



## Transteele secures orders of ₹11.06 crore from marquee brands

**MUMBAI, Nov 4:** Transteele Ltd on Tuesday said it has secured fresh orders totalling ₹11.06 crore from leading enterprises such as Nykaa, Kaseya, Tata Projects, Zyeta and Cashfree. Transteele will provide end-to-end workspace solutions, spanning design, build, and supply of ergonomic furniture across client offices in Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Pune, the company said in a statement.

"These new orders reflect the confidence that leading enterprises place in Transteele's ability to deliver modern, functional, and employee-friendly workspace solutions. Our asset-light model enables us to scale rapidly while maintaining cash flow efficiency, allowing us to take on larger turnkey projects without blocking capital," Shiraz Ibrahim, Managing Director of Transteele, said. (PTI)

## Sensex tanks over 519 points on foreign fund outflows, weak global peers



**MUMBAI, Nov 4:** Benchmark Sensex tanked 519 points and broader Nifty settled below the 25,600 level on Tuesday due to profit-taking in utility, metal and IT shares triggered by weak global trends and foreign fund outflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 519.34 points, or 0.62 per cent, to settle at 83,459.15 with 25 of its constituents ending lower and five with gains. During the day, it tanked 565.72 points, or 0.67 per cent, to 83,412.77.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 165.70 points, or 0.64 per cent, to 25,597.65. It hit a low of 25,578.40 due to losses in bluechip shares such as PowerGrid, Eternal and Adani Enterprises.

Among Sensex firms, Power Grid fell the most by 3.13 per cent after the utility posted a decline in the September quarter profit. Eternal dropped 2.79 per cent, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicle by 2.53 per cent, Tata Steel by 1.86 per cent, Maruti by 1.76 per cent and

Bharat Electronics by 1.69 per cent.

However, Titan was the biggest gainer, rising by 2.28 per cent on strong Q2 financial results. The company reported a 59 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to ₹1,120 crore for the September quarter of FY26. Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, and State Bank of India were the gainers.

"Indian equity markets ended lower, tracking weak global cues and broad-based selling, particularly across IT, metal, and power sectors. Investor sentiment remained subdued ahead of the holiday-shortened week. FIIs extended their selling streak for the fourth consecutive session, as rising US bond yields and waning expectations of a near-term Fed rate cut curtailed risk appetite," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹1,883.78 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. Domes-

tic Institutional Investors (DIIs), however, bought stocks worth ₹3,516.36 crore in the previous trade.

The BSE smallcap gauge dropped 0.69 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.26 per cent.

Utilities tumbled the most by 1.56 per cent, followed by metal 1.40 per cent, commodities (1.11 per cent), BSE Focused IT (1.08 per cent), IT (1.06 per cent), power (0.99 per cent) and realty (0.83 per cent).

Telecommunication jumped 0.93 per cent and consumer durables climbed 0.11 per cent.

A total of 2,549 stocks declined while 1,618 advanced and 162 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Stock markets would remain closed on Wednesday for Guru Nanak Jayanti.

"Profit-taking across heavyweight sectors dampened overall mood, while risk appetite remained subdued amid weak global cues. Additionally, inconsistent foreign institutional investor (FII) flows further added to the cautious tone," Ajit Mishra—SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled lower.

Markets in Europe were trading in negative territory on Monday, while US markets ended mostly higher.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.34 per cent to USD 64.02 a barrel.

On Monday, the Sensex inched up 39.78 points, or 0.05 per cent, to settle at 83,978.49. The Nifty eked out a marginal gain of 41.25 points, or 0.16 per cent, to end at 25,763.35. (PTI)

## Global shares trade lower after AI darlings prop up Wall Street

**TOKYO, Nov 4:** Global shares re-entrenched on Tuesday despite the big lift in overseas markets from optimism over artificial intelligence technology, as traders sold shares to lock in recent profits.

France's CAC 40 lost 1.3 per cent in early trading to 8,007.48, while Germany's DAX dipped 1.5 per cent to 23,780.93. Britain's FTSE 100 slid 0.8 per cent to 9,624.57. US shares were set to drift lower with Dow futures down 0.8 per cent at 47,112.00. S&P 500 futures lost

nearly 1.0 per cent to 6,816.50. In Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 dipped 1.7 per cent to finish at 51,497.20 following a national holiday on Monday.

"Japan market continues to pivot from mean reversion to momentum, with AI/semis driving gains through steep valuation rerating," said Shrikant Kale, strategist at Jefferies Hong Kong.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 shed 0.9 per cent to 8,813.70. South Korea's Kospi dipped 2.4 per cent

to 4,121.74, reversing after a rally took it to record highs in recent days. Hong Kong's Hang Seng erased earlier gains to fall 0.8 per cent to 25,952.40, while the Shanghai Composite lost 0.4 per cent to 3,960.19. Gains for Nvidia, Amazon and other AI superstars have been pronounced lately on Wall Street. But companies across the US stock market will need to hit expectations for growth in profit to justify the big gains for their stock prices since April. (PTI)

## ChatGPT Go one-year free access rolls out in India

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** ChatGPT Go's 12-month free access rollout in India on Tuesday witnessed significant user interest, but many reported difficulties activating the offer using their UPI credentials.

OpenAI introduced a 12-month, no-cost ChatGPT Go plan for Indian users, beginning November 4, 2025, as part of a limited-time promotion. However, several users took to X (formerly Twitter) to complain about unsuccessful activation attempts.

Common grievances include repeated approvals of a Re 1 UPI debit without activation, applica-

tions getting stuck on the payment screen, and ongoing errors relating to valid UPI IDs and incomplete mandates, even when the payment authorisation appears to be successful.

According to OpenAI, enrolling in the ChatGPT Go free access offer requires adding a payment method (either a Credit Card or UPI), despite the absence of any subscription fee. It mandates a temporary charge of ₹1 at every billing cycle, which is immediately refunded. The setup is designed to enable automatic billing for ChatGPT Go after the 12-month free promotion expires.

Users are reminded that cancelling the subscription during the free period renders the offer void for that account.

"Excited for free ChatGPT Go in India, but UPI verification stuck! Invalid VPA error despite valid ID like myname@phonepe. Mandate not completing. Please fix UPI support ASAP!" a user wrote on X.

"I am facing the ChatGPT Go subscription payment issue using the UPI method. Even after confirming the upi payment it is stuck at the approved payment screen. Any fix or is it a bug?" another said. (PTI)

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## New political entity

concerns of our people, but from different platforms and political spaces. We have realised that our strength lies in unity, and that it is time to give our people one collective voice," it said.

"Taking inspiration from the vision and legacy of great leaders who fought selflessly for the identity and development of our land, we have resolved to carry forward their ideals by coming together under a shared vision for the future of the Northeast," it said.

"Our united effort is guided by a simple conviction that the people of the Northeast deserve to be heard, respected, and represented through a strong, unified, and indigenous political voice at the national level," it added.

Sangma said the effort is driven by the conviction that people of the Northeast need to be "heard and represented".

"It is very important that these different parties are combined in one political party, we have started working on that today," the Meghalaya CM said.

Asked if they would be able to confront the BJP, Sangma said, "We are not here to fight anyone".

"We are not trying to say we will contest against anyone. We are only saying that the platform we are trying to create is what the Northeast needs today. What is driving our decision is the interest of our people and the interest of our future," he said.

"We are working with the central government. Obviously as a political party, we will fight election, we are not fighting against anybody," he said, adding that the NPP, as well as TIPRA Motha, have contested elections on their own.

Asked about the issues that brought the parties together, he said land rights and protection of indigenous people, economic growth, and overall progress are some of the prominent issues.

Manikya said, "Daniel Langthasa is fighting for Sixth Schedule, we are fighting for Sixth Schedule. Besides, there are common problems like illegal migration happening from neighbouring countries and alienation of tribal land."

"In Delhi, people from the Northeast are facing discrimination. Many students and professionals feel there should be a common platform where they can speak," the TIPRA Motha leader added. (PTI)

## Organ transplant racket

in the area," a villager said on condition of anonymity.

He said that the conscious protesting villagers were compelled to keep silent as they were threatened with dire consequences by the broker gang.

Das claimed that police had arrested a few people in 2021 for their alleged involvement in the kidney racket. (PTI)

## Cooperate with judicial

booked under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for murder, culpable homicide not amounting to murder, criminal conspiracy and causing death by negligence. (PTI)

## Court grants bail

continued detention was no longer necessary for the progress of the investigation.

The court allowed Potom's release on furnishing a personal bond of Rs one lakh with one surety of like amount to the satisfaction of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Yupia.

It imposed conditions that the accused must appear before the investigating officer whenever required, must cooperate with the probe and must not directly or indirectly make any inducement, threat or promise to any person acquainted with the facts of the case. (PTI)

## Tendency to play

for fear that carefully built reputations could be casually tarnished, best of talent will not be forthcoming, especially for government and public sector corporations," it said.

The bench found no merit in the objections filed by MMTC under Section 47 of the CPC and dismissed its appeal.

The dispute arose out of a long-term coal supply agreement executed in March 2007 between MMTC and Anglo American firm for the supply of coking coal over multiple delivery periods.

After MMTC failed to lift certain quantities during the fifth delivery period amid market volatility in 2008, Anglo American Coal Pvt Ltd invoked arbitration seeking damages based on price differentials.

In May 2014, a majority of the arbitral tribunal awarded Anglo American firm USD 78.72 million with interest and costs. MMTC's challenge to the award under Section 34 of the Arbitration Act failed before a single judge of the Delhi High Court in July 2015.

Although a division bench later set aside the award in March 2020, the Supreme Court restored it in December 2020. MMTC subsequently objected to enforcement on grounds including alleged breach of fiduciary duties by its former officials and an ongoing criminal investigation.

The PSU also sought a stay under CPC, claiming the award was inexecutable. The top court rejected all contentions, ruling that MMTC was attempting a "retrial" of issues already settled. (PTI)

## DG Assam Rifles

and skill development among soldiers.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment to uphold operational readiness and strive for excellence in all spheres, with attendees pledging to maintain peace and tranquillity in their respective areas of responsibility. (NNN)

## Business tycoon Gopichand

three were, however, exonerated by the Delhi High Court in 2005.

Gopichand Hinduja and his family retained their position as Britain's wealthiest, according to the latest The Sunday Times Rich List, despite a drop in their overall fortune. The Hinduja family's net worth stands at 35.3 billion pounds, down from 37.2 billion pounds the previous year.

Their UK property assets include the 67,000 square feet 18th-century Carlton House Terrace near Buckingham Palace and the historic Old War Office building in Whitehall, now home to the Raffles London hotel, which opened in September 2023 to great fanfare.

The family, however, feuded over the vast wealth. After the death of the eldest brother, Srichand, in 2023, it emerged that Gopichand and his two younger brothers - Prakash, 79, and Ashok, 74, had been fighting over the past three years with the patriarch and his daughter, Vinoo, over a 2014 letter signed by the four siblings that said assets held by one of them belonged to all.

While the family called a truce on the bitter power struggle, reports suggest they're still privately haggling on related issues.

Their father, Parmanand, founded their namesake business in 1914 in the Sindh region of British India, trading in carpets, tea and spices. In 1919, he moved from Sindh (then in India, now Pakistan) to Iran, and his sons joined as the group rapidly diversified investments, with early success distributing Bollywood films outside India.

Parmand, who died in 1971, instilled in his sons a mantra they pledged to follow: "Everything belongs to everyone and nothing belongs to anyone". The siblings, however, feuded over control of the vast business empire and have reportedly agreed to effectively dump the letter, raising the prospect of a breakup for their conglomerate.

The Hinduja empire included the only Indian-owned Swiss bank, SP Hinduja Banque Privee, with headquarters in Geneva. Its assets include Mumbai-based lender IndusInd Bank Ltd and a property investment firm that has bought more than 250 acres of land in major Indian cities. (PTI)

**ENGINEERING WORKS IN LUMDING DIVISION**

**Tender Notice No.: SCL-Engg-80-2025, Dated: 30-10-2025.** E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **SN-1: Brief Description of Item:** Construction of merchant room, labour shed with drinking water facility, and other allied works at DMR goods shed under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/VI/Lumding. **Tender Value:** ₹3,10,01,325.54/- **Earnest Money:** ₹3,05,000/- **Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. on 24-11-2025 and opening at 15:00 hrs. on 25-11-2025.** Complete information along with the tender document of above e-tender will be available up to 15:00 hrs. on 24-11-2025 in the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

DRM(W)/Lumding  
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY  
Serving Customers With A Smile

**DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION OF GOODS CIRCULATING AREA WORKS ETC.**

**Tender Notice No.: Sr. DEE/LMG/28 of 2025-26, dtd. 31-10-2025.** E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **SN-1; Tender No.:** EL/LM/25-26/34; **Name of work:** (i) Development of Goods circulating area, Goods office, High Mast Tower, Merchant room/Labour room, Goods office/Modular furniture at Bhairabi under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/VI/Lumding. (ii) Provision of Goods circulating area, green belt, Merchant room, Goods office & labour shed drinking water facility at Moinar. Bond under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/VI/Lumding (Electric Portion). (iii) Construction of goods circulating area, approach road, merchant room & goods office, labour shed with drinking water facilities CCTV monitoring at Bhanga (electric portion). (iv) Construction of Goods office, Merchant room, labour shed with drinking water facility, CCTV monitoring and furniture's at Bihara goods. Under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/VI/Lumding (Electric Portion). & (2) Civil, Electrical and LAN connectivity work for installation of ATM at 8 proposed locations over Lumding division Station: - Guwahati, Kamakhya, Dimapur, Lumding, Silchar, Agartala, Badarpur, New Haflong (Electrical Portion). **Tender Value:** ₹1,03,86,176.77/- **Earnest Money:** ₹2,01,900/- **Date & time of closing of tender at 11:30 hrs. on 24-11-2025.** For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Sr. DEE/G&Chg, Lumding  
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY  
Serving Customers With A Smile

**NAME CORRECTION**

I, Dulari Sahu, W/O: Sankar Gour, D/O: Phulsing Gour, a Resident of Vill: Uttar Bidya Nagar, P.S. Hojai, Dist. Hojai, Assam do hereby solemnly affirm and state via a Notarial Affidavit executed at Srimanta Sankardev Nagar in Hojai, dated 29/08/2025, that in some of my documents like Aadhaar Card and Voter ID my name has been recorded as Dulari Sahu and in some of my documents my name has been recorded as Anjana Gour. I hereby declare that, both Anjana Gour and Dulari Sahu are the names of one and same person i.e. Dulari Sahu.

**AFFIDAVIT**

I, Shri. Jorlish Enghi, S/o Sarthe Enghi, DOB: 15/05/1977, resident of village Mensing Timung Gaon, P.O Jengka, P.S Kheroni, district West Karbi Anglong, Assam, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare an oath before Notary, Hamren, West Karbi Anglong that Shri Ajit Das, S/o Prabhad Das, DOB 20/10/1983, resident of village Solok Enghee Gaon, P.O. & P.S Kheroni, district West Karbi Anglong, is my adopted Son. He had got married to a Karbi lady namely Rebecca Teronpi D/o Mensing Teron from our Karbi Community and after that I have adopted him as my son. After that his name or title is transferred from Sri Ajit Das to Sri Ajit Enghi.

I, Sri Jorlish Enghi, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that the contents of this affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge, belief and information and in verification thereof I put my signature on this 4th day of November, 2025.

## KFC launches 'The Great KFC Feastival'

*Campaign brings back limited-edition favourites Chizza and Double Down Burger alongside classic offerings*

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** KFC India has announced the launch of its new campaign, The Great KFC Feastival, offering a line-up of four fan-favourite meals at an introductory price of ₹299 each.

The campaign celebrates India's festive spirit with the return of two limited-edition favourites—the crunchy, cheesy Chizza and the all-chicken, no-bun Double Down Burger—alongside signature items like the Gold Zinger Burger and 9-piece chicken bucket, all served with fries and Pepsi.

The launch is accompanied by a campaign film set to Sukhbir's popular track Ishq Tera Tadpave (Oh Ho Ho Ho), capturing the joy of friends coming together for a celebratory meal. The film depicts a group of friends discovering the Feastival menu and expressing surprise at the variety and affordability, with every

'Oh?!' turning into the infectious 'Oh Ho Ho Ho' as they enjoy the indulgent meals.

Aparna Bhawal, chief marketing officer, KFC India & Partner Countries, said the Great KFC Feastival reflects the high celebratory spirit across the country.

"It's the ultimate celebration of all things chicken – from limited-edition favourites like Chizza and Double Down to much-loved classics like Gold Zinger and 9 pieces chicken. The Great KFC Feastival brings four irresistible meals at an unbelievable price of ₹299 each," she said. The Great KFC Feastival menu is now available across more than 1,300 KFC restaurants nationwide for dine-in and takeaway, as well as on the KFC app, website (<https://online.kfc.co.in/>) and major food delivery platforms. Customers can also pre-order through the KFC app while dining in to skip queues and enjoy a seamless experience.

## NPCI urges citizens to stay alert from digital arrest

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has urged citizens to remain vigilant against the rising cases of online frauds, particularly the emerging trend of 'Digital Arrest' scams, as part of its ongoing efforts to promote safe digital payment practices.

Highlighting the growing accessibility and convenience of digital transactions across the country, NPCI emphasized the importance of awareness and caution to ensure a secure, less-cash economy.

It said that early identification of scams can help protect individuals and their families from financial and identity-related losses. Explaining the nature of the 'Digital Arrest' fraud, NPCI said that scammers often pose as law enforcement officials to deceive victims.

They fabricate fake legal cases and use threats of arrest to extort money or personal information.

These fraudsters typically initiate contact through phone calls and then switch to video calls, sometimes appearing in police uniforms or using official-looking

backgrounds to intimidate their targets.

The corporation advised citizens to be wary of unexpected calls from individuals claiming to represent government agencies such as the police, CBI, income tax or customs departments, particularly when such callers allege legal violations or demand urgent action.

Genuine officials, NPCI clarified, never seek payments or conduct investigations over phone or video calls. NPCI urged users to pause and verify any suspicious communication before responding.

It recommended reporting such incidents immediately to the national cybercrime helpline by dialing 1930 or through the Department of Telecommunication's portal (<https://sancharsaathi.gov.in/sfc/>).

Citizens were also encouraged to record details, take screenshots and save evidence to assist authorities in their investigations. Reiterating its commitment to secure digital transactions, NPCI said that awareness and caution remain the most effective tools in protecting users from fraudsters exploiting fear and urgency to commit cybercrimes.

## Axis Bank launches SPLASH 2025

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** Axis Bank, one of India's largest private sector banks, has announced the launch of SPLASH 2025, the 13th edition of its annual nationwide competition on art, craft and literature.

Inspired by the Bank's brand philosophy 'Dil Se Open', this year's theme, 'Dreams', aims to encourage children to explore their imagination and creativity.

Participants can register and submit their entries on [www.axis-bankspash.in](http://www.axis-bankspash.in) till December 31, 2025.

The Bank will also organise on-ground competitions across select Axis Bank branches, schools and Residential Welfare Associations (RWAs), with an aim to engage over 11 lakh participants through both digital and physical platforms.

Entries will be accepted under two sub-themes: 'A Day in My Dream

Life' for the 7–10 years age group and 'The Future as I Dream It' for the 11–14 years category.

A panel of over 100 domain experts will evaluate the entries, including Savio Mascarenhas, Group Art Director at Amar Chitra Katha; Dr Snehal Pinto, Director of Ryan International Group of Institutions; and Deepak Patil, Vice President of The Art Society of India.

Unveiling the 13th edition, Anoop Manohar, President and Chief Marketing Officer of Axis Bank, said that Splash is more than a competition—it is a creative platform that uplifts children's spirits and fuels their imagination.

"Through SPLASH, we encourage children to envision the world they want to create—a world filled with hope, courage, and boundless possibilities," he said.

In keeping with the theme, the Bank has introduced an interactive

'AI Dream Generator', allowing children to bring their dreams to life—whether it involves flying cars, talking animals or building a city on the moon—through art, craft or literature.

Six winners and six runners-up will receive prizes of ₹1 lakh and ₹50,000 respectively and will get the opportunity to attend a special art and craft workshop at Tashkeel, Dubai.

Their works will also be exhibited at the Museum of Art and Photography (MAP) in Bengaluru. Additionally, the top 400 qualifiers will be rewarded with goodies and vouchers from partner brands including Ixigo and American Tourister.

In the previous edition of SPLASH, Axis Bank received more than nine lakh entries and collaborated with over 3,300 schools across India, marking a major milestone in its creative outreach initiative.

## Kidney trade resurfaces in Nagaon, three are arrested

Villagers allege renewed organ-selling racket targeting financially distressed residents despite earlier crackdowns

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** A kidney-selling racket has resurfaced in Hooj Kaibarta village of Nagaon district, leading to the arrest of three residents on Tuesday. Police action followed reports that several villagers had once again begun selling their kidneys to middlemen in exchange for money.

According to sources, the practice first came to light in 2021 when six to seven villagers secretly sold their kidneys through brokers. The issue subsided for some time after a few concerned residents intervened, but it has reportedly revived in recent months. Those who tried to stop the illegal trade faced threats and intimidations, locals said.



Villagers claimed that many residents were lured by promises of quick money and a comfortable

life. Brokers allegedly targeted people in financial distress and arranged buyers through unverified medical networks outside the district. Reports indicate that a large section of the village population has already sold their kidneys.

Following the latest arrests, the village head and a group of women appealed to residents not to fall into the trap of organ brokers. They urged the administration to take strict action against those involved and to prevent further exploitation.

Police have detained three people in connection with the case, though further details about charges or the progress of the investigation are yet to be released.

## Congress leaders ramp up campaign in West KA

**HT Correspondent**

**KHERONI, Nov 4:** After Congress deputy leader of opposition and AICC president Gaurav Gogoi concluded his two-day tour in West Karbi Anglong, AICC secretary Manoj Chauhan arrived in the district on Tuesday with the aim of strengthening the party's base in the Karbi Hills. One Congress leader after another is seen visiting the hill district.

Attending a party meeting held at Dongkamokam, Manoj Chauhan alleged that the BJP has been involved in activities such as mud-slinging, coal smuggling, su-pari smuggling and cow smuggling in Assam, in addition to manipulating votes. Chauhan also accused Rikki Bhuyan of being the "number one land thief." He further criticised the state government, saying that while the country demands justice for Zubinda's death, the Chief Minister is attempting to divert attention by calling Gaurav Gogoi a Pakistani agent.

## BTR motorcycle rally reach Udalguri



**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Nov 4:** The BTR (Bodoland Territorial Region) Motorcycle Rally for Kazigaon to Gohpur for a six-day scheduled on Tuesday entered into fourth day on its journey of the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL). The rally team this evening arrived at Udalguri town from Tamulpur district.

Hundreds of bikers from different districts of the BTR in nearly sixty motorcycles are participating in the team. The UPPL party has been carrying this rally to promote peaceful and ethical society amongst the citizens, better services for the common masses across the Bodoland region. Remarkably, the rally was started on November 1 and continuing till November 6 which is concluding at Gohpur.

The rally is led by UPPL general secretary Raju Kumar Narzary and interacting with party workers, well-wishers and community members at various places in the region.

Narzary told that the UPPL party has been emphasising to make strengthening the party affairs and building an integration society.

## Over 20,000 contractual health workers call for equal pay, benefits and job security

### NHM workers protest for job regularisation



**HT Correspondent**

**DONGKAMUKAM, Nov 4:** Over 20,000 employees of the National Health Mission (NHM), Assam have intensified their long-standing demand for regularisation and financial security by staging a three-day statewide sit-in protest across all districts from November 3 to 5. In West Karbi Anglong, hundreds of NHM workers gathered at Hamren District Hospital on Tuesday, expressing frustration over nearly two decades of unfulfilled government assurances. The protestors also submitted a memorandum to the District Commissioner outlining their nine-point charter of demands.

Their key demands include the implementation of a pay scale system ensuring "equal pay for equal work" in line with the Supreme Court verdict (No 213 of 2013), extension of gratuity benefits as per the Assam Gazette Notification 2021 and inclusion under the Employees' Provident Fund and Pension Schemes. They also sought financial assistance for families of deceased employees, a uniform leave policy with two years of Child Care Leave and comprehensive medical coverage

under the MMLSAY scheme. Additionally, the employees demanded special recruitment drives to regularise long-serving NHM staff, age relaxation in future recruitments and priority in state health sector appointments.

The protestors emphasised that despite their crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic and other public health emergencies, their employment status and financial security remain uncertain. The NHM Employees' Union has vowed to continue the agitation until the government takes concrete action to address their grievances and ensure justice for all contractual health workers across Assam.

The nine-point demand charter submitted by the employees highlights the following: implementation of a pay scale system for all NHM employees to ensure "equal pay for equal work" as per the Supreme Court judgment (Verdict No 213 of 2013); enforcement of the Assam Gazette Notification 2021 to extend gratuity benefits, provision of Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) and inclusion under the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS/NPS), financial assistance for families of deceased

employees either through full salary till retirement age or employment for a family member, a uniform leave policy including two years of Child Care Leave similar to regular government employees, comprehensive medical coverage under the MMLSAY scheme with continued reimbursement benefits until inclusion, special recruitment drives to regularise long-serving NHM employees, policy reforms to provide age relaxation and recruitment priority for NHM workers in future health sector appointments and the formulation of a specific policy to prioritise NHM workers in state health sector recruitment, including age exemption and additional marks in examinations.

The employees reiterated that their contributions, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and other public health crises, have been invaluable, yet their employment status and financial security remain uncertain. The NHM Employees' Union has stated that the agitation will continue until the government takes concrete steps to address their grievances and ensure justice for all contractual health workers across Assam.

## Workshop on 'Traditional Weaving and Rural Entrepreneurship'

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Nov 4:** A workshop on "Traditional Weaving and Rural Entrepreneurship" was organised by Bir Lachit Borpuhan College, Sivasagar in association with Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat on Monday at the Xudhakantha Auditorium of the college. Senior scientists from AAU, Dr Arifa Mantaz Begum and Dr Ricky Rani Baruah, along with Assistant Professor Dr Mamata Konwar, shared insights on the evolving prospects of traditional weaving and the importance

of marketing strategies for sustainable livelihoods. In his welcome address, Dr Pankaj Hazarika, Principal of BLB College, emphasised weaving as both a cultural heritage and a viable source of livelihood.

The workshop, initiated by the Department of Economics and the IQAC of the college, aimed to promote traditional handloom practices and encourage self-employment among students and rural women through sustainable entrepreneurship.

Vice-Principal Dipali Neog appreciated the initiative, while

Lakshi Sensua, Senior Professor of the Economics Department, anchored the programme. Faculty members, students and village women actively participated in the interactive sessions and demonstrations.

The event concluded with a discussion on empowering rural communities through innovative weaving techniques and entrepreneurship training, reaffirming the college's commitment to sustainable livelihoods and the preservation of Assam's rich cultural traditions.

## Court employee arrested for forging signatures

**HT Correspondent**

**MANGALDAI, Nov 4:** The arrest of an assistant from Darrang's District and Sessions Judge Court by Mangaldai police on Tuesday for forging colleagues' signatures has created an intense sensation. According to received information, Rekiuddin Ali Ahmed, a junior assistant who was appointed to the post a few years ago, had been secretly issuing Form-50, i.e. non-encumbrance certificates by taking substantial amounts of money from applicants.

This Form-50, necessary for land purchase-sale, bank loans and other transactions, is supposed to be obtained from the record keepers or senior assistants of three different benches. However, Rekiuddin allegedly acted as the sole authority, bypassing the proper process. For this nefarious purpose, he had even created his own seal and stamp. By affixing the fake seal and forging the signatures of the three officers on Form-50s himself, he reportedly collected money from applicants.

When the forgery came to light, a colleague from the court, Tapendra Saharia, filed a complaint. Based on this complaint, Mangaldai police registered a case (Case No 204/25 under Section 318(4)/336(3) BNS 2023) and arrested Rekiuddin from the court in the afternoon. As of the time of writing, police interrogation is ongoing.

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** District Commissioner Munindra Nath Ngatey addressed the media, highlighting the district administration's strong commitment to protecting migratory birds especially the Amur Falcon — during their annual migration through Dima Hasao. The Office of the District Magistrate, Dima Hasao, has issued a Prohibitory Order under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNS), 2023 — corresponding to Section 144 of the former CrPC — banning the killing, capturing, or disturbing of migratory birds in specific parts of the district. As per official inputs from the Divisional Forest Officer, Dima Hasao (West) Division, large flocks of migratory birds arrive every year between August and November, in areas like Jatinga, Doiheng and New Tumbung under Garampani Range, Umrangno.

Forest officials have been conducting round-the-clock patrols to ensure their safety. To reinforce this, the District Magistrate has prohibited the use of high-power halogen lights, long poles or any other tools that could harm the birds in their natural roosting sites. The order (ECF No 16103/L&O/2025/472649) was first issued on 25th September 2025 and reaffirmed on 21st October 2025 after reports of fresh Amur Falcon arrivals in the region.

The District Administration has warned of strict legal action against anyone violating the order. This initiative aims to ensure the safe passage of migratory birds through Dima Hasao reaffirming the district's commitment to wildlife conservation and ecological balance.

## Girl gang raped in Tinsukia while returning from school

**TINSUKIA, Nov 4:** A girl was allegedly gang raped in Assam's Tinsukia district when she was returning home from school, police said on Tuesday.

The incident happened in the Bordubi police station area on Monday afternoon, they said.

As per the girl's statement, three men raped and dumped her on the roadside while she was returning home from school, an officer said.

According to her family, the

class 7 student did not return home after school, which ended at 2.30 pm, he said.

"Around 5 pm, an e-rickshaw driver informed the family that he had found her lying by the roadside in a semi-conscious condition in the vicinity of a tea garden. They rushed to the spot and found her with visible marks of injuries and clothes torn," the official said.

He said a police team was sent

to the spot immediately, and the girl was sent to a hospital.

"We are awaiting the medical report. In the meantime, we have launched a manhunt to nab the culprits," he added.

The incident created shock and anger among the people, who are demanding the arrest of the accused.

Doctors at the Tinsukia Medical College and Hospital are monitoring her condition. (PTI)

## GU Youth Festival 2025 ends with tribute to Zubeen Garg



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** As the familiar strains of "Mayabini Ratir Bukut" filled the auditorium, hundreds of Gauhati University students rose in unison, some smiling, others teary-eyed, their voices blending in a heartfelt tribute to the artist who defined an era of Assamese music: Zubeen Garg.

The five-day Inter-College Youth Festival 2025, organised under the Gauhati University Sports Board by the Post Graduate Students' Union (PGSU), concluded on an emotional and celebratory note. The event "Assamese Modern Song Competition in the Voice of Zubeen Garg" transcended its format, turning into a collective act of remembrance and admiration for the musical icon.

Over 700 students from 60 colleges participated in more than 30 competitions spanning classical and folk dance, one-act plays, poetry, quizzes and visual arts, transforming the campus into a vibrant

mosaic of talent, creativity and youthful energy.

The festival's inaugural day was graced by Prof Utpal Sarma Registrar, Dr Hemanta Kumar Nath Director of Students' Welfare, Dr Ranjan Kumar Kakati Deputy Director, Dr Kuldeep Patgiri Prof Akhil Ranjan Dutta, Senior Advocate Nekibur Zaman, AASU President Trinayan Baruah and PGSU leaders, among others.

Reflecting on the festival's spirit, Vice-Chancellor Prof Nani Gopal Mahanta said, "Culture, discipline and knowledge form the core strengths of Gauhati University's youth. This festival is a bridge of thought, culture and unity and an extravaganza that showcases the holistic spirit and intellectual vibrancy of our university."

The musical competition was judged by noted Assamese artists Gautam Sharma, Ibson Lal Baruah and Hemanta Goswami, with former IAS officer Bharat Bhushan

Choudhury as the distinguished guest. A special performance of Zubeen Garg's timeless classic "Mayabini Ratir Bukut" added a fitting and emotional crescendo to the closing ceremony.

Expressing gratitude to all participants and supporters, Dr Ranjan Kumar Kakati, secretary of the University Sports Board and Director of Students' Welfare, said, "The festival truly reflected the diversity and creative spirit of Assam. The enthusiasm and participation of students made the Gauhati University campus come alive like a mini Assam. We are grateful to every participant, faculty member and organiser who made this year's celebration such a memorable success."

As the lights dimmed and applause faded, the melodies of Zubeen Garg lingered, a poignant reminder that while artists may pass, and their music continues to echo through the hearts of generations.

## Ambitious 85 km highway through to boost connectivity and protect wildlife

### Elevated corridor worth ₹ 6,957 crore to transform connectivity through Kaziranga



**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** The Central Cabinet has approved the construction of an elevated corridor through Kaziranga National Park. The ambitious project, estimated at ₹ 6,957 crore, aims to connect

Kaliabor and Numaligarh with an 85.675 km elevated highway built entirely on pillars.

The initiative seeks to ensure the safety of animals and birds crossing National Highway 715, which passes through Kaziranga. Of the

total stretch, 34.45 km will be built within the national park itself, while 30.22 km of the existing two-lane road will be expanded into a four-lane section. In addition, a new 21 km bypass will also be constructed to ease traffic flow.

The elevated structure will feature specialised animal corridors, proper drainage systems and design elements that preserve the park's natural beauty.

According to official sources, the tender process has already begun, and the foundation stone is expected to be laid either by the end of this year or early next year. The project aims to be completed within three years. Once operational, the corridor is expected to cut travel time between Kaliabor and Numaligarh by nearly half, while boosting tourism, trade and local employment in the region.

The project, prepared by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and approved by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is designed to prevent vehicle-animal collisions and provide safe passage to wildlife during floods. Both the forest and wildlife departments have granted their clearance for the project.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*I want to put a ding in the universe.*  
-Steve Jobs

## Induction of MPATGM in 2026

The Indian Army is set to receive a major upgrade in its tank-destroying capability as the indigenously developed Man-Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile system moves closer to operational approval by 2026. After years of intensive testing and successful trials, this advanced weapon system represents a giant leap forward for India's defence self-reliance and will fundamentally change how Indian soldiers engage enemy armoured vehicles on the battlefield. Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, the MPATGM is a third-generation fire-and-forget missile that marks a revolutionary departure from the aging systems currently in use. Unlike the old second-generation wire-guided missiles like MILAN and Konkurs that the Army has relied on for decades, this new weapon allows a soldier to simply aim, fire and immediately take cover. The missile's advanced seeker technology then takes over, guiding itself to the target without any further input from the operator. This capability dramatically reduces the soldier's exposure to enemy fire and represents a massive tactical advantage in modern combat. The urgency for such a weapon became painfully clear during the 2020 Galwan border clashes, where portable missile systems proved their critical importance in mountain warfare.

Recognizing this operational need, the Ministry of Defence approved the MPATGM project back in 2015 with an initial budget of Rs 73.46 crore. The mission was to create a man-portable version of the successful Nag anti-tank missile, specifically designed for infantry soldiers, special forces and airborne units who need lightweight yet lethal firepower. State-owned Bharat Dynamics Limited was designated as the primary production agency and established a dedicated manufacturing facility in Bhanur, Telangana in 2018. While the COVID-19 pandemic caused some delays in the testing schedule, DRDO engineers continued refining the system throughout this period. The MPATGM's Imaging Infrared seeker represents cutting-edge technology that locks onto the heat signature of enemy vehicles, making it extremely difficult to evade. The missile offers two attack modes to suit different battlefield situations. In direct attack mode, it flies straight at the target, useful when engaging from the side or rear.

What makes the MPATGM truly impressive is its combination of devastating power and soldier-friendly design. The complete system weighs less than 30 kilograms, with the missile itself at 14.5 kg and the Command Launch Unit with tripod at 14.25 kg, making it manageable for a two-person crew to carry and operate in difficult terrain. According to Defence.in Publication, the missile can engage targets from 200 metres minimum distance all the way out to 4,000 metres, giving soldiers tremendous flexibility in both open desert terrain and congested urban environments. The MPATGM's induction represents more than just a weapons upgrade. It embodies the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision in critical defence technology, demonstrating India's growing capability to design, develop and manufacture sophisticated military systems that match or exceed international standards.

## Dr Bhupen Hazarika's melodies of Human compassion

The bard of the Brahmaputra, Dr Bhupen Hazarika, widely known as Bhupen dada, stood as the towering cultural icon of Assam. A multifaceted talent, he transcended the realms of singing to become a lyricist, composer, musical director, poet, filmmaker, and writer all in one. His songs, often self-written and composed, echoed with a highly emotive and melodious voice, impeccable diction, and poetic brilliance. Driven by a deep-rooted humanism, Hazarika's compositions covered diverse themes, with many advocating for universal brotherhood beyond national and cultural boundaries. His music resonated with love, optimism, and a profound humanistic message, fostering unity and brotherhood across ethnic, community, and linguistic diversities. A true humanist at heart, he used his songs to champion the cause of the downtrodden, oppressed, and deprived, expressing spontaneous human love. Dr Bhupen Hazarika's popularity extended far beyond Assam, encompassing the entire nation, as he sang not only in Assamese but also in various Indian languages, including Hindi and Bengali. His profound sense of societal belongingness earned him the title of "janatar xilpi" or the artist of the masses.

Dr Bhupen Hazarika, a true humanist at heart, weaves the soft sentiments of his compassionate soul into his songs. His musical creations resonate with the shared emotions of the masses, evoking a sense of camaraderie. Through his lyrical expressions, he advocates for the downtrodden, oppressed, and the less fortunate in society, imploring the world to extend humane sentiments towards them. The majority of his songs are spontaneous reflections of genuine human love. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika stands unparalleled in portraying the fair and representative depiction of human suffering, poverty, and trauma. His profound love for people and society, rooted in his ideas, creative thoughts, and the value he places on life, finds eloquent expression in his music, elevating him to the status of the greatest cultural icon of India. With heartfelt emotions, he imparts life's messages to the world, aligning himself closely with the common masses and their struggles, forging a deep connection with the people.

Bhupen Hazarika's broader humanistic approach was shaped and

influenced by various notable personalities at different stages of his life. In his childhood, he came into contact with legendary icons of Assamese art, music, and literature, namely Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and Bishnu Rabha. These influential figures planted seeds of nationalism and class consciousness in him. Jyoti Prasad imparted aesthetic philosophy, which later became the stepping stone for Hazarika's poetic creations. Under the guidance of the communist Bishnu Rabha, Hazarika adopted a revolutionary and humanistic approach, intensifying his love for ordinary people and earning him the title of janatar xilpi (artist of the masses).

In the USA (Columbia University), Bhupen Hazarika developed intimate contact with the African-American revolutionary singer Paul Robson, giving his humanism a new dimension. Glimpses of Robson are evident in Hazarika, both in his positivist humanistic approach and his works. Bhupen Hazarika expressed, "he was a social singer with the power to change... I too wanted to be a singer with the power to change society." Paul Robson's "Ol' man river" resonates in Hazarika's immortal composition "Bistimo parore," with its Bangla and Hindi versions enjoying immense popularity alongside the Assamese rendition.

The Assamese nationalism witnessed his broader humanistic approach during the tumultuous periods of Assam in the sixties and the eighties, marked by ethnic conflicts between Assamese and Bengalis reaching their peak. Bhupen Hazarika played a pivotal role in these challenging times. He composed songs such as "Morome bhaxar akhar naikia" (language of love doesn't have an alphabet). Additionally, he established a peace-seeking cultural troop and visited violence-affected areas, personally meeting the people affected by the strife.

The Bhupendriam kaleidoscope weaves together countless hues and shades of humanity. Bhupen Hazarika, a true humanist, dedicated his efforts to the pursuit and fight for a society free from prejudices and discrimination. Addressing issues such as casteism, the rich-poor divide, and the struggles of those facing economic depravity, Hazarika's concerns formed a diverse tapestry with a common motive—to empower

common people to resist the hardships of life. Through his compositions, Hazarika shed light on aspects of everyday human life that demanded the attention and concern of society.

Dr Bhupen Hazarika's songs serve as powerful sermons on brotherhood and human bonding, carrying profound messages of protest, compassion, and peace. To him, music embodies the spirit of the people, acting as the common thread that connects individuals. Throughout his life, he lent his voice to the voiceless, using his melodies to empower millions to speak out against discrimination and inequality. Many of his timeless compositions resonate with a vocal stance against the

DEGREE OF THOUGHT  
By: Dipak Kurmi

hardships faced by the common masses and the destitute. In this paper, selected songs of Dr. Hazarika are taken up for discussion.

## Bhupen Hazarika's Songs of human interest

Manuhe manuhor babe/Jadihe akano nebhabe/Akani xahanubhure/Bhabiba koneno kowa, samaniya?

(If a man doesn't think of man with little sympathy..... tell me o friend who will....?)

The song is considered the most poignant one, encapsulating the liberal ideals of humanity that Bhupen Hazarika sought to impart. It unequivocally emphasizes the necessity for fellow-feelings and bonds between people in a humanistic manner. Throughout his life, Bhupen Hazarika endeavored to promote unity and brotherhood among people, transcending barriers of ethnicity, community, language, and more. This particular song stands as a testament to those cherished ideals, providing solace to our stressed and bereaved souls through its exquisite blend of love, optimism, and humanism.

## In the same song,

Manuh jodihe nohoy maanuh./Daanob kahanui nohoy maanuh./Jodi daanob kahaniba hoye maanuh./Laaj paabo kunenu kowa?..Xamaniya.

He asks if we human fail to act as a human being...a demon can never be a human being, if a demon acts as a human being, we will be ashamed.

## In another song,

Xitore xemekara rati/Xemekara xitore rati/Bastra bihin kono

khetiyakar.../Bhagi pora pojatar tuh jui/ekurat, umi umi joli thoka,/Raktim jen eti uttar hou...

On a withered winter night, may I become the warm red glow emanating from the slowly burning ember in the tattered hut of a clothless farmer. Bhupen Hazarika's words resonate with and inspire the working masses and oppressed classes whom he sought to embrace. He passionately lamented the plight of the oppressed, vehemently opposing all forms of hierarchy and domination. Through his songs, he became a strong advocate for the poor and marginalized sections of society, challenging those in positions of power to bring about change. In the poignant line, "Bastra bihin kono khetiyakar.../Bhagi pora pojatar tuh jui ekurat, umi umi joli thoka, Raktim jen eti uttar hou... (may I be in a cloth-less peasant's broken hut, with the slowly burning ember from the hay, the red glowing warmth), he vividly depicts the struggles of the working masses. Dr. Hazarika's relentless pursuit was for brotherhood and emotional integration among the global human family.

The essence of universalism finds its most poignant expression in his song "Moi Eti Jajabor" (I am a vagabond).

moi luitor pora mississippi hoi/volgar rup salu/ottawar pora austria hoi/peris haboti lolu/moi illorlor pora puroni rohon/chicagole koriyalu/moi Galibor sher dushanber/minarot huna palu/Mark Twainor homadhit bohi/Gorky kotha kolu/bare bare dekhua bator manuh/apun hoise bor/heiye moi jajabor/heiye moi jajabor

(He travelled and traversed from the Luhit (the river Brahmaputra) via Mississippi to Volga, from Ottawa via Austria to embrace Paris, from Illinois to Chicago, heard Galib's Sharyar in the Minar of Dushanbe, spoke of Gorky sitting at Mark Twain's tomb and embraced the strangers as his own.) In this song, he identified himself with the common masses of the world. He is a vagabond and wonders with only one intention in mind, i.e. unification of human mind. He is without home & family but, embraces the whole world as his own family.

Bhupen Hazarika lamented the plight of the poor and their sufferings and was against all forms of hierarchy and exploitation. So, in the same song - Moi Dekhisu Onek

Gogonsumbi Ottalikar Hari, Tar Sa Tei Dekhisu Kotona Grihohin Noronari...

(I've seen many skyscrapers, but also seen countless homeless by the side of those skyscrapers.)

In another song, Aami ekekhon naore jatri/Xahayatri ekekhon naore jatri.....

(We are in the same boat brother, if you tip one end you will rock the other.....)

He cultivated a warm and universal glow of humanity, with his sense of humanism extending beyond the confines of his political boundaries. Despite recognizing the common thread of humanity, he retained his original roots, enriching them in the process.

Bhupen Hazarika's love extended to people, with their habitat, life, culture, and social security prominently shaping his philosophy of life. He forged a deep connection with the common masses and their struggles, drawing himself much closer to the people. Through his songs, he resonated with their feelings, sentiments, pains, sufferings, hopes, and aspirations, standing steadfastly by them. At times, his songs took on a bitter tone, serving as a poignant expression of protest and compassion.

In another song, Prothom nohoi/Dwitiyo nohoi/Tritiyo shrenir yatri amii/Jiwan relor dabat amii/Prothom nohoi/Dwitiyo nohoi/Tritiyo shrenir yatri amii

(Neither first, nor second.....are we the passengers of the third class.)

In celebrating the resilience of the working masses, Bhupen Hazarika identified himself as a fellow traveler journeying towards the same destination. This song encapsulates an optimistic expression of Bhupen Hazarika's human philosophy.

Bhupen Hazarika actively seeks, strives, and fights for the establishment of a society devoid of prejudices and discriminations. Delving into issues such as casteism, the rich-poor divide, and the challenges faced by those experiencing economic hardship, Hazarika's concerns form a diverse spectrum united by a common motive—to empower ordinary individuals to resist the hardships of life. As a humanist, Bhupen Hazarika utilizes his compositions to shed light on aspects of common human existence that demand the collective concern of society. (the writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

## The Humanistic Philosophy of the Song 'Manuhe Manuhor Babe'

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The song 'Manuhe Manuhor Babe' by Bharat Ratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika, renowned worldwide, is regarded as one of his finest creations. Every line of this song expresses the profound philosophy of humanism in a deeply meaningful and intricate manner. Through this song, the dignity of human life, responsibility towards one another, and the indispensability of unity in society are beautifully highlighted. Composed against the backdrop of the language movement of 1960-61, this song emerged during a complex and critical period in Assam. At that time, linguistic, cultural, and social divisions had created chaos in society. Yet it must be acknowledged that the message of this song is not confined to the circumstances of that era alone. Transcending the boundaries of time, it has secured a place as an eternal ideal of universal humanism. The lines of the song delicately present the struggles of human life, respect for its dignity, and the importance of empathy towards others.

Humanism is a philosophy that places the dignity, value, and freedom of human life at the highest pedestal. The core foundation of this philosophy is the belief that every individual possesses an inherent dignity, and the fullness of their life depends on mutual empathy and cooperation. The essence of this philosophy is beautifully expressed in the central theme of 'Manuhe Manuhor Babe'. Through the opening lines, "Manuhe manuhor babe, jodihe okono nebhabe, okoni sohanubhure hhabib koneno kowa somoniya," he raises a profound question about the lack of responsibility among people towards one another. Through these lines, he clearly explains that if people remain indifferent to the suffering and hardships of those around them, the human values of society will gradually erode. This question creates a moral awakening in the listener's mind, compelling them to reflect deeply on their actions and responsibilities. This part of the song makes evident the interdependence of human lives. Through this interdependence, people from all strata of society remain bound by the thread of unity. This aspect of humanism illuminates the truth that the true fulfillment of human life lies not merely in personal happiness and prosperity, but in the effort to enrich the lives of others. The depth of this sentiment in the song lies in its inspiration for people to rise above selfishness and think about the overall welfare of society. Through this philosophy, the song issues a universal call capable of awakening the

values of humanity in the listener's mind. Through this call, the lyricist encourages people to become conscious of the dignity of their own lives and work for the betterment of society. The profundity hidden within the simplicity of these lines makes the song comprehensible and impactful for people of all classes.

Empathy is one of the fundamental aspects of humanism, which closes the doors of division among people and binds society with the thread of unity. From the very first line of 'Manuhe Manuhor Babe', the word "empathy" acquires a special significance. Through this word, the Sudhakantha conveys a clear message—if people do not express empathy towards the pain and suffering of others, the human values of society will gradually be plundered. This concept of empathy is not limited to personal relationships alone; it plays a crucial role in the structure of the entire society. When one person opens the door of their heart to another's pain, they not only become a participant in that pain but also open a path to lighten its burden. In this part of the song, the lyricist has subtly presented the power of empathy, which creates a profound impact on the listener's mind. The song clearly mentions how the lack of empathy among people from different strata of society leads to division and isolation. Through empathy, people reveal their human qualities, paving the way for peace and harmony in society. This aspect unveils a universal truth of humanism—that without empathy, human life remains incomplete, and the progress of society comes to a halt. The depth of this part of the song lies in the fact that it is not merely an emotional appeal but also raises the issue of a moral responsibility to bind people from all strata of society with the thread of unity. This concept of empathy inspires people to rise above their self-interest and become sensitive to the pain and suffering of others' lives. Through this message, the song has succeeded in awakening a sense of unity among people from all strata of society.

In an important part of the song, Dr Bhupen Hazarika raises a sharp criticism against the divisions and exploitation prevalent in society. Through the lines "Manuhe manuhok besib khujii, manuhe manuhok kinib khujii", he points to that dark aspect of society where people exploit others' lives for their own interests. These lines present an opposite picture of humanism, where human qualities are lost, and the web of selfishness engulfs the overall structure of society. The lyricist's criticism was not limited to the society of

that time alone; this message remains equally relevant today. In modern society, due to economic inequality, class divisions, and social exploitation, human life has become increasingly complex. In this part of the song, the lyricist strikes a protest tone against this exploitation, compelling the listener to question their own actions. Through this criticism, an important aspect of humanism is revealed—that the value of human life becomes meaningful only when it frees others' lives from the clutches of exploitation. The depth of this part of the song lies in the fact that it is not confined to criticism alone but provides a search for a moral path where cooperation and harmony prevail over exploitation. Through this criticism, the Sudhakantha calls upon people from all strata of society to become conscious of the consequences of their actions and to show respect for the dignity of others' lives. Through this message, the song represents the voice of the exploited and deprived classes of society and brings their life's hardships to the forefront of society. The protest tone of these lines creates a profound impact on the listener's mind, compelling them to reconsider the ethics of their actions.

The historical background of the song adds further depth to its humanistic philosophy. During the language movement of 1960-61, linguistic, cultural, and political instability had emerged in Assamese society. At that time, divisions and conflicts among various communities had disrupted the overall structure of society. Even amidst this situation, Dr Bhupen Hazarika attempted to propagate a universal message of humanism. Through this song, he called upon people from all strata of society to move forward on the path of unity. This historical background gives a special significance to the humanistic philosophy of the song. The lyricist provided a search for the path of empathy, unity, and cooperation to resolve the problems that were dividing society at that time. The relevance of the song's message, born from this background, remains intact even today.

In the modern world, various social, economic, and political problems have complicated human life. In such circumstances, this message of the song can make people conscious of their responsibilities. Through this historical and contemporary relevance, the enduring value of the philosophy of humanism is established. This background gives the song a special depth, which does not confine it within the limits of music alone but establishes it as a carrier of philosophical and social messages. This historical



Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, the bard of the Brahmaputra, is shown in a portrait wearing a traditional Assamese cap and a colorful shawl.

context of the song further strengthens its humanistic philosophy, inspiring the listener to rise above societal divisions and move forward on the path of unity.

The message of 'Manuhe Manuhor Babe' is not limited to Assamese society alone but is applicable to people across the entire world. By saying "Manuhe manuhor babe", the lyricist unveils a universal truth—that the primary purpose of human life is to enrich the lives of others. Within this universal call lies a profound philosophy of humanism, which transcends the boundaries of caste, religion, language, or culture and binds people with the thread of unity. This aspect of the song leaves a deep impact on the listener's mind, as it speaks not only of personal responsibility but also raises the issue of accountability towards the entire human race. Through this universality, the song has succeeded in awakening a sense of unity among people from various corners of the world. In today's globalized world, where mutual conflicts among people of different cultures and ethnicities are increasing, this universal message of the song provides a search for the path of peace and harmony. The depth of this aspect of the song lies in the fact that it is not for a specific section of society alone but is an enduring call for the entire human race. This universality has elevated the song to a global level, where it is not merely a specimen of Assamese music but becomes a universal message for all people of the world. Through this message, the song inspires people to rise above the boundaries of caste and religion and build a sense of unity.

A song is not merely a combination of melody and words but a powerful medium through which profound philosophical ideas can be expressed. The artistic value of 'Manuhe Manuhor Babe' lies in its ability to present complex humanistic philosophy through simple and straightforward language. This song creates a deep impact on the listener's heart. Through the melody and rhythm of the song, the message of humanism becomes more vibrant and impactful. Every line of the song reflects a kind of emotional depth, which

can make the listener conscious of their responsibilities. Through this medium of art, the lyricist has succeeded in presenting the philosophy of humanism not only on an intellectual level but also on an emotional level. This artistic aspect of the song further strengthens its humanistic message, creating a lasting impact on the listener's mind. Through this aspect, the song has succeeded in establishing its place as a powerful medium of art, opening a unique path to propagate the philosophy of humanism among the general public. Through this artistic value of the song, it is not confined within the limits of music alone but is established as a carrier of philosophical and social messages. This combination of melody and words in the song creates a profound impact on people's minds, reminding them of the dignity of their lives and their responsibilities towards society.

Every line of the song clearly raises the issue of responsibility towards one another. Through this song, Sudhakantha Dr Bhupen Hazarika has attempted to convey a clear message—that every individual in society has certain responsibilities towards others. This responsibility is not only on a personal level but is also extremely necessary for the overall development of society. In the song, he calls upon people to question their own actions. Within this call lies a sense of moral obligation, which is capable of making people conscious of the consequences of their actions. This concept of social responsibility is an inseparable part of humanism, as it inspires people to rise above their self-interest and think about the overall welfare of society. This aspect of the song has succeeded in awakening a sense of unity and cooperation among people from various strata of society, further strengthening the philosophy of humanism. Through this call, the lyricist encourages people to become conscious of the dignity of their lives and work for the welfare of society. Through this message, the song has succeeded in uniting people from all classes of society.

Through this song, Dr Bhupen Hazarika has raised the issue of the freedom of human life and its creative potential. According to humanism, the value of human life is fulfilled only when one contributes to the welfare of society through their creativity and intelligence. This sentiment is clearly evident in the lines of the song, where people are encouraged to shape their own life paths and work responsibly towards society. This aspect reflects that principle of humanism which gives the highest importance to the freedom and

creativity of human life. The depth of this part of the song lies in the fact that it calls upon people to have faith in their potential and use it for the welfare of society. Through this call, the lyricist encourages people to become conscious of the dignity of their lives and work for the overall development of society. This aspect gives the song a special significance, which is capable of illuminating the creative potential of human life.

The optimism of human life and faith in the future is another important aspect of the humanistic philosophy of the song. Through this song, Dr Hazarika has expressed an optimistic perspective, which encourages people not to give up amidst all adversities of life and to work for the welfare of society. This aspect of humanism emphasizes the potential of human life and its creativity. This optimistic perspective is clearly evident in the lines of the song, where people are encouraged to have faith in their lives and work for the welfare of society. This aspect has elevated the song to a universal level, where it is not confined to the context of Assamese society alone but becomes a universal message for all people of the world. Through this optimistic perspective of the song, the lyricist inspires people to live with hope amidst all adversities of life and work for the welfare of society. The depth of this aspect lies in the fact that it is capable of illuminating the potential of human life.

In conclusion, it can be said that 'Manuhe Manuhor Babe' is a brilliant expression of the humanistic philosophy of Sudhakantha Dr Bhupen Hazarika. Through this song, he has built a powerful protest against exploitation, inequality, and injustice in society. The lines of his song clearly reflect the hardships and struggles of the lives of the exploited class. He has shown that one section of society has always been a victim of exploitation, and there is a need for a collective protest against this exploitation. The lines of his song represent the voice of the exploited, bringing their life's hardships to the forefront of society. Through this song, he has envisioned a society where there is no place for exploitation, inequality, and injustice. This ideology of his is consistent with the universal ideals of humanism. The lines of his song make the reader or listener conscious of their responsibilities and compel them to think about their role in society. Through the song, he has succeeded in uniting people from all classes of society. The power of his song is a powerful expression of humanism. The message of this song always reminds us that living for one another is the true fulfillment of life.

# Bhupen Hazarika@100: A voice beyond borders and time

By: Dipak Kurmi

When India remembers its greatest cultural icons, the name of Bhupen Hazarika rises like the Brahmaputra itself—steady, powerful, and uncontaminable. As the country steps into the centenary year of his birth, beginning September 8, 2024, it is impossible to think of him without invoking the river alongside which he grew up, and which shaped his art, his politics, and his conscience. To many, his voice was not merely a vessel for songs but an echo of the Brahmaputra's eternal current—majestic, unrelenting, and carrying both sorrow and hope in equal measure.

For decades, Hazarika's compositions articulated the conscience of a troubled region. The Northeast of India, often described as peripheral in the national imagination, found in his music a voice that could travel across boundaries of language, ethnicity, and geography. Through folk-rooted melodies that spoke of boatmen, rivers, tribal traditions, and forgotten idioms, he constructed bridges between a culturally rich but politically neglected Assam and the rest of the nation. His themes—solidarity, dignity, humanity, and resistance—resonated far beyond Assam's borders, turning his work into a timeless call for empathy and justice.

**Early Life: Music by the River**  
Bhupen Hazarika was born in 1926 in Sadiya, a town in unified Assam, situated by the deepest point of the Brahmaputra. He was the eldest of ten siblings in a family deeply immersed in education and culture. His grandfather had established a school in Sivasagar, and his father, Neelkantha Hazarika, taught there before moving on to Cotton College in Guwahati. But while academics formed one part of his environment, it was music that defined young Bhupen's world.

His mother's lullabies and the tribal songs that surrounded his childhood instilled in him the musical instincts that later matured into compositions of staggering emotional depth. Traces of these early lullabies would later find their way into his acclaimed film scores, including in Kalpana Lajmi's *Rudaali* (1993), where the haunting notes bear unmistakable echoes of Assamese folk traditions.

Hazarika's prodigious talent revealed itself early. At just ten years old, he sang at a public event in Tezpur. Among those in the audience were Jyotiprasad Agarwala, the pioneering poet, playwright, and filmmaker credited with founding Assamese cinema, and Bishnu Prasad Rabha, a political activist, composer, and writer. They immediately recognized his brilliance. Between 1936 and 1940, young Hazarika accompanied Agarwala to Kolkata, where he recorded songs, in-



cluding for Agarwala's 1939 film *Indramalati*. He also absorbed Rabha's musical and political influences, which shaped his lifelong understanding of art as a social weapon.

After schooling, Hazarika pursued political science at Banaras Hindu University (BHU). There, he was enthralled by the shehnai of Ustad Bismillah Khan, often visiting the maestro to learn the nuances of Hindustani classical music. His circle of acquaintances expanded to include young political leaders, among them Chandra Shekhar, the future Prime Minister of India. These years opened his eyes to caste prejudice and political exclusion, themes he would wrestle with in both his personal and creative life. His inability to marry an upper-caste Brahmin woman due to social orthodoxy left a deep scar and further reinforced his resolve to fight against discrimination.

In 1948, after a brief stint with All India Radio, Hazarika left for the United States on a scholarship to Columbia University, where he pursued a PhD in Mass Communication. His time in New York proved transformative. He befriended African-American musician and activist Paul Robeson, whose powerful rendition of "Ol' Man River" exposed him to the idea of music as protest. Hazarika reimagined Robeson's song in Assamese as *Bistirno Parore* and later in Bengali as *Bistirno Duparey*, transplanting the imagery of the Mississippi onto the Brahmaputra and, at times, the Ganga. This adaptation was not mimicry but reinvention: Robeson's lament over racial struggles became Hazarika's anthem for resistance, dignity, and human solidarity in the Indian context.

On his way back from America, he traveled via France and even encountered

Pablo Picasso during a dawn walk, conversing with the painter about his "Blue Period" works. This brief episode underlined Hazarika's tendency to seek connections across artistic boundaries, absorbing global influences into his own regional and national identity.

**Music as a Social Weapon**  
Returning to India, Hazarika immersed himself in the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), an organization where art was wielded as a weapon for social justice. He absorbed from mentors like Agarwala and Rabha the conviction that art must confront power and give voice to the silenced. His music, thus, was never a passive reflection of culture—it was a deliberate intervention.

Through the 1960s, he composed for and directed Assamese films such as *Shakuntala* (1961) and *Pratidhwani* (1964), as well as Bengali films in West Bengal and Bangladesh. His baritone voice—at once commanding and tender—became instantly recognizable, particularly in songs like *Samay dheere chalo* and *Dil hoom hoom kare*. Beyond melody, his lyrics often questioned inequality, called for peace, and celebrated humanity.

But Hazarika's role was not limited to cinema and records. He was a public figure whose songs became entwined with Assam's political ferment. In the early 1980s, during the anti-immigration agitation in Assam, his songs—though written earlier as critiques of systemic injustice—were appropriated by the masses as expressions of anger and hope. They articulated fears of cultural erasure and yet retained a universal appeal, warning against violence even as they gave voice to unrest.

By the time the United Liberation

Front of Asom (ULFA) emerged in 1987 under Paresh Barua, Hazarika's music had become inseparable from the political imagination of the state. Though ULFA initially enjoyed popular support, its descent into violence disillusioned many. Hazarika, meanwhile, remained committed to peace. At the 50th anniversary celebrations of All India Radio Guwahati in 1998, he spoke movingly about reconciliation. Soon after, Barua himself reportedly called him, admitting that he too longed for peace. Hazarika offered to mediate between ULFA and the Union Government, underlining his stature not merely as an artist but as a moral leader.

Recounting his village road shows, he once said: "During those shows, I have met many angry young men who have said to me, 'Dada gana chod do aur gun le lo' (Leave your song and take up the gun). I told them that my gaan (song) is my gun." In this statement lies the essence of Hazarika's philosophy: the belief that music could be more potent than violence in confronting injustice.

**A Multifaceted Career**

Hazarika's career defied categories. He was a poet, composer, singer, filmmaker, writer, editor, and even a politician. Over his lifetime, he wrote and composed more than 1,500 songs, made 14 films, and composed music for around 70 others. He also edited literary magazines like *Amar Pratidhwani* and *Pratidhwani*, au-

thored books, and served in key cultural institutions such as the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Assam Sahitya Sabha.

His partnership with filmmaker Kalpana Lajmi in the 1970s added another dimension to his career. He composed for her films *Ek Pal* (1986), *Rudaali* (1993), and *Daman* (2001), creating music that reached pan-Indian audiences. The haunting "Dil hoom hoom kare" from *Rudaali*, with its fusion of folk strains and cinematic sweep, remains one of the most enduring pieces in Indian film music. His personal relationship with Lajmi, which lasted until his death in 2011, was equally significant in his life.

Recognition for his work poured in steadily. He received numerous National Awards, including the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for lifetime contribution to Indian cinema. He was conferred the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India. The Government of Bangladesh, acknowledging his cultural solidarity with its people, bestowed its highest civilian honor upon him in 2010 for his song *Manush manusher jonnai* (Humans are for humans), which became an anthem of shared humanity across borders. In 2019, eight years after his death, he was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honor.

Yet Hazarika also ventured into active politics. He served as an independent MLA in Assam from 1967 to 1972. Later, he joined the Bharatiya Janata Party and

contested the Lok Sabha elections from Guwahati, though unsuccessfully, losing to Congress candidate Kirip Chaliha. His political career was short-lived, but it reflected his lifelong urge to engage directly with issues beyond the stage.

**The Eternal River**  
Bhupen Hazarika passed away in 2011, but like the Brahmaputra, his presence continues to flow through the consciousness of Assam, the Northeast, and India at large. His centenary is not merely a moment of nostalgia but a reminder of what he stood for. He believed in the power of art to heal fractured societies, to fight against oppression without surrendering to violence, and to assert the dignity of the marginalized.

The Brahmaputra was his eternal metaphor—its vastness a symbol of human endurance, its turbulence a reflection of social conflict, its flow an emblem of continuity. Just as the river connected distant shores, Hazarika's songs connected fragmented peoples, reminding them that humanity itself was the greatest bond.

As India celebrates his hundredth year, his words still resonate: songs are not mere entertainment; they are weapons of conscience. In the troubled times of his life, Hazarika wielded his voice like a river—ceaseless, powerful, and forever carrying the echo of humanity. (The writer can be reached at [dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com](mailto:dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com))



By: Satyabrata Borah

In the lush green valleys of Assam, where the mighty Brahmaputra River winds its way like a silver thread through the heart of the land, a voice was born that would echo across generations. That voice belonged to Bhupen Hazarika, a man whose life was as vast and nurturing as the river he loved so deeply. People in Assam still call him the Bard of the Brahmaputra, or Sudha Kontho, the sweet-throated singer, because his melodies carried the soul of their homeland far beyond its borders. Born on a crisp September morning in 1926, in the quiet town of Sadiya, Bhupen came into a world rich with stories, songs, and the gentle rhythm of nature. His father, Nilakanta Hazarika, was a simple man who worked in the railways, but it was his mother, Shantipriya, who first filled young Bhupen's ears with the magic of music. She would sing him lullabies in the evenings, soft tunes drawn from Assam's ancient folk traditions, weaving tales of love, loss, and the beauty of the everyday. As the eldest of ten children, Bhupen grew up in a home buzzing with laughter and learning, where music was not just entertainment but a way to connect with one's roots.

From his earliest days, Bhupen showed a spark that set him apart. His family moved around Assam

a bit, following his father's job, but it was in Tezpur, at the age of just ten, that his talent truly blossomed. During a public event at a local school, little Bhupen stepped onto the stage and sang a Borgeet, one of those timeless devotional songs from Assam's Vaishnava heritage, taught to him by his mother. The audience included two giants of Assamese culture: Jyotiprasad Agarwala, a poet, playwright, and the pioneer of Assamese cinema, and Bishnu Prasad Rabha, a fiery artist and freedom fighter. They were stunned by the boy's pure, heartfelt voice. It was like hearing the river itself sing. Moved by his gift, they invited him to Kolkata, then the cultural heartbeat of eastern India. There, in 1936, at the Aurora Studio, ten-year-old Bhupen recorded his very first song for the Selona Company. Standing on wooden crates to reach the microphone, he poured his young heart into the melody, and a star was born. By twelve, he was already lending his voice to Agarwala's groundbreaking film *Indramalati*, singing tracks like *Kaxote Kolosi Loi* and *Biswo Bijoyi Naujawan*. These were not just songs; they were bridges between childhood dreams and a lifelong passion for art that spoke to the people.

As Bhupen grew into his teens, his love for music deepened alongside his thirst for knowledge. He finished his schooling in places like Dhubri and Guwahati,

where the mix of Assamese and Bengali influences sharpened his ear for diverse rhythms. The Bhatiati boatmen's songs from the riverbanks became his favorites, their haunting calls blending sorrow and hope in a way that would later define his own work. After matriculating in 1940, he headed to Cotton College in Guwahati for his intermediate studies, then to Banaras Hindu University for a bachelor's in arts. By 1946, he had earned a master's in political science, but his mind was always wandering back to the melodies of home. Music and politics intertwined early for him; he saw songs as tools for change, much like the freedom struggles stirring across India. In those post-independence years, Bhupen joined All India Radio as a producer, but the pull of bigger horizons was too strong. He left for New York in 1948, enrolling at Columbia University to pursue a doctorate in mass communication. It was there, amid the skyscrapers and jazz clubs, that he discovered influences that would transform his art. He befriended Paul Robeson, the legendary African-American singer and civil rights activist, whose powerful rendition of *Ol' Man River* left an indelible mark. Robeson's song mourned the struggles of Black workers along the Mississippi, and Bhupen, homesick for his own river, reimagined it as *Bistirno Parore*, a poignant Assamese ode to the

By the time the United Liberation

## The Bard of Brahmaputra

*Returning to India in 1953 with his PhD in hand, Bhupen dove headfirst into the cultural renaissance of Assam. He briefly taught at Gauhati University, sharing his knowledge of film and communication, but soon shifted to Kolkata, the hub of Bengali and Indian cinema. There, he became a force in the Indian People's Theatre Association, using plays and songs to rally for social justice and unity.....*

Brahmaputra's wide shores, where the waters whispered of inequality and resilience.

Returning to India in 1953 with his PhD in hand, Bhupen dove headfirst into the cultural renaissance of Assam. He briefly taught at Gauhati University, sharing his knowledge of film and communication, but soon shifted to Kolkata, the hub of Bengali and Indian cinema. There, he became a force in the Indian People's Theatre Association, using plays and songs to rally for social justice and unity. His voice, now richer and more commanding, filled auditoriums and airwaves. He composed music for documentaries and films that highlighted the lives of ordinary folks, from tea garden workers to river traders. One of his early triumphs was the film *Era Bator Sur* in 1956, where he wore multiple hats as director, producer, and composer. But it was his songs that truly captured hearts. Bhupen wrote over a thousand of them, mostly in Assamese, each one a mirror to the joys and pains of his people. Tracks like *Bistrina parore* and *Ami asomiya* painted vivid pictures of the Northeast's landscapes, from misty hills to flooded plains, urging listeners to cherish their heritage while dreaming of a fairer world. His lyrics often wove in themes of universal brotherhood, drawing from the Borgeets and folk tunes he grew up with, but infusing them with modern empathy. In an Assam grappling with identity and change, his music became a gentle conscience, soothing the wounds of insurgency and migration with calls for harmony.

Bhupen's reach extended far beyond Assam's borders, thanks to his work in cinema. He directed and scored several Assamese classics, like *Shakuntala* in 1960, *Pratidhwani* in 1964 and *Lotighoti*

in 1966, earning the President's Medal for their evocative storytelling. These films weren't just entertainment; they showcased the raw beauty and struggles of rural life, with Bhupen's scores using traditional instruments like the dotara and flute to evoke the river's flow. His foray into Bengali and Hindi cinema brought Assam's folk essence to a national audience. He collaborated with directors like Kalpana Lajmi on films such as *Rudaali* and *Saaz*, where his song *Dil Hoom Hoom Kare*, a duet that tugs at the soul, introduced Northeast rhythms to Bollywood. Sung with a depth that mirrored the film's themes of widowhood and resilience, it became an anthem of quiet strength. In Bangladesh, his tunes were beloved, bridging cultures with shared stories of rivers and longing. Even in Arunachal Pradesh, he was honored with a gold medal in 1979 for uplifting tribal voices through his art. Bhupen once called himself a *jajabor*, a wandering minstrel, and indeed, he

roamed from studios in Kolkata to stages in Delhi, always carrying Assam in his heart.

What made Bhupen truly iconic was how his music touched the everyday lives of people in Assam. During the turbulent Assam Agitation of the 1970s and 80s, when tensions over immigrants boiled over, his songs became rallying cries. Yet, ever the humanist, he criticized the violence while performing to foster peace. Tunes like *Moi Eti Jajabor* were more than ballads; they were invitations to wander through life's uncertainties with grace, reminding folks that the Brahmaputra, for all its floods, always renewed itself. His words celebrated the tea pickers' toil, the fishermen's solitude, and the warmth of Shillong's hills, making the marginalized feel seen. In a region often overlooked by the rest of India, Bhupen was a proud ambassador, blending local dialects like Mising and Boro into his compositions to honor Assam's mosaic of ethnic voices. He wrote

books too, fifteen in all, filled with poems, essays, and children's stories that echoed his belief in education as a path to equality. As president of the Assam Sahitya Sabha in 1993, he championed literature that spoke truth to power.

The world took notice of this unassuming genius. In 1992, he received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, India's highest cinema honor, for his lifetime of blending song and screen. Padma Shri in 1977, Padma Bhushan in 2001, and posthumously the Padma Vibhushan in 2012 followed, but it was the Bharat Ratna in 2019 that sealed his place among India's immortals, only the second from Assam after Gopinath Bordoloi. Stamps bore his image, and the grand Dhola-Sadiya Bridge over the Brahmaputra was renamed Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Setu in his memory, a fitting tribute to the man who sang its praises. Yet, Bhupen remained grounded, often joking about his nomadic life, saying he had no fixed address but the river's banks.

On November 5, 2011, at 85, Bhupen left this world in Guwahati, his voice silenced by illness. But oh, how it lingers. Today, as we mark nearly a century since his birth, his songs play on river ferries and in school assemblies, teaching young Assamese children about their roots. They remind us that art can heal divides, that a simple melody can carry the weight of a nation's hopes. In an era of fleeting trends, Bhupen's work endures like the Brahmaputra eternal flow, nurturing dreams and washing away sorrows. He wasn't just a singer; he was the heartbeat of Assam, a friend who whispered that humanity's greatest strength lies in its shared stories. And in every note, every word, he invites us still to listen, to feel, and to sing along.



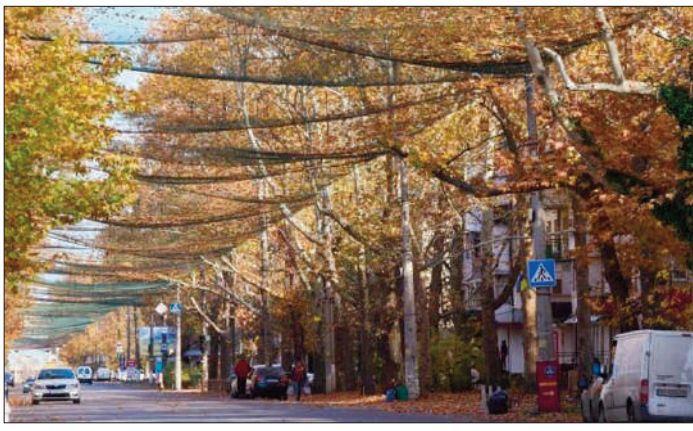
## Two drones targeted an industrial facility in Sterlitamak, a city in Russia's Bashkortostan region

# Ukrainian drones reach deep inside Russia as battle for key city rages on

**MOSCOW, Nov 4:** Ukrainian long-range drones attacked an industrial plant around 1,300 kilometres (800 miles) inside Russia, local officials said Tuesday, while Ukraine's army remained locked in an intense battle to hold back a Russian push on the key city of Pokrovsk in the eastern Donetsk region. Two drones targeted an industrial facility in Sterlitamak, a city in Russia's Bashkortostan region, regional Gov. Rady Habirov said in an online statement. He didn't specify what facility was targeted, but he said that both drones were shot down. There were no casualties, and the facility was operating normally, he said.

Meanwhile, the city administration reported an explosion at the Sterlitamak Petrochemical Plant caused the plant's water treatment facility to partially collapse, adding that the cause of the explosion was not known. The plant, which makes rubber and aviation fuel, is not known to have been attacked before.

Ukraine's daring strikes deep inside Russia using domestically produced drones have embarrassed



Moscow, with officials being unforthcoming about any damage, and unnerved Russians. Ukraine has taken aim at manufacturing plants, oil refineries and military logistics hubs in a bid to disrupt Russia's war effort almost four years after Moscow launched an all-out invasion. Explosions were also heard at an industrial area of the Nizhny Novgorod region, some 800 kilometres (500 miles) from Ukraine, where an oil refinery and a petrochemical plant are located, Russian media reported. Officials did not confirm the

reports.

Both Bashkortostan and Nizhny Novgorod are among the regions where the Russian Defence Ministry said Tuesday that Ukrainian drones were shot down, claiming that 85 were intercepted overnight.

Ukrainian officials said Russia bombed the southeastern Dnipropetrovsk region of Ukraine with drones, missiles and artillery overnight, killing one person and injuring 11 others, including two children.

Russia fired seven missiles of

various types and 130 strike and decoy drones at Ukraine during the night, Ukraine's air force said.

Also, Romania's Defence said Tuesday that Russia carried out two overnight attacks on Ukraine's Danube port infrastructure, close to the border with the NATO member country.

Two pairs of fighter jets were separately deployed from two different airbases for air policing missions after "numerous explosions were observed on the Ukrainian shore," the ministry said.

On the battlefield, Russia and Ukraine are fiercely contesting control of Pokrovsk, a Ukrainian stronghold in the Donetsk region that Moscow's forces have been trying to capture for more than a year. Russia has, in recent months, intensified its efforts in the area and has claimed its troops are making progress.

"Russian forces continue to advance in the Pokrovsk direction and appear to be operating with increasing comfort within Pokrovsk itself," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said late Monday. (AP)

## Philippine air force helicopter carrying 5 crashes while en route to help in typhoon response



**MANILA, Nov 4:** A Philippine air force helicopter with five personnel on board crashed on Monday in the country's south while flying to help respond to the devastation wrought by Typhoon Kalmaegi, which has already left at least five people dead and set off widespread flooding that trapped residents on roofs in some central villages.

The Super Huey chopper crashed near Loreto town in southern Agusan del Sur province, and efforts were underway to locate the air force personnel aboard who were deployed to help provide humanitarian assistance to provinces affected by the typhoon, the military's Eastern Mindanao Command said in a statement.

Military officials didn't immediately provide other details about the crash, including the condition of the

five air force personnel aboard and what could have caused the crash.

Kalmaegi was last spotted over the coastal waters of Jordan town in the central province of Guimaras with sustained winds of 130 kph (81 mph) and gusts of up to 180 kph (112 mph). It was forecast to blow away into the South China Sea late Tuesday or early Wednesday after hitting the western province of Palawan.

An older villager drowned in floodwaters in Southern Leyte, where a provincewide power outage was also reported, and another person died after being hit by a fallen tree in central Bohol province, officials said.

Three other people died in central Cebu province, where officials reported flooding in several towns and villages.

Gwendolyn Pang, secretary-general of the Philippine Red Cross, said that an unspecified number of residents were trapped on their roofs by floodwaters in the coastal town of Liloan in Cebu, and added that cars either were submerged in floods or floated in another Cebu community.

"We have received so many calls from people asking us to rescue them from roofs and from their houses, but it's impossible," Pang told The Associated Press on Tuesday morning. "There is so much debris, you see cars floating, so we have to wait for the flood to subside."

Cebu province was still recovering from a 6.9 magnitude earthquake on Sept. 30 that left at least 79 people dead and displaced thousands when houses collapsed or were severely damaged.

In Eastern Samar, one of the east-central provinces first lashed by Kalmaegi early Tuesday, fierce winds either ripped off roofs or damaged about 300 mostly rural shanties on the island community of Homonhon, which is part of the town of Guianan, but there were no reported deaths or injuries, Mayor Annaliza Gonzales Kwan said.

"There was no flooding at all, but just strong wind," Kwan told the AP by telephone. "We're OK. We'll make it through. We've been through a lot, and bigger than this." (AP)

## Centrist D66 party takes home win in Dutch election

**THE HAGUE, Nov 4:** A nail-biter national election in the Netherlands came down to postal votes from Dutch citizens living abroad, with the centrist D66 party eking out a win over anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders' far-right Party for Freedom according to a final tally by national news agency ANP.

The pair will each have 26 seats in parliament, as the roughly 28,000 vote advantage for D66 was not enough for the party to pick up an additional legislator.

Using a nearly complete ballot count and an estimation based on previous patterns, ANP had predicted D66 would receive the most votes but the question of the additional seat was unclear until late Monday evening. Speaking to reporters last week, Rob Jetten, the 38-year-old leader of D66, called the outcome a "historic result" and said he was proud but felt a "great responsibility" to the country. Jetten would be the country's youngest and first openly gay leader.

Despite a second place finish, the result is an 11 seat loss for Wilders' party, known by its Dutch acronym PVV. Two years ago, the PVV surged to victory in a stunning lurch to the far right for a nation once famed as a beacon of tolerance. But the 62-year-old has lost support since forming and then bringing down a four-party coalition that was notorious for infighting and which did not manage to agree on a tough package of measures to rein in migration to the Netherlands. (AP)

## Hegseth praises South Korea's plans to raise its military spending

**SEOUL, Nov 4:** US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth praised South Korea's plans to raise its military spending, saying Tuesday that the Asian ally will take a larger role in defending itself from North Korean aggressions as the allies must brace for regional contingencies.

Modernising the decades-long alliance between the US and South Korea is a key issue between the two Koreas, as the US apparently wants South Korea to increase its conventional defence capabilities so that Washington can focus more on China.

After annual security talks with South Korean Defence Minister Ahn Gyu-back in Seoul, Hegseth told reporters that he was "greatly encouraged" by Seoul's commitment to increase defence spending and make greater investments in South Korean capabilities. He said the two agreed the investments would bolster South Korea's ability to lead its conventional deterrence and defence against North Korea.

In a speech at parliament earlier Tuesday, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung asked lawmakers to approve an 8.2 per cent increase in defence spending next year, which he said would help modernise the South Korean military's weapons systems and reduce its reliance on the United States.

"We face, as we both acknowledge, a dangerous security environment, but our alliance is stronger than ever," Hegseth said.

Hegseth said that he and Ahn agreed to demonstrate works to maintain and repair US warships in South Korea, a move that he said will harness South Korea's world-class shipbuilding capabilities and also "ensure our most lethal capabilities remain ready to respond to any crisis." Hegseth said the South Korea-US alliance is primarily aimed at coping with potential North Korean provocations but must also keep other regional threats in view.

"There's no doubt flexibility for regional contingencies is something we would take a look at, but we are focused on standing by our allies here and ensuring the threat of the DPRK is not a threat to the Republic of Korea and certainly continue to extend nuclear deter-



rence as we have before," he said.

DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — North Korea's official name — while the Republic of Korea is South Korea's formal name.

In recent years, the US and South Korea have been discussing how to integrate US nuclear weapons and South Korean conventional weapons in various contingencies. South Korea has no nuclear weapons and is under the US "nuclear umbrella" security commitment. Ahn denied speculation that South Korea could eventually seek its own nuclear weapons program or is pushing for the redeployment of US tactical weapons that were removed from South Korea in the 1990s. He stressed that Seoul remains committed to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

"Because we cannot have nuclear weapons, that's why a system integrating US nuclear capabilities and South Korea's conventional weapons, the CNI (conventional-nuclear integration) framework, has been established," he said.

Hegseth and Ahn did not issue a joint statement after the meeting, leaving the details of their agreements unclear. It's unusual for the two countries' defence ministerial talks to end without an immediate joint statement. But Hegseth said there was "no daylight or differences" between the two countries, only "a bigger deal which takes a little more time." (AP)

## Zohran Mamdani emerges as front-runner as NYC Mayoral race enters final lap



**NEW YORK, Nov 4:** New York City is all set to elect a new mayor on Tuesday as the mayoral race enters its final lap, with Indian-descent Zohran Kwame Mamdani emerging as the front-runner to take up the top political post in America's biggest city.

Mamdani, 34, born in Uganda and raised in New York City, is a New York State Assembly member and democratic socialist running for Mayor.

The Democratic nominee will face off against former New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, who is running as an independent candidate and the Republican nominee Curtis Sliva on the ballots.

Current New York City Mayor Eric Adams, whose administration has been plagued by scandals, dropped out of the mayoral race in September.

US President Donald Trump has warned voters that New York City will be a "complete and total economic and social disaster" and its "survival" will be at risk if Democratic candidate Zohran Mamdani wins the mayoral race, as he officially endorsed former governor Andrew Cuomo for the city's top post.

In a post on Truth Social on election eve on Monday, Trump also threatened that he will send only the minimum-required federal funds to New York City if Mamdani wins the election and becomes the mayor.

November 4 is election day across the US, with polls opening from 6 am to 9 pm. The early vot-

ing period, which commenced on October 25, ended on Sunday.

Mamdani, the son of renowned Indian filmmaker Mira Nair and Mahmood Mamdani, a Ugandan author of Indian ancestry, upset Cuomo in the Democratic primary race for New York City mayor and was declared victorious in June.

The Board of Elections has said that more than 735,000 people voted early in this election, which is about four times more than the number of ballots cast during the 2021 elections.

Mamdani has emerged as the front-runner in the NYC Mayoral election race and has promised to "lower costs and make life easier" for New Yorkers as the city gets "too expensive".

Mamdani has vowed that as Mayor, he will immediately freeze the rent for all stabilised tenants, and use every available resource to build the housing New Yorkers need and bring down the rent.

Promising fast, fare-free buses, his campaign said that as Mayor, he'll permanently eliminate the fare on every city bus — and make them faster by rapidly building priority lanes, expanding bus queue jump signals, and dedicated loading zones to keep double parkers out of the way.

Mamdani would also implement free childcare for every New Yorker aged 6 weeks to 5 years, ensuring high-quality programming for all families.

With food prices out of control, his campaign also promised that as Mayor, he would create a network of city-owned grocery stores focused on keeping prices low, not making a profit.

Mamdani has a plan to bring down the cost-of-living through city-owned grocery stores, universal childcare, and other bold proposals, and he knows exactly how to pay for it, too, the campaign said. (PTI)

## China opposes Trump's threat to attack Nigeria

**BEIJING, Nov 4:** China on Tuesday opposed US President Donald Trump's threat to carry out military action against Nigeria over the alleged persecution of Christians, as it backed the Nigerian government in leading its people to follow a development path in line with its national conditions. Trump on Saturday said if the Nigerian government continues to allow the killing of Christians, the US will immediately stop all aid and assistance to the West African country, and may go for military action to wipe out the Islamic terrorists.

Asked for her comments on Trump's threat, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told the media that the Nigerian Foreign Ministry issued a statement, stating that the US' claims did not reflect the current realities in Nigeria, and the government had remained committed to fighting terrorism, strengthening interfaith harmony, and protecting the lives and rights of all its people.

As a comprehensive strategic partner, China firmly supports the Nigerian government in leading its people to follow a development path in line with its national conditions, Mao said.

"China opposes interference by any country in the internal affairs of other nations under the pretext of religion or human rights and opposes the arbitrary use of sanctions and threats of force," she said.

On the reports that Venezuela is seeking missiles and drones following a dozen US strikes on the boats in the region on the suspicion that they carried drugs, Mao said China is opposed to the use of force in the name of fighting drug cartels.

China supports enhanced international cooperation in combating transnational crimes, but opposes the use of threats of using force in international relations, and actions that undermine peace and stability in Latin America and the Caribbean, she said. (PTI)

## UN secretary-general warns that war in Sudan is 'spiralling out of control'

**DUBAI, Nov 4:** The United Nations secretary-general warned on Tuesday that the war in Sudan is "spiralling out of control" after a paramilitary force seized the Darfur city of el-Fasher.

Speaking at a UN summit in Qatar, Antonio Guterres offered a stark warning about el-Fasher and called for an immediate ceasefire in the two-year conflict that's become one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

"Hundreds of thousands of civilians are trapped by this siege," Guterres said. "People are dying of malnutrition, disease and violence. And we are hearing continued reports of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights."

He added that there also were "credible reports of widespread executions since the Rapid Support Forces entered the city."

UN officials have warned of a rampage by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces after it took over the city of el-Fasher, reportedly killing more than 450 people in a hospital and carrying out ethnically targeted killings of civilians and sexual assaults.

The RSF has denied committing atrocities, but testimonies from those fleeing, online videos and satellite images offer an apocalyptic vision of the aftermath of their attack. The full scope of the violence remains unclear because communications are poor in the region.

The RSF besieged el-Fasher for 18 months, cutting off much of the food and other supplies needed by tens of thousands of people. Last week, the paramilitary group seized the city. (AP)

## 9 climbers, including 2 local guides, killed in separate avalanches in Nepal

**KATHMANDU, Nov 4:** At least nine climbers, including two Nepalese guides, have been killed in two separate avalanches in Nepal, officials said on Tuesday. Seven climbers were buried in an avalanche near Mt. Yalung Ri (6,920m) under Gaurishanker Rural Municipality at around 10 am on Monday while attempting to scale the peak, said Deputy Superintendent of Police Gyan Kumar Mahato.

A joint rescue mission have been mobilised to retrieve the bodies of the seven climbers, he said.

The deceased climbers include two Nepali citizens, two Italians identified as Paolo Cocco and Marco Di Marcello, a Canadian, a French, and a German national.

Five others, including three Nepalis and two French nationals, were injured and airlifted to hospitals in Kathmandu. Four more climbers with minor injuries

were also rescued from the site.

In a separate incident, two Italian climbers, Stefano Farronato and Alessandro Caputo, who had been missing after heavy snowfall since October 28, were found dead inside their tent at Camp I of Mt. Panbani (6,887m) in the Manaslu region.

Their bodies were recovered on Tuesday from an altitude of 5,242 metres, police said.

Another Italian climber, Velter Parallon, who was stranded with them, was rescued on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Nepal Tourism Board has issued a condolence message on the demise of the mountaineers in the Himalayas of Nepal.

"We are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of lives in the avalanche. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the families and friends of the seven victims in Yalung Ri mountain," the tourism board said in the message. (PTI)

## Indian Sikhs arrive in Pak to attend events related to Guru Nanak Dev's birth anniversary

**LAHORE, Nov 4:** About 2,100 Indian Sikh pilgrims entered Pakistan via Wagah border on Tuesday to attend events related to the 556th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, marking the first people-to-people contact between the two countries after the four-day conflict in May.

Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee President and Punjab Minorities Minister Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) chief Sajid Mahmood Chauhan and Additional Secretary Shrines Nasir Mushtaq received the Indian pilgrims at the Wagah check post.

Akal Takht leader Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj, Shrimoni Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee delegation led by Bibi Gurinder Kaur and Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee's Ravinder Singh Sweeta were among those who crossed the Wagah border into Pakistan.

The Pakistan government had issued 2,150 visas to Indian Sikhs to



attend Guru Nanak Dev's birth anniversary.

ETPB spokesperson Ghulam Mohyuddin told PTI that some 2,100 Sikhs arrived in Lahore via Wagah on Tuesday.

He said that after completing immigration and customs formalities,

the pilgrims departed for Gurdwara Janamasthan, Nankana Sahib, by special buses.

The main ceremony of Guru Nanak's birth anniversary will be held on Wednesday at Gurdwara Janamasthan, some 80 km from Lahore.

"All gurdwaras, including the Janamasthan and Kartarpur Sahi, have been beautifully decorated with lights. For medical assistance, teams from Rescue 1122 and the ETPB medical unit will accompany the pilgrims," Nasir Mushtaq said.

He added that foolproof security arrangements have been made at all entry points and surrounding areas. "Rangers, police, special forces, and the ETPB's own security wing have been engaged for the pilgrims' security," he said.

During their 10-day stay, the Indian Sikhs will also visit Gurdwara Panja Sahib Hasan Abdal, Gurdwara Sacha Sauda Ferozabad, and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur.

They will leave for their homeland on November 13. Tensions remain high between New Delhi and Islamabad after the four-day conflict in May following the Pahalgam terror attack. Since May, both countries have virtually cut off all contacts, and they have even placed a ban on the use of their airspace for each other. (PTI)

## Britain's Treasury chief prepares ground for tax-hiking budget

**LONDON, Nov 4:** UK Treasury chief Rachel Reeves signalled she will raise taxes in her budget this month, arguing that the economy is sicker than the government knew when it took office last year.

Reeves gave a highly unusual speech, three weeks before the Nov. 26 budget, to brace voters and financial markets for the likelihood she will break an election pledge not to increase income taxes or sales tax.

"If we are to build the future of Britain together, we will all have to contribute to that effort," she said, in a hint at broad tax increases. "Each of us must do our bit for the security of our country and the brightness of its future." Reeves cited interest payments on the UK's 2.6 trillion pound (USD 3.4 trillion) national debt and a lower-than-expected productivity assessment from the government's economic forecaster as factors behind her decisions.

"The productivity performance that we inherited from the last government is weaker than we first thought," Reeves said. "We're putting in more, we're getting out less."

On top of that, "the world has thrown even more challenges our way," including US President Donald Trump's tariffs, volatile supply chains and a rise in the cost of government borrowing, she said.

While many of the economic challenges are global, Reeves said Britain is especially exposed because of the high debt left by "years of economic mismanagement" under the Conservative Party that was in power for 14 years until 2024.

The British economy, the sixth-largest in the world, has underperformed its long-run average since the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, and the centre-left Labour Party government elected in July 2024 has struggled to deliver the economic growth it promised.

Inflation remains stubbornly high and growth sluggish, frustrating efforts to repair battered public services and ease the cost of living.

Critics say Reeves has made things worse by being overly downbeat and increasing taxes on businesses in last year's budget. (AP)

# Arunachal to host global conference on Dalai Lama in Tawang: CM

Historic December event to celebrate faith, culture and scholarship in the birthplace of Gyalwa Tsangyang Gyatso

**ITANAGAR, Nov 4:** Terming it a "historic moment", CM Khandu said that the event will unite faith, culture and scholarship in the birthplace of the revered spiritual figure.

"We are going to create history, and be part of it," Khandu said in a post on X, while currently on a visit to Tawang.

Highlighting the global significance of Tsangyang Gyatso, the Sixth Dalai Lama, known for his spiritual wisdom and celebrated poetic works, the chief minister stressed the importance of bringing his story to the world.

"The world knows little about His Holiness the sixth Dalai Lama... It is now our duty to let the world know about his life, his philosophy and his timeless words," Khandu said.

He said that the landmark conference is being organised under the guidance of His Eminence Ven



Tengyur Rinpoche and the state Department of Karmik and Adhyatmik Affairs (DoKAA).

Scholars from across India and

abroad are expected to attend and rediscover the enduring legacy of the spiritual luminary who was born in Tawang.

Describing the upcoming event as a proud moment for the region, he said, "A historic moment for Tawang, where faith, culture and scholarship unite."

During his Tawang tour, the chief minister also reviewed organisational activities of the BJP in the district. He held discussions with Tawang district BJP president Lhundup Chosang and representatives of the Lumla, Tawang and Jang mandal units, in the presence of Lumla MLA Tsering Lhamu and district in-charge Gungjum Haider.

Khandu added that the district unit is "fully geared up" for the upcoming events and engagements.

The international conference in December is expected to spotlight Arunachal Pradesh as a centre of Buddhist cultural heritage and academic excellence, marking a new chapter in global recognition for Tawang. (PTI)

## Guv extends greetings on Guru Nanak Jayanti

HT Bureau

**GUWAHATI, Nov 4:** Governor Lt General KT Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd), has extended his warm greetings to the people of the State on the auspicious occasion of Guru Nanak Jayanti. In his message, the Governor said that Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism, is revered across the world for his timeless teachings of spirituality, justice and compassion. His messages of love, unity and equality continue to illuminate human hearts and guide society towards harmony and righteousness. The Governor said that Guru Nanak Dev Ji's philosophy, enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib, inspires everyone to live with purity of mind, honesty in work and selfless service to humanity. His core principles, Naam Japna (remembrance of the Divine), Kirat Karni (honest living) and Vand Chakna (sharing and serving selflessly), remain eternal beacons for a life of virtue and moral strength. May this sacred occasion inspire all of us to follow the noble ideals of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and to build a society rooted in peace, equality and brotherhood, the Governor wished in his message.

## Free medical camp benefits 253 villagers

HT Correspondent

**DADAM, Nov 4:** In a heartwarming initiative, 36 Bn CRPF Khonsa in collaboration with Dr Aprajit Sandilya's Urovison Hospital and Dr Tumli Basar of General Hospital Khonsa,

TA-PHC staff, Dadam organised a free medical camp at Dadam, Tirap district.

The camp provided free medicines, check-ups, ECG and other medical services to around 253 villagers. The community expressed gratitude to 36 Bn CRPF, Dr Aprajit Sandilya, his team and Dr Tumli Basar for bringing quality healthcare to their doorstep.

## AWAZ seeks fair probe into Sainik school student's death

HT Correspondent

**ITANAGAR, Nov 4:** The Apatami Women Association Ziro (AWAZ) has demanded a fair and impartial investigation into the mysterious death of a student at Sainik School, Pasighat located at Niglok under Ruksin Circle in East Siang district.

In a press release, AWAZ expressed shock over the incident, stating, "We protest the mysterious death at a temple of learning, Sainik School Pasighat. We are deeply saddened and shocked at how a young, intelligent student was found dead under such suspicious circumstances."

AWAZ called for a free and fair investigation to ensure justice for the bereaved family. The association also demanded that school authorities be held accountable if negligence is found and sought their immediate suspension pending inquiry. "We will continue to fight until justice is served and the culprit is punished as per the law," the release added.

Meanwhile, East Siang Superintendent of Police Pankaj Lamba issued an update on the case, stating that on November 1, 2025, a complaint was received from Sainik School authorities regarding a missing cadet, whose body was later found within the school premises. Based on the complaint, Ruksin Police Station registered UD Case No 07/2025 under Section 194 BNS.

An inquest was conducted by the Executive Magistrate of Ruksin in the presence of independent witnesses, with proper photography and videography of the scene. The body was later sent to BPGH, Pasighat, for preservation and post-mortem examination, which was conducted on November 2 following the arrival of the deceased's father, Tadu Tani.

Later, an FIR was lodged by Tadu Tani, leading to the registration of Ruksin PS Case No 20/2025 under Sections 108/106(1)/3(5) BNS. The case is currently under investigation. SP Lamba assured that the East Siang District Police is committed to a fair, professional and impartial investigation, adhering strictly to legal procedures.

## HC gives two months for maintenance of Papu Nallah-Nirjuli road

HT Correspondent

**ITANAGAR, Nov 4:** The Gauhati High Court (Itanagar Permanent Bench, Naharlagun) has given the PWD (Highway) two months' time to complete maintenance work on the Papu Nallah-Nirjuli stretch of National Highway-415 Package-B, informed Itanagar Capital Complex Deputy Commissioner Toko Babu.

Speaking to the media on Monday afternoon at the DC office in Chandannagar, DC Babu said that earlier, the court had directed the PWD Highway and the executing agency to carry out the maintenance work, but despite repeated efforts, they failed to comply. On October 31, the High Court again issued directions for repairing and maintaining NH-415, Package-B from Papu Nallah to Nirjuli.

"Today, after the court's direction, I spoke with officers of the Highway department and they confirmed that maintenance work has begun. The entire stretch is to be completed as per the court's orders. A new firm has been assigned the task, as the previous contractor, Woodhill Shivam, failed to carry out the work," DC Babu said.

Earlier, the court had given the contractor one month to complete the maintenance, which remained incomplete. M/s Tama Fabrication Works has now been assigned the maintenance work for the Papu Nallah-Nirjuli stretch, which must be completed within 60 days. The court has also directed the department to file a status report on the progress by December 3 with the matter listed for hearing on December 5.

## NSCN issues diktat ahead of panchayat polls

HT Correspondent

**DIBRUGARH, Nov 4:** As the panchayat elections in Arunachal Pradesh draw near, the NSCN has once again interfered in the election process.

Intelligence agencies have reportedly obtained a document issued by the outfit directing villagers under Wakka, Pongchau, Khakam and Longchan circles in Longding district not to field candidates from any party other than "the ruling government and party."

The diktat, issued by self-styled Major General Shahkoi, warned that anyone violating the order

would face "strong action" and a fine of ₹ 20 lakh.

The directive has sparked strong reactions in the region, with the Congress taking up the matter with Governor Lt Gen (Retd) K T Parnaik, seeking his intervention to ensure free and fair elections.

Interference from militant outfits in the Tirap, Changlang and Longding (TCL) region is not new. In the past, militants from outside the area have been directly involved in Arunachal's electoral process, often leading to violence, including the assassination of sitting MLA Tirong Aboh and 10 of his family members and associates in May 2019.



The court further directed that the construction of the flyover and highway should strictly adhere to the terms of the agreement. The completion date for the highway and flyover has been extended to July 2026, DC Babu said.

A division bench passed the order while hearing Public Interest Litigation (PIL) No. 11/2024, filed in July 2024 in which senior advocate Dicky Pangang appeared for the petitioners.

DC Babu expressed concern over the slow pace of construction under Package B, which begins at Papu Nallah and ends at Nirjuli, causing immense inconvenience to

the people of the Itanagar Capital Region. "Despite several assurances from the state government, work continues at a snail's pace. I am equally worried about the progress of the flyover and highway construction. As an administrative officer, I have repeatedly inspected the work and urged the agency to increase workforce and machinery. Everyone is facing difficulties due to the poor road condition and damaged bypass and I am not satisfied with the progress. Nevertheless, we are pursuing the matter to fast-track the work of the highway and flyover construction," he said.

Authorities seize machinery and seal units in a major operation to curb illegal mining activities

## District administration cracks down on illegal stone crushers



**HT Correspondent**  
**KEYI PANYOR, Nov 4:** In a significant enforcement action, the Keyi Panyor District Administration on Monday carried out a coordinated crackdown on illegal stone crusher operations and unauthorised mineral extraction across multiple locations in the district. The operation, conducted on

November 3, was led by Beru Dulom, Assistant Mineral Development Officer (AMDO), with support from a 26-member police team headed by Inspector Token Dubi, OC, Yachuli Police Station.

Three stone crusher units—M/s NT LLP (Pitapool), M/s Meens Stone Crusher (Potin), and M/s D & L Enterprises (Potin)—were

found operating in violation of the Arunachal Pradesh Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 2012. The units were sealed for offenses including operating without a valid NOC, continuing operations after permit expiry and illegal extraction and transportation of minor minerals.

Officials also seized a large quantity of machinery from the sites, including 13 dumper trucks, 3 backhoe loaders, 5 excavators and 1 loader. Roadworthy vehicles were moved to Yazab Police Station for custody, while defunct machinery was sealed on-site.

The administration followed all legal procedures during the operation, issuing seizure memos, recording photographic and video evidence, immobilising machinery, and serving show-cause notices to violators with a seven-day response period.

District authorities stated that the action is part of an ongoing effort to curb illegal mining activities and protect the district's mineral resources, adding that similar enforcement drives will continue in the coming weeks.

## Training for Census 2027 enumerators begins

HT Correspondent

**PASIGHAT, Nov 4:** The Census 2027 process has begun, with a three-day training programme (Nov 4-7) for enumerators and supervisors for the pre-test of houselisting operations in selected wards (Ward 4 and 7) of Pasighat Municipal Council, East Siang District, launched at the Pasighat Smart City Conference Hall.

Census Charge Officer cum i/c MEO Dr Manjuli Komut emphasised the importance of conducting an accurate population census for development planning and policy-making. The pre-test of houselisting operations will be conducted from November 10 to November 30, 2025, in the selected areas.

Deputy Director, Census Operations, Arunachal Pradesh, Utpal Sharma, serving as master trainer, highlighted that Census 2027 will be conducted entirely in digital mode. Data collection from the field will be carried out using specially designed mobile apps and the entire process will be managed and monitored through the Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS) portal. Residents also have the option to self-enumerate via the Self-Enumeration Portal, which has been open from November 1 to November 7, 2025. Self-enumeration entries will be verified by enumerators during field visits from November 10 to 30.

## Spear Corps GoC reviews operations ahead of tri-services exercise

**ITANAGAR, Nov 4:** The General Officer Commanding (GoC) of Spear Corps Lt Gen Abhijit S Pendharkar on Tuesday visited the forward areas of Arunachal Pradesh to inspect ongoing Op Chaukas activities and readiness levels along India's Eastern borders, a defence statement said.

The high-level visit comes ahead of Exercise 'Poorvi Prachand Prahar', a major upcoming tri-service military drill designed to showcase integrated combat capabilities in the difficult terrain of the Eastern Himalayas, it said. (PTI)

## MLA Techi Kaso lays foundation for link road, inaugurates school



HT Correspondent

**ITANAGAR, Nov 4:** Capital Complex MLA and Urban Affairs Minister's Advisor Techi Kaso on Tuesday laid the foundation stone for the construction of a link road and inaugurated an RCC building block for Government Upper Primary School (GUPS), C Sector in Ward No-10 amid a large gathering.

Addressing the function at GUPS C Sector, Kaso said that the foundation stone was laid in response to public demand to connect Upper C Sector, especially the area near Circuit House, directly to NH-415 via Lower C Sector. The link road, over 1 km long, will allow residents of Upper C Sector to reach NH-415 within minutes without hindrances.

Regarding the new RCC building block, Kaso stated it would meet the school's current needs. The old infrastructure, built in the late 1970s was in poor condition. While this block has been constructed by PWD, another RCC block is in progress, which will further improve the school's facilities. Kaso expressed confidence that, with the new infrastructure, GUPS C Sector could eventually be upgraded to a secondary school.

Highlighting his priority on the education sector, Kaso noted that permanent and RCC infrastructure has either been completed or is in progress in 11 government schools in the Capital Complex over the last two years and more such projects are planned. He appealed to parents, school authorities, SMCs and students to protect the new infrastructure, which is expected to last for decades.

Kaso emphasised the importance of education, calling it the key to knowledge and human resource development and urged teachers, guardians and parents to support the government in building skilled citizens for nation-building. He assured that all required support would be provided for the all-round development of the Capital Complex and the state.

Itanagar Capital Complex Deputy Commissioner Toko Babu and IMC Corporator Yukar Yaro thanked the public for their cooperation and support for the progress of education in the state. Corporator Yaro added that work on the link road is ongoing and expressed hope for timely completion of the new RCC building with quality construction.

The event was attended by GUPS SMC Chairman Hania Tara Taniu, IMC corporators from other wards, local ward members, leaders, parents, students and general public, who participated in the foundation-laying ceremony of the link road and the inauguration of the school building.

## Workshop aims to enhance artisan skills and promote local handicrafts for national and global markets East Siang DC launches cane and bamboo crafts workshop



**HT Correspondent**  
**PASIGHAT, Nov 4:** DC East Siang Sonalika Jiwani inaugurated a Design & Technology Development Workshop (DDW) on Cane and Bamboo Crafts, organised for artisans of East Siang under the comprehensive handicraft cluster development initiative (CHCD Scheme) at the ADTH Office. The

workshop, organised by the Department of Industries under the aegis of the Ministry of Textiles, GoI, aims to upgrade artisan skills, promote innovative designs and align handicraft products with national and international demands.

Addressing the inaugural session, the DC urged trainee artisans

to take up self-employment ventures in the handicraft sector for economic empowerment, noting the immense potential of local handicraft products. She stressed producing local products with global quality and advised artisans to identify market demands and gaps. Informing about the upcoming Entrepreneurs Summit/Meet,

tentatively scheduled in Pasighat in January, she encouraged budding entrepreneurs and artisans keen to start business ventures to participate. The DC also urged artisans to make the most of the workshop under expert guidance.

Assistant Director Industries (ADI) Anima Gammeng briefed participants on the objectives of the skill development training under CHCD. During the two-month-long training at DIC, Pasighat, 20 artisans of East Siang will receive guidance from empanelled designer Shanat K Pegu and master craftsman Pokrim Mitkong. She emphasised dedication and punctuality to maximise benefits from the training.

ADTH Libang Perme noted that the initiative will help preserve and promote the dying art of traditional craftsmanship. AD (Sericulture) S Talom highlighted the scope for income generation through handicrafts, while EO Industries Upendra Prasad also addressed the participants.

## Search for missing porter enters third phase

HT Correspondent

**ANINI, Nov 4:** The search operation to locate 29-year-old porter Jamok Pansa, missing for over a month in the high-altitude Kangri Camp area of Dibang Valley, has entered its third phase but was again called off due to extreme weather conditions.

The latest team, led by Aito Miwu, set out from Anini earlier this week to comb the designated search zone but had to return after heavy snowfall and poor visibility made progress impossible. The second phase on October 26 was similarly abandoned due to incessant rain, snow and difficult terrain.

The rescue efforts have been jointly carried out by the District Administration, Indian Army, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Arunachal Pradesh Police, local porters and volunteers. Deputy Commissioner Bekir Nyorak appreciated the dedication and courage of all personnel involved, noting that the terrain and weather have posed significant challenges.

# 'The NDA under PM's leadership could only lead Bihar to all-around development' Pak terrorists to get 'goli ka jawab goley se' if they attack India again: Shah

**DARBHANGA/MOTIHARI/BETIAH, Nov 4:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday warned Pakistan-sponsored terrorists to refrain from further attacking India, asserting that if they repeat the mistake, "goli ka jawab goley se diya jayega" (they will face cannons for bullets).

Explosives manufactured in Bihar's proposed defence corridor will be used against these terrorists, he said.

"Terrorists from Pakistan attacked our citizens in Pahalgam. They wiped off Sindoor from the foreheads of our mothers and sisters. Prime Minister Narendra Modi avenged it by launching Operation Sindoor within 20 days. The Indian Army neutralised the terrorists on Pakistan's land," Shah said at a poll rally in Bihar.

He also said, "The PM is setting up a Defence Corridor in Bihar. If Pakistan-sponsored terrorists repeat their mistake, 'goli ka jawab goley se diya jayega' (they will face cannons for bullets)."

The cannons to be used against terrorists will be made in Bihar, Shah said. "Unlike the previous Congress regime, the government under Modi's leadership is committed to the safety and security of the nation," he alleged.

Shah launched a blistering attack on RJD supreme Lalu Prasad and his son Tejashwi Yadav for "raising slogans in the praise of late Mohammad Shahabuddin", who was accused of unleashing terror in Siwan during the RJD's 15-year rule in Bihar.

"Lalu and his party raise slogans like 'Shahabuddin amar rahe', dream of 'jungle raj' but Bihar people won't allow these," he said.

Addressing back-to-back rallies in Darbhanga, Motihari and Bettiah, Shah urged voters in Bihar to press the EVM button with the BJP's poll symbol 'lotus' to prevent the return of 'jungle raj' during the RJD rule that had "devastated" the state.

Champaran is witness to "how Bihar's land remained blood-



soaked during the RJD's 'jungle raj'," he said. Shah also hit out at Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, for organising the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar.

"I dare Rahul Gandhi to organise as many yatras as he can to protect infiltrators. We will drive out illegal immigrants," he claimed. Shah promised that if the NDA

6 voting day," the union minister alleged.

Shah claimed that the NDA under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership could only lead Bihar to all-around development.

"Altogether, ₹ 26,000 crore will be spent to harness the Koshi river water to irrigate 'Mithilanchal' and prevent floods in the area if the NDA is voted to power in Bihar...Water of the Ganga, Koshi and Gandak rivers will be utilised for irrigation and to prevent deluge in the state," the former BJP president said. If the NDA retains power in Bihar, people from Mithila, Koshi, and Tirhut will not be required to go to Patna or Delhi for treatment, as they will get quality medical facilities at AIIMS-Darbhanga, he said.

Shah claimed, "As many as 3.60 cr people have been covered with free health insurance up to ₹ 5 lakh crore, while the IT park at Darbhanga will employ the youth."

He slammed the RJD for its complaint to the Election Commis-

sion, seeking a pause on the ₹ 10,000 benefit for 'Jeevika Didis', alleging that "three generations of Lalu won't be able to snatch funds transferred" to the self-help groups.

Reiterating that the RJD-Congress insulted 'Chhathi Maiya', the prime minister and his mother, Shah said people of Bihar will "avenge the insult by showing the exit door to such political parties" in the upcoming elections.

"Bihar people never forgive those who insult 'Chhathi Maiya'. The RJD-Congress will be wiped out in the Bihar polls," Shah claimed.

If NDA retains power in Bihar, each district will get one engineering, one medical college in the next five years, he promised.

Asserting that real development could take place only under the NDA, he said, "As many as 423 companies inked pacts for ₹ 1.80 lakh crore investment in Bihar during the business summit. (PTI)

## PM wants youth to remain busy making social media reels: Rahul

**AURANGABAD, Nov 4:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants the youth to remain busy in making social media reels, so that they stay distracted from pressing problems about education, health and employment.

Addressing back-to-back rallies in Bihar's Aurangabad and Gayaji, Gandhi charged the PM with promoting "addiction" to social media.

"Modi wants you to become addicted to making reels, Instagram, Facebook... This is the new high ('nasha') of the 21st century. He wants such a scenario because this would ensure that the youth remain distracted, and do not hold his government accountable for their problems about education, health and employment," he alleged.

Gandhi also claimed that Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah "were indulging in 'vote chori' (vote theft) in Bihar, as they know the NDA would not win the assembly polls".

The former Congress president also rebutted repeated assertions by the BJP and other NDA leaders that his party, in alliance with the RJD, would bring back "jungle raj" if voted to power in Bihar, and alleged that the PM was promoting lawlessness through vote theft.

"Whenever Modi comes here, he speaks about 'jungle raj'. I will tell you what that is. 'Jungle raj' has been brought in Delhi, by Modi, who is enabling vote theft. He has done so in Maharashtra and Haryana. He wants to do the same in Bihar. But, I am sure that the people of Bihar will defeat his designs," Gandhi asserted.

"The INDIA bloc, if voted to power in Bihar, will be a government of the extremely backward, socially marginalised and Dalits," the Rae Bareilly MP said.

He said it would transform the state into a manufacturing hub, ensure labels of 'made-in-Bihar' on clothes and mobile phones, "so that even China is forced to sit up and take note".

Gandhi also promised to revive the ancient glory of Bihar by setting up a state-of-the-art university at Nalanda, if the opposition bloc came to power. (PTI)

## Polling in Maha municipal councils, nagar panchayats on Dec 2

**MUMBAI, Nov 4:** Elections in 246 municipal councils and 42 nagar panchayats in Maharashtra will take place on December 2 and votes will be counted on December 3. State Election Commissioner Dinesh Waghmare said on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference in Mumbai, Waghmare did not declare the election schedule for 29 municipal corporations, 32 zilla parishads, and 336 panchayat samitis where polls are due.

Polling will be held through EVMs to elect 6,859 members and 288 presidents in 246 municipal councils and 42 nagar panchayats on December 2, and counting of votes will be held on December 3, he said.

With the announcement of the poll schedule, the model code of conduct has come into force in the respective municipal councils and nagar panchayats.

The number of eligible voters is 1.7 crore, including 53,79,931 men, 53,22,870 women, and 775 others. There will be 13,355 polling centres, and the total number of wards is 3,820.

The 6,859 members to be elected include 3,492 seats reserved for women, 895 for Scheduled Castes, 338 for Scheduled Tribes, and 1,821 for OBCs.

Waghmare said the State Election Commission has launched a dedicated website <https://mahaselec.in> for online submission of nomination forms and affidavits, while another portal <https://mahasecvoterlist.in> will allow voters to check their names and polling stations.

He said 13,726 EVM control units and 27,452 ballot units have

been arranged for conducting polls.

The commission has directed all district collectors and civic chiefs to intensify voter awareness campaigns through traditional and digital media to improve the voter turnout.

About 66,775 personnel, including 288 returning officers and their assistants, will be deployed for poll duties.

The code of conduct will remain effective until the completion of the election process, prohibiting any policy decisions or announcements that may influence voters in these areas.

The division wise division of the number of nagar parishads and nagar panchayats going to polls are: Konkan (27), Nashik (49), Pune (60), Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (52), Amravati (45), and Nagpur (55).

The last day to file nominations is November 17, and scrutiny will be conducted on November 18, Waghmare said. November 21 is the deadline to withdraw nominations. Election symbols and the list of candidates will be published on November 26.

The polling will be held as per the cut-off date of July 1, 2025, which may be considered for extension, Waghmare said.

The poll-bound local bodies include municipal councils with 20 to 75 members each and nagar panchayats (town councils) with up to 17 members each.

"The cut-off date of the electoral rolls is July 1, 2025. We have asked for the voter roll till October 15 from the ECI, and if we get the list, we will consider extending the cut-off date," the State Election Commissioner said. (PTI)

## Crimes against women 'skyrocketed uncontrollably' under BJP-JD(U) rule in Bihar: Cong

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** The Congress on Tuesday alleged that crimes against women have "skyrocketed uncontrollably" under the BJP-JD(U) rule in Bihar and posed questions to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the alleged "neglect" of women's safety, health, and dignity in the last 20 years.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge slammed the BJP-JD(U) over the security situation for women and asserted that the Mahagathbandhan is fully committed to their empowerment and economic upliftment.

Kharge said the Congress' promises are not just to garner votes during elections or right before them, but rather, they are the same promises that the party will fulfil.

Congress general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, alleged that for the 20 years under the BJP-JD(U) government in Bihar, there has been a "consistent neglect" of women's safety, health, and dignity.

The prime minister didn't remember to check on Bihar's women for an entire decade, and now, at election time, a sham digital outreach is being staged for votes, Ramesh said.

In a post in Hindi on X, Kharge said, "The BJP-JDU government in Bihar has been in power for 20 years. If even today, Modi ji has to

say that in Bihar 'daughters-in-law and daughters are not safe', then this is his self-admission that in 20 years, they have not made Bihar safe!"

He alleged that the situation of women and children in the state is extremely alarming.

Citing data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), Kharge claimed that 70 per cent of children in the state were afflicted with anaemia and 40 per cent were victims of malnutrition. Only 11 per cent of infants receive adequate nutrition, he said.

The Mahagathbandhan is fully committed to the empowerment and economic upliftment of half the population, he said, referring to women.

Listing the promises made to women by the Mahagathbandhan, Kharge said they will be given an assistance of ₹ 2,500 per month if the opposition alliance comes to power.

A monthly pension of ₹ 1,500-₹ 3,000 would be given to the elderly, widows, and disabled, while Jeevika Didis will be given official status, he said.

"Our promises are not just to garner votes during elections or right before them, but rather, they are the same promises that we will fulfil and we have already fulfilled them in Congress-ruled states," he said. (PTI)

## SC to hear in open court NHA's plea for review of verdict on compensation to farmers

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** In a significant development, the Supreme Court has agreed to hear in open court a plea of the National Highway Authority of India seeking review of its verdict, which ruled that the apex court's 2019 decision for the grant of compensation with interest to farmers whose land was acquired under the NHA Act would apply retrospectively.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan issued notice on the review plea and listed the matter for open court hearing on November 11. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the NHA, had recently told the bench that the matter will have wide implications of around ₹ 32,000 crore and not ₹ 100 crore as was stated earlier in the petition.

"Issue notice, returnable on November 11, 2025, at 3 PM," the bench ordered on Tuesday.

On February 4, the top court, while rejecting NHA's plea, ruled that its 2019 decision allowing the grant of compensation and interest to farmers, whose land was acquired under the NHA Act, would apply retrospectively.

The NHA had sought the applicability of its September 19, 2019 judgment prospectively, thereby precluding the reopening of cases where land acquisition proceedings had already been completed and the determination of com-

penensation attained finality.

The bench had said, "We find no merit in the contentions raised by the applicant, NHA. We reaffirm the principles established in Tarsem Singh (2019 decision) regarding the beneficial nature of granting 'solatium' and 'interest' while emphasising the need to avoid creating unjust classifications lacking intelligible differentia. Consequently, we deem it appropriate to dismiss the present miscellaneous application."

The top court had said that in its 2019 decision that Section 3J of the NHA Act, by excluding the applicability of the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 and thereby denying solatium and interest for lands acquired under the NHA Act, was violative of Article 14 of the Constitution. "Regardless, the prayer in the instant application expressly seeks clarification that the decision in Tarsem Singh should be deemed to operate prospectively only."

"However, in our considered view, granting such a clarification would effectively nullify the very relief that Tarsem Singh intended to provide, as the prospective operation of it would restore the state of affairs to the same position as it was before the decision was rendered," the bench had said in February.

Referring to the 2019 decision, which held

## BJP govt will fall if just one eligible voter removed from list in Bengal: Mamata

**KOLKATA, Nov 4:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday asserted that the fall of the BJP-led government at the Centre would be inevitable if a single eligible voter was omitted from the rolls, and accused the saffron party and the EC of using the SIR as a political tool to intimidate voters before the 2026 assembly polls.

Leading a massive anti-SIR rally in Kolkata, Banerjee charged the Election Commission (EC) of selectively conducting the revision drive in opposition-ruled states while sparing BJP-ruled ones.

"The EC is conducting SIR in states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, but not in BJP-ruled Assam," the TMC chief alleged.

In these four states, the assembly elections are due next year.

"The Election Commission must also reply why there is no SIR in BJP-ruled Assam, Tripura and other northeastern states," she demanded, calling it "clear discrimination aimed at helping the ruling party at the Centre."

The last SIR in West Bengal in 2002 took at least two years to be completed, she said, and wondered why the EC is "in a hurry" to finish it this time in just a month.

Banerjee branded the current exercise "hurried and politically motivated". "If a single eligible voter is removed from the electoral rolls, we will ensure the fall of this BJP government," Banerjee declared to

thunderous applause from her supporters. Challenging the BJP's repeated claims of "illegal voters" in West Bengal, Banerjee asked, "How many Rohingyas or Bangladeshis were found in Bihar after the SIR there?"

She asserted that just speaking in Bengali doesn't make someone a Bangladeshi, accusing the saffron party of spreading fake news and communal propaganda to malign Bengalis. Taking a swipe at the saffron party, the TMC supreme said, "The BJP does not want to win on the basis of votes, but on the strength of notes. If this electoral rolls is fake, then how did the BJP win previous elections held on the basis of the same list?" (PTI)

## Nadda uses acronym 'HIRA' to highlight growth in Bihar under NDA rule

**PATNA, Nov 4:** BJP president Jagat Prakash Nadda on Tuesday used the acronym 'HIRA', which means diamond in Hindi, to highlight the growth witnessed in Bihar under the NDA rule, especially in road, rail, air and internet connectivity.

The union minister, who addressed a rally in Bhojpur district, on the final day of campaign for the first phase of assembly polls in the state, also alleged that the RJD, the main opposition party, stood for 'rangdari' (extortion), 'jungle raj' (lawlessness) and 'dadagiri' (intimidation).

"The people of Bihar might recall the 'Lathi tel pilawan' rally called by RJD president Lalu Prasad in his heyday. It was a clear signal to his detractors that they were better off cowering inside their homes. The state must beware of the party, which is trying to lure voters through promises but in essence remains the same, wearing new clothes", alleged Nadda. He urged voters to "shower blessings on the NDA and ensure that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar retains power".

"The state has discovered 'HIRA' under the BJP-led coalition. H stands for highways, I for internet, R for Railways and A for airports. You all can vouch for the improvement on these counts in the last 20 years", the BJP president said. Nadda also claimed that the Narendra Modi government at the Centre was working towards rapid poverty alleviation, with "over three crore people in Bihar alone having been pulled out of the clutches of deprivation". (PTI)

## Doctors report 60% rise in eye problems as toxic smog engulfs Delhi

**Delhi's air quality, which has remained in the 'severe' category since Diwali**

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** A thick blanket of smog and toxic air hanging over Delhi has triggered a sharp rise in eye-related ailments like allergies, dryness, burning sensations, and excessive watering, affecting both adults and children, according to the city's doctors.

With the air quality plunging to the severe category after Diwali, ophthalmologists say they have seen a 60 per cent surge in such cases, blaming the toxic cocktail of smoke, particulate matter, and chemical residues from fire-cracker burning. The dangerously high level of pollution, they warned, was not only harmful for the lungs, but for the eyes as well.

Dr Ikeda Lal, Senior Cornea, Cataract and Refractive Surgery Specialist at Delhi Eye Centre and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said, "Every year after Diwali, we brace for a rise in eye complaints. The number of patients complaining of itching, redness, and irritation has gone up by almost 50-60 per cent."

"We are seeing patients with severe eye allergies, and those who already have dry eyes are experiencing much more discomfort than usual. The combination of pollution, dust, and chemical exposure is proving extremely harmful for the ocular surface," Lal said. Delhi's air quality, which has remained in the "severe" category since Diwali, has left citizens gasping. Experts warn that prolonged exposure to such toxic air can lead to chronic eye conditions, particularly among people who spend long hours outdoors, such as traffic police, delivery agents, and school children.

Dr Rajesh Sinha, Professor of Ophthalmology at the RP Centre in AIIMS, said in the last few days, the number of patients suffering from dryness, burning, and watery eyes has increased by around 50 per cent.

"Many of them come in complaining that their eyes feel gritty or heavy, which are symptoms typical of pollution-induced ocular allergy. Even healthy individuals are experiencing irritation due to the poor air quality," he said.

"Tiny particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10) suspended in the air can settle on the surface of the eyes, damaging the tear film and causing inflammation. If preventive measures are ignored, the constant irritation can eventually lead to infections or temporary blurring of vision. For those already prone to allergies or dry eye disease, the



risk is much higher," Sinha said.

The eyes, being directly exposed to the environment, are among the first organs to suffer when pollution levels soar. Pollutants like nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and carbon particles react with the moisture in the eyes, leading to chemical irritation and inflammation. Lal further said the eyes have a delicate surface and depend on a healthy tear film for comfort and clarity of vision. Pollution disturbs this balance, making the eyes dry, red, and prone to infection. Even short exposure to smog can make eyes sting, itch, or water.

Contact lens wearers and makeup users are particularly vulnerable, as tiny particles trapped between the lens and the cornea can worsen inflammation, Lal said.

People should avoid contact lenses and heavy eye makeup during such high-pollution days and instead, use lubricating eye drops, wear protective glasses, and wash their eyes frequently with clean water to reduce the impact of pollution, Lal said.

Doctors also suggested wearing protective eyewear when stepping outdoors, limiting outdoor activity during peak smog hours, and using air purifiers indoors to reduce exposure to irritant particles.

Those experiencing persistent redness, pain, or blurred vision should consult an ophthalmologist promptly rather than self-medicating, they said.

Sinha said repeated exposure to high pollution levels can lead to chronic inflammation and progressive damage to the ocular surface, affecting both comfort and long-term vision.

"Protecting your eyes is just as important as protecting your lungs during this season. Even small steps like wearing glasses and using lubricating drops can make a big difference," Sinha said.

According to doctors, children's eyes are more sensitive, and since they tend to spend more time outdoors, the risk of allergic conjunctivitis and infections increases.

The elderly, on the other hand, often experience reduced tear production, which makes their eyes drier and more susceptible to irritation. Older adults should stay indoors during peak pollution hours to ensure their eyes remain well-lubricated, they said.

The doctors cautioned that ignoring eye irritation or delaying treatment can lead to long-term damage to the cornea and tear glands. (PTI)

## Union Minister reviews implementation of central schemes in Manipur

**IMPHAL, Nov 4:** Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Government of India, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, immediately on arrival at Imphal on Monday, reviewed various central schemes and 10% Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) during a meeting at the Conference Hall, Old Secretariat, Manipur, an official report said.

The Union Minister was also briefed on the details of "Fund Released by MHA for Relief Operation & Resettlement / Rehabilitation of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons)".

During the meeting, the Union Minister of State reviewed various programmes and policies of Central Ministries, departments, organisations (including MHA), for ensuring speedy implementation of flagship and other programs, the report also said.

Bandi Sanjay Kumar assessed the status of different programmes being implemented by various Departments under the State Government in the following sectors: Health, Education, Transport and Connectivity, Power, Tourism, Rural Development, Housing, Agriculture and Food Processing, Handloom, Handicrafts & Textiles among others.

The Minister was briefed on "Action Plans" on improving the above sectors in a time bound manner.

On a query about the number of tourists coming to the State, he was informed that the number of tourists visiting the State has drastically decreased from over 1,79,000 (1,67,000 domestic and 12,000 foreign) in 2019-20 to approximately 17,000 (15,700 domestic and 1,300 foreign) in 2024-25.

Though the decrease is primarily due to civil unrest in the State, another factor deterring tourists from visiting the State is due to exorbitant air fare, the report further said.

Anurag Bajpai, PCCF/ Addition Chief Sec-

### Zoramthanga launches attack on ZPM over governance

**AIZAWL, Nov 4:** Mizo National Front (MNF) president Zoramthanga on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) government headed by Chief Minister Lalduhoma, claiming that the patriotic youths have become sick of its rule. He said that the ZPM government is undergoing a "test" and is under a scanner to find out whether it is good or bad.

"The patriotic young people are bored with the ZPM government. By destiny, the MNF lost the 2023 assembly polls and the ZPM won. It is just an experimental government. It begins its rule with wearing sackcloth, a Biblical sign of repentance, which is followed by amending the prohibition law," the former chief minister said while addressing a political training in south Mizoram's Lunglei district.

"The ZPM has sold our lands, and they are trying to dispose of our assets. It illegally awards contracts. Roads are in such bad condition that non-tribal travellers can't find roads while travelling in vehicles. The number of lies ZPM has told is innumerable," the former rebel leader turned politician said. Zoramthanga said that the MNF, when it returns to power, will reform and erase all the bad things that have been done by the ZPM.

Although the government levied cess for road construction, roads have not been improved and repaired, he said. "The ZPM is being scanned by voters in all parts of the state. It will hardly win assembly seats. We should make efforts to strengthen our party as we are nearing MNF's year of victory," Zoramthanga said. (PTI)

## 30 civil defence officers from Nagaland, Manipur undergo master trainers course in Dimapur



**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, Nov 4:** A total of 30 civil defence officers - 20 from Nagaland and 10 from Manipur - successfully completed the 21-day civil defence master trainers course at Central Training Institute, Home Guards, Civil Defence and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Toluvi, Dimapur, on Tuesday.

The training, which commenced

on October 10, was held under the memorandum of understanding signed between the directorate general of fire services, civil defence & home guards, ministry of home affairs, and the directorate of civil defence, home guards & SDRF, Nagaland.

The master trainers programme on capacity building and preparedness included sessions on emergency communication systems, air

raid warning systems, collapsed structure search and rescue, reconnaissance and damage assessment, emergency methods of rescue, medical first response, and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear response.

Delivering the valedictory address, Medozhalie Peinyu, deputy commandant general, home guards, civil defence & SDRF, Nagaland, commended

responsible organisation, it must exercise honesty and integrity in addressing such a grave matter", while adding, "otherwise, one is compelled to ask if not the Kukis, then who else raised the slogans 'We want Kuki Land' and 'We demand Kuki Land'?"

The NPO then said it does not blame the entire Kuki-Zo community. "In fact, we urged the concerned community-based civil society organisations to identify and present the culprits to our office", the NPO added. The NPO also said the statement issued by CoTU further confirmed that the incident was a deliberate and calculated attempt to insult and dishonour the "living legendary leader" of the Nagas.

Therefore, the NPO said that in order to protect the dignity, integrity, and safety of the Naga people, it "shall take a drastic course of action by completely halting all forms of economic supply passing towards Kangpokpi areas, within 48 hours. (NNN)

## NPO warns of supply halt to Kangpokpi over poster desecration

**IMPHAL, Nov 4:** The Naga People's Organisation (NPO), while reacting Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU) advisory statement, said on Monday that it "shall take a drastic course of action by completely halting all forms of economic supply passing towards Kangpokpi areas, within 48 hours i.e from the midnight of November 5.

The NPO said that the Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU) advisory statement issued in response to the Naga People's Organisation (NPO) press release dated October 31, 2025, which condemned and served an ultimatum regarding the incidents of October 29 and October 30 at Daili village near Kangpokpi, "where the poster of the most respected Naga living legend, Eno Th Muivah, was desecrated twice and a huge firecracker was detonated, causing panic among the residents which is deeply regrettable".

The NPO said, "If CoTU truly considers itself a re-

## NMC sanctions 50 more MBBS seats for Tripura Medical College, Ambedkar hospital

**AGARTALA, Nov 4:** Chief Minister Manik Saha on Tuesday said the National Medical Commission (NMC) has sanctioned 50 additional MBBS seats for Tripura Medical College (TMC) and Dr B R Ambedkar Memorial Teaching Hospital, Agartala.

With the latest approval, the total intake capacity at TMC has increased from 100 to 150 seats, raising the overall number of MBBS seats in the state to 450.

"This marks a major step forward in Tripura's efforts to expand medical education and improve healthcare access," Saha said in a Facebook post on Tuesday.

He said that over the past three years, Tripura has achieved an addition of 225 MBBS seats, reflect-



ing the state government's sustained commitment to strengthening its health and education infrastructure.

Expressing gratitude, Saha thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Health Minister J P Nadda for their continued sup-

port in developing Tripura's healthcare sector.

"This achievement is a remarkable milestone in our ongoing mission to enhance medical education and ensure better healthcare services for the people of Tripura," Saha said. (PTI)

## 4 militants killed in gun-battle with security forces in Manipur's Churachandpur

**IMPHAL/CHURACHANDPUR, Nov 4:** At least four militants, belonging to a banned outfit, were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Manipur's Churachandpur district on Tuesday morning, police said.

Based on inputs about the presence of armed cadres belonging to the proscribed United Kuki National Army (UKNA), an operation was launched around 5.30 am at Khanpi village under Henglep subdivision in the district, a senior officer said.

UKNA is not a signatory to the Suspension of Operations pact signed between the Centre, the state government and the Kuki and Zomi militant groups.

During the operation, a fierce gunfight broke out between army personnel and the militants, the officer said.

"At least four militants were killed during the exchange of fire while several others managed to flee the spot," the officer said, adding that the identities of the deceased are yet to be established.

The militants were identified as Alex Zammaunlal Simte, Thangminlal Haokip, Ginlenjohn Haokip and Thanglenlal Kipgen.



A defence statement said that in the early hours of November 4, terrorists resorted to unprovoked firing on the Army column during an intelligence-based operation at Khanpi village, approximately 80 km west of Churachandpur.

In the ensuing firefight between security forces and armed cadres of UKNA, a non-SOO insurgent group, "four cadres of the terrorist group were neutralised", it said.

"This operation follows recent atrocities by UKNA cadres, including the killing of a village chief, intimidation of locals and attempts to

disrupt peace and stability in the region. Successful neutralisation of these terrorists highlights the Indian Army's and Assam Rifles' commitment to protecting innocent civilians, mitigating all threats and ensuring peace and security in Manipur," it said.

Meanwhile, Kuki civil society organisations condemned the killing of four militants in the gunfight and called for a total shutdown in Churachandpur district to "mourn the deaths" on the day of the funeral of the militants, which is yet to be decided. (PTI)

## Tourist footfalls decrease to 17,000 in FY25 in Manipur amid ethnic strife

**IMPHAL, Nov 4:** Tourist footfalls have plummeted in Manipur to nearly 17,000 in 2024-25 from 1.79 lakh in 2019-20, amid ethnic violence between Meiteis and the Kuki-Zo community continuing for more than two years, a statement said.

Not only the unrest in the state, but also the exorbitant airfare is a factor responsible for the decline in the number of travellers in the state, it said.

During a meeting with Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, who arrived in Imphal on Monday and reviewed various central schemes, the state government officials raised the issue of high airfare.

On a query, Kumar was informed that "the number of tourists visiting the state has drastically decreased from over 1,79,000 (1,67,000 domestic and 12,000 foreign) in 2019-20 to approximately 17,000 (15,700 domestic and 1,300 foreign) in 2024-25", the statement said.

The state officials also urged the central minister to take up the issue with the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

"The decrease in tourist footfalls is primarily due to civil unrest in the state, while another factor deterring travellers from visiting the state is due to high airfare", the statement said.

The union minister was also briefed on the details of "funds released by the Ministry of Home Affairs for relief operation and resettlement/rehabilitation of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons)", it said.

During the meeting, Kumar reviewed various programmes and policies of central ministries, departments and organisations for ensuring the speedy implementation of various programmes.

Kumar also assessed the status of different programmes being implemented by the departments under the state government. (PTI)



**OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT  
2ND BN, INDO-TIBETAN BORDER POLICE  
MHA (GOVT. OF INDIA)  
BABELI CAMP, DISTT-KULLU (HP)  
CONTROL ROOM/FAX NO-01902-230631**

### SHOW CAUSE NOTICE

Whereas, No. 250020059 Constable (General Duty) [Recruit] Akash, S/o Sh. Sahajan of 2nd Battalion, ITB Police, has been absent from RTC Kimin, ITB Police, with effect from 06.05.2025 (FN) without any intimation or prior permission of the competent authority. RTC Kimin lodged a DDR at the nearest Police Station, and the individual was directed to report for duty vide RTC Kimin Memo No. 368-A dated 06.05.2025. And whereas, after conducting a Court of Inquiry under the provisions of Section 74(2) of the ITBPF Act, 1992, Constable (GD) [Recruit] Akash has been declared a deserter with effect from 06.05.2025 (FN).



2. Now, therefore, Constable (GD) [Recruit] Akash, S/o Sh. Sahajan of 2nd Battalion, ITB Police, is hereby given an opportunity to make a representation or submission, if any, before a final decision is taken in the matter. If he wishes to make any representation or submission on the report, he may do so in writing to the Commandant, 2nd Battalion, ITB Police Force, within 30 days from the date of issue of this notice.

Sd/-

Commandant

CBC 19112/11/0145/2526 2nd Bn, ITB Police Force

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to the general public that Shri Jems Rongphar, son of Sikari Rongphar, resident of Rongdo Gaon, Japhralangso/Japararajan, Karbi Anglong, Assam - 782470, claiming to be rightful and absolute owner, has agreed to lease out a parcel of land standing in his name in favour of Shri Robin Lotha, son of Late Nzempemo Lotha, resident of House No. 123, Dunkan Basti, Dimapur, Nagaland - 797112 and Certified by Shri Bapuram Terang (G.B.) bearing GB No- 1341 of Village-Nokbelongion, Po: Khatkhathi, Karbi Anglong, under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC).

The details of the said land are as follows:

Area: 100 Bigha

Location: Under Nirmal/ Tea/ Estate Pvt. Ltd. Lahorijan, P/S Khatkhathi, Moza-Borjan, Karbi Anglong, Assam.

Boundaries:

North: Four-Lane Highway / Private Land

South: Private Land facing Gautam Basti

East: Four-Lane Highway / Private Land

West: Stream (Naulaha / Bokajan Road)

Any person or authority having any objection, claim, or interest over the said land is hereby requested to contact the undersigned within 30 (Thirty) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, it shall be presumed that there is no objection to the proposed lease arrangement.

Sd/-

ROBIN LOTHAS

Mobile No: 82590-78581.

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Ishaan Khatter hopes for a time when smaller films like "Homebound" can find box office success at par with mainstream blockbusters, but for that to happen, the actor believes the audiences must also become a "stakeholder" in supporting these stories.

"Homebound", directed by Neeraj Ghaywan, struck a chord with international audiences after it premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in May, followed by more such screenings at Toronto and Melbourne. The movie is set to represent India at the Academy Awards next year.

Despite the critical acclaim, the film, which released in Indian theatres on September 26, has only managed to earn Rs 5 crore at the domestic box office.

Khatter, who stars in the movie alongside Vishal Jethwa and Janhvi Kapoor, said he would not label the movie a failure in "any way, shape or form".

"I don't think this film is a failure. I think films have different journeys. As far as the box office is concerned, I think this film is going to have a long life. And this is not coming from a place of... I'm not trying to be deluded or in denial about the box office. I know the numbers very well.

"Our hope is to have it reach as many people as possible. And I'm not going to let up in my efforts in that," the 30-year-old actor told PTI in an interview.

"Homebound" is loosely inspired by journalist Basharat Peer's The New York Times article "Taking Amrit Home (A Friendship, a Pandemic and a Death Beside the Highway)".

The film portrays the childhood friendship between a Muslim and Dalit who chase a police job that promises them the dignity they have long been denied due to their respective backgrounds.

The movie is produced by Dharma Productions' Karan Johar and Apoorva Mehta alongside

## Films have different journeys, 'Homebound' will have a long life: Ishaan Khatter



Somen Mishra and Adar Poonawalla. Hollywood veteran Martin Scorsese serves as an executive producer. If smaller films get good numbers at the ticket window, titles like "Homebound" wouldn't be a rarity, Khatter said.

"One does hope for a time where films like these will also see the kind of numbers that you see a big commercial blockbuster having because that would change things. It would create a kind of culture where films like these are allowed to exist and thrive and be made much more. Unfortunately, you see a rare film like this every once in a while.

"And in order to change that, the audience has to become an active participant, almost like a stakeholder." Still, the actor said he is happy with the response to the movie.

"Call me an idealist or an optimist, but I still think that the way that this film has been showered with love and the people who have seen it, the way that they are going out talking about it and championing it, my hope is that it keeps growing, not only theatrically, but also once the digital release happens, once it makes a little more noise internationally. "I have personally seen the universality of this film. I've seen the range and diversity of the audiences that have watched it and connected with it." He said the movie had a hectic production and release timeline -- from completing the film to submitting it for Cannes within 40 days, followed by festival runs in Toronto, Melbourne, and Zurich. (PTI)

## 'Umrao Jaan' was poetry coming alive: Filmmaker Muzaffar Ali



**NAINITAL, Nov 4:** For veteran filmmaker Muzaffar Ali, his 1981 masterpiece "Umrao Jaan" was more than a period drama -- it was poetry finding a visual form.

Speaking at the recently concluded 10th edition of the "Himalayan Echoes: Kumaon Festival of Literature & Arts", Ali said with "Umrao Jaan", he was, in essence, telling "the story of a poetess through poetry".

"I was always a poetry-driven person. For me, 'Umrao Jaan' was poetry coming alive. It came from my days after leaving Aligarh, from all the poets I spent time with, and from the imagery they instilled in my thinking and life," said Ali, who has also directed "Gaman", "Aagaman", "Anjuman", and "Jaanisaaar".

To keep the essence of the story intact, he ensured that poet-lyricist Shahryar stayed with him in Mumbai throughout the process.

Shahryar was someone who, Ali said, would "think and dream in poetry".

"Yeh kya jagah hai doston, yeh kaun sa dayaar hai" was the starting point. And to this, Shahryar would say, "Why are you making me do this women's poetry?" And I told him, "This women's poetry is what will stay alive." And that is true.

The entire trajectory of Umrao's character - from her transformation into a courtesan, her experiences of love and rejection, to her eventual disillusionment and return to her roots - was a poetic journey," he added. Set in the opulent world of 19th-century

Lucknow, "Umrao Jaan", based on Mirza Hadi Ruswa's Urdu novel, tells the poignant story of a young girl named Amiran from Faizabad, who is kidnapped by her father's rival and sold to a brothel in Lucknow.

There she is renamed Umrao Jaan and trained in music, dance, and poetry, eventually becoming one of the most celebrated courtesans of her time. The story explores her journey from innocence to fame and the emotional scars that come with it. The 81-year-old director remains grateful for his collaboration with composer Khayyam and Shahryar, a partnership of music, words, and vision which, he noted, was what breathed life into the very soul of the film.

"Fortunately, we all lived close by. We would walk to each other's homes, constantly exchanging thoughts and ideas," he said.

On veteran actor Rekha, who played the titular role, Ali said he always knew she had it in her to bring the iconic character to life.

He also fondly recalled singer Asha Bhosle's dedication and "extraordinary commitment" towards the project.

"She was ready to sing in a lower scale, wanted me to narrate the entire book to her, and was determined to recreate the world of Lucknow out of Bombay. She was willing to go that extra mile," he recalled.

When asked why he chose to tell the story from a woman's perspective, Ali explained that women are the true bearers of culture, with a depth of perception men often lack. "When you narrate a story through a woman, you can't go wrong. With a man, it's a hit or miss," he concluded.

"Umrao Jaan" won four National Film Awards, including best actress for Rekha. The film rereleased in theatres in June this year.

The two-day festival, focused on both literature and nature, was attended by celebrated writer Stephen Alter, Booker-longlisted author Anuradha Roy, Nepali economist Sujeev Shakya, environmentalist Vandana Shiva, and others. (PTI)

## SRK thanks Akshay Kumar, Shashi Tharoor and others for birthday wishes



**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Superstar Shah Rukh Khan thanked actors Akshay Kumar, Juhi Chawla, Anupam Kher as well as politician Mamata Banerjee and Shashi Tharoor for their heartfelt birthday wishes.

Shah Rukh celebrated his 60th birthday on Sunday.

"Thank u Akki for singing Happy Birthday to me... you've taught me the secret to looking good and thinking smart. Ab Khiladi ki taraah jaldi uthna bhi sikhaade. Ha ha," he replied to Akshay Kumar, his "Dil To Pagal Hai" co-star.

The actor also thanked his "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge" co-star Anupam Kher who had uploaded a lengthy video congratulating Shah Rukh.

"Thank u @AnupamPKher for the heartfelt video. Big hugs and lots of love to you always. Some of the fondest memories in my journey of films are with you. I hold you in the highest regard. Love u. (And yes we must find ways to spend more time... maybe a film would be

nice)," his tweet read.

Shah Rukh is also a co-owner of the Indian Premier League (IPL) team, Kolkata Knight Riders and was wished by CM Mamata Banerjee. He thanked her in a post.

"Thank u for your kind words Mamata Di. Wishing you the best. Will visit Kolkata soon..." he said.

Replying to Shashi Tharoor, who in a witty tweet, compared the actor's youthful appearance to "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button", SRK said the politician will be around to see him play the child star.

"Thank u... Although I'm sure you will be around to see me playing the 'child star'... and I will copy your hairstyle then. Ha ha." Shah Rukh joked. He also thanked his frequent collaborator, "Darr" co-star Juhi Chawla as she wished him by planting trees.

"Thank u Juh... thoughtful as always. Me tell them next good cause on the agenda that you will be involved in has to be a jungle of love..." he wrote. (PTI)

## Got half a star for my film first time but no complaints: Harshvardhan Rane on 'Ek Deewane...' success

**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** "Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat" is the biggest hit of Harshvardhan Rane's career and has also earned him some of the worst reviews but the actor says negative feedback only motivates him to do better.

Directed by Milap Zaveri, the romantic drama released on October 21 and also features Sonam Bajwa alongside Rane. The film, which released alongside "Thamma", has already crossed the mark of Rs 100 crore at the worldwide box office and continues to attract the audiences to the theatres.

"You give me negative feedback, I'll give you all the love in my heart because it motivates me to build on it. I have got half a star for the first time... And I have no complaints about it. My heart doesn't hold anything right now. There is no heaviness. They (critics) are getting paid for saying what they feel. They are not trying to put us down or put anybody down. It is just a job and part of the job is to give stars. The people who have given this half-star have really appreciated my other films. So, I know they are actually good people who are doing a

job," Rane told PTI in an interview.

The film revolves around Rane, a politician, who falls for a strong-willed superstar, who rebuffs his advances.

Despite the box office numbers, many critics have rated the film to be poor, pointing out how it propagates themes of toxic masculinity and revenge.

According to Rane, there is something very Indian about the movie's story.

"Yes, there are parts that are dramatic and bold and you might not want to face in real life. But that's how cinema is. There is always some heightened drama. But there was always this Indian-ness to this. And I love Indian emotions," he said Rane made his acting debut in 2006 with the television show "Left Right Left" and

went on to feature in several projects, including Netflix's romantic thriller "Haseen Dillruba" and Telugu film "Kavacham", among others.

But it was the re-release of his 2016 film "Sanam Teri Kasam", earlier this year, which served as a breakthrough project for the actor.

Although declared a flop at the box office during its orig-

inal release, "Sanam Teri Kasam" emerged as the highest-grossing re-released film in India, giving Rane a much delayed appreciation from the audience.

Rane said when "Sanam Teri Kasam" became a big hit after its re-release, there were many who called it a "fluke" and it broke his heart.

"But then I thought, you give me half a star, I'll work harder. You call it tukka (fluke), I'll work harder," he added.

The actor said he has finally reached a stage where audiences are organically going to theatres to watch his movies.

"It is delayed gratification... it is the opposite of what we get on social media, where you put a picture and you suddenly get likes... I had put this picture up 20 years ago, and today I am getting the likes. So, it is a 20-year-old social media post in a way. That credit goes to the directors," Rane said.

The success of "Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat" is even more special as it was re-released alongside "Thamma"

"Thamma", the big-budget film from Maddock Films,

featuring Ayushmann Khurrana and Rashmika Mandanna in the lead roles.

The actor praised his producers and the director of the film for taking the call to re-release the movie alongside "Thamma".

"It was a huge decision to release the film on that date. It was a big call because we were up against a Rs 200 crore film ('Thamma') approximately. And it was part of a universe.

We are one small little new film. There is no franchise. It was a Rs 25 crore rupee film. So, pitting against a 175 to 200 crore rupee film, it was all their conviction," he said.

The actor, however, is happy that viewers appreciated both the movies by going to theatres and pointed out that both "Thamma" and "Ek Deewane..." are fronted by "outsiders".

"On Diwali, you saw two films of two outsiders.. 'Thamma' and ours. It means that you (audience) are giving equal love to both. So, it goes to show that the audience has given both the films the same amount of love." The actor will next appear in a sequel to "Sanam Teri Kasam". (PTI)



# MOHSIN CLAIMS SIX AS KARNATAKA CRUSH KERALA BY AN INNINGS AND 164 RUNS

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Nov 4:** Mohsin Khan claimed six wickets as a dominant Karnataka crushed last year's finalists Kerala by an innings and 164 runs in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group B contest, here on Tuesday.

Kerala were shot out for 184 following on as Mohsin, who returned a splendid 23.3-14-29-6, ran through their batting lineup with Karnataka completing a bonus-point victory on the final day of the match, here at the KCA Cricket Ground.

Kerala entered the final day with the follow-on enforced on them and Karnataka still having a lead of 338 runs in the second innings, having piled up a huge 585/5 declared.

Vidwath Kaverappa removed opener Nidheesh MD (9) and No 3 Akshay Chandran (0) in quick succession to continue the plight for the home side, while Mohsin began by cleaning up Krishna Prasad for 33.



The left-arm spinner did not allow any of the Kerala batters to find their feet at the crease as he sent down more than half of his 23.3 overs as maidens.

Karnataka, who had bowled out Kerala for 238 in the first innings, walked away with seven points with their first win of the season after first two

matches ended in draws.

India batter Karun Nair, who made 233 for Karnataka, was named the player-of-the-match.

At Indore, hosts Madhya Pradesh walked away with three points on basis of first-innings lead as their clash against Chandigarh ended in a draw.

The hosts were 73/3 with an

overall lead of 147 runs when the stumps were drawn. MP had taken a 74-run lead in the first essay.

Visitors Goa were the happier side with three points in their kitty on the basis of first-innings lead against hosts Punjab at the PCA New Cricket Stadium in Chandigarh.

Punjab reached 179 for four with Nehal Wadhwa batting on 55 and Ramandeep Singh on 36 not out when the match was called off.

Punjab had conceded a lead of 171 runs after replying with 325 against Goa's 494/6 declared.

Meanwhile, at the Golf Club Ground in Nashik, Maharashtra and Saurashtra's game ended in a tame draw with the hosts reaching 55/1 in their first innings.

Saurashtra had declared their first innings at 394/5 with Harvik Desai 132 and Jay Gohil (115) scoring centuries.

## Brief scores:

**At Thiruvananthapuram:** Karnataka 585/5 declared beat Kerala 238 and 184; 79.3 overs (Krishna Prasad 33, Eden Apple Tom 39 not out; Vidwath Kaverappa 2/28, Mohsin Khan 6/29) by an innings and 164 runs.

**At Indore:** Madhya Pradesh 348/8 declared and 73/3; 27 overs (Harsh Gawali 33, Harpreet Singh Bhatia 15 not out; Nishank Birla 2/21) drew with Chandigarh 310.

**At Chandigarh:** Punjab 325 and 179/4; 63 overs (Harnoor Singh 49, Nehal Wadhwa 55 not out, Ramandeep Singh 36 not out; Darshan Misal 2/57) drew with Goa 494/6 declared.

**At Nashik:** Saurashtra 394/5 declared; 101 overs (Harvik Desai 132, Jay Gohil 115, Arpit Vasavada 73 not out; Mukesh Choudhary 2/96) drew with Maharashtra 55/1; 10 overs (Arshin Kulkarni 35 not out; Hiten Kanbi 1/6). (PTI)

## Sunil Joshi set to accompany India A team as head coach for Rising Stars Asia Cup



**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Former India left-arm spinner and Centre of Excellence's (CoE) head of spin department Sunil Joshi will be the chief coach of the India A team led by Jitesh Sharma, which will take part in the Rising Stars Asia Cup in Doha from November 14.

The India A team comprises IPL stars like Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Priyansh Arya, Naman Dhir, Nehal Wadhwa, and Ramandeep Singh to name a few.

The convention in BCCI to appoint COE's in-house coaches for India's A, Emerging (Rising Stars), India U-19s assignments and rotate them.

Joshi, who recently joined the CoE, also was a part of India A team's recent assignment against Australia A.

Along with Joshi as the head coach for the assignment, the other two members of the coaching staff will be Apurva Desai (batting) and Pallav Vohra (fielding).

Joshi will go with the India A team for Rising Stars (previously Emerging) because the other CoE coach Hrishikesh Kanitkar is busy with the India A team's first-class games against South Africa A. He will then return for India U-19 duty for a series involving Afghanistan and guide the team till the next U-19 World Cup.

The Centre of Excellence is trying to integrate all the coaches who have completed their Level 2 or have been coaches with first-class, age-group or IPL teams into a system.

Former India opener and Mumbai stalwart Wasim Jaffer is one such cricketer-turned-coach, who will be seen helping out one of the four U-19 teams playing in the Challenger Series that starts in Hyderabad in a few days' time. (PTI)

## Women's soccer great Pia Sundhage out as Switzerland coach despite Euro 2025 success

**BERN (SWITZERLAND), Nov 4:** Storied soccer coach Pia Sundhage won't get the chance to lead Switzerland to the 2027 Women's World Cup despite a hugely successful European Championship.

Sundhage said on Monday she was surprised by the Swiss Football Association decision not to renew her contract which expires in December.

A two-time Olympic champion and 2011 World Cup finalist coaching the United States, Sundhage led the host Swiss team in July to the quarterfinals of Euro 2025 that captured the nation's imagination. Switzerland had never reached the knockout stage before.

"I would have loved to continue this journey," the 65-year-old Sundhage said in a statement published by the Swiss FA. "I am surprised by the (federation's) decision, but

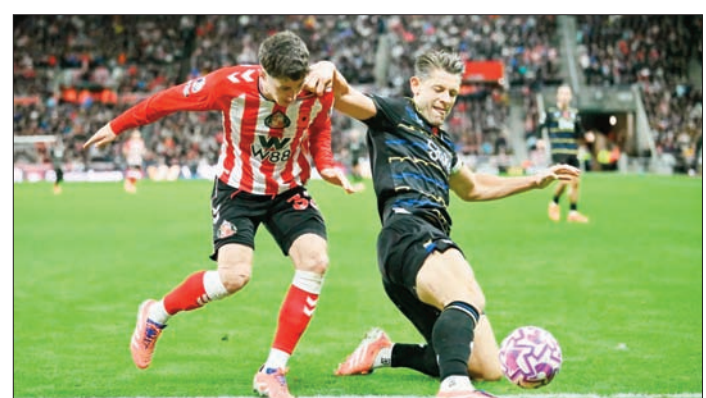
## Sunderland moves into fourth place after home draw with Everton

**LONDON, Nov 4:** Sunderland came back from a goal down to draw with Everton 1-1 and moved into fourth spot in the Premier League on Monday.

The Black Cats moved level with Liverpool and Bournemouth and continued to confound doubters on a stirring return to the top tier.

Sunderland was looking to win three successive top-flight wins for the first time in a decade but went behind after 15 minutes thanks to a solo effort from Everton winger Iliman Ndiaye.

The Senegal international gathered the ball on the right touchline around 40 meters from goal and dribbled and muscled his way past four defenders before striking a lovely left-foot shot past a static keeper.



Jack Grealish hit the post midway through the first half as Everton started to dominate and Thierno Barry sliced over the top from close in a few minutes later.

But Sunderland got back into the match immediately after the

could not get the goal that would have taken it above Manchester City and into second place.

"We lost the three points today in the first 25 minutes," Xhaka told broadcaster Sky Sports. "We were sloppy with the ball and made too many mistakes. On this level you get punished, but second half was very good. We created many chances and with a bit more luck we can win this game."

Its next game is a mouth-watering home tie against leader Arsenal on Saturday.

Everton, which was in 14th place and without a win in three games, takes on Fulham, the team below it, the same day.

Coach David Moyes agreed his team was on top in the opening stages and he rued the missed chances. (AP)

## NFR hosts All India Inter Railway Basketball Championship 2025

**HT Bureau GUAHATI, Nov 4:** The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has inaugurated the 68th Men's and 48th Women's All India Inter Railway Basketball Championship for 2025, organised by the Northeast Frontier Railway Sports Association (NFRSA).

The tournament is being held at the Indoor Stadium of NFRSA, Maligaon, from November 3 to 11, and will see participation from top-performing teams representing various zones of Indian Railways.

The championship was formally inaugurated by Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager of NFR, in the presence of senior officials, players, and sports enthusiasts.

Shrivastava welcomed the teams and participants from across the country and wished them success in the week-long event.

A total of 20 men's teams and 14 women's teams are competing in this year's edition, bringing together over 500 participants, including referees, selectors, and observers.

## Jharkhand inflict innings defeat on Nagaland

**RANCHI, Nov 4:** Jharkhand inflicted a massive innings defeat on Nagaland to earn a bonus point as left-arm spinner Anukul Roy returned a career-best match haul of 13 wickets in a Ranji Trophy game, here on Tuesday.

A day after Roy grabbed a career-best haul of eight wickets (8/55) to dismiss Nagaland for 154 in response to Jharkhand's 510 for 8 declared, the 26-year-old ripped through the opponent's batting lineup in the second essay as well with 5/35 as they won by an innings and 196 runs in their Elite Group A game.

Nagaland, who were asked to follow-on and were reduced to 104 for 5 at stumps on day three, did not have the wherewithal to ward off a combative Jharkhand bowling attack.

Roy, who had started the demolition work on day three by taking two second-innings wickets with compatriot slow-bowler Manishi grabbing the other three, came back to finish off Nagaland's resistance in no time. Nagaland could add just 56 runs to their overnight total as their innings folded up at 160 in 57.4 overs. (PTI)

## Barbados-born Bethell in England's centrally-contracted list alongside Stokes, Archer

**LONDON, Nov 4:** Four-Test-old all-rounder Jacob Bethell was awarded his maiden central contract by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) which offered two-year deals to 14 multi-format cricketers, including Test captain Ben Stokes and injury-plagued pacer Jofra Archer.

The 22-year-old Bethell, who has also appeared in 18 ODIs and 20 T20 Internationals, is among the top 14 alongside other senior stars Joe Root, ODI captain Harry Brook and Gus Atkinson among others.

Bethell was born and brought up in Barbados before moving to England on a scholarship. He made his Test debut only last year.

"A total of 30 players have been awarded central contracts, comprising 14 Two-Year Central Contracts, 12 England Annual Central Contracts, and four England Development Contracts," the ECB said in a press release.

Five players -- Sonny Baker, Liam Dawson, Saqib Mahmood, Jamie Overton and Luke Wood -- have also been awarded central contracts for the first time but for one year.

Three players -- Eddie Jack, Tom Lawes and Mitchell Stanley -- have

been handed England Development Contracts for the first time, joining Josh Hull.

"The system, which covers both red-ball and white-ball cricket, takes into account the likelihood of players featuring in England teams across formats during the next period, while also recognising performances over the past year," the ECB stated. Managing Director of England Men's Cricket Rob Key said the central contract group reflects the depth and strength of talent in the country.

"We have awarded two-year deals to our multi-format players, so we can manage their workloads responsibly and give them the stability they need to perform across formats," he said referring to players like Stokes and Buttler who play at least two formats.

"We have also secured a number of white-ball players on longer

## My job was to apply the finishing touches: Richa Ghosh

**MUMBAI, Nov 4:** India's World Cup-winning team was built on trust and role clarity, feels dashing keeper-batter Richa Ghosh, who was assigned the finisher's role by head coach Amol Muzumdar.

Having missed at the final hurdle twice, India finally won their maiden World Cup title, defeating Laura Wolvaardt's South Africa by 52 runs in front of a sea of crowd in Navi Mumbai.

"My main job was to finish innings strongly by scoring quickly in the final overs," the 22-year-old said on JioStar's Follow The Blues.

"Whenever I got the chance to bat, my focus was on applying the finishing touches. I aimed to maintain a high strike-rate and put pressure on the opposition bowlers.

"Scoring those extra runs reduces the pressure on our team and gives us a better chance to win," she said. Richa, who played a blistering 34 off 24 balls in the final batting at No 7 to lift India to 298/7. In reply, South Africa folded for 246.

She further credited head coach Amol Muzumdar for creating an environment where every player knew exactly what was expected of them. "Amol sir made everyone's role in the team very clear."

"For me, it was to play fearless cricket, look for the big shots and finish the innings strongly," she said, adding that Muzumdar's reassurance to "take time to settle in" gave her the confidence to back her strengths under pressure.

Richa, who often walked in during the final overs, said she had worked hard in the lead-up to the tournament to balance aggression with patience.

"Before the World Cup, I really focused on spending more time at the crease and building my innings. Whenever I got the chance to play, I concentrated on playing grounded shots and making sure I didn't throw my wicket away."

"For me, it was all about keeping the scoreboard ticking with singles and holding up one end. That's what I worked on the most," added Richa, who scored 235 runs from eight innings with one fifty finishing among the top-five run-getters for the team.

Her strike rate of 133.52 was the highest among Indians and she also

equalled the record for the most sixes (12) in a single edition of the Women's World Cup joining West Indies power-hitter Deandra Dottin.

Richa's approach remained simple. "My main job was to finish innings strongly by scoring quickly in the final overs. Whenever I got the chance to bat, my focus was on applying the finishing touches."

"I aimed to maintain a high strike-rate and put pressure on the opposition bowlers. Scoring those extra runs reduces the pressure on our team and gives us a better chance to win," she said.

The daughter of an umpire, Richa's talent was spotted when she was just eight years old before she went on to make her domestic debut for Bengal under the legendary India pacer Jhulan Goswami.

"Jhulan didi has played a huge role in my journey. She's always been there to guide me, even when I started playing for India. She taught me how to adapt my game to different situations and shared invaluable advice on improving as a player." As the team erupted in joy after Harmanpreet Kaur's catch sealed the final, Richa said the feeling was "just incredible".

"We were so overwhelmed that we didn't even know how to celebrate! Harman didi was absolutely speechless, just pure joy. And when Deepti didi got that last wicket, even she couldn't process that we'd actually won the World Cup. We were all just living in that moment, soaking it all in before it even sank in." The victory also unlocked a long-kept secret: their self-composed team song as they had a spontaneous rendition on the pitch that quickly went viral with the players singing and dancing with the World Cup Trophy at the centre of the pitch.

"We actually created our team song a few series ago. It was something we really wanted. But we made a pact to only sing it, and reveal it to the world after we lifted the World Cup trophy."

"Every player contributed to it in some way. So, the moment we won at the DY Patil Stadium, we just knew we had to sing it right there on the ground. It was a magical feeling," she signed off. (PTI)

## Slot happy to welcome Alexander-Arnold's return to Anfield with Real Madrid

**LONDON, Nov 4:** Trent Alexander-Arnold will receive a hearty welcome from Liverpool manager Arne Slot when he returns to Anfield with Real Madrid on Tuesday.

Alexander-Arnold won two Premier Leagues and the Champions League across 10 years with Liverpool after graduating from its academy, but after he announced in May he was leaving his hometown club he was booed by angry Reds fans.

The Champions League draw set up a quick return to Liverpool for Alexander-Arnold, who has said he'll love the club for life and has mixed emotions about the upcoming game.

He added he was prepared for any reaction from the Liverpool crowd but Slot guaranteed on Monday nothing but affection for one of the stars of the manager's first season.

"I have great memories of the player and of the human being... so he will get a warm welcome by me," Slot said.

The jeering of Alexander-Arnold last May when Arsenal visited prompted former



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp to turn off his TV, saying, "I couldn't have been more disappointed."

More public outcry prompted Liverpool fans to cool down for the remaining home

games, and Slot was not sure what reception the crowd will give the England international this time.

"Let's first wait and see if he is on the pitch tomorrow," Slot said. "I have no clue

how that's going to be but he gets a warm welcome from me, that's for sure."

Alexander-Arnold has not featured in Madrid's last two matches since recovering from a hamstring injury. But Madrid coach Xabi Alonso said they've spoken about returning to former clubs.

Alonso was a 2005 Champions League winner with Liverpool and his returns have always been welcoming.

"He has to have his own feelings and enjoy it his own way, so I am not going to say how he needs to feel," Alonso said. "For sure his history is different from mine, he was born and bred in Liverpool. I remember him from a young age in the academy and then coming to the first team and winning the Champions League."

"So he needs to enjoy that moment because it is nice to be back and for him it is going to be nice."

Slot confirmed Alexander Isak would not be available for the game and was a doubt for Sunday's game against Manchester City after a groin injury. (AP)

# Mandhana concedes top spot to Wolvaardt; Jemimah in top-10

**DUBAI, Nov 4:** Smriti Mandhana dropped a rung to second but Jemimah Rodrigues scaled nine positions to be 10th in the latest ICC women's ODI rankings after India's title-winning World Cup performance.

South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt has moved up two positions to the No.1 spot in the latest list. Wolvaardt overtook Mandhana after her incredible effort of striking hundreds in both the semifinal and final.

The two innings took Wolvaardt to 571 runs, the most in a single edition of the tournament, and the run was rewarded with a career-high rating of 814.

Mandhana, who held the top spot for the entirety of the World Cup, was named in the Team of the Tournament alongside Wolvaardt. India defeated South Africa by 52 runs in the final on Sunday.

Rodrigues' match-winning hundred against the Australians in the semifinal in Navi Mumbai meant



the 25-year-old entered the top-10, while Phoebe Litchfield made

a 13-spot jump to a career-high 13th (637) thanks to a century in

the same match. Australia's Ellyse Perry moved

to seventh, sharing the spot with New Zealand's Sophie Devine, who has announced her retirement from the format.

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur also rose four spots to 14th in the updated list.

There was marked movement in the bowling rankings, with South Africa's Marizanne Kapp now the closest to knock Sophie Ecclestone off the top spot thanks to her 5/20 against England in the other World Cup semifinal.

Kapp moved two spots to a rating of 712, with Australians Annabel Sutherland (sixth) and Kim Garth (seventh) making one-spot moves in the top 10.

World Cup's Player of the Tournament Deepti Sharma cemented her credentials with seven wickets and 82 runs across the semifinal and final at the tournament. As a result, she gained a spot to fourth in the all-rounder rankings, overtaking Sutherland (388). (PTI)

# Vaibhav, Priyansh in India A squad for Rising Stars Asia Cup; Jitesh to lead



**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Teenaged batting sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi and IPL star Priyansh Arya were on Tuesday named in the Jitesh Sharma-led India A squad for the Rising Stars Asia Cup to be held in Doha later this month.

India A will play arch foes Pakistan A on November 16 after opening their campaign against the UAE on November 14.

Jitesh, who is currently in Australia with the Indian team for a five-match T20I series, will be leading a side full of IPL performers, including the 14-year-old Suryavanshi, who have shown tremendous potential.

Jitesh was a part of the IPL trophy-winning Royal Challengers Bengaluru side.

The 32-year-old, who was brought in place of Sanju Samson for the third T20I, scored an unbeaten 22 against Australia at Hobart as India won the match to level the series 1-1.

"The Senior Men's Selection Committee has picked the India A squad for the Asian Cricket Council's Rising Stars Asia Cup to be held in Qatar. The Tournament will be played from 14th to 23rd November 2025 at West End International Cricket Stadium in Doha," said BCCI in a release.

Suryavanshi will once again be the player to watch out for after he became the youngest centurion in

men's T20 cricket with a 101 for Rajasthan Royals against Gujarat Titans in an IPL game earlier this year.

He also cracked a century during India U-19s Youth Test against Australia A in Brisbane last month.

Young top-order batter Priyansh has secured a place in the side following his performances for Punjab Kings in the IPL and also his job in an unofficial ODI between India A and Australia A in Kanpur in September.

Besides, the squad also has upcoming 26-year-old left-arm pacer Gurjapneet Singh, who took a hat-trick for Tamil Nadu in the Ranji Trophy match against Nagaland a few days back.

Rising Stars Asia Cup squads were earlier known as India Emerging, which was primarily an Under-23 tournament.

However, most nations don't have robust U-23 programmes like India and sent open teams.

This year, India has also done the same by including a mix of young and senior players in the squad.

India A squad for Rising Stars Asia Cup: Priyansh Arya, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Nehal Wadhwa, Naman Dhir (VC), Suryansh Sledge, Jitesh Sharma (C) (WK), Ramandeep Singh, Harsh Dubey, Ashutosh Sharma, Yash Thakur, Gurjapneet Singh, Vijay Kumar Vyshak, Yudhvir Singh Charak, Abhishek Porel (WK), Suyash Sharma.

Stand-by Players: Gurnoor Singh Brar, Kumar Kushagra, Tanush Kotian, Sameer Rizvi, Shaik Rasheed. (PTI)

## Naqvi unlikely to attend ICC meeting where BCCI will rake up Asia Cup trophy issue

**KARACHI, Nov 4:** "Domestic political issues" might prevent Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Naqvi from attending the ICC's Executive Board meeting in Dubai where the BCCI is set to raise the issue of the Asia Cup trophy not being presented to India.

The four-day meeting began on Tuesday and Naqvi, who is also the chairman of the Asian Cricket Council, was to face the BCCI's ire for not handing the trophy after the winning players refused to accept it from him due to his anti-India statements.

The PCB source did not specify the exact political issues that would come in the way of his attendance. Naqvi also holds the interior minister's position in his country and has not attended ICC meetings after Jay Shah was elected Chairman of the world body last year.

A source in the PCB said that the Board's Chief Operating Officer Sumair Syed will attend the chief executives meeting and in case Naqvi is unable to travel to Dubai, he could represent Pakistan in the all-important board meeting on November 7.

The Asia Cup Trophy lies locked in the Asian Cricket Council headquarter in Dubai despite the final being held back in late September.

The source said there was also a likelihood of Naqvi joining the board meeting remotely.

The Pakistan minister was at the centre of the trophy controversy when he had it sent to the ACC secretariat in Dubai. He has since insisted that the Indian team must accept the trophy from him and has ordered the ACC staff not to move the silverware without his permission.

The BCCI wrote a letter to the ACC asking for the trophy to be sent to Mumbai but Naqvi is insisting that it will be handed over to a BCCI representative and a member of the Indian team only by him at a function in Dubai on November 10. (PTI)

## Ashwin ruled out of BBL15 due to knee injury

**CHENNAI, Nov 4:** Former India cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin's much-anticipated foray into Australian Big Bash League has been stalled by a knee injury with the off-spinner ruled out of the entire season with Sydney Thunder.

Ashwin had retired from international cricket late last year and from the IPL in August 2025 to focus on playing in T20 leagues across the world, including BBL, The Hundred and SA20.

"While training in Chennai to prepare for the upcoming season, I hurt my knee. I've had a procedure, and the outcome means I'll miss BBL15. That is tough to say. I was genuinely excited to be part of this group," wrote Ashwin on Instagram.

BBL 15 will commence on December 14. The injury means the legendary cricketer will also miss the Hong Kong Sixes from November 7-9. He has been replaced by Robin Uthappa in HK Sixes.

Ashwin said that following the medical procedure, he will now focus on rehabilitation.

"For now it is rehab, recovery and doing the work to come back stronger. From my first chat with the club, I have felt only warmth. Trent (Copeland, the Thunder general manager), the staff, the players and so many of you who have already reached out. Thank you for making me feel at home before a



ball has been bowled," he wrote for Sydney Thunder fans.

Earlier this year, Ashwin had confirmed his full availability for Thunder's BBL15 campaign, including the finals.

The legend said that if the injury heals, he would like to be with the Thunder sometime later in the season to cheer the team.

"If rehab and travel line up, and only if the doctors are happy, I would love to be round later in the season and say hello in person. No promises. That is the intent," he wrote.

Thunder GM Copeland said his side was "devastated" by the news. "Everyone at Sydney Thunder

was devastated to learn of Ash's knee injury... and we wish him well in his recovery.

"From the moment we first spoke with Ash, his commitment to Thunder was clear. We are hopeful of welcoming him into our dugout for part of BBL15, introducing him to our fans at events and building a long-term relationship.

"While disappointing for the club, we have built two championship-contending squads and expect to continue the progress of recent seasons in WBBL11 and BBL15. We can't wait to get back in front of our fans in Western Sydney for two massive campaigns," added Copeland. (PTI)

## Never stop dreaming, you never know where destiny will take you: Harmanpreet



**NEW DELHI, Nov 4:** Still quite overwhelmed by emotions, India's newest World Cup-winning captain Harmanpreet Kaur has recalled how picking up her sports tragic father's "big" cricket bat as a kid ignited the dream that is now a reality.

After leading India to a 52-run win over South Africa in the women's World Cup summit clash in Navi Mumbai on Sunday, Harmanpreet, in a video posted by the BCCI, recalled her childhood and also had one advice for aspiring young players -- "Never stop dreaming. You never know where your destiny will take you."

"Ever since, I was a kid, I've always had a bat in my hand. I still remember we used to play with a bat from my dad's kit bag. The bat was very big. One day, my dad carved a small bat for me out of one of his old bats. We used to play with it.

"Whenever we used to watch a match on TV, or watch India play, or watch the World Cup, I used to think, I need an opportunity like this. At that time, I didn't even know about women's cricket," Harmanpreet said as she

Harmanpreet's father Harmandar Singh Bhullar dabbled in cricket and football before settling for a clerk's job at a local judicial court in Punjab's Moga, the city where she was born and brought up.

With the firm support of her father, the journey which began as a child culminated into a World Cup trophy for Harmanpreet on Sunday. None of it came easy but Harmanpreet said she wasn't the one to get bogged down by the challenges that were integral to women's cricket.

"I was dreaming, when will I wear this blue jersey? So I think this means a lot to me, a young girl

who didn't know about women's cricket, but still dreamt, that one day, I want to bring that change in our country.

"And I think, it all shows that you should never stop dreaming. You never know where your destiny will take you. You never think, when will it happen, how will it happen. You only think, this will happen.

"So, I think, that was my self-belief, that this can be possible. And that is exactly what happened."

The 36-year-old stalwart said she is feeling relaxed and humbled after realising her childhood dream.

"Personally, it's a very emotional moment. Because, it was my dream since childhood. Ever since I started playing, it was my dream to win the World Cup one day. If I get an opportunity to lead my team, I don't want to miss this opportunity," she said, emotions still heavy

in her voice.

"So, I said all these things from the bottom of my heart. And God heard everything one by one. It's like magic. I don't understand how come suddenly everything is falling in place. Everything kept happening one by one.

"Finally, we are world champions. I am feeling very relaxed, very humble, so grateful to God, for giving this team, which we have been dreaming of for so many years, and we are living this moment."

Harmanpreet also recalled the grand reception that the Indian team came back to after losing the 2017 women's World Cup final to England in London.

"...we were so heartbroken. We lost the game by nine runs. We didn't understand how that happened because that game was also fully in our control," she said of the 2017 final where India were all out for 219 in 48.4 overs while chasing 229.

"But after coming back, the kind of welcome and motivation we got from Indian fans, that showed that not only us, the entire country was waiting for women's cricket to do something special for them and for the country."

That team, led by Mithali Raj, had the current team's senior players like Harmanpreet, Smriti Mandhana and Deepti Sharma.

"Everybody was waiting for this moment. And I think it's because of everyone's blessings and prayers that we were able to cross that line. I don't think we were alone playing in the stadium.

"Everybody, the entire stadium, people who were watching us on TV, everybody came together to win this. Because it wasn't possible alone." (PTI)

## Mandhana, Jemimah, Deepti named in ICC Women's World Cup team of tournament

**DUBAI, Nov 4:** The title-winning Indian stars expectedly dominated the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Team of the Tournament with Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues and Deepti Sharma making it to the line-up announced on Tuesday.

The Indian trio played a stellar role in the team's maiden World Cup triumph. India defeated South Africa by 52 runs in the summit clash on Sunday.

Runners-up South Africa also have three of their players in the side, with skipper Laura Wolvaardt chosen to captain the Team of the Tournament following her sensational efforts with the bat where she amassed a whopping 571 runs at an average of 71.37 to break the record for the most runs at any single edition of the Women's World Cup.

Annabel Sutherland, Ash Gardner and leg-spinner Alana King feature from the Australian team that reached the semi-finals, with standout wicket-keeper Sidra Nawaz of Pakistan the only player named in a side to miss out on the final four, stated an ICC press release.

England's Sophie Ecclestone was also included following some strong efforts that helped her side reach the semi-finals, while compatriot Nat Sciver-Brunt is named as the 12th player.

Opening batter Mandhana scored 434 runs at an average of 54.25 with one century and two fifties.

A model of consistency at the top of the batting order for India, Mandhana finished as the second-leading run-scorer at the tournament behind only Wolvaardt.

Her 109 against New Zealand in Navi Mumbai was the highlight for the left-hander, while consecutive scores of 80 and 88 against Australia and England prior to that century displayed Mandhana's ability to perform well against the best teams.

Rodrigues, on her part, made 292 runs at an average of 58.40 with the help of one century and one fifty.

Her stunning innings of 127 not out against Australia in the semi-finals was the major reason behind her inclusion in the side, though the India No.3 also produced a string of other good scores throughout the tournament.

An unbeaten 76 against New Zealand was of vital importance in India's run to the semifinals, while Rodrigues' knock of 24 helped alongside Shafali Verma's fireworks in the final against South Africa.

With the bat, Deepti scored 215 runs at an average



of 30.71 with one century and three fifties. She also took 22 wickets at an average of 20.40.

Named Player of the Tournament, Deepti was instrumental in India's title-winning campaign. She finished as the leading wicket-taker and scored crucial runs across the tournament.

Deepti produced her best performance on the grandest stage, taking 5/39 in the final against South Africa and adding 58 with the bat. Her consistency and ability to influence games with both bat and ball made her India's most valuable player.

**ICC Women's World Cup team of tournament:**

1. Smriti Mandhana (India)
2. Laura Wolvaardt (c) (South Africa)
3. Jemimah Rodrigues (India)
4. Marizanne Kapp (South Africa)
5. Ash Gardner (Australia)
6. Deepti Sharma (India)
7. Annabel Sutherland (Australia)
8. Nadine de Klerk (South Africa)
9. Sidra Nawaz (wk) (Pakistan)
10. Alana King (Australia)
11. Sophie Ecclestone (England)
- 12th Player: Nat Sciver-Brunt (England). (PTI)