for a Dalit CM to take over the reins.

Besides the six pro-Shivakumar MLAs who are in Delhi now, few more legislators are likely to travel soon to pitch for the KPCC chief as CM, party sources said. The MLAs who are in Delhi are -- H C Balakrishna, K M Uday, Nayana Motamma, Iqbal Hussain, Sharath Bachegowd and Shivaganga Basavaraj, sources added.

Siddaramaiah had earlier met AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, who is in Bengaluru. The Congress chief is scheduled to travel to Delhi, and top party leader Rahul Gandhi is likely to return from abroad, sources said in an indication that the matter might be discussed between the two. Kharge has also stated that the Congress high command will decide on the matter. Last week, about 10 MLAs supporting Shivakumar travelled to New Delhi and met Kharge, as the Congress government completed 2.5 years in office on November 20. Shivakumar, however, had then said he was not aware of legislators travelling to Delhi to meet Kharge.

Subsequently, Siddaramaiah on Saturday held more than an hour long meeting with Kharge at his residence here.

While Siddaramaiah is pushing for a reshuffle of his Cabinet, Shivakumar wants the party to first decide on leadership change, Congress sources have said.

According to several party insiders, if the Congress high command approves the Cabinet reshuffle, it would signal that Siddaramaiah will complete the full five-year term, which will scuttle the chances of Shivakumar from occupying the top post. (PTI)

MUMBAI, Nov 24: Dharmendra, the star who wrote himself into showbiz legend in a 65-year career spanning 300 films ranging from "Satyakam" to "Sholay", died here on Monday, police said here. He was 89.

There was no confirmation from the family. The actor, who would have turned 90 on December 8, was not keeping well for a while and was in and out of a Mumbai hospital with the family finally deciding to continue his treatment at home earlier this month.

A police statement said Dharmendra died this morning and funeral arrangements are being made at the Pawan Hans crematorium in Ville Parle suburb of Mumbai.

An ambulance and several cars left Dharmendra's Juhu residence and Hema Malini, Esha Deol, Aamir Khan, Amitabh Bachchan and Abhishek Bachchan were seen at the crematorium.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Dharmendra, saying his death marks "the end of an era in Indian cinema".

"The passing of Dharmendra Ji marks the end of an era in Indian cinema. He was an iconic film personality, a phenomenal actor who brought charm and depth to every role he played. The manner in which he played diverse roles struck a chord with countless people."

"Dharmendra Ji was equally admired for his simplicity, humility and warmth. In this sad hour, my thoughts are with his family, friends and innumerable fans. Om Shanti," PM Modi posted on X.

Salman Khan and his father, scriptwriter Salim Khan, were also spotted at the crematorium.

But the family, which had criticised the media for declaring Dharmendra dead earlier this month and requested for privacy, has kept quiet so far.

Several media houses had carried reports that Dharmendra had died on November 11 but the actor was discharged the next day and has been treated at home since then.

Many celebrities including Karan Johar, Kajol, Ajay Devgn and Kareena Kapoor mourned the actor's death on social media.



"It is an end of an ERA.... a massive mega star... the embodiment of a HERO in mainstream cinema... incredibly handsome and the most enigmatic screen presence... he is and will always be a bonafide Legend of Indian Cinema... defining and richly present in the pages of cinema history... but mostly he was the best human being... he was so loved by everyone in our industry," Karan wrote in a post on X.

Kajol shared a post of her son Yug and the late actor, "The OG of the Good Man is gone and the world is poorer for it... somehow it seems like we are only losing the good people in it. Kind to the core and loved always. RIP Dharamji... with love always," she wrote on Instagram.

Dharmendra, born Dharam Singh Deol in Punjab in 1935, enjoyed a remarkable six-decade career, featuring in over 300 films and headlining classics such as "Sholay", "Chupke Chupke", "Satyakam", "Anupama", "Seeta Aur Geeta" and many others. He was widely celebrated for his versatility across action, romance and comedy.

Dharmendra is survived by his wife Prakash Kaur, Hema Malini, sons Sunny and Bobby Deol, and daughters Vijeta, Ajeeta, Esha and Ahana. (PTI)

## BJP slams Rahul for 'skipping' CJJ's oath ceremony

NEW DELHI, Nov 24: The BJP on Monday slammed Rahul Gandhi for "skipping" the oath ceremony of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and alleged the Congress neither has any respect for B R Ambedkar nor for the Constitution.

Justice Surya Kant, who has been part of several landmark verdicts, including on the abrogation of Article 370 removing Jammu and Kashmir's special status and Bihar electoral rolls revision, took oath as the 53rd Chief Justice of India on Monday.

President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath to Justice Kant at a brief ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among the senior leaders who attended the ceremony.

"Today, when the entire country was in a sense celebrating, particularly Haryana, the Chief Justice of India's oath ceremony and the entire government led by Modi was present at the event, he skipped it, boycotted it," BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said, flaying Gandhi over his absence at the event.

"Instead of attending this solemn programme, Rahul Gandhi may be on some foreign trip or jungle safari," he charged. "It shows that his family, particularly him, talk about 'samvidhan' (Constitution of India), but they don't respect Ambedkar and 'samvidhan'."

The Congress puts 'parivaar tantra' (family system) above 'lok-tantra' (democracy) and 'samvidhan tantra' (constitutional system), the BJP spokesperson alleged.

Justice Kant, who succeeded Justice B R Gavai, took the oath in Hindi in the name of God. He will remain in the post for nearly 15 months and demit office on February 9, 2027, on attaining the age of 65 years. (PTI)

## IITF: Bihar Pavilion showcases proposed Sita temple through artistic display

NEW DELHI, Nov 24: Adjacent to a temple-themed gateway of the Bihar Pavilion at the international trade fair here, a giant mural depicting the proposed 'Punaura Dham Janki Mandir' in Sitamarhi district welcomes visitors.

Inside the sprawling pavilion, the decor bears a dominating theme of the world-famous Mithila paintings, while the state's popular culinary and tourist offerings draw people, young and old.

The Bihar Tourism stall showcases some of the historic and famous sites such as the Mahabodhi temple complex, a UNESCO world heritage site in Gaya, the Unga Sun temple in Aurangabad, waterfalls in Rohtas and Kaimur districts in south Bihar, the Patna Sahib gurdwara in the state capital, and the Pawapuri Jal Mandir in Nalanda district. The wall panels at the stall near the gateway also display the design of the proposed Sita temple in Sitamarhi district with the caption -- 'Maa Janki Jannasthali Punaura Dham'.

"The old temple dedicated to Sita Mata is situated in Sitamarhi, believed to be her birthplace. And now a grand temple dedicated to her will come up there as announced earlier, so we have shown its design at our stall," Neelam Kumari, a staff of Bihar Tourism, said.

A large-size design of the temple along with the image of a woman offering 'arghya' on Chhath mounted adjacent to it, also adorns the outer wall of the Bihar Pavilion, as strains of a Chhath song

by later folk singer Sharda Sinha plays in the background, and an inner wall of the pavilion also carrying an image of the temple model.

Inside the pavilion, a large colourful cut-out bearing the design of the planned temple along with a caption has been placed near the other stalls, with many visitors stopping by to get clicked with it, some expressing reverence with folded hands.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah in August laid the foundation for the construction of the grand Mata Janaki temple at Punaura Dham.

The temple, to be spread over 67 acres of land, is being developed on the lines of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.

The showcasing of the proposed temple in Bihar at the India International Trade Fair (IITF) underway at the Pragati Maidan comes at time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to hoist a saffron flag atop the 161-foot-high main spire of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on November 25.

Bihar is one of the partner states in the 2025 edition of the IITF. The cities of Ayodhya and Sitamarhi, located in neighbouring states, are considered holy places by devout Hindus by virtue of their religious significance, and their believed association with Lord Ram and his consort Sita.

The Ram temple, whose groundbreaking ceremony was held in the presence of Prime Minister Modi on August 5, 2020, was built after a land-



mark Supreme Court verdict paved the way for its construction, settling a fractious issue that went back more than a century.

A dominant subject in right-wing politics, the Pran Pratishtha ceremony held at the site on January 22, 2024, when the Ram temple was still under construction, was seen by many as a poll plank ahead of the Lok Sabha elections held that year. And, in the run-up to the 2025 Bihar elections, the ruling NDA further pushed the temple

rhetoric through speeches by party leaders in election rallies, and laying of the foundation for the 'Mata Janaki Temple' months before the November polls. In October, the NDA released its manifesto for the Bihar polls, and promised that it would develop the 'Punaura Dham Janki Mandir' site as a world-class spiritual city.

The annual trade fair, which will run till November 27, had begun on November 14, the day the results for the high-stakes Bihar elections were

announced. The NDA stormed to power with a thumping majority in Bihar, with Nitish Kumar taking charge as the chief minister for a record 10th time. At the Bihar Pavilion, one section also showcases the Bihar Museum built by the Nitish government, and inaugurated by him in 2015.

A model of its prized possession, Didarganj Yakshi, which was earlier kept at the old Patna Museum, has been displayed in the lobby area.

A large number of stalls in the pavilion display sarees, suits and other garments bearing hand-made design, embroidery or prints themed on Mithila paintings, portraying motifs like the wedding of Lord Ram and Sita, or she being carried in a palanquin after the marriage ceremony.

A large mural on the other side of the temple-themed gateway at depicts the Jal Mandir at Pawapuri, a sacred Jain temple dedicated to Lord Mahavir. Another gateway of the Bihar Pavilion depicts the Mahabodhi temple in Gaya, while two adjacent murals near another gateway depict the Vishwa Shanti Stupa of Rajgir in Nalanda and the Patna Metro. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had inaugurated a small section of the Patna Metro on October 6, hours ahead of the announcement of the Assembly elections in the state.

The operational section, a 3.45-km elevated corridor, spans three stations -- Pataliputra Bus Terminal, Zero Mile and Bhoonthath, which opened as part of the "priority corridor". (PTI)

# 'Arunachal Rang Mahotsav is a celebration of art, courage, human connection'

CM says event reflects state's rising cultural stature, drawing artists from 10 countries

ITANAGAR, Nov 24: Chief Minister Pema Khandu said the annual Arunachal Rang Mahotsav (ARM) festival is a celebration of 'art, courage and human connection' and a reflection of the state's rising presence on the global cultural map.

Khandu inaugurated the third edition of the Arunachal Rang Mahotsav on Sunday evening at the D K Convention Centre.

The CM, who attended the premiere of the festival's inaugural production Robin and Jummi, said the performance left the auditorium in "deep silence and reflection", capturing the emotional depth and artistic intent behind this year's lineup.

"It was an honour to have celebrated actor Adil Hussain with us at the opening ceremony of ARM 2025," he said in a social media post shortly after the show.

"With artists from 10 countries joining this year, the ARM continues to prove that the language of art is universal," he said, urging young people, students, art lovers and theatre practitioners to witness



the diversity and storytelling power showcased at the festival.

Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, who serves as the chairman of the festival committee, said ARM has rapidly positioned itself as one of the Northeast's most influential cultural platforms.

"ARM celebrates our theatre traditions, creative expression and emerging talent. In just three edi-

tions, it has become one of the region's most significant theatre festivals," he said, emphasising the festival's expanding scope and artistic ambition.

Mein personally welcomed officials from the embassies of Denmark and Ireland, whose participation further deepened the festival's international engagement. He also acknowledged artists rep-

resenting various states of India, as well as performers from abroad who travelled to Arunachal to share their work.

"It was a pleasure to have Bollywood actors, Adil Hussain (Festival Ambassador), Mita Vasisht and Ashok Bhagat amidst us. Their presence is an inspiration and encouragement to our young artists of Arunachal Pradesh," he said.

The DyCM also praised festival director Riken Ngomle for spearheading the movement and bringing global theatre to Arunachal Pradesh, noting that the festival's growing reputation is the result of sustained commitment to artistic excellence, youth engagement and international collaboration.

Over the next 13 days, ARM will feature performances from across India and 10 foreign countries, alongside panel discussions, skill-building workshops, director's talks and cultural evenings intended to foster dialogue between diverse artistic traditions.

The Arunachal Rang Mahotsav will continue till December 6. (PTI)

## People with vested interests trying to create rift between BJP, Tipra Motha: Pradyot



AGARTALA, Nov 24: Tipra Motha Party (TMP) supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma claimed that "people with vested interests" have been trying to create a rift between his party and ally BJP to weaken the coalition government in Tripura.

He also accused a state minister of inciting violence among the tribal people.

Debbarma's allegation came after clashes broke out between supporters of his party and BJP activists in Jampuijala in Sepahijala district and Khumulwng in West Tripura. Both districts share a common boundary.

Chief Minister Manik Saha had blamed the "communist mentality" for the violence.

Four FIRs have been lodged with the Radhapur Police Station, and one person has been arrested for their alleged involvement in violence in Jampuijala and Khumulwng from November 18 to 20.

"Some people with vested interests are trying to create a rift between the Tripura Motha and our partner BJP. If the violence continues between supporters of the two sides, both the chief minister and I will feel sad. I want to focus on peace and develop-

ment," the TMP chief told reporters after visiting the violence-hit areas late on Sunday.

Debbarma also claimed that they were "trying to create trouble between two parties to depict the chief minister as weak".

"They want to take space by engineering a rift between the BJP and the TMP so that they can gain politically. But this is a new Tripura where the people will not tolerate violence," he said.

Debbarma also accused a minister of the Manik Saha-led cabinet of using money and creating differences between the BJP and the TMP.

"A minister is trying to instigate violence among Tripura people by using money and power. I know who is funding the minister. He will be nowhere if I disclose his name", he said.

Debbarma also claimed that the miscreants have no political ideology or religion, and they just indulge in violence for money.

"Miscreants have no political belief or ideology as they keep changing the party flags. They spread violence for money under the political patronage. The police must act against them," he said. (PTI)

## 42<sup>nd</sup> Sub-Junior National Archery meet begins in Yupia

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Nov 24: The 42nd NTPC Sub-Junior National Archery Championship began at the Golden Jubilee Outdoor Stadium in Yupia, Papum Pare district with Chief Minister Pema Khandu formally inaugurating the week-long event on Sunday.

Addressing young archers, coaches and officials, Khandu said the championship would provide a crucial platform for budding talent from across the country to demonstrate their skills. He noted that archery has been an intrinsic part of tribal culture in Arunachal Pradesh and expressed confidence that the event would help bring the state's traditional strength in archery to national prominence.

The chief minister informed that the government recently organised a state-level archery competition in Tawang and is investing in professional training for youth in both compound and recurve categories. He said it was only a matter of time before young archers from Arunachal make a mark in major national and international tournaments.

Emphasising the state government's commitment to promoting sports, Khandu highlighted job reservation policies for sportspersons, including 5 percent reservation in all government departments and 10 percent in the police and sports departments. He urged eligible athletes to apply under the prescribed guidelines.

Responding to concerns about archery infrastructure, Khandu assured that sports facilities across the state are being upgraded. He announced that a state-of-the-art archery range would be established in Yupia and added that Arunachal Pradesh is preparing to host national and international tournaments.

Football stadiums across the state, he said are also set for upgradation following a recent review with the Arunachal Pradesh Football Association.

Earlier, Arunachal Archery Association (AAA) president and organising committee chairman Tadar Niglar stressed the need for improved infrastructure, noting that archery has historically been the first sport to bring laurels to the

state at both national and international levels.

Niglar said that 46 teams including 28 states, eight Union Territories and 10 affiliated archery units are participating in the championship. About 1,500 archers and officials are expected to take part, competing in recurve, compound and Indian round events for boys and girls.

Organised by the Arunachal Archery Association under the aegis of the Archery Association of India, the championship will run until November 30.

Among those present at the inaugural ceremony were AAI vice president Satyanarayana Cherukuri, AAI observer KB Guring, AAI competition director Rupesh Kar, Arjuna Awardee Dola Banerjee, advisor to the Sports Minister Chow Zingnu Namchoom, Director of Sports Tadar Apa, Arunachal Olympic Association chairman Er Taba Tedir, Deputy Commissioner Vishakha Yadav, SP Nyelem Nega, AAA vice president Maryi Doyom and Sports Authority of Arunachal chairman Neelam Jhon.

## Guv extends Chalo Loku greetings to Nocte community

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Nov 24: Governor Lt General KT Parnaik, PVS, UYSM, YSM (Retd), extended warm greetings to the people of the state, especially the Nocte community on the occasion of Chalo Loku. The Governor expressed his hope that the festival continues to foster peace, harmony and brotherhood across Arunachal Pradesh.

In his message, the Governor highlighted the deep social and spiritual significance of traditional tribal festivals. He noted that such celebrations help communities live their culture in daily life, nurture respect for elders and the environment and reinforce enduring values. Festivals, he added, also play a vital role in preserving rituals, promoting local arts and crafts and fostering social cohesion.

Governor Parnaik emphasised that Arunachal Pradesh's strength lies in the diversity of its tribal cultures and traditions. He urged all communities to actively participate in cultural celebrations, ensuring that these heritages are preserved and passed on to future generations.

## Internally displaced people clash with security forces as they attempt to return to native homes

IMPHAL, Nov 24: Hundreds of internally displaced people (IDPs) staying in relief camps here clashed with security forces at Pukhao and near Dolaitabi Dam in Imphal East district on Monday as they attempted to return to their native homes, officials said.

IDPs from Ekou, Dolaitabi and Yengkhuman localities, who had been staying in relief camps, attempted to march towards their homes but were stopped by security forces. The security forces fired tear gas shells to disperse the protesters, they said.

The IDPs claimed that, as the annual Sangai festival is being held, normalcy has been established in the state, and they should be allowed to return to their homes.

A protester, S Kumarjit Meitei told reporters, "We are mostly farmers. Our economic livelihood has been completely cut off after we were forced to flee our homes. Now that the government has said



that normalcy has returned. We demand to return home. How long do we stay confined in relief camps. Why can't security forces deal with the militants instead of forcing us to remain in relief camps.

Agitated protesters scuffled with security forces and headed towards the areas considered one of the most sensitive zones, prompting them to fire tear gas shells to disperse them, the official added.

Ekou, Dolaitabi and Yengkhuman are located at the foothills of Imphal East district, bordering Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi district. The areas witnessed ethnic violence in 2023. (PTI)

## Rameshwar Meitei nominated leader of legislature party in Manipur

IMPHAL/SHILLONG, Nov 24: NPP MLA M Rameshwar Meitei has been nominated as leader of the legislature party in the Manipur assembly, an official statement said on Monday.

The National Peoples' Party also named Wangoi MLA Kh Loken Singh as its chief whip, he said.

In a letter to Manipur Assembly Speaker T H Satyabrata, NPP national president Conrad K Sangma said, "I write... To inform you that M Rameshwar Meitei has been unanimously nominated as leader of the legislature party with immediate effect."

Rameshwar, the Kakching MLA, replaced Kshetrigao legislator Sheikh Noorul Hassan, who has been appointed as the working president of the party.

The NPP has six legislators in the 60-member Manipur assembly. The party had recently named former MP Lorho S Pfoze as president of its state unit. (PTI)

# Arunachal's Yak churpi gets GI tag Meet on Naga oral history project in Kohima

ITANAGAR, Nov 24: Arunachal Pradesh's centuries-old highland staple, Yak churpi, has received Geographical Indication (GI) registration.

State Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, in a post on X on Monday, said the GI tag marks not just a milestone for a traditional product, but a moment of pride for the mountain communities whose identity and survival are intertwined with yak culture and Himalayan ecology. The deputy chief minister underscored that Yak Churpi, long valued for its dense texture, high nutritional content and long shelf life, has quietly sustained generations in the harsh, high-altitude terrains of Tawang and West Kameng. "Yak Churpi has been a simple but important part of life in our higher regions for generations," Mein said in the post on X, noting that the cheese has historically served as a critical food resource for families living in remote, climate-challenging zones with limited agricultural options.

With the product now formally registered under GI (Reg No 809), Mein said the recognition is expected to elevate both its cultural standing and market viability.

"With its GI recognition, this local product now gets a boost in visibility and value for our

communities," he posted, emphasising that the tag safeguards indigenous processing techniques and guarantees authenticity for buyers.

Produced from locally sourced yak milk and crafted using traditional knowledge passed down through pastoral families, Yak churpi is not merely a culinary item, it is a symbol of resilience, identity and ecological harmony. "A quiet reflection of our traditions and the connection our people share with the mountains," Mein said.

Experts note that the GI protection will help shield local producers from imitation, open doors to premium niche markets, and strengthen the economic foundation of yak-herding households, particularly at a time when climate change and shifting livelihood patterns pose new challenges in the Himalayan belt. The recognition may also expand opportunities for value-added products, tourism-driven promotion, and branding of Arunachal Pradesh's indigenous foods at national and international platforms.

Officials say that Yak churpi's inclusion in the GI registry adds to the growing list of Arunachal's unique cultural assets, helping preserve local heritage while encouraging sustainable economic development in the state's high-altitude districts. (PTI)

maker Parasher Baruah, Naga oral tradition live storytelling/singing, display of photographs, artwork and paintings.

Vibha Lakhera, founder of Project Empathy, in her welcome note, highlighted that her project 'Weaves of Empathy' on empathy seeks to draw the wisdom, care, community and belonging already living in the everyday life of the Naga people. She added these have become the seat for the project Naga Oral History and stories of empathy.

Lakhera noted that the journey was not as simple as it seemed, as it meant asking difficult questions,

hearing the truths that were layered, sometimes painful and carried generations of memories.

As some stories began to fade, she said, she turned to the youth, holding tradition in one hand and modernity in the other, to not only document stories but also listen with empathy.

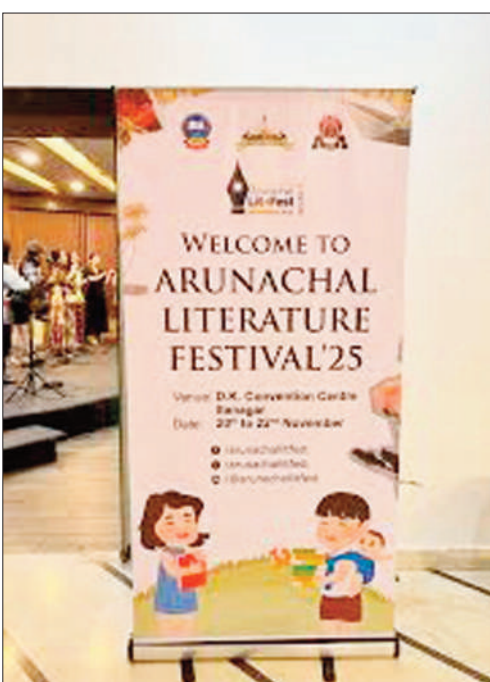
Abu Metha, adviser to Nagaland chief minister, who was the chief guest of the occasion, said: "This gathering is contributing towards that aspiration, where our traditions, our way of life, are kept alive, not only for ourselves, but also to share that knowledge with different communities and different parts of the world."

While congratulating the Project Empathy for their excellent work and production, Metha emphasised the importance of empathy, which is the treasure that connects, unites and brings us together.

He acknowledged that the Naga society is stepping up by overcoming challenges and hurdles not only to succeed, but to contribute to progress, humanity, and nation-building.

Lt. Gen Vikas Lakhera, DG, Assam Rifles, who was the guest of honour, said: "We need to respect our past, for those who respect their past are destined to grow in the future."

## New DIPROs witness the cultural heartbeat of the state while managing a large-scale literary event Beyond the Podium: Reflections from the Arunachal Literary Festival



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Nov 24: Newly inducted District Information and Public Relations Officers (DIPROs) of Arunachal Pradesh had the unique opportunity to witness and actively participate in one of the state's most significant cultural gatherings—the Arunachal Literary Festival (ALF).

Tasked with press and public communication duties under the guidance of the IPR department led by Gijum Tali, the officers' engagement went beyond administrative work into a profound immersion in the region's literary and cultural life.

The festival began at DK Convention Hall with ceremonial inaugurations, attended by prominent dignitaries.

The young officers managed press releases while also enjoying personal interactions with celebrated figures such as Padmashree awardee Mamang Dai. Evening events featured performances by senior government officials, blending formal proceedings with artistic celebration.

The second day emphasised discipline and timely reporting, with the officers learning the importance of punctuality and accuracy in communication.

Meanwhile, the festival sessions highlighted national and international literary voices alongside indigenous storytellers, fostering discussions on

identity and heritage, including the origins of Abotani.

The officers compiled daily press releases, balancing rigorous organizational demands with the festival's intellectual vibrancy.

The final day showcased the festival's investment in young audiences, with the officers assisting in the Children's Corner and facilitating grassroots engagement. The event concluded with the drafting of the final press release, distilling the three-day celebration into an official narrative.

The experience demonstrated that literature and art are integral to governance, bridging bureaucratic action with cultural enrichment.

The DIPROs walked away with enhanced skills in logistics and strategic communication, coupled with a deeper appreciation for Arunachal Pradesh's cultural diversity and literary heritage.

The ALF served as both a professional training ground and a cultural awakening, inspiring the officers to support and amplify initiatives that preserve and celebrate the region's rich narratives.

The festival underscored the power of collaboration between government and cultural organisations, leaving a lasting impression on those who helped bring the event to life while witnessing Arunachal Pradesh's literary heartbeat firsthand.

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POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)		
(As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002)		
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Bajaj Finance Limited (BFL), under the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Sec. 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand by registered post ("Notice") calling upon the Borrowers/Co-borrowers mentioned hereunder to repay the amount mentioned in the notice U/s. 13(2) of the said Act within a period of 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.		
The Borrowers/Mortgagors/Guarantors named below having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Mortgagors/ Guarantors and public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on me under Sec. 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.		
The borrowers in particular and public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the said property and any dealing with this property will be subject to the charge of the Bajaj Finance Limited, for the amount mentioned herein below along with interest thereon at contracted rate. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.		
Loan Account No./Name of the Borrower(s)/Mortgagor(s)/Guarantor(s)	Description of Secured Immovable Property	Date of Notice U/s. 13(2) and U/s. 13(2) Notice Amount and Date of Possession
LAN: PBPQBL7218977 1. B B Enterprise thr. Its Prop. Bipul Boro, R/o, Ward No. 3 Holding No. 03/664 Hospital Road Rangia Murara Chowk Rangia Kamrup Assam - 781354. Contact: 9864145712. Email id: bipulboro228@gmail.com. Also at, R/o. Dag No. 242/243/245 Patta No. 75, Village Nakul Mouza Pub-Barigog Circle Rangia District Kamrup Assam 781354. 2. Sabitri Boro W/o Romoni Boro, R/o. H. No. 157 Santala Santola Kamrup Guwahati Assam 781125. Contact: 9864145712. Email id: bipulboro228@gmail.com 3. Bipul Boro S/o Karuna Boro, R/o. W No 3 Hospital Road Mt Road, Basni Office Rangia Kamrup Assam 781354. Contact: 9864145712. Email id: bipulboro228@gmail.com	All the piece and parcel of Dag No. 242/243/245 Patta No. 75 Village Nakul Mouza Pub-Barigog Circle Rangia District Kamrup Assam 781354 along with proportionate share in common areas (Area adm. 5760 Sq.Ft.) Boundaries: East: Pradip Das and Owner Land; West: Road and Seller Land; North: Ananta Das; South: Owner Land and Loban Das	18.08.2025 Rs. 4407730/- (Rupees Forty Four Lakhs Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Only) Possession Date 21.11.2025
Place : Assam, Date : 21.11.2025		
Sd/-Authorized Officer - M/s Bajaj Finance Limited		

# Indian batting flops on flat deck as 'Marco The Man' turns destroyer

## Indian batters bounced out for a lowly 201 in their first innings

**GUWAHATI, Nov 24:** Sai Sudharsan was careless, Dhruv Jurel was indiscreet and skipper Rishabh Pant plain irresponsible as a progressively ugly Indian batting collapse left them on the brink of an embarrassing home series whitewash against South Africa here on Monday.

On a pitch that Kuldeep Yadav had compared to a "road", the Indian batters were bounced out for a lowly 201 in their first innings by a 6 feet 8 inches tall pacer Marco Jansen, who returned a haul of 6 for 48 after smashing 93 on the second day.

At stumps on the third day of the second and final Test here, South Africa were 26 for no loss and had consolidated their overall lead to 314, aiming to give India a target in excess of 450 and with 120 overs in hand for their bowlers.

Jansen will cherish his performance on Monday as it came in conditions where there was nothing much for any type of bowler.

While head coach Gautam Gambhir copped a lot of flak for the choice of a rank turner pitch in Kolkata, no one should mind a dressing down from the fiery former batter after the poor game awareness displayed by home batters during the first session and a half of the third day.

Yashvir Jaiswal (58) and KL Rahul (22) had given the team a steady start but both were a tad unlucky to get the only two deliveries from spinners that bounced from length to see their back.

Slumping from 95 for 1 to 122 for 7 required a cavalier attitude towards opposition's bowling attack and lack of respect for the game situation. The Indians, on Monday,



were guilty of both. Sudharsan (15), Jurel (0) and Pant (7) were out in a space of 13 balls and wouldn't like to look at those dismissals again.

In the dug-out, the head coach herself was watched what could be mildly termed as a "collective brain fade".

The pitch was the kind on which one merely needed to play normal cricket and stick around as spinners, after the dismissal of the two openers, hardly made any impact.

The dogged as ever Washington Sundar (48 off 92 balls) added 62 runs in just under

35 overs with the gutsy Kuldeep Yadav (19 off 134 balls).

Nearly 35 overs constitute a session and if Kuldeep could bat for over two hours, Jurel and Pant would need to introspect what they could have achieved if they had shown a bit of common sense.

Sudharsan is unlikely to get any more opportunities in Test matches when India restart red-ball cricket against Sri Lanka after six months. One of the reasons would be a failure to learn from his mistakes.

The manner in which he got out on Mon-

day was identical to his dismissal in the first Test against the West Indies.

The ball from Simon Harmer was slightly short on length and his immediate reaction was to rock back and play the pull.

In the Ahmedabad game last month, he was leg before, missing the ball all over and in Guwahati, the pull shot never had the elevation as Ryan Rickleton pulled off a fine catch at mid-wicket.

Jurel took the bait of a short ball outside the off-stump but the pace of the delivery was slower than expected. The resultant pull shot never got the desired elevation and ballooned up leading to his dismissal. The choice of such a shot with five just minutes to go for tea was questionable.

The most disappointing was skipper Pant's shot-selection and dismissal despite being well aware that the team is in doldrums. Knowing his propensity to charge down the track to pacers, Jansen cleverly shortened the length further.

Pant had jumped out for an ugly cross-batted hoick and the thin edge was taken by Kyle Verreynne behind the stumps.

Suddenly, India were 102 for 5 and then Nitish Kumar Reddy (10) and Ravindra Jadeja (6), the two all-rounders, were sorted by well-directed short balls delivered at the body by Jansen.

The Proteas have enough time to force a positive result and go home with a 2-0 result. For India, a hard-earned draw would feel like a moral victory. For Gambhir though, his reputation as a red-ball coach will take a beating once again even if Pant and company happen to save the game. (PTI)

# Messi's goal, 3 assists power Inter Miami past FC Cincinnati 4-0, into 1st Eastern Conference final



**CINCINNATI, Nov 24:** Lionel Messi had a goal and three assists and Tadeo Allende scored twice as Inter Miami beat FC Cincinnati 4-0 to advance to its first Eastern Conference final.

Miami will host New York City FC, a 1-0 winner over the Philadelphia Union in the other conference semifinal, on Saturday. The winner advances to the MLS Cup on Dec. 6.

"Proud of how the team played on a very, very difficult field and against a very, very tough opponent," Miami head coach Javier Mascherano said through a translator. "I think from the first minute it wasn't about holding back. It was about going after the game and being ourselves. I think today the players played a virtually perfect match."

Messi set an MLS playoff record with 12 goal contributions (six goals, six assists).

Cincinnati had the second-best overall record in MLS behind Philadelphia after winning the Supporters Shield last season. Cincinnati lost to the Columbus Crew in last year's conference finals.

"Tough night to end this way," FC Cincinnati coach Pat Noonan said. "Credit to Miami. They were better tonight. To the fans, sorry how it ended. It's disappointing. You have to own it."

Messi had been scoreless in three matches against Cincinnati, but that streak ended in the 19th minute Sunday when he headed a short cross from Mateo Silvestri, giving Miami a 1-0 lead. Messi, a World Cup champion with Argentina and eight-time Ballon d'Or winner, had his 11th goal in the last seven games.

Nine minutes after scoring, Messi found himself alone with the keeper, but his shot toward the far post sailed wide.

Cincinnati's best scoring chance came in the first half when Ender Echenique sent a header across the box to Evander, who shot over the bar.

Miami had seven shots on goal to Cincinnati's four.

"We looked confident in front of goal," Noonan said. "We turned the ball over too much in dangerous areas. We gave too much time to Messi. We didn't protect that space."

Miami made it a two-goal lead 10 minutes into the second half when Silvestri beat Cincinnati keeper Roman Celentano with a shot from the left side of the box.

"It's obviously an honor as a striker to score my first goal wearing this jersey," Silvestri said via a translator. "I'm very happy. Whenever I can help the team, it's even better, so I'm happy about that."

Silvestri replaced Luis Suarez, who was suspended from Miami's previous playoff match against Nashville due to violent conduct. Mascherano decided to keep him out of the lineup on Sunday.

In the 62nd minute, Messi threaded a pass through the defense to Allende, who made it 3-0. Allende scored again in the 74th minute.

Cincinnati beat Miami 3-0 at home on July 16, and played to a scoreless draw at Fort Lauderdale on July 26. Messi was in the lineup for the first meeting, but not the second.

"We're playing to win trophies," Noonan said. "We'll continue to push to make that a reality." (AP)

## PCB wants to reschedule ODI series against Australia at home

**KARACHI, Nov 24:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is trying to reschedule a three-match ODI series against Australia at home in March to avoid a clash with the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

A source said that the PCB was in talks with Cricket Australia (CA) to reschedule the ODI series.

The series is part of a twin tour by Australia to Pakistan for a three-match T20 series from January 30 to February 5 to prepare for the T20 World Cup and they are then scheduled to return for the ODIs from March 13 to 19.

The source said the PCB wants to reschedule the ODIs because it is most likely to organise the PSL between March and May next year.

This year the PCB was forced to reschedule the PSL because of the ICC Champions Trophy it hosted in February and March.

The PSL this year will feature two new teams. (PTI)

## Pranjali wins 25m pistol gold in Deaflympics

**TOKYO, Nov 24:** Indian shooter Pranjali Prashant Dhumal dominated from start to end to win gold in the women's 25m pistol event, her third medal in the Deaflympics here on Monday.

She had earlier won gold in the mixed pistol event with Abhinav Deshwal, and a silver in the women's air pistol. Mosina Halyna of Ukraine won the silver and Jeon Jiwon of Korea took the bronze.

Anuya Prasad, who had won gold in women's air pistol event, finished at fourth place.

Pranjali had qualified for the finals with a new qualification world record and Deaflympic record score of 573 out of 600.

Pranjali finished with a score of 34 in the final, two more than Mosina who won the silver. Jeon won the bronze medal with a score of 30, after having overcome India's Anuya Prasad in a shootout.

Earlier in qualification, the Indian shooter secured the top two spot while also breaking the world deaf qualification record and the Deaflympics record.

She shot 573-14x, breaking her own world record which was set in the World Deaf Shooting Championships last year in Hannover, Germany.

Anuya Prasad finished second with a score of 569-15x in the qualification. On Sunday, Abhinav Deshwal had won India's 15th medal in shooting at the Deaflympics, clinching the gold in the 25m pistol event with a record in qualification.

Indian shooters have so far won 16 medals at the Deaflympics, including seven gold, six silver and three bronze. The shooting events will conclude Tuesday with the men's 25m rapid fire pistol competition. (PTI)

## Kane Williamson returns for Kiwi's three-test cricket series against West Indies

**WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND), Nov 24:** Kane Williamson has been included in New Zealand's 14-man squad for a three-test series against the West Indies next month after missing the Black Caps' last test series in Zimbabwe and most of their white-ball matches so far this season.

Williamson has a limited contract with New Zealand Cricket which allows him to play in overseas leagues while still playing for New Zealand when he is available.

"Kane's ability on the field speaks for itself and it will be great to have his skills as well as his leadership back in the test group," New Zealand head coach Rob Walter said.

"He's had a bit of time off to get himself ready for red-ball cricket and I know he's looking forward to playing for Northern Districts in the second round of the Plunket Shield in the lead-up to the first test."

Williamson played in the first two of New Zealand's three one-day internationals against Eng-



land last month before sustaining a minor groin in-

jury.

Pace bowlers Zak Foulkes, Jacob Duffy and Blair Tinkler are also selected in the squad. Foulkes took nine wickets on test debut against Zimbabwe in August. Tinkler last played a test for New Zealand in 2023.

"Zak couldn't have performed much better in his first test against Zimbabwe. That, along with his recent form across the white-ball tours, has rightfully earned him selection," Walter said. "Both Jacob and Blair have been around a while and know what it takes to perform at the highest level."

Will O'Rourke and Ben Sears are unavailable with injuries and Kyle Jamieson is being rested as he continues his comeback from a back injury.

Daryl Mitchell also returns to the squad after overcoming a groin injury sustained during New Zealand's recent ODI series against the West Indies. Glenn Phillips is still recovering from an injury. The first test starts Dec. 2 at Christchurch. (AP)

## Sami Valimaki holds on for 1st PGA Tour title on final day of close calls for keeping cards

**ST SIMONS ISLAND, Nov 24:** Sami Valimaki became Finland's first PGA Tour winner on Sunday when he closed with a 4-under 66 for a one-shot victory in the RSM Classic, the final event of the year, which saw hopes rise and fall over the final hour at Sea Island.

Valimaki, who had two runner-up finishes over the past two seasons, used putter from below the green on the 16th and then holed an 18-foot putt putt. He was steady over the closing holes even as the wind abruptly changed direction with a little more force late in the day.

Far more dramatic was everything going on in front of him.

The top 100 in the FedEx Cup standings — down from 125 players in previous years — have full PGA Tour cards for a 2026 season where the fields will be smaller.

## Adjudicator in Pakistan revokes suspension of Arshad Nadeem's long-time coach

### Action by PAAF unconstitutional

**LAHORE, Nov 24:** An adjudicator of the state-run Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has declared null and void a life ban imposed on the long-time coach and mentor of the country's celebrated athlete, Arshad Nadeem.

Senator Pervaz Rashid was appointed as adjudicator after coach Salman Butt took his plea to the PSB and the Pakistan Olympic Committee (POC) soon after the Pakistan Amateur Athletics Federation (PAAF) imposed the life ban on him in October.

The senator said on Monday he was overturning the ban on Butt as the action by the PAAF was unconstitutional.

He said there was a complete lack of due process, noting that no charge sheet or proper hearing was ever provided to Butt.

He also called on the PAAF to immediately withdraw all adverse notes and communications sent to international bodies and said Butt can continue to remain Nadeem's coach and represent Pakistan on the

world stage. The ban was imposed after Nadeem finished 10th in the World Athletics Championships. On returning home after the tournament, the coach was told by PSB and PAAF to submit a report on why Nadeem performed poorly.

In his report, Butt said Nadeem struggled in the Worlds because of health issues as he was still recovering from a calf muscle surgery carried out in July, while also making it clear that the PAAF had had no role to play in his career and distanced itself from the Olympic gold medalist javelin thrower in the last one year.

The reply from Butt didn't go down well with the athletics federation, which decided to impose the life ban, alleging that he had violated the constitution as president of the Punjab athletics body.

The Pakistan Olympic Committee gave special clearance to Butt to accompany Nadeem to Riyadh for the recent Islamic Solidarity Games where the star athlete won the gold medal in javelin throw. (PTI)

who was runner-up two weeks ago in Mexico. Now he has a two-year exemption on the PGA Tour and is assured of playing the first two \$20 million signature events of 2026 by finishing at No. 51 in the FedEx Cup.

"It has been a long road, of course," Valimaki said. "I feel like it's a really tough year even when I kind of played decent golf, and then to keep pushing and find some good grooves in the last few tournaments, it feels amazing."

McGreavy, who already had his card locked up, moved up to No. 60 to also qualify for a pair of signature events to start next year. His finish bumped Jordan Spieth, who did not play this fall, from the 60th spot, meaning Spieth will need sponsor exemptions for Pebble Beach and Riviera. (AP)

## Real Madrid president wants investors to buy up to 10% stake in club, backs Super League again

**MADRID, Nov 24:** Real Madrid president Florentino Perez is considering allowing investors to buy a stake of up to 10% in the club, and insisted the Super League remains an "indispensable project" for the future of soccer.

Speaking to club members at the club's general assembly on Sunday, Perez said he will propose a statutory reform during an extraordinary assembly to allow for the possibility of outside investors to take a minority stake in the club.

"We will continue to be a members' club, but we must create a subsidiary in which the 100,000 members of Real Madrid will always retain absolute control," he said. "On that basis, this subsidiary could simply incorporate a minority stake, for example, 5% — never more than 10% — from one or more investors committed to the very long term and willing to contribute their own resources."

Perez said that would be "the clearest and most compelling way to value our club."

"The fact that someone is willing to invest such a significant amount for a symbolic stake is the greatest demonstration of the value of Real Madrid," he said without specifying the amount. "At the same time, such a lim-

ited stake ensures that control, governance and the essence of the club will always remain in the hands of the members, our delegates and our board of directors."

Perez said investors would be obliged to "respect our values," contribute to the growth of the club and "help us protect our assets from external attacks." He said Real Madrid would always have the right to buy its assets back from investors.

"In short, they will be a strategic ally and never an owner," he said.

Perez reiterated several times that members — whose voice would be heard during a referendum on the reform — would never lose control of the club. He said his proposal would make sure that the current 100,000 members are recognized as the real owners of the club, with the number of members fixed for the future.

"With this protection in place, no one will be able to diminish our status as owners or alter the balance that guarantees the independence and stability of Real Madrid," Perez said. "It will be us, the members of today, who will have the responsibility of safeguarding our culture of values and ensuring that our club continues to lead world football for many generations to come." (AP)

## Shining example of determination: PM hails India blind women's team's T20WC triumph

**NEW DELHI, Nov 24:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated the Indian blind women's cricket team for winning the inaugural T20 World Cup, saying the triumph is a shining example of team work and determination.

India won the inaugural event after defeating Nepal by seven wickets in the final played at the P Sara oval in Colombo on Sunday. India restricted Nepal to 114 for 5 after opting to bowl and then coasted to 117 for 3 in just 12 overs to claim the title.

"Congratulations to Indian Blind Women's Cricket Team for creating history by winning the inaugural Blind Women's T20 World Cup! More commendable is the fact that they stayed unbeaten in the series," Modi posted on his 'X' page.

"This is indeed a historic sporting achievement, a shining example of hardwork, team work and determination. Each player is a



champion! My best wishes to the team for their future endeavours. This feat will inspire generations to come," he added.

India got the better of Sri Lanka, Australia, Nepal, USA and Pakistan in the league phase, before beating the Australians again in the

semi-final. The tournament was co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka with fixtures also held in Delhi and Bengaluru.

Eleven players make up a blind cricket team and it is played with a white plastic ball packed with ball bearings that rattle as it rolls, which allows it to be heard by players.

**Praise for Indian medal winners at World Boxing Cup Finals**

Modi also lauded the Indian boxers who shone at the World Boxing Cup Finals held recently at Greater Noida.

"Our phenomenal athletes delivered an extraordinary, record-breaking performance at the World Boxing Cup Finals 2025! They brought home an unprecedented 20 medals including 9 Golds," Modi wrote.

"This is due to the resolve and determination of our boxers. Congratulations to them. Best wishes for the endeavours ahead." (PTI)