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 ● Gaurav Gogoi hits back at CM over 'Pakistani Agent' remark
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Government of Assam
 Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department

Launch of
Chief Minister's Jibon Prerana Scheme




Handholding Fresh Graduates of Assam

Assistance of
₹2,500
 per month
 for 1 year

Chief Guest
Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma
 Chief Minister, Assam

In august presence of
Shri Prasanta Phukan
 Minister, Skill, Employment & Entrepreneurship, etc., Assam

3 November 2025 | 4:00 PM
 Ground Floor, Lok Sewa Bhawan, Dispur

Objectives

- Support Fresh Graduates in their Job Search
- Encourage Fresh Graduates to prepare for Competitive Exams
- Empower Fresh Graduates to pursue Self-Employment

Eligibility

Fresh Graduates (2025 pass-outs only) from Govt./Public Institutions of state or central, situated in Assam (excluding open universities and private institutions)

Permanent Resident of Assam

GST collection grows at slower pace of 4.6 pc in October at ₹ 1.96 lakh cr after tax cuts

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Festive buying spree unleashed by lower tax rates pushed gross GST collection to about ₹ 1.96 lakh crore in October, registering a 4.6 per cent year-on-year growth -- the slowest rate so far this fiscal.

The slowest pace of revenue growth in October comes after Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates on 375 items, from kitchen staples to electronics and automobiles, were slashed with effect from September 22 -- the first day of Navratri.

According to the government data released on Saturday, gross GST mop-up in October was about ₹ 1.96 lakh crore, a 4.6 per cent higher over ₹ 1.87 lakh crore collections in October 2024.

The gross domestic revenue, an indication of local sales, grew 2 per cent to ₹ 1.45 lakh crore, while tax from imports surged about 13 per cent to ₹ 50,884 crore in October. The rate of growth in gross GST collections in year-on-year terms in October at 4.6 per cent is, however, lower than about 9 per cent average growth in GST mop-up so far this fiscal.

In August and September this year, GST collection grew at 6.5 per cent to ₹ 1.86 lakh crore and at 9.1 per cent to ₹ 1.89 lakh crore, respectively.

The October GST collection number reflects the impact of festive season sales and the pent up demand. Consumers had held back their purchase decision, awaiting GST rate cut after Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his In-



dependence Day speech had announced that GST rates will be cut ahead of Diwali. The rate cut was, however, implemented with the onset of Navratri.

As per the data, GST refunds jumped 39.6 per cent year-on-year in October to Rs 26,934 crore. Net GST revenue, after adjusting refunds, stood at ₹ 1.69 lakh crore in October 2025, recording 0.2 per cent YoY growth.

Price Waterhouse & Co LLP Partner Pratik Jain said despite massive rate cuts effective from September 22, a slight increase in domestic GST collection shows that demand is steadily increasing.

"Consistent increase in GST refunds (domestic as well as exports) shows confidence of tax administration that GST collections would show positive trend in future as well," Jain said.

EY India Tax Partner Saurabh Agarwal said GST collections reflected a muted momentum in tax

anced the de-growth in revenue due to the tax rate cuts.

According to Jain, the sustained buoyancy in receipts despite significant rate-rationalisation underscores that the reforms are stimulating consumption rather than constraining it. Also, refund disbursements surged nearly 40 per cent YoY, which is a clear indication of improved compliance discipline and smoother credit flows for business.

"Meanwhile, import-linked IGST inflows rose nearly 13 per cent, signalling healthy demand for raw materials and capital goods and pointing to a strong industrial output cycle. Major states such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh anchored this growth, benefitting from manufacturing revival, services expansion and a strong festive uptick in a challenging global environment," Jain said.

Grant Thornton Bharat, Partner and Tax Controversy Management Leader, Manoj Mishra said early retail indicators show broad-based demand across autos, FMCG, apparel and electronics, reflecting renewed consumer confidence.

"With India's vast household consumption base and an industrial revival now increasingly complementing services-led growth, the October GST data affirm that India's growth story is both broadening and deepening," Mishra said. (PTI)

collection primarily due to rate rationalisation effect and the deferred consumer spending ahead of the festive season.

This anticipated lag is likely to be compensated by more robust numbers in the next month, driven by seasonal buoyancy.

Deloitte India, Partner & Indirect Tax Leader, Mahesh Jaising said the GST collection numbers underscore the resilience of economy amid festive momentum and enhanced compliance.

This fiscal strength arms the government with the bold resolve to drive GST 2.0 reforms -- streamlining rates, curbing evasion and simplifying compliance -- propelling India toward a truly seamless, tech-driven tax ecosystem.

Tax Connect Advisory Services Partner Vivek Jalan said the growth in collections by 4.6 per cent re-affirm that the boost in consumption has, to an extent, bal-

SiCSem starts work to build country's first end-to-end chip production project in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR, Nov 1: Power electronics chip company SiCSem performed ground breaking ceremony here on Saturday for setting up the country's first end-to-end silicon carbide semiconductor production plant entailing investment of about ₹ 2,000 crore.

The integrated facility, expected to be operational by 2027-28, will have a capacity of processing 60,000 SiC wafers annually and packaging about 9.6 crore units.

"Our dream of bringing advanced technology to Odisha is coming true today, and our special focus is on enabling a seamless integration of industry and academia.

"In this regard, we are partnering with IIT Bhubaneswar for a semiconductor research lab. I re-

cently had the honour of approving ₹ 4.95 crore from the MPLAD for establishing the NaMo Semiconductor Lab," Union IT and Electronics Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on the occasion through a video message. Silicon carbide chips are used for handling high voltage application in products like renewable energy, electric vehicle, power inverters, etc.

The minister said under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, electronics industries have grown six times in the last 11 years and India's electronics export increased eight times in 12 years.

"We are now third largest exporter of electronic items in the world... I urge the state government to take up semiconductor industries aggressively. (PTI)

Registration of properties in Mumbai region down 10 pc in Oct

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Registration of properties in Mumbai region fell 10 per cent in October to 11,649 units due to higher base effect, according to Knight Frank.

As many as 12,960 units were registered during October last year.

Citing Maharashtra government data, real estate consultant Knight Frank India said Mumbai city (area under BMC jurisdiction) recorded 11,649 property registrations in October 2025, with stamp duty collections touching ₹ 1,040 crore. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 3...

Langkhon Festival concludes

medium schools have been established to ensure children can learn in their mother tongue at the primary level. Recollecting the historical ties among the indigenous communities, the CEM said, "When Mikir Hills (now Karbi Anglong district) was created on November 17, 1951, the Karbis, Tiwas, Rengma Nagas and other indigenous tribes lived together and made sacrifices for a separate district to safeguard their identity, culture and language. The KAAC continues to support these efforts."

Ronghang commended the Tiwa Cultural Society for its role in preserving and promoting Tiwa traditions. The event was attended by Mawhati MLA Charles Mangar; KAAC Executive Member D. Uphing Maslai; Baithalango MLA Rupsing Teron; MAC members Heading Rongphar and Tiltotoma Hasnu; Tiwa Mathonlai Tokhra (TMT) president Horsing Kholar; Tiwa Cultural Society, Karbi Anglong Committee president Kumud Mithi; former TMT president Lalsing Madar; former general secretary V. Len Kholar; former ATSU general secretary Niban Ch. Amsih; and reception committee president Atul Khorai and secretary Debol Madar.

Countdown begins for

Gaganyaan mission, ISRO had planned the Human rated LVM3 rocket as the launch vehicle, which is named as HRLV. The space agency had previously launched its heaviest communication satellite GSAT-11 on December 5, 2018 from Kourou launch base, French Guiana by Ariane-5 VA-246 rocket. Weighing about 5,854 kg, GSAT-11 is the heaviest satellite built by ISRO.

Sunday's mission objective is that the CMS-03, a multi-band communication satellite, will provide services over a wide oceanic region including the Indian landmass, the space agency said.

The LVM3-rocket is capable to carry payload to GTO weighing 4,000 kg and for Low Earth Orbit payloads of 8,000 kg with its powerful cryogenic stage.

The two S200 solid rocket boosters located on the sides of the rocket provide the thrust required for lift off. The S200 boosters are developed at Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram.

The third stage is L110 Liquid Stage and is powered by two Vikas engines designed and developed at the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre.

The previous mission of LVM-3 rocket was the successful launch of Chandrayaan-3 mission, wherein, India became the first country to land successfully near the lunar South pole in 2023. (PTI)

Union minister reviews

extending quality medical care under government schemes, it said. Later, Joshi visited a fair price shop at Six Mile area of the city, where he inspected the storehouse and examined the use of machinery and documentation processes before delivery of essential commodities.

He also inspected the quality of rice supplied to beneficiaries under the Public Distribution System (PDS) and interacted with the public. Joshi reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring supply of quality food grains at fair prices to all eligible beneficiaries. The minister also visited the Ganesh Mandir Higher Secondary School, where he reviewed the construction of a new academic building, the statement said. (PTI)

CM lays foundation

initiative would progress in three phases. Participants who invest the first instalment productively will qualify for subsequent grants of ₹ 25,000 and ₹ 50,000. He added that women can pool their funds to start group businesses or invest individually to expand their enterprises. Pub Jaluguti, who established a food-processing unit and grocery store with an investment of Rs 80,000 and now earns around ₹ 50,000 per month.

He also cited Jyotsna Khakhlari Devi of the Sanjivani SHG in Borbhagiya village, who became self-reliant through integrated farming and now earns about ₹ 60,000 monthly.

These examples, he said, demonstrate the transformative potential of women's entrepreneurship when supported through training and SHG initiatives. Sarma reiterated the government's commitment to women's empowerment, announcing plans to introduce a strict law against polygamy in the upcoming November session of the Assam Legislative Assembly.

Highlighting other state welfare schemes, Sarma said that the government continues to expand benefits under Orunodoi, Nijut Moira, and free education schemes.

He announced that from January 1, each Orunodoi beneficiary will receive an additional ₹ 250 per LPG cylinder as financial aid, while ration cardholders will get free rice and subsidised sugar, pulses, and salt from December. He further declared that an additional 4,000 eligible families from the Morigaon constituency will be newly included under the Orunodoi scheme.

"Once women become self-reliant and financially empowered, no one can disrespect them. They will be admired by all. Our government's goal is the holistic welfare of women, irrespective of caste or religion," Sarma said. The event was attended by Water Resources Minister Pijush Hazarika, Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs Minister Kaushik Rai, MLA Rama Kanta Deuri, Chief Executive Member of the Tiwa Autonomous Council Jibon Chandra Konwar, Chairperson of Morigaon Zila Parishad Pranati Kalita Deka, Mission Director of Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission Kuntal Moni Sarma Bordoloi, and several other dignitaries and beneficiaries.

India needs more

Parshuramkar leads Agrozee Organics and its flagship initiative, Millets Now. An MTEch in Food Technology from IIT Kharagpur, she discovered early in her journey how scientific innovation can transform traditional foods into modern nutritional solutions.

The award, instituted in 2022 in memory of Nayyar, comes with a cash prize of ₹ 10 lakh, a citation and a trophy. The Rohini Nayyar Prize was instituted by the family of Nayyar, an eminent scholar-administrator who spent much of her professional life working on issues related to rural development in India.

The prize is given out annually by the Nayyar Foundation for Social and Economic Purpose. (PTI)

Centre unveils ₹ 300

airports connect our people, and when tourism infrastructure is world-class, that is when development truly reaches every home," he said. Applauding the Meghalaya government's vision, Scindia said, "The passion and dedication of the CM and his team are visible in every initiative taken in this state. Meghalaya is not waiting for the future, it is building it." Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, in his address, expressed gratitude to the PM and the Union minister for their vision and support towards Meghalaya's development.

He described the event as "historic and transformative" for Sohra and the state's tourism sector. "This project is not just about developing one destination, it's about realising a vision to build world-class, sustainable tourist destinations across the country," the CM said.

Calling the Sohra Circuit a "game changer" for the state, Sangma said the initiative will transform infrastructure, boost local livelihoods, and elevate Meghalaya's image as a sustainable tourism hub.

"The number of tourists visiting Meghalaya is increasing every year, but our focus now is on improving the overall experience -- from infrastructure to connectivity -- so that visitors stay longer and engage more deeply with our communities," he said.

He also mentioned plans to improve accessibility through an upcoming airport project and proposed helicopter services between Shillong, Sohra, and other destinations.

"We are hopeful that all of this will come together to take Meghalaya's tourism sector to new heights," he added. Tourism Minister Timothy D. Shira said the shared goal is to make Sohra a destination where visitors "stay longer, explore deeper, and engage with local communities."

He added that such initiatives are already creating jobs, empowering youth, and strengthening the local economy. Earlier, Chief Secretary Dr. Shakil Ahammed delivered the welcome address, noting that with over 16 lakh annual visitors, Meghalaya must now diversify destinations and promote clean, responsible tourism.

"We have the cleanest villages and rivers, and we must now become the cleanest destination," he said. (PTI)

Indo-Pacific should

peace and shared prosperity. "India views its role in this framework through the lens of a spirit of partnership and cooperation. Our approach is not transactional, but rather long-term and principle-driven," he said.

"We believe that the Indo-Pacific should remain open, inclusive, and free from any form of coercion," he noted. The ADMM-Plus is a platform comprising 11-nation ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and its eight dialogue partners -- India, China, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States. "Let us all together reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding and strengthening the ASEAN-led, inclusive regional security architecture, which has served our region so admirably," Singh said.

He said India is ready to enhance cooperation in all areas of mutual interests, promote dialogue, and ensure peace and stability through robust regional mechanisms.

"The experience of the past 15 years teaches us some things in a clear manner, namely that inclusive cooperation is effective; regional ownership brings legitimacy, and collective security strengthens everyone's individual sovereignty," he said. "In the coming years, these same principles will continue to guide India's approach towards ADMM-Plus and ASEAN," he added.

Singh said India is ready to continue making constructive contributions in this endeavour in the spirit of its vision MAHASAGAR or Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth across Regions.

"India sees its defence cooperation with ASEAN and Plus countries as a contribution to regional peace, stability, and capacity-building," he said.

The defence minister noted that the ADMM-Plus have proven in the last 15 years that cooperation based on trust, inclusivity, and respect for sovereignty is not only necessary but also possible.. (PTI)

Projects worth ₹ 1.78

laying of the three projects, Sarma said, "Today marks a significant day in the journey of Assam's industrial development, which will have a far-reaching impact on strengthening the state's healthcare and hospitality infrastructure". He said that the projects were being set up with an investment of around Rs 800 crore under the MoUs signed during Advantage Assam 2.0 in February.

The Medanta Super-Speciality Hospital will be constructed on 3.5 acres of land, the Cocoon Mother and Child-care Hospital on 1 acre, and the Lemon Tree hotel on 1.75 acres.

The integrated complex comprising hospitals, a hotel, and service apartments at Sarusajai will open a new chapter for medical tourism not only in Assam but across neighbouring states and the entire Southeast Asian region, he said. The chief minister expressed confidence that Assam's youth will no longer need to leave the state in search of jobs in the coming years. State Industries and Commerce Minister Bimal Bora also attended the event. (PTI)

'Delivery of justice

addressed after the completion of the probe. "Our priority right now is justice for Zubeen Garg. Discussions about other political figures, including Gaurav Gogoi, can come later," the Chief Minister stated.

Expressing confidence in his political standing, Sarma added, "Himanta Biswa Sarma cannot lose credibility. I know politics very well."

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, S.E.. WORKS,
KAAC::SECRETARIAT
DIPHU-78246
 No. KAAC/S.E.-W-106 (Pt)/2025-26/227-A (A) Dtd.06/10/2025

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs. 10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of works department and will be received by the undersigned up to 4 P.M. on 03/11/2025, and will be opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderer or their authorized agent if any.

If the day of the opening of tender happens to be a holiday/non-working days, the tender will be opened in the next day. The undersigned has the right to accept, reject any tender without any assigning reason thereof and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender quoted rate.

SL No	Name of Works	Tender Amount (Rs)	A/A Amount (Rs)	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion
1	Construction of Earthwork Road from Langvothong to Kensing Teron Vill. Khorsim Athoi, under Socheng dhenta Constituency.	Rs. 81,65,000.00	Rs.81,65,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% General 2%	90 days

Terms & Condition

- The rate to be quoted as % (Percent) above/below/as per schedule rate for building/sanitary/ works for all division under CPWD-2020-21.
- Earnest money should be deposited in favour of the undersigned in the form of call deposit/bank draft & should be attached with the tender without which no tender will be accepted
- The Contractor shall repair/re-Construction if the works executed failed due inferior quality of works. The KAAC Authority will take legal action if the contractor refuse to repair/re- construction the woks
- The work must be carried on as directed by the EE (W), KAAC Diphu Authority.
- The following up to date documents should be enclosed with the tender.
 - Professional Tax Clearance Certificate.
 - Sale Tax Clearance Certificate/GST
 - Council Registration.
 - Call Deposit
 - Council receipt
 - Caste Certificate.
 - Pan Card/Adhaar Card
 - Account number
 - Payment will be made subject to availabilities of fund
 - The undersigned is not bound to accept the lowest quoted rate.

Sd/-
 Superintending Engineer (SE), Works.
 Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,
 DIPHU.

'Delivery of justice to Zubeen and eviction drive will move together'

Himanta attacks Cong, Akhil for politicising cultural icon's death issue

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday launched a sharp attack on the Opposition, accusing it of attempting to politicise the legacy of the late singer and cultural icon Zubeen Garg.

He also reaffirmed that his government would simultaneously ensure justice in the Zubeen Garg case and continue its ongoing eviction operations across the state.

Speaking to reporters, the Chief Minister alleged that the Congress and Independent MLA Akhil Gogoi were "bringing people who were never genuine followers" of Zubeen Garg to public events and memorials.

This, he said, was inconveniencing genuine admirers and fans.

"The Congress is trying to exploit Zubeen Garg's name for political mileage," Sarma said, adding that the BJP government



was working "to ensure Zubeen receives the true respect and honour he deserves at every step."

The chief minister further claimed that certain groups, particularly from the "Miya community," had been visiting the late artist's memorial site in the evenings "in a manner that disturbs

the sanctity of the place."

"After the April elections, these duplicate Zubeen fans will disappear. This is nothing but a political tactic to attract sympathy," Sarma remarked.

Reiterating his administration's firm stand on land encroachment, the chief minister said eviction

drives would continue without compromise.

"I will stand against the Miya community as long as I remain chief minister," Sarma asserted. "There will be no relaxation or backtracking on eviction operations. Like Arjun shot arrows with both hands, I will, on one hand, deliver justice for Zubeen Garg, and on the other, carry out the evictions."

The chief minister emphasised that his government's approach balanced law enforcement with respect for Assam's cultural icons.

"Justice for Zubeen will not stop the rule of law. Both will move forward together," he said.

Sarma also indicated that the government's immediate focus remained on the ongoing investigation into Zubeen Garg's death. Other political issues, including those involving opposition leaders, would be (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Dispur police take custody of Bikash Axom

On-the-run Veer Lachit Sena leader finally gives up



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: Veer Lachit Sena leader Bikash Axom, who had been evading arrest for several days, surrendered before the Dispur Police on Saturday amid an ongoing statewide crackdown on members of the organisation.

Police sources said Axom had been absconding since an arrest warrant was issued against him in connection with an alleged extortion case.

His surrender followed a brief social media post earlier in the day, in which he publicly announced his decision to cooperate with the authorities.

In his Facebook post, Axom wrote that he had just watched the late Zubeen Garg's final film, Roi Roi Binale, before giving himself up to police.

"I wanted to watch the film first. Since my arrest was inevitable, I decided to see it before surrendering," he wrote, urging others to experience the film as well.

The post quickly went viral, drawing mixed reactions online.

Supporters hailed it as a symbolic gesture, while others criticised the timing, given the legal charges pending against him.

During his days in hiding, Axom reportedly sent a letter to associates and media houses alleging that the government had paid social media influencers to downplay the investigation into Zubeen Garg's death.

The claim added further fuel to the ongoing debate surrounding the high-profile case and its political overtones.

Police officials, however, dismissed the allegations as an attempt to divert attention from the charges against him. "The extortion case is being investigated on solid evidence. The surrender will help us proceed with due process," an officer said.

Bikash Axom's surrender comes amid a broader police crackdown on Veer Lachit Sena, a group known for its aggressive regionalist stance and frequent confrontations with law enforcement.

Several members of the outfit have been detained over the past two weeks on charges ranging from intimidation to illegal fundraising.

Authorities have described the operation as part of a wider effort to "restore order and accountability" within pressure groups operating in the state.

"The law applies equally to everyone, regardless of affiliation," a senior police official said.

With Bikash Axom now in custody, police are expected to intensify questioning over the group's recent activities, financial links, and possible connections to other political developments in the state.

Projects worth ₹1.78 lakh crore to be launched by Dec: CM

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that projects worth around ₹1.78 lakh crore, committed during the investment summit earlier this year, will be launched by December.

With the pouring in of investments and projects, youth will find more employment opportunities within the state, he said.

The chief minister was speaking at a programme here on Friday evening for the laying of foundation stones for three major projects — Medanta Super Speciality Hospital by Global Health Limited, Cocoon Mother and Childcare Hospital by RJ Corp Healthcare and the Lemon Tree five-star hotel.

Asserting that the government has successfully projected a new image of Assam across the country, Sarma said investment commitments at Advantage Assam 2.0 are fruitifying.

He said that a thermal power project worth ₹40,000 crore will soon commence in the state.

By December, several projects, including multiple palm storage ventures worth ₹30,000 crore, will begin, totalling investments of approximately ₹1.78 lakh crore, the chief minister added. On the foundation stone—(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Indo-Pacific should be free from coercion: Rajnath

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: India's emphasis on rule of law and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific is not against any country, but to safeguard interests of all stakeholders, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday amid mounting global concerns over China's aggressive military posturing in the region.

In an address at a conclave of defence ministers of ASEAN member states and the bloc's dialogue partners in Kuala Lumpur, Singh said India believes that the Indo-Pacific should remain open, inclusive, and free from any form of "coercion".

He also pitched for an approach of "collective security" to ensure sovereignty of every nation in the region.

"India's emphasis on the rule of law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and its advocacy for freedom of navigation and overflight in the Indo-Pacific, are not directed against any country but are meant to safeguard the collective in-



terests of all regional stakeholders," he said.

His remarks came amid consistent demands by several ASEAN member states as well as democratic nations for adherence to UNCLOS in the face of Beijing's increasing military muscle flexing in the contested South China Sea.

In his speech at the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) conclave, Singh said India's strategic engagement with ASEAN is not transactional but long-term and principle-driven, and it rests on a

shared belief that the region should remain open, inclusive, and free from "coercion".

"The security of the future will not depend solely on military capabilities, but on the management of shared resources, the security of digital and physical infrastructure, and a collective response to humanitarian crises," he said.

Singh said the ADMM-Plus can be that bridge to connect strategic dialogue to practical outcomes and take the region forward towards (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Centre unveils ₹300-crore Sohra tourism circuit in Meghalaya

SOHRA (MEGHALAYA), Nov 1: Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia on Saturday laid the foundation of the ₹300-crore Integrated Development of the Sohra Tourism Circuit in Meghalaya, describing the initiative as "not just about building infrastructure, but about building futures."

Scindia, the Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), who was joined by Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, said the project aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of inclusive and sustainable development under the PM-DevINE scheme, ensuring "no corner of the country is left behind."

He said the project aims to strengthen tourism infrastructure, enhance visitor experience, and create sustainable livelihood opportunities in Sohra, once known as Cherrapunji, one of Meghalaya's most iconic destinations.

"The PM-DevINE initiative was launched to ensure that the pace of development reaches every corner of our nation. Today's foundation laying in Sohra is not just about constructing facilities, but about creating livelihoods and building futures," Scindia said at the event held at Kutmadan here.

Highlighting the government's focus on the Northeast, Scindia said budgetary support for the region has risen from ₹36,000 crore in 2014 to over ₹1 lakh crore today.

He said over ₹50,000 crore has been spent on rural road and connectivity projects across the region, adding that the upcoming Shillong-Silchar Greenfield Expressway worth ₹22,680 crore will pass close to Sohra, further boosting tourism and trade.

"Connectivity and tourism are the twin engines of development in the Northeast," he said, adding that the Sohra Tourism Circuit would serve as a model for responsible tourism and en-



vironmental balance.

The projects under the Sohra circuit include the development of Nohkalikai Falls, Mawmsai Eco Park, Arwah and Mawmsai Cave precincts, Nohsngthiang Falls, Wah Kaba Falls, Shella Riverside, and the Wah Kaliar Canyon viewpoint.

"These world-class projects will give Sohra a new identity, not just as a tourist destination but as a benchmark for responsible tourism across the country," Scindia said.

Praising Meghalaya's community-based tourism model, he added, "Nowhere else in the world do nature, culture, and community coexist in such harmony as they do here in Meghalaya. This harmony is the foundation of its growth."

The Union minister said the government of India's efforts go beyond tourism, extending to strengthening connectivity and infrastructure. "We are strengthening the arteries of progress. When our roads are strong, when (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

India needs more decentralisation: EAC-PM chairman

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: India needs greater decentralisation but in many states, there is resistance to devolving powers to local councils, according to Mahendra Dev, Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).

At a ceremony to award the fourth Rohini Nayar Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Rural Development, Dev said the level of decentralisation in China and

the US is much higher.

"India needs greater decentralisation, which should involve giving more powers to panchayats and local bodies, along with increased use of technology in the agricultural sector to improve rural wages.... There is resistance in many states to devolving powers to local councils," he said.

Recalling the contribution of former economist and bureaucrat Rohini Nayar,

Dev said the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) through panchayats not only helped improve wages but also helped build trust in grassroots democracy.

He presented the prize to Pune's social entrepreneur Vidhya Parshuramkar for her contribution to making nutrition more accessible, sustainable and community-driven. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CM lays foundation for AYUSH hospital, launches women's entrepreneurship aid in Morigaon

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday laid the foundation stone for a 50-bed AYUSH hospital at Mikirbha in Morigaon district.

He also launched the distribution of the first instalment of seed capital under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA), handing over cheques of ₹10,000 each to 36,367 female beneficiaries of the Morigaon Legislative Assembly constituency, including 32,951 from rural areas and 3,416 from urban areas.

The chief minister further laid the foundation stone for a new Circuit House in Morigaon involving an estimated outlay of ₹15 crore.

The upcoming AYUSH hospital, to be constructed on 15 bighas of land, aims to promote traditional systems of medicine

alongside modern healthcare.

The hospital complex will include a multi-storey main building with 40 general beds and 10 private rooms.

It will function as a modern, fully equipped centre for traditional, holistic, and alternative medicine, promoting preventive healthcare and balanced living.

Speaking at the event, Sarma recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Jorhat nearly two years ago, during which he expressed his vision of empowering three crore women across India as "Lakhpati Baideos." Inspired by that vision, the Assam government launched the MMUA to empower 30 lakh women through self-help groups (SHGs).

Urging the women entrepreneurs to use the seed capital judiciously, the chief minister explained that the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Union minister reviews implementation of central govt schemes

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: Union minister Prahlad Joshi on Saturday reviewed the implementation of central government schemes in health, education and public welfare sectors in Assam.

Joshi visited the Khanpara State Ayushman Arogya Mandir, where he interacted with doctors, hospital staff and NHM workers, an official statement said.

He also inspected various OPD facilities and reviewed the health services available for citizens.

The Minister for New and Renewable Energy and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution hailed the efforts of healthcare personnel in (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CEM announces enhanced financial aid and land allotment for Tiwa Cultural Society

Langkhon Festival concludes with pledge to preserve Tiwa culture

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 1: The two-day 18th Shame Langkhon Kham (Langkhon Festival) of the Tiwa tribe, organised by the Tiwa Cultural Society, Karbi Anglong Committee, concluded recently here at the Tiwa Cultural Complex, Ulukunchi in Amri, West Karbi Anglong.

The socio-religious festival, celebrated by the Tiwa community of Assam, is observed to pray for a good harvest in the forthcoming Rabi crop season. Community members offer prayers and make offerings to the deities for prosperity and abundant yields.

The two-day cultural event



featured competitions and performances showcasing traditional Tiwa dances, songs, and music by troupes from various regions.

On the concluding day, Chief Executive Member

(CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Tuliram Ronghang, attended as chief guest. Addressing the gathering, the CEM announced that the KAAC's financial assistance

to the Langkhon Festival, which currently stands at ₹5 lakh, will be enhanced to ₹20 lakh from next year. He further assured that 100 bighas of land would be allotted to the Tiwa Cultural Society for the construction of artists' camps.

Highlighting the concern over the declining use of the Tiwa language, Ronghang said, "In my Bithung Rengthama MAC constituency in West Karbi Anglong, there are around 500 Tiwa voters, but many have forgotten their own language and speak Assamese or other languages." He added that Tiwa—(CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Countdown begins for launch of ISRO's heaviest communication satellite CMS-03 onboard LVM3-M5

SRIHARIKOTA (ANDHRA PRADESH) Nov 1: The 24-hour countdown for the launch of over 4,000 kg communication satellite CMS-03 commenced at this spacecraft on Saturday, ISRO said.

The satellite weighing about 4,410 kg will be the heaviest to be launched from the Indian soil and into a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO), the space agency said.

The spacecraft will travel onboard a LVM3-M5 rocket, dubbed as 'Bahubali' for its heavy-lift capability.

The launch vehicle has been fully assembled and integrated with the spacecraft and it has been moved to the second launch pad here for taking up pre-launch operations, the Bengaluru-headquartered

space agency said on Saturday.

Later in a social media post, ISRO said, "Countdown commences!! Final preparations complete and the countdown for LVM3-M5 (mission) has officially begun at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota."

"All systems are GO as we move closer to liftoff," the space agency said in its update.

The 43.5 metre tall rocket is scheduled for a 5.26 pm liftoff on November 2.

LVM3- (Launch Vehicle Mark-3) is the new heavy lift launch vehicle of ISRO and is used for placing 4,000 kg spacecraft in GTO in a cost-effective manner, ISRO said.

This three stage launch vehicle with two solid motor strap-ons (S200), a liquid

propellant core stage (L110) and a cryogenic stage (C25) gives ISRO full self-reliance in launching heavier communication satellites that weigh up to 4,000 kg in GTO.

LVM3- is also termed as Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) MkIII.

According to ISRO, the LVM3-M5 is the fifth operational flight. The LVM3 vehicle was developed with completely indigenous technologies including the C25 cryogenic stage. It has a track record of all successful launches even from the first development flight LVM-3 Crew module Atmospheric Re-entry Experiment (CARE) launched in December 2014.

It is pertinent to mention that for the ambitious (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Editor's pick

Manifesto: A powerful weapon of democracy or an electoral deception?

By: Lalit Garg

In the Bihar Assembly elections, both alliances have released their election manifestos filled with populist promises — designed more to attract or mislead the voters than to offer realistic governance plans. The nature of these promises raises a serious question: have election manifestos become the most powerful weapon in the grand festival of democracy, or are they merely electoral deceptions? Certainly, they have become a major tool to influence public opinion and win votes. But the bigger question remains — how many political parties have sincerely implemented their manifestos once they came to power?

In truth, a manifesto is supposed to be a party's vision document — a public declaration of its ideology, objectives, and commitments. It outlines how a party intends to shape the direction of the state or nation if elected, which fundamental issues it aims to resolve, and which path of development it plans to pursue. During elections, manifestos spark fierce accusations and counter-accusations between rival parties, yet meaningful debate over their content is rarely seen — unlike in developed democracies where such discussions help build an informed and responsible electorate. Sadly, in India, election manifestos are fast losing their significance and seriousness.

In a democracy, the role of the manifesto is extremely important, for it provides voters with the necessary information to make an informed choice. It enables citizens to understand what each political party stands for, what its priorities are, and what welfare measures it proposes for different sections of society. The manifesto represents a party's public pledge — a symbol of accountability. Unfortunately, in Indian democracy, this accountability has largely remained confined to paper. Most parties conveniently forget their manifestos once elections are over. Voters too fail to demand fulfillment of promises in exchange for their votes. Consequently, manifestos have become mere formalities and instruments of display rather than documents of commitment.

A look at history shows that most promises made in manifestos are either half-fulfilled or completely ignored. For example, the previous government in Rajasthan fulfilled only about 64% of its promises, while in Karnataka, merely 3% were implemented. These figures reveal that neither political parties nor the public treat manifestos with the seriousness they deserve. This attitude goes against the spirit of democracy, which thrives only when citizens question their representatives and demand accountability. A major problem with most manifestos is that many of the promises they contain are financially impractical. In the eagerness to please voters, parties make commitments that are neither economically feasible nor administratively planned. There is also no legal provision that binds parties to fulfill their pledges. As a result, such promises are forgotten once the elections conclude.

Looking specifically at Bihar, both the NDA and the Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) have issued manifestos filled with highly attractive but unrealistic promises. The NDA's Sankalp Patra includes pledges such as creating one crore (ten million) jobs, financial assistance of up to two lakh rupees for women, skill centers in every district, an annual honor fund of nine thousand rupees for farmers, and construction of seven new expressways. Meanwhile, the Mahagathbandhan's Tejashwi Pran promises a government job for every family, monthly assistance of ₹2,500 for women, health insurance worth ₹25 lakh, 200 units of free electricity, guaranteed minimum support prices for farmers, and restoration of agricultural markets.

Both manifestos share one thing in common — they are highly ambitious and populist. Promises of jobs, free electricity, cash transfers, and massive infrastructure projects may sound appealing, but their feasibility remains questionable. In a state like Bihar, where resources are limited and employment opportunities scarce, such commitments are difficult to fulfill. Neither side has explained how these expenditures will be funded, which departments will implement them, or when results can realistically be expected. Although these manifestos carry an apparent intent of public welfare, they seem to be based more on imagination than reality. The real problems of Bihar — education, healthcare, migration, agricultural distress, unemployment, and lack of industry — cannot be solved merely through populist declarations. Before making such commitments, parties must carefully study their financial and administrative feasibility. Unfortunately, manifestos are now being used more as tools of political marketing rather than instruments of public service.

Voters, too, must become more discerning — not merely impressed by grand promises but aware of what previous governments actually delivered. The media and civil society organizations also have a responsibility to track post-election performance and hold parties accountable for their manifestos. Manifestos will become meaningful only when their promises are measurable, time-bound, and resource-backed. Political parties must transform slogans into concrete programs, not just catchy rhetoric. It is also essential for the Election Commission to formulate clear policies preventing parties from making impractical or impossible promises that mislead the electorate. The central question remains — should we not ensure that the promises made in election manifestos are legally and practically implemented after elections? After all, a manifesto is essentially a list of policies through which a political party expresses its intentions, objectives, and principles before the electorate. Once a party comes to power, it is expected to act on these policies. Thus, the manifesto is, in effect, a vision document — and should be treated as a legally enforceable commitment.

One can rightly say that a manifesto serves as a vital instrument through which voters evaluate the governance agenda and ideology of competing parties. Voting, in this sense, becomes a form of transaction — where promises are exchanged for trust and votes. Hence, once a party comes to power, it should be legally and morally bound to honor this social contract. Under the very social contract theory upon which governments are elected, should they not be held accountable for fulfilling their promises? The Election Commission must revisit this issue and explore viable mechanisms to ensure compliance. Undoubtedly, election manifestos have emerged as one of the most influential instruments in the grand celebration of democracy. But as long as they remain collections of lofty words without any binding commitment, they will continue to weaken the true essence of democracy. The manifestos released by both alliances in Bihar may add color and excitement to the democratic festival, but only time will tell whether they truly meet the aspirations of the people — or turn out to be nothing more than another electoral illusion.

How Zubeen Garg's last film revived Assam's cinemas

By: Dipak Kurmi

In the pre-dawn darkness of a Friday morning in Guwahati, queues snaked down the street as the clock struck 4:25 am. People had gathered in the half-light, driven by something more than mere entertainment—they came to witness a resurrection. The first screening of 'Roi Roi Binale' was not simply a film premiere; it was a cultural phenomenon that breathed life back into Assam's forgotten single-screen cinemas and served as a final testament to Zubeen Garg, the musician, actor, and filmmaker whose death transformed a promise into reality.

Years before this extraordinary moment, while performing at Jagiroad in Morigaon district, Zubeen had stood on stage and lamented the closure of Ganesh Talkies, once an iconic venue that had succumbed to the relentless advance of multiplexes. In that moment of frustration and nostalgia, he made a vow that seemed almost quixotic: he would help reopen Assam's dying single-screen theatres, those temples of celluloid dreams that had become casualties of modernization and changing viewing habits. Skepticism greeted his pledge—few believed such a reversal was possible in an era when multiplexes dominated the entertainment landscape and streaming services threatened even their supremacy. Yet through 'Roi Roi Binale', Zubeen has posthumously kept his word in a manner that exceeds anything he might have accomplished in life.

Across Assam, at least eight long-shuttered cinema halls have been repaired, cleaned, and reopened specifically for the film's release. Among them stands Ganesh Talkies itself, its projector flickering to life for the first time since the COVID-19 lockdown forced its indefinite closure. The revival represents more than mere commercial opportunity; it symbolizes the enduring power of regional cinema and the profound connection between an artist and his audience that transcends mortality itself.

The phenomenon extends from Guwahati to Dibrugarh, from Jorhat to Tezpur, with crowds pouring into theatres throughout the day. Every seat sold out for the following week, and cinema owners found themselves adding extra shows to accommodate demand that exceeded even the most optimistic projections. Rajiv Bora, president of the Assam Cinema Hall Owners' Association, revealed the unprecedented scope of the film's dominance: 'Roi Roi Binale'



occupies every cinema hall in the state—eighty-five venues in total. "No other film is being screened in Assam right now," he confirmed, underscoring the singular cultural moment unfolding across the region. "We expect full houses for at least a month. Eight or nine new screens have opened, and even one of our oldest halls in Jagi Road has been reopened for this film. We believe Roi Roi Binale will cross ₹100 crore—an unthinkable figure for Assamese cinema."

That projection, which would once have seemed absurdly ambitious for a regional production, now appears entirely plausible given the emotional groundswell surrounding the film. At the heart of this unprecedented phenomenon lies not merely a successful marketing campaign or fortuitous timing, but the story of a man whose art dissolved the boundaries between music, cinema, and social life throughout Assam.

'Roi Roi Binale'—a title that translates to "Tears Still Flow"—represents Zubeen's final cinematic statement, a 146-minute musical drama directed by Rajesh Bhuyan. Zubeen's involvement permeated every aspect of the production: he starred in the lead role, composed

all eleven songs that form the film's emotional architecture, and co-produced it alongside his wife Garima and Shyamantak Gautam. In the film, Zubeen portrays a blind musician grappling with the fundamental tension between artistic integrity and a world often indifferent to such concerns. The trailer, released mere weeks before his death, contains an image that would later acquire haunting prevalence: Zubeen lying unconscious on a beach, eerily mirroring the circumstances that would claim his life.

On September 19, while attending the fourth edition of the North East India Festival in Singapore, the fifty-two-year-old singer drowned while swimming in the sea. The tragedy devastated a state that had long regarded him as transcending conventional celebrity status—he was a cultural conscience, a restless artistic force who sang in over forty languages and crafted songs addressing love, rebellion, and the complex question of belonging in a region whose identity has been shaped by migration, conflict, and cultural synthesis.

The team behind 'Roi Roi Binale' faced the agonizing challenge

of completing the film after losing its creative nucleus. Director Rajesh Bhuyan described the emotional and artistic difficulty: "This was Zubeen's dream. He left us at the last moment. It was very difficult—emotionally and artistically. We tried to keep every detail the way he wanted." The responsibility became both a burden and a sacred trust, requiring the team to channel Zubeen's vision while coping with profound grief.

Poran Borkatoky, entrusted with creating the background score, explained that this task should have fallen to Zubeen himself. "When I took over, I couldn't stop crying," Borkatoky admitted. "Our entire generation learnt music from Zubeen Garg. We've tried to put everything we learnt from him into this film." His words capture the intergenerational influence Zubeen wielded, having shaped the musical sensibilities of countless artists who now carry forward his legacy.

Scriptwriter Rahul Gautam Sharma described the project as "an embodiment of Zubeen's worldview," elaborating that "this film reflects what he stood for—his politics, his understanding of art, his stance against extremism, and his belief in love as resistance." These themes resonate deeply in Assam, a state whose modern history includes periods of insurgency, ethnic tension, and on-going debates about identity and inclusion.

Actor Achurja Borpatra considered his involvement "a blessing," expressing gratitude for having shared the screen with the legend. "I am lucky to be included in Zubeen Da's last film. We are also his fans. He is a living legend for us and I have acted with him and this will remain with us forever," he reflected, his words revealing the reverence younger artists held for Zubeen even during his lifetime.

Editor Pratim Khaund articulated the difficulty of accepting the finality of death: "It's difficult to accept he is not with us. Zubeen Da's involvement in the film was immense. We hope the people will like the film as a lot of his memories are connected to the film." Indeed, for many viewers, watching 'Roi Roi Binale' represents not mere entertainment but a means of communion with an artist whose absence has left an irreplaceable void.

The Assam government announced that its entire share of Goods and Services Tax revenue from 'Roi Roi Binale' would be donated to Zubeen's Kalaguru Artiste Foundation, a charitable organization he established to sup-

port underprivileged artists and students. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma characterized this gesture as a tribute to "Assam's eternal son," acknowledging Zubeen's status as a figure whose cultural significance transcended political divisions.

Thirty-seven days after his cremation, Zubeen's ashes were immersed in the Brahmaputra River, that mighty waterway that flows through Assamese geography and imagination alike. His wife Garima, accompanied by family and close friends, sailed from Lachit Ghat into the river's wide current. As she lowered two clay pots containing his remains into the water, she wept openly, her grief witnessed by those who understood that they were bidding farewell not merely to a man but to an epoch.

Later, Garima posted on social media words that captured both her devotion and her anguish: "Assam's land, sky, wind and now the vast Brahmaputra... You are the only one in the hearts of people and nature." She continued with a promise that suggested unresolved questions: "See you again one day soon... I'll talk about reincarnation, I'll write new stories for you and me. But now, we need to know what really happened to you on that cursed day. #JusticeForZubeenGarg."

Part of the ashes was immersed again in Jorhat, Zubeen's hometown, by Arun Garg, a family confidant and one of the four individuals who lit his funeral pyre. When Zubeen's body had returned from Singapore, it received state honours befitting his cultural stature. Over a million people came to pay their respects at the Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah Sports Complex, a gathering that testified to the breadth of his appeal across demographic and geographic boundaries. Thousands followed the funeral procession to Kamarkuchi village, singing his songs as his pyre was lit—a spontaneous chorus that transformed mourning into celebration of a life lived in pursuit of art.

In death, Zubeen Garg has achieved what eluded many artists in life: he has reminded his state that cinema, particularly regional cinema shown in communal settings, retains the power to unite communities and revive cultural institutions thought permanently lost. 'Roi Roi Binale' stands as more than a successful film; it represents a final gift from an artist to his people, proof that promises kept echo beyond the grave. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmi@gmail.com)

Mother Tongue Medium and Intellectual development

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The mother tongue is a fundamental foundation for human thought processes, emotional sensitivity, and intellectual development. The language that a child naturally and spontaneously acquires from home, family, and society after birth is their mother tongue. This language lays the first mold of knowledge in the child's mind and gives a definite and stable form to their mental world. Linguists and educationists have confirmed that receiving education through the mother tongue medium is extremely important for the natural development of a child's brain. Since the mother tongue is the language of the child's mind, any new subject matter or complex concept becomes easily comprehensible through it. As a result, the child can receive that knowledge without any mental barrier, analyze it, and connect it with prior knowledge. This easy connection and natural acceptability create a powerful mindset in the child's mind for arousing curiosity and questions, which initiates their intellectual journey. Through the mother tongue, the child establishes a deep spiritual relationship with their surroundings, culture, and heritage, which strengthens their self-confidence and intellectual identity. The richness of the mother tongue and its expressive styles enrich the child's thought world to such an extent that they become mentally prepared to easily master any higher knowledge and other languages in the future. The mother tongue is that secure foundation of a contemplative life, without which the full development of human intellectual freedom and creativity is impossible.

The application of the mother tongue in primary education is a pedagogical necessity. At this crucial stage of the child's brain development, providing education through the mother tongue medium is essential for enhancing the child's comprehension and problem-solving skills. If complex concepts in any subject, such as science, mathematics, social sciences, or moral education, are explained in the child's familiar language, that is, the mother tongue, then the child can easily understand their core meaning and interconnections. The words and sentence structures of the mother tongue are so familiar to the child that they absorb the knowledge presented through that language without any mental effort. Consequently, all their attention and mental energy are directed toward delving into the depth of the main subject matter. The child learns to analyze that knowledge, seek out the logic behind it, and make decisions from their own perspective based on it. This analytical abil-

ity is the primary driving force of intellectual development. In contrast, if a child is forced to receive education through some foreign language medium, they face a significant mental challenge in acquiring knowledge. They first have to strive to strengthen the language foundation, which disrupts the process of acquiring core knowledge. Due to the limited vocabulary and difficult sentence structures of a foreign language, the child cannot perceive the deep meaning or subtleties of any subject matter. In such situations, the learning process becomes limited to mere memorization of so-called knowledge, which restricts the child's intellectual capacity and hinders their contemplativeness. Therefore, education through the mother tongue medium strengthens the child's intellectual foundation to such an extent that they become capable of succeeding in any competitive field in the world in the future with their original thinking.

The mother tongue plays an important role in strengthening the child's emotional sensitivity, self-confidence, and social bonds. Emotional development requires freedom of expression and deep connection. The child can express their deepest thoughts, dreams, fears, or joys in the mother tongue as comfortably and vividly as in no other language. Heartfelt and affectionate conversations in the mother tongue with parents, grandparents, and family members create a safe and stable emotional environment in the child's mind. This sense of emotional security builds the child's self-confidence and respect for their own identity. A child who can easily express their emotions experiences beautiful development in mental health and personality. Furthermore, through the mother tongue, the child gains knowledge about societal traditions, ethics, social behaviors, and cultural values. Through this cultural knowledge, the child learns to integrate with their ethnicity, heritage, and roots. The mother tongue is the carrier of culture, and its knowledge gives a powerful form to the child's intellectual identity. If a child receives education through another language medium, they have to feel a division between their familial and educational worlds. This division can create a sense of alienation in the child's mind, which obstructs their emotional stability and contemplative development. Therefore, education through the mother tongue medium strengthens the child's emotional foundation along with their intellectual development, helping to shape a balanced personality.

The use of the mother tongue also unlocks the child's creativity and capacity for original thinking. The core foundation of creativity is imaginative power and the courage to

think in new ways. The rich vocabulary and figures of speech in the mother tongue provide unrestricted momentum to the child's imagination. They can vividly express the images in their mind, dreams, and new ideas through words without any hesitation. Literature, folktales, poems, and songs composed in the mother tongue deeply influence the child's contemplativeness, awaken their subtle feelings, and help them understand the aesthetic aspects of life. Due to this natural expressiveness, interest in original creation increases in the child's mind, enabling them to contribute innovations with new inventive thoughts in the future in any field such as literature, art, science, or technology. When attempting creative expression through a foreign language medium, the child often remains confined within the grammar and limited words of that language. As a result, the natural flow of their original thinking stops, and the expression becomes artificial. The fluency and naturalness required for the full development of creativity are available only in the mother tongue. The mother tongue gives the child the ability to deeply comprehend every subject and explain it from their own viewpoint, which is a sign of powerful intellectual contemplation.

The expansion of the mother tongue medium plays an immense role in a society's collective intellectual advancement and the democratization of knowledge. When all higher knowledge in education, research, technology, medical science, and philosophy becomes available in the native language, that is, the mother tongue, the right to knowledge is not confined only to a small language-speaking or elite class. People from all levels of society, regardless of their economic and social foundations, become capable of acquiring modern knowledge in their own language and improving their quality of life. As a result, the dissemination of knowledge accelerates, the scope of intellectual discussions widens, and awareness and interest in knowledge increase among the general public. The expansion of research and higher education in the mother tongue helps create original thinking and innovative methods for solving local problems. Many developed countries in the world have adopted their mother tongue as the vehicle of knowledge and contributed to the world in the fields of science and technology. This proves that the mother tongue is not a barrier in the field of knowledge but rather a strength. Excessive dependence on foreign languages harms a nation's intellectual independence and self-reliance in the long term. Therefore, opening the doors to all fields of knowledge through the mother tongue is an essential

policy for a nation's self-respect and intellectual development.

In the current context of globalization, the importance of the mother tongue cannot be denied for any reason, but the necessity of learning other languages must also be acknowledged. In the field of intellectual development, the place of the mother tongue is like the foundation, and the place of other languages is like the height built upon that foundation. Linguists and educationists have clarified that when a child's mother tongue foundation is strong, a powerful system forms in their brain for receiving and analyzing new concepts, enabling them to easily learn a second or third language. The high standard of comprehension skills mastered in the mother tongue helps in understanding the complexities of other languages. Therefore, the goal of educational policy should be to adopt the mother tongue as the primary foundation and effectively teach other languages, such as English, as additional tools for global knowledge, technology, and communication. The respect and affection for the mother tongue create a deep faith in the child's mind toward their own identity, providing their mental strength to fully develop their talents in any competitive environment in the world. The standards of mother tongue medium education, appropriate curriculum, and supply of skilled teachers must make it suitable for all challenges of modern knowledge and science. Only through the mother tongue is the blossoming of every child's inherent talent possible, which is indispensable for creating a healthy, strong, and contemplative nation.

In conclusion, the relationship between mother tongue medium and intellectual development is an eternal and inseparable truth. The mother tongue plants the roots of thought, emotion, and culture so deeply in the child's mind that their intellectual development progresses at a natural and balanced pace. This language sows the seeds of creativity in the child's mind, makes them confident, and helps build a strong bond with society. Only through the dignity of the mother tongue and its extensive application can a nation achieve self-reliance in the field of knowledge and shine in the world arena with its unique identity. Showing respect for the mother tongue and giving it an appropriate place at all levels of education is not just a linguistic responsibility; it is a fundamental commitment to ensuring every person's intellectual freedom and full development. Knowledge acquired through the mother tongue gives profound meaning to the child's life and enables them to lead a contemplative and successful life.

Jim Corbett: The hunter who became India's greatest conservationist

By: Zahid Ahmed Tapadar

A 150-Year Legacy of Courage and Conservation

As we commemorate 150 years since the birth of Edward James "Jim" Corbett in 1875, we celebrate a man whose life embodied an extraordinary transformation from legendary hunter to pioneering wildlife conservationist. His enduring connection with India and the Kumaon hills shaped not only his destiny but also the future of wildlife conservation in the subcontinent.

The Making of a Legend

Born in Nainital, then part of British India, Corbett's life was intrinsically woven into the fabric of the Indian Himalayan foothills. The son of a postmaster, he spent his formative years exploring the dense forests of Kumaon, developing an intimate knowledge of the wilderness that would later define his life's work. Unlike many British colonialists of his era, Corbett spoke fluent Kumaoni and shared a deep bond with the local communities, understanding their struggles with man-eating tigers and leopards that terrorised villages.

Between 1907 and 1938, Corbett tracked and killed over a dozen man-eating tigers and leopards that had claimed more than 1,200 human lives. The Champawat Tiger alone had killed 436 people, making it history's deadliest big cat. His hunts were not sport but mercy missions, undertaken at the desperate request of villagers living in constant fear.

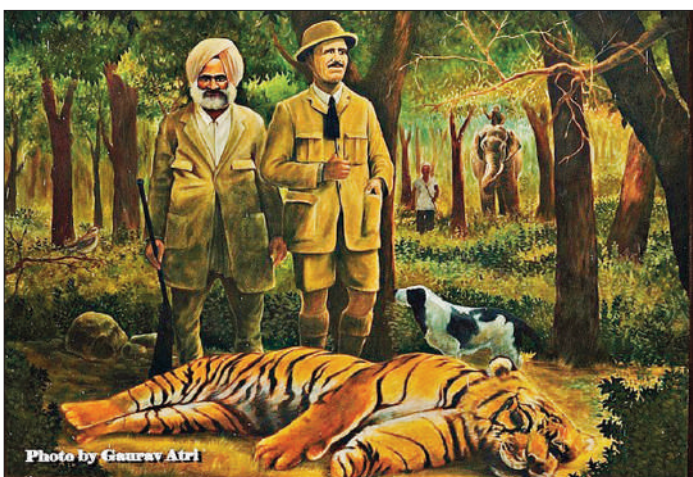


Photo by Gaurav Atri

Literary Masterpieces from the Wild

Corbett's literary legacy is as remarkable as his hunting exploits. After retiring to Kenya in 1947, he penned several books that transported readers into the heart of the Indian jungle, combining thrilling narratives with profound ecological insights.

Man-Eaters of Kumaon (1944), his first and most celebrated work, remains a classic of wildlife literature. Written with vivid detail and deep empathy for both human victims and the animals he hunted, the book revolutionised how people perceived big cats—not as mindless killers, but as creatures driven to man-eating by injury or circumstance.

The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag (1947) and My India (1952) further showcased his narrative genius and love for the country. In Jungle Lore (1953) and Tree Tops (1955), he shared his deep ecological

knowledge and conservation philosophy. His final work, Temple Tiger and More Man-Eaters of Kumaon, published posthumously, completed his literary tribute to the wilderness he loved.

From Hunter to Conservation Pioneer

What makes Corbett truly exceptional is his ideological evolution. By the 1930s, he recognised that India's wildlife faced extinction from indiscriminate hunting and habitat loss. He became one of India's earliest and most vocal wildlife conservationists, advocating for the protection of tigers and their habitats decades before conservation became a global movement.

His efforts were instrumental in establishing India's first national park in 1936 in the Kumaon hills—initially named Hailey National Park. It was renamed Corbett National Park in 1957 as a tribute to his conserva-

tion legacy. This park became a model for wildlife protection and later served as the launch site for Project Tiger in 1973, India's ambitious tiger conservation program.

An Enduring Bond with India

Though born during British rule, Corbett considered himself Indian at heart. He lived in India for 67 years, departing only after Independence in 1947, heartbroken at leaving the land he loved. His writings reveal a man deeply respectful of Indian culture, traditions, and people. He photographed wildlife when cameras were primitive, pioneered ecotourism, and understood ecological balance long before these concepts entered mainstream consciousness.

A Timeless Legacy

Jim Corbett passed away in Kenya on April 19, 1955, but his legacy thrives in India's forests. Today, Corbett National Park stands as living proof of his vision, protecting tigers and their habitat while inspiring millions of visitors. His books continue to captivate readers worldwide, offering timeless lessons about co-existence, respect for nature, and the urgent need for conservation.

As we mark 150 years since his birth, Jim Corbett remains India's most beloved naturalist—a hunter who learned to shoot with a camera, a storyteller who gave voice to the wilderness, and a visionary who understood that protecting nature meant protecting ourselves. His life reminds us that true heroism lies not in conquest, but in conservation.

PUTU SHONA: THE CHESS CHAMPION

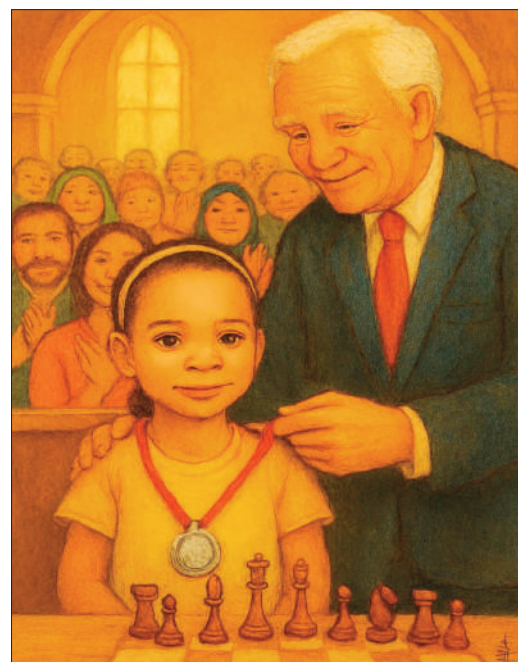
By: Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

The autumn sun filtered gently through the windows of the Kids Chess Center of Virginia, casting golden squares on the polished floor—like a real-life chessboard waiting for its players. Inside, the air buzzed with excitement. Children in festive attire gathered around tables, their eyes gleaming with anticipation. It was Bhai Phonta, the Bengali celebration of sibling love, and this year, the center had organized a special chess tournament to mark the occasion.

Putu Shona, a bright-eyed six-year-old with a ponytail tied in a blue ribbon, adjusted her glasses and looked around. Everyone says, "Oh the child Ms. Garry Kasparov here!" The trainer laughed.

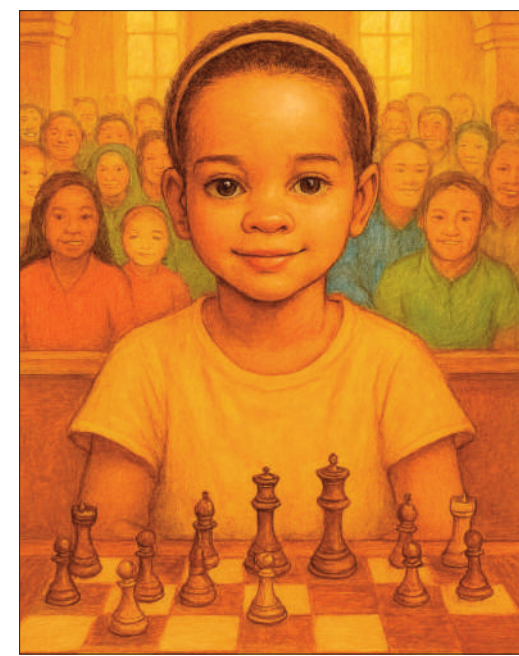
Putu had come dressed in a traditional blue kurti with tiny embroidered Ele—her favorite animal. Her cheeks were flushed with excitement. This wasn't just any tournament. But it was a real competition. It was a battle of wits between brothers and sisters, a symbolic duel where strategy replaced sweets and checkmates replaced rituals. The rules were simple: siblings would face off in friendly matches, and the winner would receive a medal, a certificate, and a surprise gift. The center had even decorated the hall with posters of famous chess champions—Viswanathan Anand, Judit Polgar, Magnus Carlsen—and a banner that read: "Celebrate Bhai Phonta with Chess Brilliance!"

Putu Shona's opponent was her cousin Riju, a year older and known in the family for his cheeky jokes and quick moves on the chessboard. He wore a red kurta and had brought a small box wrapped in shiny paper—his Bhai Phonta gift for Putu Shona. But before the gift could be exchanged, the game had to be played. The match began with laughter and lighthearted teasing. Riju opened with the King's Pawn,



and Putu responded confidently. She had practiced with her father and watched YouTube videos of grandmasters playing blitz games. But today, nerves crept in. Her fingers trembled slightly as she moved her bishop, and within minutes, she made a miscalculation. Riju grinned and captured her queen. Putu gasped. Her most powerful piece was gone. She looked at the board, stunned. The queen had been her anchor, her protector. Without it, her strategy crumbled. Riju leaned back smugly, and a lady—one of the center's instructors—walked by and whispered a suggestion to him. Putu overheard it. Her heart sank. "No one's helping me," she thought. "I have to do this on my own." She glanced at the other tables. Some sisters were winning, some brothers were. The room was filled with giggles, groans, and the occasional triumphant "Check!"

But Putu sat quietly, her eyes fixed on the board. She took a deep breath. Putu remembered what her Abi (dad) had told her: "Chess is not about power. It's about patience." She looked at her remaining pieces—the knights, the rooks, the pawns—and began to rebuild. She moved her knight to a strategic position, blocked Riju's bishop, and slowly began to corner his king. Riju frowned. His earlier confidence began to waver. He tried to trap her rook, but Putu anticipated it and sacrificed a pawn to protect her flank. The instructor walked by again but didn't say a word this time. Putu was on her own, and she was thriving. Then came the moment of magic. Riju made a careless move, and Putu saw it—a path to reclaim her queen. She moved her bishop, forced a trade, and with a



clever fork, captured the piece that had once been hers. Her queen was back.

The room seemed to shimmer with possibility. Putu's fingers danced across the board. She launched a series of attacks, pushing Riju's king into a corner. Her rook cut off the escape. Her knight guarded the diagonal. And then, with a quiet but firm voice, she said: "Checkmate."

There was a pause. Riju stared at the board, then looked up at Putu. She smiled—not smugly, but with quiet pride. The instructor clapped softly, and others around them joined in. Putu had won. Not just the game, but the respect of everyone in the room. She was handed a medal—a shiny gold circle with a chess knight engraved on it—and a certificate that read: "Champion of Bhai Phonta Chess Tournament." But the real surprise was the gift: a plush blue elephant with a tiny crown on its head. Putu hugged it tightly. "Blue Ele," she whispered. "You're my lucky charm now." That evening, back home, Putu Shona sat on the couch with her medal around her neck and Blue Ele beside her. Her parents were beaming. Her mother had brought pizza to celebrate, and her father had recorded the match on his mobile to share with Putu's Dadun in India. Putu wore superwoman specs a mixed blue and red and the blue gown on her back and brought the medal in her hand. She now had one more thing to do. She picked up the phone and dialled India. It was early morning there, and her Dadun—her grandfather—was still asleep. The phone rang, and finally, a sleepy voice answered. "Hello?" "Dadun!" Putu shouted. "I won! I'm the Chess Champion!" Dadun chuckled. "Arrey, really? Tell me everything." Putu narrated the entire match—the loss of her queen, the comeback, the checkmate, and the medal. She even described Blue Ele in detail. Dadun listened patiently, then said, "Patience and hard work can make one win. You remembered that, didn't you?" "Yes, Dadun," Putu said. "I didn't give up." "And you are happy, Dadun?" she asked. Dadun's voice softened. "I am the happiest for the best granddaughter of the world."

Putu smiled. She said "Hey Dadun in happiness I want to beat you. I am happier than you. Putu loves to be Number one, the best in everything, even in her happiness. Dadun and Deemama saw the competition video and the conferring of medal to her. It was superb. They were super excited. Overwhelmed with pride and pleasure for the six year old Putu Shona who is a versatile girl. A genius in swimming in playing piano, in getting the highest points in her elementary school besides her painting and crafting. An All-rounder. But this championship in Chess is something like a new feather in her crown. Her heart felt full. The next day, Putu Shona took her medal to school. Her teacher asked her to share her story during morning assembly. She stood on the stage, holding Blue Ele, and told everyone about Bhai Phonta, the chess match, and how she learned that losing a queen doesn't mean losing the game. "Sometimes," she said, "you have to lose something important to learn how strong you really are." Her classmates clapped. Her teacher wiped a tear. And somewhere in India, Dadun told all his friends at the tea stall. "My granddaughter is a champion. Not just in chess, but in life." (International Tagore Awardee Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee is a former Affiliate Faculty Virginia Commonwealth University & Ex Associate Professor and Head Post Graduate Dept of English Dum Dum Motijheel College, President Kolkata Indian American Society & multilingual Poet cum Columnist)

ECHOES OF A PROMISE

(CONTD. FROM PREV ISSUE)

By: Chafikhur Rahman

The story of Ratneswar Rahang and Kabita Kathar lived in whispers in Diphu town. Old people spoke of it when they sat by the fire on winter nights. College teachers remembered it with sighs. Friends who had grown older still carried the memories like folded letters in their hearts.

But for Rudra Baruah and Kaberi Mahanta, the story was not just an old tale. It was alive again, breathing through the dusty file, through photographs that looked too much like them. And as Rudra read deeper into the records that night, the past opened like a window.

In 1993, Ratneswar Rahang was a young boy of twenty from a small village called Borsinga, about twelve kilometers from Diphu. His father, Hari Rahang, was a farmer. His mother had died when Ratneswar was only ten, leaving him with an ache that never fully healed. He was the eldest of three children, but his younger brother and sister were still small when his mother passed. So, Ratneswar grew quickly into responsibility.

He worked in the paddy fields after school, fetched water, and took care of his siblings when his father was busy. Yet he never let go of his books. He studied late at night under a kerosene lamp, his fingers sometimes black with soot from trimming the wick.

His teachers at high school always said the same: "This boy has fire." He stood first in his class, and when he got admission to Diphu College for a Bachelor of Arts, it was the pride of his village. People clapped him on the back, women blessed him, and his father's eyes shone with quiet joy.

To pay for his books and pocket money, Ratneswar worked evenings in a grocery shop near Diphu Bazaar. The shopkeeper, who liked him, allowed him to study between customers. Many nights, Ratneswar could be seen with a book open, his lips moving silently while weighing rice or packing salt.

Kabita Kathar was different in background. She was the daughter of Dhanesh Kathar, the headman of a nearby village. Her family was respected, not rich but comfortable. Her father had influence; people came to him with disputes, for advice, for permission during festivals. Her mother was gentle and wanted her only daughter to study well before marriage.

Kabita had always been bright. She loved poetry, especially Assamese poems of Jyotiprasad and Bishnu Rabha. She wrote verses in her diary, though she never showed them to anyone except one cousin. Her handwriting was round and neat, and she always covered her books with brown paper and labels.

When she joined Diphu College for her B.A., she was proud but also nervous. It was her first time away from her small village life. She wore her dupatta carefully, spoke politely to teachers, and carried her books close to her chest. Her eyes were bright and curious, like someone looking at a river she had always wanted to cross.

The records did not say exactly how they met, but friends later told the police a simple story.

It was in the college library. Kabita was searching for a book on Indian history. She could not reach the top shelf. Ratneswar, who was taller, saw her stretching and struggling. Without a word, he stepped forward, pulled the book down, and handed it to her.

Their fingers touched for a moment. Kabita smiled politely and said, "Thank you."

Ratneswar nodded and said, "Keep it. I will find another copy."

That was all. But in the silence of the library, the small kindness was like a spark. From that day, they noticed each other more often—at the tea stall outside the gate, in the corridor between classes, in the college courtyard during lunch.

Within months, they began to sit together in study groups. They discovered that both were serious about education, but both also loved small joys. Kabita laughed easily at Ratneswar's jokes about hostel food. Ratneswar listened carefully when Kabita recited poetry under her breath.

One day, at a picnic by the river, Kabita forgot her notebook under a tree. Ratneswar found it. On the first page was a poem she had written:

"If the hills are my walls,
and the river is my road,
then your eyes are my window,
where sunlight enters me."

He read it only once, then closed the notebook quickly, as if afraid of stealing a secret. When he returned it to her, Kabita's cheeks turned red. "Did you read?" she asked softly. "Only one line," he said. "But it was enough."

After that, something changed. Their friendship was no longer only books and laughter. It became gentler, deeper, like a stream that has found its true course.

In villages, nothing remains hidden for long. Their closeness was noticed. At first, Kabita's father, the headman, frowned. He wanted his daughter to marry someone of equal status, maybe a government officer, not the son of a poor farmer. But Kabita's mother spoke kindly: "Let the children finish their studies. We will see later."

Ratneswar's father was a quiet man. When he heard, he said nothing against it. "If they are happy and study well," he told his neighbors, "what is wrong?"

In fact, for a while, both families seemed willing. It was said openly that after graduation, there would be a marriage. Friends teased them gently, calling Kabita "Bou" (bride) and Ratneswar "Bokul" (groom). Both blushed but did not deny.

Life in Diphu College in the mid-1990s was simple. Students gathered in the courtyard to eat oranges in winter sun. They played football on the field after classes. They sat in the library pretending to read but secretly writing letters.

Ratneswar and Kabita had a group of friends: Jitu, Ratneswar's roommate, always joking, always hungry.

Momi, Kabita's cousin, who teased them but also covered for them when they met. Dulu, who carried a flute everywhere and played tunes by the river.

Biki, a footballer with dreams of the state team.

Together, they laughed, sang songs, shared tiffins of puffed rice and fried potatoes. But whenever the group thinned and Ratneswar and Kabita found themselves alone, a different silence grew—one full of unspoken promises.

They often sat by the old banyan tree near the back gate of the college. Kabita read poems aloud. Ratneswar listened with eyes half-closed. Sometimes he spoke of his dream to become a lecturer, to teach history, to help other poor boys like himself. Kabita said she wanted to open a school for girls in her village, so no girl would feel small for

wanting to study.

"You will be a teacher," she said once, "and I will be a teacher. Together we will grow a forest of learning."

"And we will live by the river," he said, half-teasing, "so that when I get tired, I can lie on the bank and hear your poems float over the water."

Kabita laughed, but her eyes softened. "Then the river will be our witness."

But the river that had witnessed their love also carried danger.

In the months before their final year, the mood of Kabita's father began to change. He had arguments in the village about land, about a path near the river that passed close to his property. Ratneswar sometimes helped his father take cattle to graze there. Some said the headman did not like it. Some said he did not want his daughter tied to a poor family after all.

Whispers grew. People noticed that the headman's nephew, Nirmal Kathar, a short-tempered young man, began following Kabita with angry eyes. Some believed he was jealous. Others said he was sent by his uncle to keep watch.

Kabita told her cousin Momi once, "Father has changed. He scolds me when I go to college events. He says love makes girls weak. But I know he is afraid of losing power. He does not see that love gives me strength."

Ratneswar, too, felt the chill. One evening at the grocery shop, a group of men passed and one muttered, "Book boy thinks he can marry headman's daughter? We will see." Ratneswar kept quiet, but his hands shook as he packed sugar for a customer. Still, the young couple did not stop meeting. They believed that if they worked hard, passed their exams, and stood tall, their love would win. They did not know that fate was sharpening its knife.

On 17 August 1995, Kabita told her cousin Momi, "Tomorrow, after class, I will meet Ratneswar at the old temple near the river. We must plan. Father is pressing me to return to the village and stop college. We need courage."

She smiled as she said it. But her smile had a shadow.

The next morning, both went to college as usual. They attended lectures, sat in the library, and left together, carrying books. Some friends saw them walking toward the river road.

By dawn of the next day, fishermen found their bodies—Ratneswar lying on the stone with a head wound, Kabita in the shallow water.

The hills fell silent. The college wept. The village whispered but said little to police. The headman denied all knowledge. Friends cried but could not prove anything. The case was closed.

And so, the story of two young lives ended not with marriage songs but with river silence. Rudra closed the file slowly. He rubbed his eyes. He could almost see the banyan tree, the library, the riverbank. He could almost hear Kabita's poems and Ratneswar's laughter.

And when he looked up, he found Kaberi at the door of his office. She had come quietly, as if drawn by the same pull.

She looked at him and asked softly, "Did you read?"

"Yes," he said. His voice was low. "I read their love. I read their loss."

Kaberi stepped closer, her eyes fixed on the photo of the young couple. Her hand trembled slightly.

"They were not just forgotten lovers," she whispered. "They were us."

Rudra felt the truth of her words settle like stone inside him. He did not argue. He only nodded, because deep in his heart, he already knew. (CONTD. ON NEXT ISSUE)

The Tulip's Whisper

By: Himadri Shekhar Bordoloi

In the world of varying intensities and nuances of emotions and feelings, I have perceived and found serenity, in the Nature's way, That has always answered me, as to how I can untie the knot, in my heart, Through the Tulip's whispers of pureness and clarity, akin to a crystal, And the forenoon light, breeze and the morning dew, that can awaken a faithful heart and essence, Giving me the strength, to express my unfathomable feelings, confined deep inside me, So my dear acquaintance, my benevolent soul, Have you ever been to a field of tulip flowers? Oh, I have been and can tell you, as an "Anthophile". How magnificent, such a tulip flower is and the sense of rarity, it embodies, That begins its budding resurgence and nascent glory, Through the unfolding of its petals, when the spring is in full swing, Like it greets every being, by the quiet stirrings of life, after awakening from its long winter slumber. Being a member of the Lily family - Liliaceae, manifested in perfectly symmetrical buds, Tulips exemplify spectacular display of breathtaking blossoms of vibrant colors, in springtime, Often popularized as ornamental and cut flowers, for their aesthetic appeal, in the realm of Nature's Orchestra, Such an unostentatious, yet exquisite natural wonder, dancing in the breeze, You are more than just a beautiful seasonal display to me - When I sit beside you, in a serene landscape, I always listen, what you silently confide to me, about the mysteries of the natural world, Like the astonishing wind's travel and the sun's warmth, The rain's gentle touch and the mystifying and soothing moonlight, With the ethereal whisper, you, my elegant Tulip, Induces a sense of gaiety and contentment, in my life, That resonates with my existential being, by understanding my silent tears and aching of my heart, And sing my yearnings, in your crooning, that even shaken the heaven and the earth. The Tulip's blossoms, as the symbol of hope, Each of your petals, when unfurls, seems to beckon me, Into a moment of reflection and the soulful musings of life, Helping me, to find the beauty in chaos and cessation of the silent revolts, inside every rhythm, of my heart-beat, Thus, steering me to a new rousing. Through visceral reflection on forgiving and sacrifice, for heartfelt resonance, with my beloved, I am now able to forgive her and wish her interminable peace and joy, in spite of her betrayal, So, that's why Tulip has always been my admired flower, And I endlessly wait for its blooming, in the persistent pulse of spring, after a frigid winter.

Opposition leader calls Himanta unfit to govern, criticises timing of allegations amid Zubeen Garg's last movie release

Gaurav Gogoi hits back at CM over 'Pakistani Agent' remark

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: A day after Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma alleged that state Congress president Gaurav Gogoi is a "Pakistani agent, planted by a foreign power," the opposition leader on Saturday retaliated, claiming the comments indicate that Sarma is unfit to lead the state.

Gogoi also criticised the timing of the remarks, noting that Sarma made them on the day late cultural icon Zubeen Garg's last movie, 'Roi Roi Binale', was released.

Sarma, however, said he would address Gogoi's case after ensuring justice in Garg's death case by early December. On Friday, the chief minister reiterated his allegation, claiming Gogoi had links to Pakistan through his British wife and asserting he possessed evidence to support the claim.

In response, Gogoi, Congress deputy leader in Lok Sabha, posted on X that "over the past few months, Himanta Biswa Sarma has lost credibility." He added, "When the entire state



was watching Garg perform for the last time, the chief minister's comments reflected his growing fear of losing power. It was another

example of why he is unfit as the chief minister of the people of Assam."

Garg had died while swimming in Singapore on September 19, prompting widespread public grief. The state government constituted a Special Investigating Team (SIT) of the police CID to probe the circumstances of his death.

Sarma, reacting to Gogoi's statement during a programme in Morigaon, said he knows the right time to act against the Congress leader. He referred to the SIT report on alleged anti-India activities of Pakistani national Ali Tauqueer Sheikh, who is reportedly close to Gogoi's wife, submitted to the government on September 10.

The chief minister emphasised that people currently want justice for Garg, not Gogoi, and asserted that after December 10, when justice for Zubeen is ensured, he will focus on Gogoi. The SIT investigating Garg's death is expected to file its chargesheet by the same date. (PTI)

First Tiwa medium school in Ulukunchi

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 1: The Chief Executive Member of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Tuliram Ronghang, inaugurated the first Tiwa medium school at Ulukunchi LP School under Amri Education Block on Friday. The event was attended by local MAC members, KAAC Executive Member D Upping Maslai, Baithalango MLA Rupsing Teron, Mawhati MLA Charles Mangar, and other dignitaries.

The Assam government has notified 62 Lower Primary Schools in Morigaon, Karbi Anglong, and West Karbi Anglong districts as Tiwa medium schools to allow students to learn in their mother tongue. Of these, 40 schools will be in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong, with 33 in the Amri MAC constituency due to a higher concentration of the Tiwa community. Speaking at the inauguration, CEM Tuliram Ronghang said this is the first Tiwa medium school in the history of the Tiwa community and announced that teachers for these schools will be appointed by KAAC next year. EM Maslai highlighted the government's support and the importance of preserving Tiwa language and culture, calling on the community to strengthen and develop their heritage. The program was also attended by Tiwa Mathonlai Tokhra president Horsing Kholar, Tiwa Cultural Society president Kumud Mithi and other community leaders.

Narcotics seized, truck driver and helper detained

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, Nov 1: During routine naka checking at Dillai Police Station on Friday at around 4 PM, police detained a truck (registration No NL 01 AG 2554) along with its driver and helper on suspicion of carrying narcotics.

A search of the vehicle in the presence of independent witnesses and SDPO Bokajan recovered six transparent polythene packets containing muddy-colored substances suspected to be morphine, weighing a total of 2.99 kg, concealed in a secret chamber above the driver's seat. Field testing with a drug detection kit confirmed the presence of morphine.

The substances were seized, and the driver, Akram Hussain Chowdhury, 28, of Assadar Ali Chowdhury, Dudhpur, PS Borkhola, Cachar and the helper, Siva Deka of Gangadhar Deka, Bilpar, PS Tamulpur, BTR were apprehended. A case will be registered against them.

In a related incident, a Max Pick-up vehicle (AS01C 6664) met with an accident at Umswai, West Karbi Anglong, when the driver lost control. Three persons – Mani Amsong, Kulbari Mala and Silumi Amsong – died, while 15 passengers sustained serious injuries and are being treated at the Primary Health Centre.

DPS hosts 'Growing Up for Girls – 2025'

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 1: DPS Nagaon organised an informative and interactive session titled "Growing Up for Girls – 2025" for students of Grades V to VIII on Friday. The session aimed to raise awareness among young girls about the physical and emotional changes during puberty and to promote self-awareness, confidence and self-respect.

The school counsellor, Roma Islam Hazarika, conducted the session with insight and sensitivity, guiding students on personal hygiene, emotional management and self-esteem building. The programme provided a safe platform for students to clarify doubts and express concerns freely.

The initiative marked an important step in empowering girls to embrace their growth with confidence and strength. Principal Ritu Rajnish appreciated the effort and highlighted the importance of such awareness programmes in nurturing responsible, confident and emotionally balanced individuals. The session concluded with an encouraging message for participants to value themselves and continue their journey of self-growth and empowerment.

Ganesh Talkies reopens today with 'Roi Roi Binale'

HT Correspondent

JAGIROAD, Nov 1: After remaining closed for more than six years, Jagiroad's only cinema hall, Ganesh Talkies is reopened with the screening of Zubeen Garg's much-awaited film 'Roi Roi Binale'.

The hall, which has a seating capacity of 780, had been shut down due to a decline in audience turnout and other operational reasons. Over the past few days, the management has been working tirelessly to refurbish and prepare the venue for its reopening.

It may be recalled that during a cultural event in Jagiroad two years ago, Zubeen Garg had promised to reopen the cinema hall for the release of his new film. Keeping that promise, Ganesh Talkies will now resume operations with three daily shows of 'Roi Roi Binale'.

Excitement runs high among local fans and residents, as both the cinema hall management and Zubeen's fan groups have been actively involved in reviving the theatre. Notably, the film's producer, Rajesh Bhuyan, also hails from Jagiroad, adding a special local connection to the reopening event.

Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurates Sansad Khel Mahotsav

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Nov 1: Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Friday inaugurated the Sansad Khel Mahotsav at the historic Chowkidengee playground in Dibrugarh, drawing enthusiastic participation from hundreds of young athletes, sports enthusiasts and local dignitaries. Speaking at the event, Sonowal highlighted the role of sports in shaping youth, promoting unity, discipline and determination. He said, "The Sansad Khel Mahotsav is not just a competition, but a celebration of talent and teamwork. It will help identify young sporting talents from grassroots levels who can represent India at national and international platforms, including the Commonwealth Games and the Olympics." Organised under the patronage of MP Sarbananda Sonowal in collaboration with the Dibrugarh District Sports Association, the Mahotsav aims to nurture young athletes and promote a sports culture in line with the government's vision of youth empowerment, unity and healthy living.

The three-level competition will be held across 11 venues in the six constituencies of Dibrugarh, covering village, block/ward, and parliamentary constituency levels. Sports featured include football, cricket, volleyball, athletics and indigenous games such as khoko, kabaddi, pithu, and tug of war.

GU Youth Festival 2025 kicks off

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: The Gauhati University Youth Festival 2025 began on Saturday with an exuberant celebration of music, culture and creativity, marking one of the most awaited annual events in the University calendar.

The festival brings together more than 700 participants from 60 colleges across 18 districts of Assam, transforming the campus into a vibrant melting pot of youthful energy and diverse cultural expressions.

Prof Nani Gopal Mahanta, Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University, said, "The Youth Festival is more than a cultural event — it is an extravaganza that celebrates creativity, camaraderie and the vibrant diversity of our university community. Each year, it provides an extraordinary platform for students to learn from each other, appreciate different art forms and strengthen the spirit of unity that defines Gauhati University."

The ceremony began with the hoisting of the University flag by Prof Upal Sarma, Registrar, followed by Dr Ranjan Kumar Kakati, Director, Students' Welfare, and Manash Pratim Kalita, president, PGSU 2024-25, who raised the GU Sports Board and PGSU flags respectively. A solemn Swahid Tarpan in memory of the martyrs was also

observed.

Highlighting the diversity of participation, Dr Kakati said, "This year, we have 700 students from 60 colleges across 18 districts of Assam participating in various events. The diverse cultures of the state have come alive through a series of performances, making the GU campus resemble a mini Assam."

The day's highlight was the Cultural Rally, where student contingents presented themes such as Zubeen Garg, Ramayana, Unity in Diversity, Rural Assam, Assamese Marriage, Cinema, Agriculture & Harvesting, Fishery and Puppetry. A special tribute was paid to Zubeen Garg and Bharat Ratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika for their monumental contributions to Assamese music and culture.

Competitions in Borgeet, Classical Vocal, Light Classical Vocal, Rabindra Sangeet, Classical Instrumental (Percussion and Non-Percussion) and Folk Song were held in the morning. The afternoon featured Solo Classical Dance, Folk Dance, Poem Recitation (Self-Composed) and Magazine Dugout.

The four-day festival will continue with a range of performances and contests across music, dance, theatre, fine arts and literature, celebrating the rich artistic heritage and youthful dynamism of Assam.

Assam Rifles observes National Unity Day

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Nov 1: The Assam Rifles organised a "Run for Unity" at its Battalion Headquarters in Lokra on Friday to mark the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Iron Man of India, informed a press release.

A total of 49 participants, including 10 Assam Rifles personnel and 39 locals from the Lokra area, took part in the run, which aimed to promote the spirit of national integration, unity and physical fitness.

Participants completed the route with enthusiasm, showcasing zeal and patriotism. The event concluded with the administration of a pledge to uphold the ideals of unity and integrity of the nation.

Tributes paid to Pulin Das on birth anniversary

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: The 107th birth anniversary of noted sports personality, organiser and journalist Pulin Das was observed along with the Pulin Das Memorial Lecture at India Club, Guwahati, on Saturday. The event was organised by the Pulin Das Memorial Committee.

Former international shuttler and executive director of Oil India Limited, Madhurjya Barua, attended the occasion as the chief guest and delivered the memorial lecture on "Role of corporate entities in developing the sports ecosystem in our country with specific reference to Assam." Eminent social worker and Padma Shri awardee Ajoy Dutta graced the occasion as the guest of honour. At the beginning of the programme, floral tributes were offered to Pulin Das.

Barua, who described himself as a product of Guwahati, fondly recalled Pulin Das as someone who had a huge influence on his life during his formative years. Having earlier worked with the governments of Rajasthan and Odisha, Barua expressed concern that Assam was lagging far behind in sports development. He emphasised the need for greater corporate involvement in promoting sports and lamented the lack of professionalism and sincerity at the grassroots level in the state.

A former junior national champion and India's No 1 men's shuttler in his time, Barua suggested that the Assam government should include coaches and technical officials under skill development programmes to strengthen the sports industry in the long run.

He also regretted that Pulin Das, despite being a towering and pioneering figure in Assam's sports history, did not receive due recognition. Barua appealed to the government, sports organisers and the public to ensure that Pulin Das's legacy is properly honoured.

Community unites to honour tradition, heritage and post-harvest celebrations

37th Kuki Chavang Kut celebrated with cultural fervour

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Nov 1: The 37th Kuki Chavang Kut 2025 was celebrated with enthusiasm and cultural fervour at Songpijang, near Haflong, bringing alive the vibrant spirit of unity and tradition. The festival, marking the post-harvest season of the Kuki community, is observed across Dima Hasao district and in Kuki-inhabited regions across India and abroad.

Celebrated annually on November 1, Chavang Kut—meaning "Autumn Festival"—is a day of thanksgiving and merriment following the harvest. Recognised as a local holiday in Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong, and a restricted holiday across Assam, the festival holds deep cultural and social significance for the Kuki people.

While the central celebration in Karbi Anglong took place at Manja, Dima Hasao witnessed village-level events organised under the guidance of the Kuki Inpi Assam (KIA), the apex body of the Kuki community in the state.

At Songpijang, the programme began with an invocation prayer by Rev T S Changan, followed by a felicitation ceremony for the Chief Guest, Assam Cabinet Minister and Haflong MLA Nandita Gorlosa, who hoisted the Kut Flag amid traditional chants and applause.

The celebration featured colourful cultural performances showcasing the rich heritage of the



Kuki community. Guest performer Lhainunm Thangew added a contemporary touch with melodious modern songs.

Speaking on the festival's theme, Rev Dr Siehjalom Doungel reflected on the values of Kuki forefathers and urged the youth to preserve their cultural identity while being responsible citizens. He emphasised unity, integrity and faith as guiding principles.

Nandita Gorlosa praised the organisers and highlighted the Kuki community's achievements in education and administration. As Minister for Youth and Sports, she encouraged young people to pursue athletics and assured government and parental support for nurturing talent.

KAAC defends Purthimi Akemang 2.0 amid controversy

Officials clarify no new land pattas were issued to non-scheduled tribes



HT Bureau

DIPHU, Nov 1: Controversies have emerged over the flagship programme Purthimi Akemang 2.0, initiated by the Land & Revenue Department of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) for free distribution of land pattas to indigenous communities in Assam's sixth scheduled districts of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong. Opposition parties, including the All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC), alleged that land pattas were given to non-scheduled tribes.

The programme, launched by the present BJP-led KAAC, aims to secure land rights for indigenous communities residing permanently in both Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong. Purthimi Akemang 1.0, launched in 2024, had already distributed more than 1 lakh land pattas. Purthimi Akemang 2.0 was launched on October 16, 2025, in Bithung-Rengthama MAC constituency and on October 30 at Dengkimo Aklam, Phuloni, under Phuloni Revenue Circle. Land pattas for Phuloni and Howrahgah MAC constituencies were distributed by Chief Executive Member (CEM) Tuliram Ronghang, covering more than 1 lakh beneficiaries.

CIPET industry meet concludes

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Nov 1: The Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology (CIPET), Guwahati, in collaboration with the district administration of Hojai and the District Industries and Commerce Centre (DICC), successfully organised an Industry Meet in Hojai on Thursday. The event began with an inaugural address by the General Manager of DICC, Hojai, who emphasised the importance of fostering industrial linkages, promoting skill-based entrepreneurship and utilising institutional support for the holistic growth of local industries.

The session was graced by Hojai Deputy Commissioner Bidyut Bikash Bhagawati, Additional Deputy Commissioners Bonny Inam Shadab and Dr Sonashree Brahma, Assistant Commissioner Rakshishree Lekharu, several departmental heads, CIPET Technical Head Debajit Kalita and Academic Coordinator Pranjal Goswami. Industrialists, entrepreneurs and CMAAA beneficiaries from sectors like packaging,

fabrication, food processing and allied industries also participated actively. Pranjal Goswami conducted the introductory session, outlining CIPET's academic framework and highlighting its diverse training programs aimed at building technical expertise among aspiring industrialists and entrepreneurs.

During the technical session, Debajit Kalita shared insights on plastic and polymer-based machinery and packaging technologies, helping participants understand their industrial applications. Discussions emphasised expanding CIPET's initiatives across the Northeast, developing customised training modules for local industries such as the spice sector and empowering Self Help Groups through packaging and polymer processing activities to promote entrepreneurship.

The meet also underlined the importance of technology support services and the use of incubator facilities to strengthen local industries and enhance the regional skill ecosystem.

Three dead in Mini Truck accident

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Nov 1: In the early hours on Saturday at around 4 AM, a Max Pick-up mini truck (registration No AS01C 6664) carrying people from Ulukunchi, the venue of the 18th Langkhon Festival, to Bormarjong Tiwa village in Amri, West Karbi Anglong, met with a fatal accident at Umswai. The driver lost control of the vehicle, causing it to overturn, resulting in the deaths of three persons and injuring several others.

The deceased have been identified as Mani Amsong, Kulbari Mala and Silumi Amsong of Umswai. The seriously injured were immediately taken to the hospital for treatment.

Sonitpur holds Sardar@150 Unity March

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Nov 1: The District Administration, Sonitpur, in collaboration with My Bharat, successfully organised the Sardar@150 – Unity March (PadYatra) on Saturday to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and his invaluable contribution to the unity and integrity of the nation.

The programme began early in the morning at Church Field, Tezpur, with the gathering of participants including students, NSS volunteers, NCC cadets and members of the SSB. The event was graced by the presence of Member of Parliament of Sonitpur HPC Ranjit Dutta, MLA of Tezpur LAC Prithiraj Rava, District Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das, Additional District Commissioner Twahir Alam and Jintu Bora, Vice Chairman of AMTRON Ritu Baran Sarmah, Additional Superintendent of Police Moushumi Kalita and Satkhokai Changan, Chairperson of Tezpur Municipal Board Ramen Tamuli, Assistant Commissioner Rajen Acharyya, noted social workers Madhusmita Hazarika Deka and Deepamoni Saikia, TDSA

president Jiten Borhakar, and vice president of the All Assam Weightlifting Association Hiranya Bhuyan, among other dignitaries. The event commenced with a floral tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, followed by a band performance by the students of Sacred Heart School. Addressing the gathering, the MP highlighted Sardar Patel's pivotal role in uniting the nation. As part of the programme, a plantation drive was also carried out where dignitaries planted Nahor saplings. The Unity March (PadYatra) was flagged off by MP Ranjit Dutta from Church Field and traversed key locations including Court Chariali, Tezpur Sadar Thana, Civil Hospital Chariali, Hatilbikhana Road, Tribeni Point, Kekura Pool and ASTC Bus Station before concluding back at Church Field. To mark the occasion, patriotic dance performances coordinated under the supervision of the District Cultural Development Officer were staged at various points along the route—Court Chariali, Tribeni Point and Church Field—adding vibrancy and cultural flavor to the celebration.

members of the Kuki community and well-wishers from across Upper Assam.

Pu Kaikhohao Doungel, Superintendent of Central Goods & Service Tax and Customs, attended as the Chief Guest, while Dr Bharati Dutta, retired Associate Professor of DSK College and noted author, graced the event as the Guest of Honour. The celebration was presided over by Dr Lamkholal Doungel, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science at DSK College and Adviser of Kuki Inpi Assam. Pu Letkhokam Vaiphei served as the Kut Pa (host) of the occasion.

The programme began with the welcoming of guests and dignitaries, followed by the formal inauguration by the Kut Pa, who extended warm Chavang Kut greetings to the gathering. In their welcome address, Pu Sangboi Doungel and Pa Jampu Guite, chairman and secretary of the Kut Celebration Committee, called upon everyone to celebrate the day in the true spirit of Kut through rejoicing, dancing and unity.

The event featured a colourful line-up of traditional dances, folk songs and modern performances that kept the audience captivated throughout the day. The programme was smoothly conducted by compères Pa Jankhugin Haokip, Pa Mangboi Lupheng, Nungah Jefani Changan and GI Minal Chongloi.

Khandu vows zero tolerance for corruption

Chief Minister orders probe into Frontier Highway fund misappropriation, inaugurates police stations



HT Correspondent
WEST KAMENG, Nov 1: Chief Minister Pema Khandu, without mincing words on Saturday reiterated that no form of corruption will be tolerated by the state government and those found guilty will be taken to task as per the rule of law. He was referring to the alleged misappropriation of government funds in the land acquisition process on the Lada to Sarli portion of the Frontier Highway.

Speaking at a public function during the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Grong Buddha Park here, Khandu informed that he came to know of the alleged misappropriation after returning from Delhi and immediately or-

dered the constitution of a high-level committee to probe the allegations.

"I have also given directions that based on the preliminary report, all held responsible for the fiasco be suspended with immediate effect for a free and fair enquiry. Suspension orders will be out in a day or two," he said.

Khandu lamented that the Frontier Highway was the result of tremendous toil by the state government, which held a series of meetings with the central government and other stakeholders, yet a few individuals were playing spoilsport for personal gain.

"We have seen similar instances earlier too and are witness to the

impact such practices have on the project's timely completion. It is unfortunate that now this Frontier Highway project, particularly the Lada to Sarli stretch, will suffer. Enquiries upon enquiries will be conducted, police will investigate and the matter will drag on in the court. This is very unfortunate and condemnable," he said.

Terming the alleged misappropriation a 'nonsense act,' Khandu assured that those found guilty – be it a government official of any stature or any member of the public will not be spared.

The Chief Minister lauded the West Kameng administration for completing the land acquisition process for the project in a free,

fair and transparent manner without any hurdle. He also thanked the people of the district for cooperating with the administration and expressed hope that other districts through which the highway passes will take a cue from West Kameng.

He further inaugurated a new police station at Singchung, the new building of the Bhalukpong police station, a new academic block at the Government Higher Secondary School, Singchung, and three road projects. The Chief Minister was joined by Home Minister Mama Natung and all five MLAs of Tawang and West Kameng, including host Tenzin Nyima Glow.

Khandu unveils anti-drug, child safety apps, tourism and infrastructure developments

CM launches youth initiatives and key projects in West Kameng

ITANAGAR, Nov 1: Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday launched a series of youth-focused reforms and major development projects in West Kameng district, underscoring the government's commitment to "healing, hope and progress" for all citizens.

At Singchung, Khandu inaugurated the Yodha-Bandhu app, a digital platform aimed at supporting youth grappling with substance abuse and emotional distress. The app connects users confidentially to doctors, counselors and emergency services, ensuring timely help for those in need. In addition, the Chief Minister launched Choo-Man-Tar, an interactive and educational game designed to teach children the difference between good and bad touch, promoting safety awareness among the younger generation.

Highlighting the district's tourism potential, Khandu unveiled the Yakatopia app, which

provides real-time travel information, helping tourists and locals navigate attractions, accommodations and services efficiently. On the healthcare front, he introduced the Amua Care brochure, a maternal health initiative focused on promoting institutional deliveries and encouraging community engagement to improve maternal and child health outcomes.

In a landmark move for spiritual tourism in the district, the Chief Minister performed a bhumi puja for the proposed Grong Buddha Park, envisioned as a spiritual and tourism hub. The park will feature a grand Buddha statue, monastery, museum and recreational facilities, aimed at attracting visitors while preserving and promoting local cultural heritage.

During the event, Khandu also dedicated and laid the foundation for more than 20 key infrastructure projects, including roads, bridges, schools, sports facilities and a FIFA-certified artificial foot-

ball turf at Buddha Stadium in Bomdila. These projects are expected to improve connectivity, education, sports and public services across the district, reflecting the government's holistic approach to development.

The event saw the presence of Home Minister Mama Natung, local legislators, senior government officials and community members, all of whom joined the Chief Minister in celebrating the district's progress. Speaking at the occasion, Khandu emphasised the importance of youth engagement, robust infrastructure and community-focused initiatives in achieving long-term growth and well-being for the people of West Kameng.

With these initiatives, the state government seeks to foster an environment of inclusive development, social awareness and cultural preservation, ensuring that every citizen benefits from the ongoing reforms and projects. (PTI)

APCC meets Guv on Panchayat election security



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Nov 1: A delegation from the Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC), led by president Bosiram Siram, called on Governor Lt General K T Parneik at Raj Bhavan, Itanagar, to discuss security concerns in Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts ahead of the Panchayat elections.

The Governor acknowledged the delegation's apprehensions and assured that necessary measures are being taken to ensure enhanced security. He emphasised that the elections must be conducted in a peace-

ful, free and fair manner, reflecting the true spirit of democracy.

Lt General Parneik also informed the delegation that the State Government has been sensitised and security agencies instructed to safeguard all during the elections.

The Governor has already chaired several security review meetings in the region, including in Namsai, Khonsa and Longding, with elected representatives, district administrations, police authorities and deployed security agencies, to strengthen arrangements in the Tirap-Changlang-Longding area.

MoUs for holistic education and AI language preservation

ITANAGAR, Nov 1: Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday

presided over the signing of two MoUs at the Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies (CIHCS) in West Kameng district to boost holistic education and AI-powered language preservation.

The agreements will focus on advancing social, emotional and ethical (SEE) learning in academic curriculums and employing artificial intelligence to preserve and promote the Bhoti (Tibetan) and Hindi languages, officials said.

Under the first MoU, Flowering Dharma of Ladakh and CIHCS

will collaborate to incorporate SEE learning, a framework inspired by ancient wisdom and modern neuroscience, they said.

"The initiative will help build happier and wiser learners equipped for life beyond classrooms," the chief minister said in a post on X.

The second MoU brings together the Centre for Study and Practice of Theravada (SPT), Athens, CIHCS and AI platform Paliverse to develop language tools that support translation, learning, and deeper cross-cultural communication, the officials said. Khandu also emphasised the im-

portance of leveraging digital innovation to safeguard the north-east's indigenous knowledge systems and linguistic diversity.

"I congratulate CIHCS for these meaningful collaborations and for its visionary efforts in shaping well-rounded, value-based education," he said.

During his visit to the institute, Khandu also reviewed its plans aimed at expanding capacity to accommodate 1,500 boys and girls in the coming years.

The CM also laid the foundation stones for a 150-capacity boys' hostel and 'Type-III' staff quarters for the institute. (PTI)

CC pavement inaugurated in Chimpu



HT Correspondent

CHIMPU, Nov 1: A CC Pavement road measuring around 200-300 meters from Lower Sangrik Hapa Colony to Upper Donisso Colony in Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC) Ward No-1 was inaugurated amid a large gathering of local leaders and residents in the Chimpu area.

The road was inaugurated by a senior citizen and wife of former MLA Koloriang Lokam Sikio, in the presence of several local leaders, IMC corporators and ward members. The pavement was

sponsored by IMC councillor Lokam Anand.

Local ward members and residents expressed their gratitude to the corporator and his family for providing much-needed proper road connectivity, which will ensure smooth transportation in the area. Residents shared that they had long faced hardships due to the poor condition of the existing road and that previous efforts to repair it had not materialized.

"Thanks to our local corporator Lokam Anand, the CC pavement

has been constructed, and it is a happy occasion for all residents. We have started using the road for all purposes and appreciate the support of every resident who cooperated with the IMC corporator and his family," locals said.

IMC ward members Nichi Fachang, Sartam Take, Charu Yamang, Rechi Tako, organising chairman Dagang Tah, organising secretary Tagru Taru and overall in-charge of the programme Gokia Kame also joined the inauguration ceremony and addressed the gathering.

BJP unveils campaign for Atmanirbhar Bharat

ITANAGAR, Nov 1: Arunachal Pradesh BJP president Kaling Moyong on Saturday emphasised the importance of promoting local products, aligning with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Launching t-shirts, caps, flyers and other campaign materials for the Atmanirbhar Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan at the BJP state office here, Moyong said, "We must adopt the spirit of 'vocal for local' to prioritise and promote our own indigenous goods and gradually move away from over-dependence on external products."

The initiative will not only boost our self-sustainability but also benefit our local producers, he said.

Moyong also highlighted the state government's initiatives and schemes like Atmanirbhar Krishi Yojana, Atmanirbhar Bagwani Yojana and others for fostering self-reliance and supporting local producers.

The Atmanirbhar Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan is a part of the nationwide campaign to promote the vision of self-reliance and the use of Swadeshi (indigenous) products.

As part of the campaign, the party will conduct seminars and workshops, and appeal to citizens to use locally made products and services.

Namsai MLA Zingnu Namchoom, state BJP vice president Ashok Sangchoju, state general secretaries Tadar Niglar and Junty Singpho, and secretary Taring Tiri attended the event. (PTI)

Rain will gradually reduce from today

ITANAGAR, Nov 1: Rainfall will gradually reduce across Arunachal Pradesh from 2 Nov, the IMD said.

Rain, along with thunderstorms, is likely in East Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit, Namsai, Upper Siang, Siang and West Siang on Sunday, it said.

On Monday, rainfall intensity is expected to

weaken, confined mostly to parts of the foothills and eastern belt, where brief afternoon or evening showers may occur, it added.

From Tuesday onward, a clearer shift towards stability with dry to isolated rain conditions likely across most parts of the state, the IMD said. (PTI)

Directorate of Agriculture bids farewell to T D Neckom

HT Correspondent

NAHARLAGUN, Nov 1: A farewell programme was organised at the Conference Hall of the Directorate of Agriculture, Naharlagun, where officers and officials felicitated T D Neckom on his retirement from government service. During the event, Neckom was honoured and remembered for his services rendered to the department and the state in various capacities and at different parts of the state.



Neckom expressed his gratitude to the state leadership, officers, officials of the department and the people of the state for supporting him in promoting agriculture and the farming community. Speaking to the media, Neckom said, "I thank each and every person, especially the farming community, for giving me an opportunity to serve the department as well as the farmers for the last 37 years, 5 months and 21 days. Thankfully, today I am going to be free from all the responsibilities. I thank each individual, including my family, relatives, friends and colleagues, who helped me in one way or the other and were part of my accomplishments. I look forward to similar support in my second inning."

Raj Bhavan celebrates State and Union Territory Foundation Day

Governor Parneik says Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative strengthens national integration and promotes cultural understanding

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Nov 1: The State Foundation Day of eight States and seven Union Territories was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Raj Bhavan, Itanagar on Saturday. Governor Lt General K T Parneik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd) and the First Lady of the State, Anagha Parneik, participated in the colourful celebration along with people from across these States and Union Territories.

Extending greetings on the occasion, the Governor conveyed his good wishes to the people of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Delhi, Lakshadweep, Puducherry as well as Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. He remarked that 1st November is a red-letter day in India's history, as it marks the formation of several States and Union Territories across the country, from north to south and east to west. He highlighted the unique strengths and cultural heritage of each State and UT, while emphasising the shared bonds and close connections these regions have with Arunachal Pradesh.

Governor Parneik expressed gratitude to the people of these States and UTs for their significant contribution to the development



of Arunachal Pradesh. He appreciated the participants for their vibrant cultural presentations that reflected India's unity in diversity. The celebrations were marked by performances from members of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, North Eastern Institute

of Science and Technology (NERIST), Rajiv Gandhi University, government departments and the local business community.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor highlighted the role of the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' initiative, envisioned by

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in reinforcing national integration and deepening cultural understanding among citizens. He noted that the youth of the country are the greatest beneficiaries of the initiative, as it inspires them to appreciate India's rich diversity and to actively uphold the nation's cultural heritage.

Governor Parneik further observed that students who had attended earlier State Foundation Day programmes as special guests of the Governor were inspired to present cultural items representing other States. This initiative encouraged students and youth to explore the cultural essence of different regions while also promoting their own cultural heritage. In line with this effort, students of Government Primary School, B Sector, Itanagar were invited as special guests, giving them the opportunity to learn and experience the cultural traditions of other States.

The Governor and the First Lady interacted warmly with all participants over high tea, making the event both memorable and inclusive. The celebrations at Raj Bhavan served as a vibrant showcase of India's diversity and unity, highlighting the spirit of collaboration, cultural exchange and national integration fostered by the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative.

With no Hazlewood around, Indian batters can breathe easy

HOBART, Nov 1: The Indian batters will breathe a little easier in the absence of Josh Hazlewood as they look to put up an improved performance, but the baffling omission of left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh continues to raise eyebrows ahead of the third T20 International against Australia on Sunday.

Hazlewood's pinpoint accuracy when it comes to hitting the right length, coupled with disconcerting bounce that he always generates around the corridor of uncertainty did become a bit of a nightmare for the Indian batters.

With the Ashes Test starting at the end of this month, Hazlewood has been given a break to rejuvenate before the gruelling five-Test series. He won't be part of the remainder of the series.

"It would obviously be a relief. I have never faced such bowling," star opener Abhishek Sharma had said after the Melbourne game as he seemed to be in awe of the Aussie speedster.

And his absence would also mean that Indian batters, who have serious technical flaws in dealing with bounce and seam movement, will feel a bit more assured while facing the likes of Xavier Bartlett, Nathan Ellis or Sean Abbott.

Both skipper Suryakumar Yadav and skipper-in-waiting Shubman Gill have had problems negotiating deliveries with extra bounce and good degree of seam movement. Surya and Gill would like to revisit their opening game's playbook when they looked in ominous touch at Canberra.

The Bellerive Oval at the Hobart is one ground where the side boundaries are smaller in size and hence the length would be paramount considering anything short would be flying over cover, point, square leg or mid-wicket on either side of the fence.



3rd T20I

Bellerive Oval is the ground where the phenomenon of Virat Kohli as a champion ODI batter took shape back in 2012 when he played a masterful knock of 133 not out in 86 balls against Sri Lanka in a chase of 321. Bellerive Oval track has traditionally been a better for white ball games.

This is also the BBL home ground for pacer Ellis, who happens to captain local franchise Hobart Hurricanes.

Curious case of Arshdeep Singh

The Indian team management's obsession with batting depth has been a topic of discussion on this tour and some of the batting failures like a paltry total of 125 at the MCG does question the merit of such a strategy.

On a pitch with extra bounce, India went in with three spinners and once again Arshdeep didn't find place in the playing XI despite being the only Indian bowler with 100 T20I wickets.

"If Jasprit Bumrah is playing, then Arshdeep Singh's name should be second on the list. If Bumrah is not playing, Arshdeep Singh's name would be first on the list," Ravichandran Ashwin had said on his Hindi YouTube channel and he couldn't have been more blunt.

In fact, a look at the statistics suggests that often India's No. 8 in the past 15 to 20 games has faced an average of five balls per innings and hence whether it is a viable option is

being questioned repeatedly.

There is a school of thought that when one stacks the team with too many batters, each one at the top of the order feels that there is someone who is coming after me and the approach is more cavalier on tracks which warrants a bit more discretion while batting.

Even if one considers that Harshit is a capable batter, which he certainly is, some of the numbers during the second game would certainly be an eye opener.

Harshit scored 35 off 33 balls, with three fours and a six.

If one takes out 18 runs scores through boundaries in four balls, the beefy all-rounder from Delhi managed 17 off 29 balls and at one stage wasted deliveries keeping Abhishek Sharma stranded at the other end.

It is now understood that Harshit features firmly in head coach Gambhir's plans and is a non-negotiable entity as far as current playing elevens are concerned but his bowling has been inconsistent to say the least.

But at Hobart, where the open area on one side will aid swing bowling, India would do well to think of sacrificing one spin bowling option at the altar of playing Arshdeep.

Squads:

India: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Shubman Gill, Tilak Varma, Sanju Samson (wk), Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Harshit Rana, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Varun Chakravarthy, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Arshdeep Singh, Rinku Singh, Washington Sundar.

Australia: Mitchell Marsh (c), Sean Abbott (games 1-3), Xavier Bartlett, Mahli Beardman (games 3-5), Tim David, Ben Dwarshuis (games 4-5), Nathan Ellis, Glenn Maxwell (games 3-5), Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhnemann, Mitchell Owen, Josh Philippe, Tanveer Sangha, Matthew Short, and Marcus Stoinis

Match Starts at: 1:45 pm IST. (PTI)

Rohan Bopanna announces retirement after two decades on Tour



NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Indian tennis veteran Rohan Bopanna, one among the only four Indians to win Grand Slam titles, on Saturday announced his retirement from professional tennis, bringing an end to a career spanning more than two decades on the challenging ATP Tour.

The 45-year-old Bopanna's final appearance on the Tour came at the Paris Masters, where he partnered Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik, losing in the opening round earlier this week.

In an emotional statement titled "A Goodbye... But Not The End," Bopanna said he was "officially hanging up racquet," reflecting on a journey that took him from his hometown of Coorg to the biggest arenas in world tennis.

"How do you bid farewell to something that gave your life its meaning? After 20 unforgettable years on tour, however, it's time.. "Starting my journey from a small town of Coorg in India, chopping blocks of wood to strengthen my serve, jogging through coffee estates to build stamina and chasing dreams on cracked courts to standing under the lights of the biggest arenas in the world—it all feels surreal," Bopanna wrote.

Bopanna had ended his India career after the Paris Olympics last year. He had announced his retirement from Davis Cup in 2023, playing his last tie against Morocco in Lucknow.

The doubles specialist, who played for 22 years, described tennis as more than a sport, calling it a source of "purpose, strength and belief" through challenging moments.

"Every time I stepped onto a court, it taught me perseverance, resilience to rise, to fight again

when everything inside me said I couldn't—and most of all, reminded me why I started and who I am," he said.

Bopanna also paid tribute to his family, crediting them for their support throughout his career.

He thanked his parents for their sacrifices, his sister Rashmi for her constant encouragement, and his wife Supriya for being his "greatest partner off court."

He dedicated a heartfelt note to his daughter, Tridha, saying she gave him "new purpose and a softer strength."

"Every match I played in these last years, I played for you—to show you that dreams are worth fighting for and that kindness and courage matter more than winning," he wrote.

Bopanna, who turned professional in the early 2000s, became one of India's most successful doubles players, known for his powerful serve and longevity on the ATP Tour. Over his career, he represented India in multiple Davis Cup ties, Grand Slam events, and the Olympics.

He won his first Grand Slam when he triumphed at the French Open mixed doubles event with Canadian partner Gabriela Dabrowski in 2017 and won his first and only men's doubles title with Matthew Ebden at the Australian Open in 2024.

In 2023, Bopanna won the Indian Wells trophy with partner Ebden, becoming the oldest ATP Masters champion at 43 years-old. He also became the oldest world number one in doubles in 2024 during his successful Australian Open run, aged 43. Bopanna is likely to stay involved in the game. He recently got UTR Tennis Pro to India and is working on several initiatives. (PTI)

Iyer discharged from hospital, stable now: BCCI

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: India ODI vice-captain Shreyas Iyer has been discharged from a Sydney hospital after undergoing a minor procedure following a spleen and rib cage injury while successfully attempting a catch in the third ODI against Australia.

"He (Iyer) is now stable and recovering well. The BCCI Medical Team, along with specialists in Sydney and India, are pleased with his recovery, and he has been discharged from the hospital today," BCCI said in a statement on Saturday.

The 30-year-old had sustained a lower left rib cage injury while attempting a difficult running catch to dismiss Alex Carey off Harshit Rana's bowling in the third ODI.

Iyer is expected to return to India when he is fit to fly but will be out of action for at least next two months.

"Shreyas Iyer sustained a blunt injury to his abdomen while fielding during the third ODI against Australia on 25th October 2025, resulting in a laceration of his spleen with internal bleeding.

"The injury was promptly identified, and the bleeding was immediately arrested following a minor procedure. He has undergone appropriate medical management for the same," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia stated.

"The BCCI extends its heartfelt gratitude to Dr Kouroush Haghighi and his team in Sydney, along with Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala in India, for ensuring Shreyas received the best treatment for his injury. Shreyas will continue to stay in Sydney for follow-up consultations and will return to India once he is deemed fit to fly," he added. (PTI)



England loses the 3rd ODI against New Zealand by 2 wickets and the series 3-0

WELLINGTON, Nov 1: England will head to the five-test Ashes series in Australia low on form and confidence after being bowled out for 222 in a two-wicket loss to New Zealand in the third one-day international Saturday and a 3-0 series defeat.

New Zealand was desperate at the end, with two wickets remaining and 28 runs still needed to win. But Zak Foulkes with 14 not out and Blair Tiekner, with an unbeaten 18, saw New Zealand home with 32 balls to spare and a total of 226-8.

New Zealand won the first match by four wickets and the second by five wickets.

England captain Harry Brook bowled out Jofra Archer, Brydon Carse and Jamie Overton, leaving Sam Curran and Adil Rashid to bowl the critical final overs.

The problem for England was its batting. For the third time in the three-match series, England was bowled out inside 50 overs as its top order faltered against quick and accurate swing bowling.

New Zealand's run chase was impeded by two runouts at the non-striker's end but Daryl Mitchell's 44 took it close to victory.

Overton had scores of 46 and 42 in the first two matches of the series and has been outstanding batting at No. 8, outshining England's specialist batters. He is unavailable



for the Ashes, having chosen not to play test cricket.

On Saturday, England slumped to 44-4 at the end of the first 10-over power play before being saved by the middle and lower order.

"That's one thing we've spoken about. We didn't get big enough scores for us to be able to defend them and to give the bowlers a big enough chance to win us the games," Brook said. "We'll go back, we'll take the learnings we've made from this trip here and we'll try our best to be better in the future."

Jamie Smith, Ben Duckett, Joe Root and Jacob Bethell will all head to Australia with few runs under their belt.

Smith was out for 5 Saturday, Duckett for 8, Root for 2, Bethell

for 11 and Brook, who has been England's mainstay in the series, was dismissed for 6. Brook scored 175 runs in his three innings in the series.

The late resistance came first from Jos Buttler who made 38 and put on 53 in a partnership for the sixth wicket with Sam Curran (17) which more than doubled England's total.

Overton and Brydon Carse then put on 58 for the eighth wicket. Carse hit four sixes in his 36 while Overton reached his half century from 50 balls with consecutive fours off Blair Tiekner. He hit 10 fours and two sixes.

England bowled well in defense of an inadequate total, though Jofra Archer conceded 53 runs from 10 overs without taking a wicket. His fifth over cost 24 runs. (AP)

Arshdeep's name should be second in list if Bumrah is playing: Ashwin

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin expressed his surprise at the Indian team management's decision to leave out Arshdeep Singh from the T20 playing eleven, saying going by his records the left-arm pacer should be the second choice fast bowler after Jasprit Bumrah.

Ashwin feels ignoring a consistent performer like Arshdeep cannot be justified.

Ashwin's remarks came on the heels of India's four-wicket loss to Australia in the second T20I in Melbourne.

India were bowled out for just 125, but Australia chased down the total in under 14 overs to take a 1-0 lead in the series.

The first T20I of the five-match series in Canberra was washed out.

"Arshdeep Singh's name should be the second name on your fast bowlers' list if Bumrah is playing," Ashwin said on the Ash Ki Baat show on his YouTube channel.

"If Bumrah is not playing, Arshdeep becomes your first bowler on that team list. I just cannot understand how Arshdeep Singh



keeps missing out from the eleven in this side. I don't really get it." While Ashwin understands that Harshit Rana added a bit of value with the bat but on a track like MCG, India's all-time highest wicket-taker in T20Is cannot possibly be kept out of the scheme of things. He feels Arshdeep's non-selection shouldn't be mixed with

Harshit's batting prowess.

"Of course, Harshit Rana had a decent day with the bat. He batted decently but this is not about him at all. It's about Arshdeep Singh. The performance he put in the T20 World Cup in 2024, after that he has consistently found ways to stay out of the team. He has been benched so many times that he has

Erling Haaland dresses as the Joker for Halloween prank in Manchester

MANCHESTER, Nov 1: Manchester City striker Erling Haaland looked the part as the Joker, but he probably won't take home any awards for his acting.

Even in makeup and green hair, Haaland wasn't fooling anyone as he visited a couple of Manchester-area stores in a Halloween prank.

"Are you the Man City boy?" one man asked when Haaland approached him as a gas station.

The Norway international documented the adventure on his YouTube channel. At one store, he bought diapers and a pack of Premier League trading cards — he's featured on the packaging.

In the video with girlfriend Isabel Haugseng Johansen, he said it was "the night before Halloween, so we're going to dress up a little bit."

"I've never dressed up as a character before, it's the first time," Haaland said as a makeup artist attached scars to his face to transform him into the fictional supervillain.



Haaland then walks to a wall mirror for a closer look, says "that looks sick!" and laughs diabolically.

The 25-year-old Haaland, who leads the Premier League with 11 goals, should be back to spoiling defenders this weekend.

On Friday, City manager Pep Guardiola confirmed Haaland is ready to play against Bournemouth on Sunday. He had missed a midweek game against Swansea. (AP)