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DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2025

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Discussions on key issues of development on the table

Himanta meets Sitharaman

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 15: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday called on Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the national capital and held detailed discussions on a range of issues related to the development of Assam and the welfare of its people.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister briefed the Union Finance Minister on the state's ongoing development initiatives and highlighted Assam's priorities in sectors such as infrastructure, connectivity, social welfare, education, healthcare and employment generation. He also discussed the financial requirements of the state to sustain its growth momentum and to further strengthen delivery of public services.

Sarma expressed his gratitude to Sitharaman for her continued support to Assam, noting that sus-



tained cooperation between the Centre and the state has played a key role in accelerating development across the region. He said that central assistance and policy support have helped Assam undertake major reforms and implement several people-centric schemes over the past few years.

The Chief Minister also drew attention to Assam's strategic importance as the gateway to the Northeast and its growing role in India's Act East policy. He underlined the need for continued investment in infrastructure projects, including roads, bridges, urban development and industrial corridors,

to boost economic activity and improve connectivity with neighbouring states and countries.

According to officials, discussions also touched upon measures to enhance fiscal stability, strengthen state finances and support welfare programmes aimed at women, youth and marginalised sections. The Chief Minister reiterated the state government's commitment to prudent financial management while ensuring inclusive growth.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman assured the Chief Minister of the Centre's continued co-operation and support for Assam's development aspirations.

She acknowledged the state's efforts in improving governance and implementing reforms, and expressed confidence that Assam would continue on its growth trajectory. The meeting comes at a time when (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Four declared foreigners expelled from KAAC

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Dec 15: The Karbi Anglong district administration has issued expulsion orders against four individuals who were declared foreigners in separate cases by the Foreigners' Tribunal, Karbi Anglong.

According to official records, Md Abas Khan of Dudu Colony under Khatkhati Police Station was declared a foreigner on October 16, 2017, in FT Case No. 156/2010, while Md Amir Uddin, also of Dudu Colony under the same police station, was declared a foreigner on February 7, 2016, in FT Case No. 12/2010. Md Mainul Hoque of Rang Nagar under Howraghat Police Station was declared a foreigner on November 8, 2023, in FT Case No. 123/2007, and Md Anuwar Ali of Purana Lahorian under Khatkhati Police Station was (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Hunger strike over grazing reserve eviction enters 8th day

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Dec 15: The indefinite hunger strike demanding eviction from Village Grazing Reserve and Professional Grazing Reserve land continued for the eighth consecutive day at Phelangpi in Kheroni, West Karbi Anglong, on Monday.

Several protesters participating in the agitation reportedly fell ill due to a deterioration in their health.

Four protesters, including agitation leader Litson Rongphar and his associates Edison Tokbi, Jonasing Rongphar and Khelan Ingti, were taken to the Kheroni Model Hospital late Sunday night after their condition worsened. Hospital sources said (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

MoE ignoring the community's growing frustration: TUUF

Students, staffers of Tezpur University stage 9-hour hunger strike demanding VC's removal



TEZPUR, Dec 15: Students and staffers of Tezpur University on Monday staged a nine-hour hunger strike, demanding a response from the Ministry of Education (MoE) on issues raised by them, including the immediate removal of Vice-Chancellor Shambhu Nath Singh over alleged financial irregularities.

The university has remained under a shutdown enforced by the agitators since the end of November, with limited relaxation being allowed for the conduct of term-end examinations since last week.

The Tezpur University United Forum (TUUF), a joint platform of students, teachers and non-teaching staffers under the aegis of which protests have been going on, said the hunger strike was held from 9 am.

"The strike aims to demand swift action from the MoE against Singh. The MoE has been ignoring the community's growing frustration over the ministry's continued silence despite sustained agitation and repeated appeals," TUUF said in a statement.

Questioning the 'prolonged silence' of the MoE, it added, "Even after multiple informal assurances, the ministry has failed to provide adequate resolution as promised by them on December 6."

A top delegation of the MoE, led by secretary Vineet Joshi, had visited the university on December 6, but was stuck inside the campus as students blocked the gate.

The team was finally allowed to leave around midnight following a handwritten assurance on a blank piece of paper by delegation member and Department of Higher Education's joint secretary Saumya Gupta that Singh will not be allowed to carry out any duty pending inquiry.

The TUUF maintained that the "responsibility for restoring academic and administrative normalcy lies with the MoE" and warned that protests will intensify if decisive action is not taken without further delay.

They reiterated their demands for Singh's removal, fair and unbiased high-level inquiry against him, and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

PM Modi, CM Sarma condole passing of Assam Tribune chief PG Baruah



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 15: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday has expressed deep grief over the passing away of Shri P.G. Baruah, Editor and Managing Director of The Assam Tribune Group, describing his demise as a major loss to journalism and public life in the Northeast.

In a post on social media platform X, Prime Minister Modi said he was saddened by the demise of P.G. Baruah, noting that he would be remembered for his immense contribution to the media world. The Prime Minister said Baruah was deeply passionate about Assam's progress and played a key role in popularising

the state's rich culture and heritage. "My thoughts are with his family and admirers. Om Shanti," the Prime Minister said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also took to X to convey his condolences, paying tribute to Baruah's legacy in strengthening credible journalism in Assam.

Sarma said that P.G. Baruah was not merely a media professional but an institution in himself, whose leadership helped The Assam Tribune emerge as a trusted and influential voice in the region.

He said Baruah upheld the highest standards of journalistic ethics and public responsibility at a time (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Arunachal accident victims cremated in Assam's Tinsukia

TINSUKIA, Dec 15: The bodies of all victims who died in a road accident in neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh have been cremated in Assam's Tinsukia district, officials said on Monday.

While the bodies of six victims arrived on Saturday, the remaining 14 reached the district the following evening, with the cremation taking place late on Sunday night, Tinsukia District Commissioner Swapnil Paul said.

Cabinet minister Bimal Borah and Tinsukia BJP MLA Sanjay Kishan and officials of the district ad-

ministration were present on the occasion.

The lone survivor of the mishap, Budheswar Deep (23), is currently undergoing treatment at the Assam Medical College Hospital in Dibrugarh.

His condition was improving and stable, according to doctors attending to him.

The accident took place on Hayuliang-Chaglagam Road in Arunachal Pradesh's Anjaw district on December 8 when the truck carrying 21 labourers fell into the gorge. Deep (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

KAAC passes supplementary budget of ₹100 crore

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Dec 15: A special session of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council was held on Monday at the Council Session Hall under the chairmanship of Speaker Raju Tisso.



During the session, chief executive member Tuliram Ronghang, who also holds the finance portfolio, presented a supplementary budget proposal to incorporate ₹100 crore received from the Central Government into the supplementary budget for the current (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Pahalgam attack case: NIA files chargesheet against 6 people, LeT

JAMMU, Dec 15: The NIA on Monday filed a comprehensive chargesheet against six people and two terrorist organisations, Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and its shadow outfit TRF, in connection with the Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed the lives of 25 tourists and a local pony operator.

The 1,597-page chargesheet, filed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) before a special court, details the deep conspiracy traced back to Pakistan, which the probe agency said has been "unabatedly sponsoring terrorism against India".

The NIA has named Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) headed by Hafeez Saeed, who has

been designated as a global terrorist by the US as well as India, along with The Resistance Front (TRF) headed by Habibullah Malik alias Sajid Jatt, in the chargesheet for their role in planning, facilitating, and executing the Pahalgam attack that took place in the Baisaran meadows on April 22 this year.

"Pakistani handler terrorist Sajid Jatt is also named as an accused in the chargesheet, filed before the NIA special court, Jammu," a statement issued by the anti-terror agency said.

The chargesheet also names the three Pakistani terrorists, who carried out the killings on religious lines on April 22 at

Baisaran meadows in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir. All the three were killed by the Army during the Operation Mahadev at Dachigam located in the outskirts of Srinagar on July 29, almost 100 days after the deadly terror attack.

The three were identified as Faisal Jatt alias Suleman Shah, Habeeb Tahir alias Jibril, and Hamza Afghani, the NIA statement said.

In its chargesheet, the NIA has also invoked the penal section against the accused for waging war against India.

The agency's eight-month long "meticulous scientific probe" led to the chargesheet. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

'Achievement reaffirms India's readiness to play a leading role'

India securing 3rd position worldwide in AI competitiveness: Dy CM Mein

ITANAGAR, Dec 15: Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on Monday said India securing the third position worldwide in AI competitiveness is a major milestone in the country's technology journey.

India has emerged as the world's third-most competitive nation in artificial intelligence (AI), according to a report by Stanford University.

Mein said that the ranking highlights the country's rapid rise as a global AI powerhouse and reflects the nation's sustained efforts in building a strong, innovation-driven technology ecosystem.

"India has secured the third position worldwide in artificial intelligence competitiveness, as per Stanford University's Global AI Vi-



brancy Tool marking a major milestone in the Nation's AI journey," he said in a post on X.

The deputy chief minister observed that the latest assessment places India behind only the United States and China, underscoring the country's

growing influence in the global AI landscape.

According to the Stanford index, India has recorded a significant jump in the rankings, moving from seventh place in 2023 to third in 2024.

Mein said the sharp rise demonstrates the impact of focused policy initiatives, a vibrant startup ecosystem and an expanding pool of skilled professionals in the AI domain.

The Global AI vibrancy tool evaluates countries across key parameters such as research and development output, talent concentration, private investment, innovation capacity and policy environment. India's improved performance across these indicators, the deputy chief minister said, reflects the country's growing capability to develop, deploy and scale AI technologies. "This achievement reaffirms India's readiness to play a leading role in shaping the future of artificial intelligence," Mein said, adding that the country's approach to AI remains anchored in responsible (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

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India's exports rise 19.37 pc in Nov; trade gap shrinks to 5-month low

NEW DELHI, Dec 15: India's exports rebounded by 19.37 per cent to USD 38.13 billion in November after contracting in October, driven by higher shipments of engineering and electronics goods that helped bring down the trade deficit to a five-month low of USD 24.53 billion.

According to government data released on Monday, the country's imports dipped by 1.88 per cent to USD 62.66 billion due to a fall in the inbound shipments of gold, crude oil, coal, and coke during the month under review.

Gold imports dipped by 59.15 per cent to USD 4 billion. Crude oil imports also declined by 11.27 per cent to USD 14.11 billion during the month.

The dip in imports also helped narrow the country's trade deficit (difference between imports and exports) in November. The previous low was USD 18.78 billion in June this year. The trade deficit stood at a record USD 41.68 billion in October.

Cumulatively, exports during April-November were up 2.62 per cent to USD 292.07 billion, while imports during the eight months rose by 5.59 per cent to USD 515.21 billion. The deficit stood at USD 223.14 billion.

Briefing reporters on the data, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said that outbound ship-



ments in November offset the losses in October this year. "November has been a good month for exports," he said.

Exports recorded growth despite the USA's hefty 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods.

He added that sectors like electronics, engineering, chemicals, gems and jewellery helped in pushing the country's merchandise shipments. Exports of petroleum products too rose by 11.65 per cent to USD 3.93 billion in November. The other commodities which recorded positive growth included tea, coffee, iron ore, cashew, oil meals, dairy, handicrafts, marine products and leather goods.

However, shipments of rice, oil seeds, carpet and plastics recorded negative growth.

He also said that the ministry is finalising the detailed guidelines of the ₹ 25,060-crore export promotion mission, and a few components of it will be rolled out this week itself.

He further said that this help may not be enough to deal with the steep 50 per cent tariff imposed by the US, but it will definitely bring relief for exporters in areas like liquidity.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President S C Ralhan said during April-November 2025, the US remained India's top export destination, despite the

imposition of a 50 per cent tariff, clearly demonstrating the resilience and adaptability of the exporting community.

Other major export destinations during this period included the UAE, the Netherlands, China, the UK, Germany, Singapore, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, and Hong Kong.

"Diversification of export markets, along with the continued resilience of several key sectors, has played a crucial role in supporting export growth. With sustained policy support, enhanced logistics efficiency, and access to competitive export financing, India's exports are well-positioned to maintain this positive trajectory in the coming months," he said.

India's exports contracted 11.8 per cent to USD 34.38 billion in October on account of the impact of high tariffs by the US, while the trade deficit widened to a record high of USD 41.68 billion, mainly due to a jump in gold imports in that month.

According to the provisional figures, the estimated value of services exports for November was USD 35.86 billion compared to USD 32.11 billion in the same month last year. During the first eight months of this fiscal year, exports stood at USD 270 billion as compared to USD 248.56 billion in April-November 2024. (PTI)

BHIM launches 'Garv Se Swadeshi' campaign to boost digital payments

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 15: BHIM Payments App, the homegrown digital payments platform developed by NPCI BHIM Services Limited, has launched the 'Garv Se Swadeshi' campaign to encourage new users across the country to adopt digital payments.

As BHIM prepares to complete 10 years since its inauguration later this month, the platform has announced a flat cashback of ₹20 on any transaction of ₹20 or more for first-time users.

Conceived as a sovereign, made-in-India payments platform, BHIM has been designed around the everyday payment needs of Indian users, ranging from small-value daily transactions to shared household expenses.

The 'Garv Se Swadeshi' campaign builds on this foundation, underscoring the role of a domestic digital payments platform in expanding secure and inclusive cashless transactions.

Through the initiative, BHIM aims to reduce entry barriers for first-time users and strengthen digital payments adoption across diverse sections of society.

Lalitha Nataraj, managing director and chief executive officer of NPCI BHIM Services Limited, said BHIM represents the confidence of a digital and self-reliant India and reflects how Indians choose to pay in their daily lives.

She said the campaign is focused on onboarding first-time users and helping them develop sustained digital payment habits for routine expenses, with the objective of making BHIM a preferred and natural choice for household transactions.

Once users begin using the app for regular expenses such as groceries, public transport tickets, prepaid recharges, electricity and gas bills, and fuel payments, they can earn cashback of up to ₹300 in a month on eligible transactions.

The refreshed version of the BHIM app, launched earlier this year, supports more than 15 Indian languages and offers an ad-free interface optimised for low-connectivity areas.

NAME CORRECTION

I surrender my PAN Card (BORPP7173C) with the name Kusum Phangchopi and will use the PAN Card (DIOPP5927A) with the name Hongbari Phangchopi. The name Kusum Phangchopi Hazarika is also my name. Therefore the names Kusum Phangchopi Hazarika, Kusum Phangchopi and Hongbari Phangchopi is the same and singer person, i.e., my name. Hence, from now onwards for all intent and purposes the name Hongbari Phangchopi will be used. Hongbari Phangchopi, D/o- Late Sarthe Phangcho, Diphu Englongcherop, PO & PS- Diphu, Dist. Karbi Anglong (Assam)

NAME CHANGE

I, Mohan Kumar Yadav son of Late Musafir Yadav residing at Birla Gate, Dillaji, PO+PS Diphu, District- Karbi Anglong, Assam, PIN - 782460 Shall henceforth be known as Mohan Yadav as declared before the Notary Public, Diphu Court Vide affidavit No. 8981 Dated 15-12-2025. Mohan Kumar Yadav and Mohan Yadav are same and identical Person.

JSW MG Motor India launches all-new Hector at ₹ 11.99 lakh

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 15: JSW MG Motor India on Monday announced the launch of the all-new MG Hector, marking a major upgrade to one of the country's most popular SUVs with refreshed design elements, enhanced comfort and advanced technology.

The updated Hector is priced starting at ₹ 11.99 lakh (ex-showroom).

The latest iteration of the SUV features a bold new exterior highlighted by the Aura Hex Grille, redesigned front and rear Aura Sculpt bumpers, and newly styled Aura Bolt alloy wheels, giving the vehicle a stronger road presence.

Two new exterior colours—Celadon Blue and Pearl White—have also been introduced.

Inside, the all-new Hector offers refreshed interiors with new dual-tone themes.

The five-seater variant comes in a Dual Tone Ice Grey finish, while the six- and seven-seater versions feature a Dual Tone Urban Tan theme.

The cabin is further enhanced with Hydra Gloss finish accents, fabric seat inserts and optional leather upholstery across the dashboard, doors and console.

Comfort features include front ventilated seats, tilt and telescopic adjustable steering, and a six-way power-adjustable driver seat.

A major highlight of the new Hector is its upgraded infotainment system.

The SUV retains its segment-leading 14-inch HD portrait touchscreen, now powered by Smart Boost technology for faster and smoother performance.

It also introduces the first-in-segment i-SWIPE touch gesture control, enabling multi-finger swipe functions for operating features such as air-conditioning, music and navigation.

Other technology additions include a digital Bluetooth key with key-sharing capability, predictive maintenance alerts, remote AC control and a full digital instrument cluster with a 17.78 cm embedded LCD screen.

Speaking on the launch, Anurag Mehrotra, managing director, JSW MG Motor India, said the Hector has remained central to the MG brand in India since its debut in 2019.

He said the all-new version builds on that legacy by further enhancing design, comfort and technology, while continuing to offer strong value to customers.

On the safety front, the all-new Hector is equipped with a 360-degree HD camera with wheel view, along with standard features such as ABS, EBD, electronic stability programme, traction control system, hill hold control and brake assist.

The SUV is powered by a 1.5-litre turbocharged petrol engine, available with both manual and CVT options, delivering 143 PS of power and 250 Nm of torque.

The diesel variant is expected to be introduced in 2026.

Sensex slips 54 pts

MUMBAI, Dec 15: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty pared most of early losses to close marginally down on Monday amid persistent foreign fund outflows and weak global trends.

The 30-share BSE Sensex closed lower by 54.30 points, or 0.06 per cent, at 85,213.36. The benchmark opened lower and declined further by 427.34 points, or 0.50 per cent, to hit a low of 84,840.32, but value buying in FMCG and IT shares in the second half helped cut losses.

The 50-share NSE Nifty edged lower by 19.65 points, or 0.08 per cent, to 26,027.30. The broader index hit a low of 25,904.75 but

pared losses later.

The rupee hitting fresh record low against the US dollar and uncertainty over an India-US trade deal weighed on investor sentiment, analysts said. The rupee hit an all-time low of 90.80 against the US dollar on Monday.

Among Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra fell the most by 1.94 per cent. Bajaj Finserv fell by 0.79 per cent and Maruti Suzuki by 0.71 per cent. Adani Ports, Bharti Airtel, Titan, Power Grid and HDFC Bank were also among the laggards.

However, Hindustan Unilever surged the most by 1.42 per cent. Trent, HCL Tech, Asian Paints,

and Tata Steel were among the gainers.

"Indian equity markets ended today's session on a muted, consolidative note, recovering from early weakness but lacking meaningful follow-through buying.

"Persistent FII selling, rupee depreciation, weakness in Asian equities and India-US trade-related uncertainty kept risk appetite cautious, though domestic flows and bargain hunting helped absorb downside pressure," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.41 per cent and midcap index went up by 0.16 percent. (PTI)

WPI inflation in negative for second month at (-) 0.32 pc in Nov

NEW DELHI, Dec 15: Wholesale price inflation stayed in the negative for the second consecutive month in November at (-) 0.32 per cent, even though there was an uptick in prices of food articles like pulses and vegetables on a month-on-month basis, government data showed on Monday.

Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation was at (-) 1.21 per cent in October and (-) 1.6 per cent in November last year.

However, on an annual basis, the negative rate of inflation during November was primarily due to decrease in prices of food articles, mineral oils, crude petroleum & natural gas, manufacture of basic metals and electricity, the industry ministry said in a statement.

Food articles continued to witness deflation for the past eight months, beginning in April. It narrowed sharply in November at 4.16 per cent, from 8.31 per cent in October.

In vegetables, deflation was 20.23 per cent in November, as against 34.97 per cent in October.

In pulses, deflation was at 15.21 per cent in November, while in potato and onion it was 36.14 per cent and 64.70 per cent, respectively.

In the case of manufactured products, inflation eased to 1.33 per cent in November, as against 1.54 per cent in October.

Fuel and power witnessed a negative inflation or deflation of 2.27 per cent, as against 2.55 per cent in October.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the WPI deflation narrowed faster than expected to 0.3 per cent in November 2025, from 1.2 per cent in October 2025, reflecting the base effect, weakening INR and rising prices of some commodities.

"With the further depreciation in the INR, hardening commodity prices, and unseasonal rise in vegetable prices, and despite softening crude oil, we expect the WPI to move into a year-on-year inflation of around 0.5 per cent in December 2025," Nayar said.

Data released last week showed CPI inched up to 0.71 per cent in

November, from a record low of 0.25 per cent, driven by rising food prices.

Low inflation in the current fiscal year has given the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) room to cut policy interest rates by 1.25 percentage points.

The Reserve Bank, earlier this month, significantly lowered the inflation projection for the current fiscal to 2 per cent from 2.6 per cent estimated earlier, as the economy continues to witness rapid disinflation. The RBI mainly tracks retail inflation for deciding on benchmark interest rates.

Earlier this month, the RBI had cut key policy interest rates by 25 bps to 5.25 per cent, saying that the Indian economy is in a "rare Goldilocks period" marked by high growth and low inflation.

The Reserve Bank last week raised the FY26 GDP growth projection to 7.3 per cent, from its earlier estimate of 6.8 per cent. India recorded an 8.2 per cent growth in the September quarter, and 7.8 per cent in the June quarter. (PTI)

Rupee slumps 29 paise to close at all-time low of 90.78 against US dollar

MUMBAI, Dec 15: The rupee on Monday crashed to its lowest-ever level of 90.80 before settling at a new all-time low of 90.78 against the US dollar, registering a loss of 29 paise over its previous close, weighed down by uncertainty over an India-US trade deal and persistent foreign fund outflows.

Forex traders said prevailing risk-averse market sentiment, compounded by strong US dollar demand from importers, further dented investor sentiment.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 90.53 against the US dollar, gained slightly to 90.51 level and then lost ground to hit a record intra-day low of 90.80, registering a 31-paise decline from its previous close.

At the end of trade on Monday, the rupee was quoted at a record low of 90.78, down 29 paise over its previous close.

On Friday, the rupee had slipped 17 paise to close at an all-time low of 90.49 against the American currency. "The Indian rupee plunged to a record low, positioning it as the worst performer among the Asian currencies. Despite the better-than-expected trade balance surplus, the rupee was unable to find support," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

Parmar further noted, "This lack of resilience is primarily attributed to a significant demand-supply imbalance, driven by high dollar demand from importers and persistent capital outflows, which remain the biggest concerns for the currency."

"In the near term, the technical bias for the spot USD-INR pair remains bullish, with key resistance at 90.95 and support at 90.50," Parmar added.

Meanwhile, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal on Monday said India and the US are "very close" on the framework deal.

"We are very close on the framework deal, which we feel can be done in a short period of time. But I would not like to put a time period on that," he told reporters here.

The two countries are conducting parallel negotiations -- one on a framework trade deal to address high tariffs and another on a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement (BTA).

The Indian industry and exporters are eagerly awaiting the conclusion of the negotiations and the announcement of the deal, as high import duties are hurting their shipments to America.

India and the US concluded two days of talks on Thursday, during which both sides exchanged views on trade-related issues, including the ongoing negotiations for a mutually beneficial bilateral trade agreement.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump on Thursday discussed ways to sustain momentum in the bilateral economic partnership in a phone conversation, amid signs that the two sides are inching closer to finalising a much-awaited trade deal.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.08 per cent lower at 98.32.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.21 per cent higher at USD 61.25 per barrel in futures trade. On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share benchmark index, Sensex, declined 54.30 points to settle at 85,213.36, and the Nifty fell 19.65 points to 26,027.30. Foreign Institutional Investors sold equities worth ₹ 1,468.32 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, MiraeAsset ShareKhan, said the rupee the rupee is expected to trade with a negative bias amid delay in Indo-US trade deal and FII outflows.

"A weak dollar and any intervention by the RBI may also support the rupee at lower levels. Investors may watch of for central bank monetary policy decisions from BOE, ECB and BoJ. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of ₹ 90.30 to ₹ 91," Choudhary said. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Himanta meets Sitharaman

Assam is witnessing increased focus on infrastructure expansion, industrial investment and social sector reforms. Dr. Sarma said that the state government looks forward to working closely with the Union Finance Ministry to translate development goals into tangible outcomes for the people of Assam.

He described the interaction as constructive and forward-looking, reinforcing the spirit of cooperative federalism in driving Assam's growth journey.

Four declared foreigners

declared a foreigner on January 3, 2015, in FT Case No. 108/2009.

Exercising powers under Section 2 of the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950, the District Magistrate has directed the four individuals to leave Assam and India within 24 hours of receipt of the expulsion orders.

They have been instructed to exit through the Dhubri, Sribhumi or South Salmara-Mankachar routes. The orders state that failure to comply will compel the government to initiate necessary action for their removal, as their continued stay has been deemed prejudicial to public interest and internal security.

The Superintendent of Police, Karbi Anglong, has been instructed to take appropriate action and submit a compliance report.

In addition, all concerned departments have been directed to delete the names of the expelled individuals from electoral rolls, cancel their ration cards and Aadhaar cards, and remove them from all government social security schemes and benefits.

MoE ignoring the

placing him on official administrative leave. The varsity, located on the north bank of the Brahmaputra in Sonitpur district, had been under complete shutdown since November 29 as a joint forum of all stakeholders has demanded the removal of the VC and an inquiry against him.

The situation had been tense since mid-September, with students accusing the VC and varsity authorities of not showing due respect to cultural icon Zubeen Garg even as the state was mourning his death.

Apart from fiscal irregularities, the agitators are also protesting alleged deforestation carried out under Singh's administration.

The senior-most faculty member, Dhruva Kumar Bhattacharyya, had assumed charge as acting vice-chancellor suo motu on December 5, citing the Tezpur University Act, 1993.

At his request, the students had agreed to sit for the term-end examinations from December 11, though other activities in this central university remained under the shutdown.

Singh has stayed away from the campus after the university witnessed heated scenes and an exchange of words between him and students on September 22, leading to a situation where Singh had to nearly flee the spot.

He had convened a virtual meeting of the Board of Management (BOM) on December 4, and appointed Mass Communication Professor Joya Chakraborty as pro-VC, a role she declined. (PTI)

Hunger strike over

the four are currently undergoing medical treatment.

Despite the health concerns, the remaining protesters have continued with the indefinite hunger strike, reiterating their demand for an eviction drive from grazing reserve land.

The agitation has been ongoing for the past eight days, with no official breakthrough reported so far.

Arunachal accident victims

survived the accident and somehow managed to reach the nearest Chipra GREF Camp, following which police were alerted and rescue operations began.

Two contractors, who had hired the workers for construction work, have been arrested by police and investigations are on, Paul said.

The duo have been identified as Sirajul Ahmed and Sairuddin Ali.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced an ex gratia of ₹ 2 lakh each for the next of kin of those who died from the PM National Relief Fund while Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced a compensation of ₹ 5 lakh to the families of the deceased. (PTI)

PM Modi, CM Sarma

when the media landscape was undergoing rapid change. The Chief Minister added that Baruah's commitment to Assam went beyond journalism, as he consistently used the platform of the newspaper to highlight developmental issues, social concerns and cultural identity. Sarma said his contribution to preserving and promoting Assamese culture through the written word would continue to inspire future generations of journalists and thinkers.

P.G. Baruah headed The Assam Tribune Group, publisher of The Assam Tribune and Dainik Asom, and played a pivotal role in steering the organisation through decades of political, social and technological transformation. Under his stewardship, the group earned respect for its independent editorial stance and balanced reporting.

Leaders from across political parties, media organisations and civil society also expressed condolences, remembering Baruah as a towering figure in Northeast journalism. His passing marks the end of an era for Assam's media fraternity, they said.

KAAC passes supplementary

financial year. The proposal was unanimously approved by members of the House. Informing the council, Ronghang said the ₹100 crore allocation would be utilised to address the needs and grievances of people across all 26 constituencies of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.

Pahalgam attack case

Two accused persons, Parvaiz Ahmad and Bashir Ahmad Jothar, who were arrested on June 22 for harbouring the terrorists, have also been named in the chargesheet by the NIA.

During interrogation, the two men had disclosed the identities of the three armed terrorists involved in the attack, and had also confirmed that they were Pakistani nationals affiliated to proscribed LeT terror outfit. (PTI)

India securing 3rd

innovation, inclusivity and public good.

The deputy chief minister added that global recognition of India's AI capabilities also strengthens the case for wider adoption of AI-led solutions in governance, industry and public service delivery.

He underlined that regions such as the Northeast stand to benefit significantly from the integration of emerging technologies to improve connectivity, efficiency and access to services. (PTI)

Section 163 BNSS imposed along NH-27 Jatinga-Harangajao stretch

Order prohibits the assembly of more than five persons



HT Correspondent

HAFLONG, Dec 15: In a bid to ensure the timely completion of the Jatinga-Harangajao stretch of National Highway-27, the district administration of Dima Hasao has imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.

According to official sources, construction of the Jatinga-Harangajao stretch of NH-27 is scheduled for completion by January 31, 2025.

However, the work being carried out by the National Highways Authority of India and its contracting agencies has reportedly been disrupted on multiple occasions due to local agitations, often without valid justification.

Taking note of the repeated interruptions, the district administration has reiterated its resolve to ensure smooth and uninterrupted execution of the project, which is considered crucial for improving regional connectivity and supporting overall development in the hill district.

District Commissioner and District Magis-

trate of Dima Hasao, Munindra Nath Ngatey, ACS, has exercised the powers vested in him under Section 163 of the BNSS, 2023, which corresponds to Section 144 of the erstwhile Code of Criminal Procedure.

The order prohibits the assembly of more than five persons in the vicinity of construction sites along the Jatinga to Harangajao stretch of NH-27.

The prohibitory order has been issued exparte, as the prevailing situation does not permit prior notice to individuals or organisations, as provided under Section 153 of the BNSS.

The order has come into force with immediate effect and will remain operative until further notice.

The Senior Superintendent of Police, Dima Hasao, has been directed to ensure strict enforcement of the order in letter and spirit.

The order was issued under the hand and seal of the District Magistrate on December 15, 2025, underscoring the administration's commitment to completing the key highway project within the stipulated timeframe.

Journalism fraternity mourns demise of Padmashree Prafulla Gobinda Baruah



HT Correspondent

MORIGAOON / NAGAON, Dec 15: The journalism fraternity across Assam has been plunged into deep mourning following the demise of Padmashree awardee and veteran journalist Prafulla Gobinda Baruah, Chairman Emeritus and former Managing Director of The Assam Tribune group of publications.

Baruah, the son of legendary media personality Radha Govind Baruah, passed away while undergoing treatment, leaving behind an

irreplaceable void in the field of journalism and public life.

Expressing grief over his passing, Chairman of the Morigaon Anchalik Sangbadik Sanstha (MASS), Bubumoni Goswami, described Baruah as a guiding force and pathfinder of journalism in Assam, stating that his death marks an irreparable loss to society.

The Morigaon District Journalists' Association also expressed profound condolences, remembering him as a towering figure whose contribution to journalism set high

professional and ethical standards.

The All Assam Journalists' Union (AAJU) likewise expressed deep sorrow over the demise of the Padmashree awardee, acknowledging his lifelong dedication to journalism and public service. In a condolence message, AAJU president Pankaj Kumar Nath and general secretary Nakul Talukdar described Baruah as a socially committed writer and editor who played a pivotal role in shaping modern journalism in Assam.

They said his efforts towards the promotion of the Assamese language and literature would be remembered for generations.

The AAJU leadership recalled Baruah's remarkable achievements and his enduring contribution to the cultural, literary and national life of Assam.

They extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

The news of Baruah's demise has sent shockwaves across the media fraternity, with journalists, writers and intellectuals remembering him as a visionary who helped shape the media landscape of Assam.

His legacy, colleagues said, will continue to inspire future generations of journalists and writers in the years to come.

Two books by poet Ashrumoni Ghosh released

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Dec 15: Two books authored by poet Ashrumoni Ghosh—Bihu Aitiya Aru Parampara and Anunad—were released at a function held at the residence of Padmashree Imran Shah here on Monday.

The books were formally released by Padmashree Imran Shah, vice chancellor of Jagannath Barooah University Dr Jyoti Prakash Saikia, and literary pensioner Dipali Bhattacharya Barua.

On the occasion, the speakers encouraged the young poet to explore social life more deeply as a source of inspiration for future literary creations.

The programme was anchored by Sontosh Dutta and attended by a number of literary personalities and well-wishers, including Bharat Sharma, Tridib Bhuyan, Suryakanta Das, Jayiyoti Gogoi, Prasanta Borghain, Shyamanta Ghosh, Aljijur Rahman, Riju Gogoi, Nazulla Rahman and Firoj Khan.

All Assam Poets' Conference Kamrup unit holds first executive meet

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 15: The first executive meeting of the Kamrup district unit of the All Assam Poets' Conference was held recently at the Yuva Vikas Kendra, Amingaon. The meeting was chaired by district president Jagannath Kalita, while the objectives of the meeting were outlined by secretary Achyut Kalita.

Several proposals placed by the office bearers were discussed in detail.

The proceedings formally began with a devotional song rendered by Sabita Devi Barua.

Among those present were organising secretary of the All Assam Poets' Conference Mrinal Bora, vice president Bhavesh Deka, advisors Anil Goswami, Manik Dutta, Pomi Goswami and Runumi Talukdar, vice president Dr Shewali Das Kalita, treasurer Shukleswar Mali, organising secretary Medini Mohan Bhat-



tacharya, district assistant secretary Mirza Lutfur Rahman, magazine editor Champawati Kalita and newly appointed publicity secretary Dharmendra Bora.

Also in attendance were Chhaya-gaon branch president Anil Saud and secretary Mridul Kalita, Krishnachura branch president Himajyoti Talukdar, North Guwahati Poets' Conference secretary Jayashree Sharma Bhattacharya, along with executive members Jon Deka, Bidita Bhattacharya, Sabita

Devi Barua, Himali Kalita, Sanjay Kumar Das and Prithak Kalita.

As part of the programme, the novel "Jibanar Natun Khoj" (A New Step in Life) authored by Dr Shewali Das Kalita was formally released by president Jagannath Kalita.

The meeting also featured poetry recitations by participating poets.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by secretary Achyut Kalita.

Prabhari officer reviews Rongmongve Block development

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Dec 15: Dr Pramod Kumar, IRS, Central Prabhari Officer for all three aspirational blocks of Karbi Anglong, on Monday carried out an extensive review of ongoing developmental activities in Rongmongve Block, with a focus on implementation under NITI Aayog's Aspirational Blocks Programme.

During the visit, Dr Kumar reviewed the functioning of key public institutions including health facilities, schools and various line departments to assess service delivery at the grassroots level.

He interacted with officials to understand on-ground challenges and examined sector-wise progress to ensure that developmental benefits are effectively reaching the intended beneficiaries.

He also held interactions with members of self-help groups and representatives of farmer producer companies, stressing the importance of livelihood enhancement, income generation and sustainable development.

Emphasising community participation, Dr Kumar underlined the role of SHGs and FPCs as crucial drivers of the local economy.

A detailed assessment of funds



allocated by NITI Aayog was undertaken, with emphasis on transparency, timely execution and outcome-based planning.

Dr Kumar provided strategic guidance to district and block-level officials, calling for stronger convergence among departments to maximise impact and avoid duplication of efforts.

The review was facilitated by coordinated efforts of the district administration, which ensured active participation of all line departments and effective presentation of

block-wise progress and challenges.

Dr Kumar appreciated the proactive role of the administration in enabling meaningful discussions and constructive feedback.

He highlighted that close coordination between the district administration and line departments is vital for accelerating development in aspirational blocks.

Dr Kumar is scheduled to visit Nilip Block on Tuesday to conduct a similar review of institutions and developmental initiatives.

Road mishap claims two

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Dec 15: Two persons died on the spot in a tragic road accident late Sunday night at Saru-Matikhola in Kheroni, West Karbi Anglong.

According to police sources, a high-speed motorcycle crashed into a roadside culvert at a bend on the road connecting Zerikingding and Kheroni after the rider reportedly lost control of the vehicle.

The impact of the collision was severe, resulting in the instantaneous death of both occupants.

The identities of the deceased have not yet been established.

The motorcycle involved in the accident bore registration number AS01 DH 3994 and was travelling towards Kheroni at the time of the mishap.

Kheroni Police reached the spot soon after the incident and have launched an investigation to ascertain the exact cause of the accident.

Cluster-level sports meet held in Socheng

HT Correspondent

HAMREN, Dec 15: The Cluster Block Level Sports Meet 2025-26 was successfully organised from December 13 to 14 at the Rongke Rongpi Memorial ME School Playground, Dikheng, and Gandhi Vidya Pith Hindi ME School, Kheroni Chariali, under the Socheng Development Block of West Karbi Anglong district.

The two-day event was organised by MY BHARAT Kendra, West Karbi Anglong, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, in collaboration with the Social Development Organisation, Kheroni Chariali.

The sports meet was inaugurated by Sukhdev Singh, Principal of Adarsh Senior Secondary School.

Jeetendra Harijan, president of the Social Development Organisation, delivered the welcome address and felicitated the guests, referees and officials. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, youth clubs and sports teams representing various clusters of the block. Group events including men's volleyball,

women's kabaddi, tug of war and relay race were conducted, highlighting teamwork and sportsmanship among the participants.

In the group events, Kheroni Chariali Youth Association emerged winners in volleyball, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Rongkheng, clinched the kabaddi title, while Adarsh Senior Secondary School won the tug of war event. Trophies, certificates and sports kits were distributed among the winners and runners-up.

Several individual indigenous events such as long jump, discus throw and 100-metre sprint for both men and women were also held.

Medals and certificates were awarded to first, second and third position holders in all individual categories. The event was attended by Bharat Sahu, assistant teacher; Radheshyam Chauhan, former sports teacher; Dr Bhanu Harijan, cardiologist; Kausalya Chetry, sports teacher; Premika Engphi, principal of KGBV Rongkheng Block; Christina Rongpipi of KGBV Socheng Block; and Dhanraj Harijan, former NYV, among others.

63rd foundation day observed

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Dec 15: PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya, Diphu, a leading educational institution in Karbi Anglong district, celebrated the 63rd foundation day of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan on Monday with enthusiasm and a series of cultural programmes. The event marked an important milestone in the more than six-decade-long journey of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan in promoting quality education and nation-building.

Students, parents, teachers and alumni participated in the celebrations, reflecting the collective spirit of the Kendriya Vidyalaya family.

The programme was held in the presence of the chief guest and other dignitaries. This year's nationwide foundation day celebration is being observed on the theme "Empowering Learners, Enriching the Nation!", which aligns with the vision of PM SHRI schools as future-ready institutions aimed at nurturing 21st-century skills among learners.

Winter Festival celebrated at Prayash Academy

HT Correspondent

GOLAGHAT, Dec 15: Prayash Academy Senior Secondary School organised a day-long Winter Festival on Monday, showcasing the talents of students through a range of cultural and co-curricular activities.

The festival was inaugurated by Hemagiri Narah, Inspector of Schools, who said such programmes help reduce academic stress and rejuvenate the spirit of students.

He also appealed to students, parents and teachers to minimise the use of mobile phones, describing excessive screen time as a major source of distraction affecting learning and focus.

Earlier, the ceremonial lamp was lit by Mohendra Nath Saikia, Rector of the academy.

The programme was attended by several distinguished guests, including journalist Kishore Dutta, journalist Pranab Chakraborty, educationist Dr Jatin Nath and Dr Jagot Chandra Saikia, who addressed the gathering and shared their views on education and cultural values.

Students from seven partner schools participated in the festival, presenting a variety of cultural programmes that reflected their roots and identity.

Certificates were distributed to winners of essay writing, drawing and poetry competitions.

Diploma certificates were also awarded to successful candidates of the GIS course by Oddey Saikia during the programme.

The event was coordinated by principal Jatindra Saikia and Rashmita Saikia. The festival concluded with a group rendition of Zubeen Garg's "Mayabini" followed by the national song, marking the end of the celebrations on a patriotic note.

Focus on empowering participants by enhancing skills in marketing, branding, packaging and digital selling of agri-food products

Five-day digitised value chain programme on agri-food marketing concludes

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Dec 15: A five-day Digitised Value Chain Programme on Agri-Food Marketing and Branding concluded on Monday at the Central Institute of Technology (CIT), Kokrajhar, with the aim of strengthening market access and branding capabilities of rural entrepreneurs and agri-producers.

The programme, which began on December 10, was organised by the Science, Technology and Innovation Hub (STI-Hub), CIT Kokrajhar, with funding support from the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, in collaboration with the North East Impact Foundation.

The initiative focused on empowering participants by enhancing skills in marketing, branding, packaging and digital selling of agri-food products.

It sought to address key challenges faced by rural producers, including limited market visibility, rising competition and restricted access to wider markets, while promoting sustainable and inclusive agri-business practices.



The sessions opened with an overview of agri-food marketing fundamentals, market analysis and customer segmentation.

This was followed by practical discussions on branding, product storytelling and eco-friendly packaging solutions tailored to local conditions.

Participants were also trained on labelling

standards, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India compliance and packaging modifications suited for different market segments.

A dedicated segment of the programme focused on distribution channels and digital market linkages.

Participants received guidance on on-

boarding processes for e-commerce and digital platforms such as Walmart, Flipkart, Meesho and the Open Network for Digital Commerce.

The final day highlighted the use of digital tools, including Facebook and WhatsApp Business, for product promotion, customer engagement and enhancing online sales preparedness.

The programme drew participation from farmers, rural entrepreneurs, self-help group members, agri-processors and stakeholders from allied sectors such as dairy, poultry, fisheries and sericulture from Kokrajhar and surrounding areas.

The sessions were conducted by the STI-Hub team under the guidance of Co-Principal Investigator Dr Anuck Islary and Principal Investigator Dr Pranav Kumar Singh.

Organisers said the initiative is expected to strengthen the digitised agri-food value chain by improving product value addition, expanding market access and increasing income opportunities, thereby contributing to sustainable rural economic development in the region.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

If nominated, I will not run; if elected, I will not serve. -William Tecumseh Sherman

B'desh general elections on Feb 12

The announcement by the Bangladesh Election Commission on the holding of general elections in Bangladesh on February 12 next year is a major development in the evolving politics of South Asia, especially with respect to India. The EC statement was welcomed by all the contesting political parties. Significantly, the voters list consisting of 12.77 crore of Bangladeshi citizens has not created any big controversy as is happening in India now. The mainstream political parties like Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jamaat E Islami and National Citizens Party (NCP) have been working on the finalisation of candidates for the 300 member national assembly. The NCP has been the first party to officially announce the names of some candidates. The Awami League which ruled from 2009 to 2024 till the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5 last year, has been excluded from participation in the national elections on February 12. There is no major protest demonstrations by the Awami League within the country after the election announcement by the EC but Sheikh Hasina herself came out with a strong statement from her hideout in India terming the elections as illegal as well as the Election Commission as an illegal body. It is not clear as of now what will be the position of the large number of Awami League supporters on the polling day. Some recent opinion polls have put AL supporters at the level of 15 per cent, much more than the NCP.

Apart from the national elections on February 12 to elect the new national assembly, the Bangladesh voters will also take part in the referendum on the July charter for the framing of a new constitution of the country. If the referendum is yes in favour of the charter, a new Constitution Reforms Council will be set up to frame the Constitution. A new Council will also be formed on the basis of the proportionality of the elected political parties. It has to be recognized that the July Charter contains very ambitious objectives for setting up a value based transparent government and administration. The real test is whether the new political leadership will be able to implement the agenda in full spirit. The experience of political governance in Bangladesh since its formation in 1971 is that the ruling political parties fail to implement effectively a transparent governance.

For India, the political outlook is not that rosy whoever wins the February 12 polls in Bangladesh. BNP is sceptical of the Narendra Modi government but among the main three parties, BNP is the only party which can be trusted in terms of working for normal diplomacy. Jamaat and NCP are out and out anti-Indian parties. But Sheikh Hasina's staying in India and her political activities are still sore points with the BNP.

Family Economics: The heart of every household

By: Chafikhur Rahman

In every family, whether big or small, rural or urban, money plays a very important role in daily life. Managing that money wisely is what we call family economics. It is the study of how families earn, spend, save and use their limited resources to meet their needs and live happily. In simple words, family economics means how a family plans and uses its income to achieve a better and more secure life.

Every family has a certain amount of income, but their wants are many. Some needs are basic, like food, clothing and shelter. Others are secondary, like entertainment, travel or luxury goods. Since it is not possible to buy everything, families have to make careful decisions about what to spend and what to save. These decisions show the family's priorities and values.

A major part of family economics is budgeting. A family budget is a plan that helps in using money properly. It lists the expected income and all the expenses for a month or a year. Through budgeting, families can avoid wasteful spending and save for important needs such as education, health or emergencies. A well-prepared budget helps a family live peacefully without financial stress. It also teaches discipline and responsibility.

Another key aspect of family economics is income management. The main sources of income for a family include salaries, business profits, pensions or government support. Some families may also earn money from property, agriculture or small businesses. Managing income means using money in a way that fulfills family needs and also ensures future security. For instance, after paying for food, rent and utilities, a family should keep aside some money as savings. Savings play a vital role in family life. It means setting aside a part of the income for future use. Savings help a family in times of emergency, such as illness, job loss or unexpected expenses. Savings also help achieve future goals like buying a house, educating children or celebrating a family function. Even small savings made regularly can grow into a big amount over time.

In addition to saving, families should also learn about investment. Investment means using money to earn more money in the future. It can be in the form of bank deposits, insurance, gold, land or shares. Wise investments help a family build wealth, provide financial independence and ensure a secure future. However, investment decisions must be taken carefully after proper planning and knowledge.

Apart from money, family economics also deals with the use of non-monetary resources like time, energy, and skills. For example, a mother who cooks food at home saves money that would otherwise be spent on restaurants. A father who repairs things himself instead of hiring a mechanic saves extra costs. Family members who share household responsibilities save both time and energy. This teamwork not only supports good management but also strengthens family relationships.

Family economics is also influenced by social and cultural factors. In some societies, families prefer spending more on festivals, religious activities or social functions. In others, families focus more on education, health or business growth. The family's background, traditions, lifestyle and goals all affect how money is spent and saved.

In today's fast-changing world, family economics has become even more important. With increasing prices, job uncertainty and new lifestyle expenses, families must learn to adapt. Modern technology has made financial management easier through online banking, digital payments and investment apps. But it has also brought new challenges like over-spending through online shopping or misuse of credit cards. Therefore, every family must learn how to balance traditional wisdom with modern tools to stay financially strong.

In conclusion, family economics is not just about money, it is about understanding life. It teaches us to balance needs and wants, to save for the future while enjoying the present, and to use our resources wisely. When every member of a family takes part in managing resources, the household becomes more peaceful, stable and happy.

A well-managed family economy builds not only a strong home but also a strong nation, because happy and financially secure families together create a prosperous society.

Land Rights and the Future of the Indigenous People

Economic hardship and lack of employment opportunities are primary reasons why indigenous people lose land. As the rural economy weakens, the new generation of youth loses interest in agricultural work. Instead of accepting agriculture as a respectable profession, they view it with disdain. In the hope of urban-oriented tendencies and higher earnings with less effort, they sell ancestral property and migrate to cities.

Land is not merely a geographical element or an economic resource for humans; rather, it is the fundamental foundation of a nation's existence, culture, and identity. The relationship between humans and land is not confined solely to cultivation or the construction of dwellings. It represents a community's right to self-determination and a protective shield for future generations. In the context of Assam, land rights and the future of the indigenous people have emerged as the most significant and sensitive issues of the present time. The struggles that the indigenous people of Assam have waged across various historical periods to hold onto their land were not merely for economic interests, but also essential for preserving their linguistic and cultural distinctiveness. However, in recent times, amid changing political, social, and economic environments, the rights of the indigenous people over land have been observed to weaken progressively. This trend necessitates an impartial and profound analysis of the kind of threats it may pose to the existence of indigenous society in the near future. Understanding how a nation can lose its political and social dominance by losing land ownership is the call of the present moment. The uncertainty centred on land that prevails today at every level of Assam's social life is not a temporary problem; rather, it is a harbinger of a profound national crisis.

The structure of Assam's indigenous society is primarily dependent on agriculture and nature. For ages, the people of this region have sustained their lives through agricultural work, regarding the land as Mother Earth. Our folk culture, songs, music, festivals—all are intricately intertwined with land and agriculture. From Bihu to the observance of fasting festivals, every tradition reflects our agrarian social system. Yet, in the frenzy of globalization and rapid modernization, extensive changes have occurred in traditional ways of life. Land is no longer merely a sacred space for crop production; in the contemporary world, it has transformed into an extreme commercial commodity. This process of commercialization has created a complex crisis in Assam's social structure. The land that was once protected generationally, from which a family sustained itself, now shows an increasing tendency to change hands easily in exchange for money. Particularly due to the expansion of urbanization and industrialization, the amount of agricultural land is decreasing rapidly, and in its place, commercial establishments or high-rise buildings are emerging. In this process, indigenous people have lost not only their land but also their traditional occupations and livelihoods. When an indigenous farmer sells his piece of land, he does not merely sell a plot; he forever extinguishes his self-respect, his productive power, and the foothold for future generations.

The question of land rights is intimately connected with demographic changes in Assam. Historically, continuous migration to Assam has had deep and far-reaching effects on the state's demography. People arriving from neighbouring states or countries at various times have succeeded in establishing roots in Assam's fertile land and, over time, have become owners of local land. This process occurs so slowly and subtly that local people fail to perceive its severity in the initial stages. When the demographic balance shifts, political power inevitably transfers as well. It is a natural law of sociology that economic and political power goes to those who hold land ownership. If indigenous people lose their rights over land, a situation may arise where they become insignificant or second-class citizens in their own state. Data already indicating that indigenous people have become minorities in several districts of the state carry signs that this apprehension is turning into reality. Despite legal protective measures, laxity in their practical implementation is observed. Although land policies or laws formulated by governments at different times have attempted to protect indigenous interests, non-indigenous or external forces have succeeded in encroaching upon or purchasing land through loopholes in their effective execution. This change is on the verge of altering Assam's political map.

Various laws have been enacted since the British era to protect indigenous land rights, such as Chapter X of the Assam Land Revenue Regulation Act of 1886. The primary objective of forming tribal belts and

blocks was to prevent people from non-protected classes from acquiring land belonging to protected classes. This system was expected to provide a security circle for tribal and backward classes. Regrettably, over the past several decades, extensive encroachment and illegal land transactions have occurred even in these protected areas. Administrative indifference, corruption, and negligence by some government officials are primarily held responsible in this regard. Often, even though documents specify land as protected, in reality, people from non-protected classes have built structures and are residing there. Moreover, the lack of awareness among indigenous people has intensified this crisis. The mentality of selling land haphazardly for temporary financial gains or to purchase luxury items is pushing the nation's future toward darkness. Money obtained from selling land may temporarily fulfil some needs or allow the purchase of an expensive vehicle, but its long-term consequences are dire. Once land rights pass to others, retrieving them becomes almost impossible. Therefore, no matter how much legal protection exists, unless a sense of responsibility and awareness toward land is awakened in every individual of society, no law can prevent this decline.

As urban-centred civilization rapidly engulfs rural society, the character of land use is changing. With the expansion of metropolitan cities and Assam, agricultural land in adjacent villages is being converted into housing projects or industries. Land once used for agriculture is now being utilized for industries or commercial establishments. This construction activity carried out in the name of development often forces indigenous people to relocate. Although industrialization is necessary for the state's development, if that development endangers the existence of local people, the acceptability of such development certainly becomes a matter for scrutiny. Policies adopted by government or private entities in the name of land acquisition often harm small farmers or poor indigenous people. Due to the lack of proper compensation or scientifically planned rehabilitation, many families become homeless and must seek shelter in urban slums after losing their foundation. Thus, those who were once landowners gradually turn into day labourers. This unplanned process of urban expansion has not only broken the economic backbone of indigenous people but also shattered their social structure.

Additionally, river erosion is one of the primary and most severe causes of land problems in Assam. The Brahmaputra and its tributaries devour thousands of bighas of fertile agricultural land and populated villages every year. People who lose everything to this natural disaster face a difficult struggle to re-establish land rights when seeking new places. Having lost their foundational land, these people are often forced to take shelter by roadsides or on embankments. Tragically, even though they possess land pattas in government records, in reality, since that land has merged into the river's bed, they effectively become landless. The slow pace and bureaucratic complexities in government schemes for providing land pattas or rehabilitating erosion-affected people have made the problem even more severe. In many cases, erosion-affected indigenous people take shelter in forests or government khas land due to lack of rehabilitation, leading to new conflicts. Unless permanent rehabilitation arrangements are made for these people afflicted by nature's wrath, a large section of indigenous people may remain permanently landless and destitute.

The encroachment of thousands of bighas of land belonging to Assam's sattras and religious institutions is an extremely unfortunate and shameful matter for the nation. Sattras are not merely places of religious worship; they are the life centres of Assamese culture, art, and literature. The encroachment of land belonging to these institutions established by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva and Sri Sri Madhavdeva means striking at the foundation of our cultural heritage. Government data and various reports over the past decades show that organized syndicates have encroached upon sattras with extreme cunning and established permanent settlements there. Although sattradhikars or management committees are fighting legal battles in this regard, the results are not always satisfactory. If the land of these institutions linked to indigenous identity cannot be protected, preserving our cultural distinctiveness will

become impossible in the future. Not only sattras but also various temples, namghars, and forest areas are being systematically encroached upon. Settlements established by destroying forests not only disrupt environmental balance but also infringe upon the traditional rights of local forest-dwelling and tribal people. Depriving indigenous tribes living in harmony with nature of their natural habitats carries indications of a profound social conflict.

Economic hardship and lack of employment opportunities are primary reasons why indigenous people lose land. As the rural economy weakens, the new generation of youth loses interest in agricultural work. Instead of accepting agriculture as a respectable profession, they view it with disdain. In the hope of urban-oriented tendencies and higher earnings with less effort, they sell ancestral property and migrate to cities. However, if they fail to achieve permanent settlement in cities due to lack of suitable skills, they ultimately become destitute. Due to the absence of modern technology in agriculture, improved market systems, and proper distribution of government aid, farming is not considered profitable in many areas. In contrast, land brokers or syndicates entice poor and financially distressed farmers with monetary inducements to sell land. Many fall prey to brokers' provocations and sell their only asset—the land. Thus, rural society is gradually transforming into landless labourers. This economic inequality, where land ac-

cumulates in the hands of capitalists or outsiders from indigenous people, cannot rule out the possibility of giving birth to a class struggle in the future. To keep land ownership intact, strengthening the rural economy and establishing agriculture-based industries is urgently needed so that people can find dignified livelihoods on their own land.

There is a direct and inseparable relationship between the definition of indigenous people and land rights. In the context of implementing Clause 6 of the Assam Accord, constitutional, legal, and administrative protections for indigenous people are clearly mentioned, where land rights preservation is a highly important matter. However, due to the prolonged failure to reach consensus on the definition of indigenous people, these protective measures have not been fully effective. If it is not clear who is indigenous, whom will the legal framework for land preservation protect? Exploiting this legal ambiguity, many non-indigenous people have succeeded in obtaining land pattas through fake documents. For proper implementation of government land policies, establishing an accurate citizen register and clearly defining indigenous people is indispensable. Recent initiatives like Mission Basundhara have instilled some hope in correcting land records, but maintaining their continuity and integrity remains challenging. The government's responsibility does not end with merely providing land pattas; strict legal restrictions should exist to ensure that such land is not transferred in the future. Especially, the legal loopholes in transferring protected class land to non-protected classes need to be closed permanently. Otherwise, there is no guarantee that an indigenous person receiving a patta today will not sell that land to a non-indigenous person tomorrow.

The role of intellectual circles, student organizations, and conscious civil society is extremely important in this field. Merely giving emotional slogans or political speeches on land rights will not yield permanent solutions. What is needed is a realistic, long-term, and scientifically based plan. Land-centred disputes among Assam's various communities must be resolved through mutual discussions to adopt a common and universally acceptable land policy. Progress must be made while maintaining the balance so that the interests of tribal and non-tribal indigenous people are not disrupted from any side. Currently, the root of various communities raising demands for autonomous governance or separate states lies in the desire to establish exclusive rights over land and resources. To curb this separatist tendency, the land rights of all indigenous people in the state must be ensured. Only when every community feels that their land and existence are secure will the process of forming a greater Assamese society strengthen. Stability and peace will prevail in society only through equitable land distribution and granting ownership to genuine beneficiaries.

Lack of political will is a major obstacle to solving this problem. In the interest of vote-bank politics, governments at various times hesitate to take strict measures against illegal encroachers. When narrow political interests suppress national interests, the future of a nation becomes endangered. To protect indigenous land rights, the government must prioritize national interests above party lines. The administration must be freed from unnecessary political interference and empowered to enforce land laws strictly and impartially. Similarly, the government's alertness in complying with high court directives must increase. Exemplary punishment must be given to anyone involved in land scandals, illegal allocation of government land, or forgery of land documents, no matter how powerful they may be, to curb this widespread corruption. In the current digital era, efforts to bring transparency through digitization of land records are positive steps. However, alongside technology use, human integrity and ethics are equally necessary. Technology is merely a tool; unless the mindset of those operating it changes, the form of corruption will only change, not be eradicated.

It has become essential to radically change the perception and mindset toward land among today's youth generation. They must be made to understand that land is not merely a commercial item to be sold for money, but the primary source of production, creativity, and self-reliance. Successful examples must be presented before them showing how one can become self-reliant and financially prosperous even on small land through modern agricultural methods, organic farming, fish rearing, animal husbandry, horticulture, etc. Including practical curricula on agriculture and land management in the education system will enable students to realize the importance of land and its productive capacity from an early age. A nation that does not know how to respect its land, that views agricultural work with contempt, can never keep its roots alive. The future of indigenous people will depend on how much land we can secure for our successors and how much interest we can instil in them toward land. If we sell land today for temporary pleasures and live luxurious lives, tomorrow our children will have to toil as slaves in others' homes in their own country. The time has come to realize this harsh and merciless truth.

A new agricultural revolution is needed for the preservation of agricultural land. Assam's soil is extremely fertile, with the potential for three crops per year. However, due to traditional methods and lack of irrigation, much land remains fallow for most of the year. This fallow land attracts encroachers. Through joint efforts of government and society, if these lands can be made productive year-round, economic development will occur on one hand, and land security will be ensured on the other. Establishing cooperative-based agricultural farms, fixing fair prices for agricultural products, and adopting permanent measures for flood and erosion control will attract farmers back to agriculture. When land can provide financial security to people, they will not easily come forward to sell it. There is no alternative to transforming agriculture into a profitable business to revive attachment to land.

In conclusion, it can be said that land rights and the future of indigenous people are two sides of the same coin. Without land, indigenous people have no existence, just as a tree cannot survive without roots. This problem cannot be resolved merely by imposing it on the government or administration. It is the national and personal responsibility of every Assamese or indigenous person. The land we have inherited from our ancestors is not merely our property; it is a trust that it is our moral duty to pass on securely to our successors. For that, strict laws, strong political will, economic self-reliance, and a powerful social awakening are required. The day every indigenous person learns to love land as dearly as life, the day selling land is considered shameful and criminal, that day the future of indigenous people can certainly be declared secure. Otherwise, the possibility cannot be ruled out that we will be marked in the pages of history as a landless, identity-less, and destitute nation. Unless we become alert and conscious while there is still time, in the coming days, there will be no option but regret. The struggle to protect land rights is not merely for land; it is a struggle for existence to safeguard our identity, our language, and our culture, where there is no place for defeat.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himanshu Ranjan Bhuyan



PG Baruah: The Enduring Voice of Assam's Conscience



By: Dipak Kurmi

The passing of Padmashree Prafulla Govinda Baruah marks the end of an era in the intellectual, journalistic, and public life of Assam. He breathed his last at around 9.30 pm on Sunday at Apollo Hospital, Guwahati, succumbing to age-related ailments. He was 93. Widely known as P.G. Baruah, he was not merely the editor, owner, or managing director of The Assam Tribune Group, but a towering moral presence whose life and work shaped generations of journalists and readers across Northeast India. His demise has cast a deep pall of gloom over the newspaper industry in Assam, creating a void that is widely acknowledged as impossible to fill. He is survived by his wife and two daughters, along with a wide circle of colleagues, admirers, and associates who regarded him as a guiding light.

Born in Dibrugarh, Prafulla Govinda Baruah's life was rooted in Assam even as his vision remained global.

While some records mention his birth date as July 26, 1933, other authoritative accounts note July 26, 1932, reflecting the long and meticulously documented journey of a man whose life spanned nearly a century of change. His early education took place in Dibrugarh, after which he passed his matriculation examination from Gauhati University in 1949, securing First Division with letter marks in two subjects. He went on to complete his Intermediate Science course from Cotton College in 1951 and graduated with Honours in Economics from Presidency College, Calcutta, in 1953. His academic brilliance continued with a Master's degree from Presidency College in 1955, followed by an LL.B. degree from Calcutta University in 1957, where he emerged as a gold medalist, an achievement that reflected both intellectual rigor and disciplined scholarship.

Despite possessing the credentials for a flourishing legal or academic career, Baruah chose journalism, a pro-

profession he believed was inseparable from public service. In 1964, he received a scholarship to study journalism and printing technology at the Thomson Foundation in the United Kingdom, equipping himself with international exposure at a time when such opportunities were rare. Even before this, he had entered the newspaper industry in 1962, demonstrating an early commitment to the field. In 1966, he took over as the Managing Director of The Assam Tribune Group, a responsibility he shouldered with quiet authority and unwavering principles. The Assam Tribune, founded in 1939 by his illustrious father Radha Govinda Baruah, was already a respected institution, but under Prafulla Govinda Baruah's leadership it grew into the most circulated English daily in Northeast India and a paper whose credibility became its strongest currency.

From 1997 until his death, Baruah served as the Editor of The Assam Tribune, combining managerial acumen with editorial depth. His steward-

ship was marked by an uncompromising commitment to editorial integrity and a deep sense of responsibility toward the people of the region. The newspapers of the Assam Tribune Group, under his guidance, played a decisive role during every major crisis faced by the Northeast. Whether it was the Chinese aggression of 1962, the Indo-Pak war of 1971, or persistent issues such as infiltration and demographic anxieties, Baruah ensured that the voice of the people of the region reached the corridors of power in New Delhi. His newspapers stood firmly with the people during times of uncertainty, reflecting his belief that journalism must always serve both the nation and society at large.

Recognition for his lifelong contribution came from across the spectrum. In 2018, he was awarded the Padma Shri for his contribution to the field of journalism, particularly in what was described as a backward part of the country, a phrase that only underscored how his work brought national attention to the Northeast. Earlier and later, he was honoured by numerous institutions and personalities. The Assam Sahitya Sabha felicitated him for his contributions to literature, art, and culture, while the late Kamala Saikia Trust honoured him for upholding the highest values of journalism, especially poignant given that the trust commemorates a journalist who lost his life to militant violence. The Dr. B. Borooah Cancer Institute presented him with an appreciation citation for his role in creating public awareness on cancer control, reflecting his engagement with social causes beyond the newsroom.

Baruah's contribution to literature and culture was as significant as his journalistic legacy. Through his publishing house, Sahitya Prakash, he launched Goriyasi, a monthly literary magazine that became an important

platform for Assamese literature. The magazine, along with books published under the same banner, nurtured and promoted some of the most prominent literary voices of the state. His role in laying the foundation of RG Baruah College further demonstrated his belief in education as the cornerstone of social progress. He also founded Jyotirupa, a socio-cultural organisation dedicated to encouraging young talent. Through annual drama festivals, competitions, and live performances by renowned artists from across the country, Jyotirupa enriched Assam's cultural life and connected local audiences with national artistic traditions.

Equally notable was Baruah's engagement with Assam's economic and developmental discourse. Along with close associates, he organised a series of seminars under the banner of Assam Prakash, bringing together experts from diverse fields, including economics, to deliberate on pathways for the state's development. The recommendations that emerged from these discussions were formally submitted to the government, reflecting his belief that informed dialogue should shape public policy. He also sponsored a major programme on Investment Opportunities in the Northeast, attended by eminent figures including former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, thereby positioning Assam and the wider region within a national economic conversation.

For those who worked with him, Prafulla Govinda Baruah was far more than an editor or employer. Employees of The Assam Tribune often described him as a father figure, someone who stood by them during personal and professional crises. His leadership style combined discipline with empathy, authority with humility, and vision with approachability. This human dimension of his personality was perhaps the reason why his influence

extended far beyond the printed page, shaping institutional culture and professional ethics in lasting ways.

The tributes that followed his passing reflected the breadth of his impact. Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, condoling his death on X, described him as a towering figure in Assam's journalistic landscape, praising his lifelong dedication to principled journalism and his immense contribution to literature, education, and public life. Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal remembered him as a doyen of journalism and Chairman Emeritus of The Assam Tribune Group, whose unwavering commitment to editorial integrity left an indelible mark on society. The All Assam Students' Union and numerous other organisations joined in mourning his loss. Earlier, during the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of The Assam Tribune in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had famously remarked that while the people of the Northeast might manage without their morning cup of tea, they could not do without The Assam Tribune, a statement that spoke volumes about the newspaper's place in public life and, by extension, Baruah's leadership.

Prafulla Govinda Baruah's life was a rare synthesis of intellect, integrity, and institution-building. He belonged to a generation that saw journalism not as a career but as a calling, one that demanded courage, consistency, and compassion. As Assam and the Northeast move forward in an age of rapid media transformation, his legacy remains a benchmark against which journalistic purpose and public responsibility will continue to be measured. His passing is not merely the loss of an individual, but the closing of a luminous chapter in the story of Indian journalism. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)

Nitin Nabin a new face of authority: BJP's changing guard

By: Lalit Garg

Indian politics has long awaited a decisive generational transition, and that moment now appears to be unfolding. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the world's largest political organization, has taken a significant and symbolic step by appointing Nitin Nabin as its Working National President. Though formally described as an interim arrangement, the political messaging and organizational response surrounding this decision strongly suggest that it may pave the way for his eventual elevation as the party's full-time National President. This appointment is not merely an internal organizational adjustment. It reflects a deeper transformation in leadership philosophy, political planning, and future vision—both for the BJP and for Indian politics as a whole. The decision of the BJP Parliamentary Board fits squarely into the pattern of bold, unconventional, and forward-looking choices that have characterised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership over the past decade.

Nitin Nabin is no stranger to active politics. A five-time Member of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, he brings with him an intimate understanding of grassroots political realities. His career reflects a rare balance between organizational discipline and governance experience. Having served as National General Secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, he has been closely involved in cadre-building, youth mobilization, and ideological training—areas that form the backbone of the BJP's organizational strength. What distinguishes Nabin is that his leadership is not confined to rhetoric or symbolic politics. He has demonstrated an ability to build structures, energize workers, and sustain ideological clarity in challenging political environments. These qualities align closely with the BJP's foundational ethos—where institutions and collective purpose take precedence over individual prominence.

One of the defining features of Prime Minister Modi's political style has been his consistent trust in new leadership and generational renewal. Whether in ministerial appointments, the selection of chief ministers, or organizational restructuring, Modi has repeatedly signaled that the future must be prepared in the present. Nitin Nabin's appointment reflects this philosophy in action. This move also sends a larger message: the BJP is not merely focused on winning the next election cycle. Instead, it appears committed to shaping a long-term ideological and organizational leadership framework for the coming two to three decades. For a party seeking sustained relevance among younger voters—particularly first-time voters—this generational recalibration carries strategic importance.

Within the BJP's internal structure, the post of National President occupies a unique position. It is not just an administrative office but a crucial pivot of ideological balance and organizational

coordination. Traditionally, such appointments are made in close consultation with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), whose role in ideological dissemination, cadre development, and social outreach has been integral to the BJP's political success. Recent electoral experiences have underscored the importance of close alignment between the party organization and the Sangh Parivar. In this context, Nitin Nabin's appointment clearly reflects deep deliberation and consensus between the BJP leadership and the RSS. It suggests a shared assessment that youthful leadership, grounded in organizational discipline and ideological commitment, is essential for the party's next phase.

One of the most immediate challenges facing Nitin Nabin will be the upcoming West Bengal elections. For the BJP, West Bengal represents not merely an electoral contest but a broader ideological and cultural battleground. The state tests the party's capacity to navigate complex social identities, political polarization, and en-

tertainment. Traditionally, such appointments are made in close consultation with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), whose role in ideological dissemination, cadre development, and social outreach has been integral to the BJP's political success. Recent electoral experiences have underscored the importance of close alignment between the party organization and the Sangh Parivar. In this context, Nitin Nabin's appointment clearly reflects deep deliberation and consensus between the BJP leadership and the RSS. It suggests a shared assessment that youthful leadership, grounded in organizational discipline and ideological commitment, is essential for the party's next phase.

ment, and national commitment. He is known for maintaining direct communication with grassroots workers, understanding public concerns at a human level, and articulating them effectively in administrative and political forums. His working style demonstrates confidence in youth, a development-oriented outlook, and a preference for transparency. Perhaps the most defining trait of his political career is his consistent emphasis on responsibility over position. This approach has earned him credibility within the organization and respect across generational lines. Socially, Nitin Nabin hails from the Kayastha community and is the son of senior BJP leader Navin Kishore Sinha, yet his political rise has been driven largely by personal merit and organizational work rather than lineage. Currently serving as Minister for Road Construction in the Bihar government, he represents the Bankipur constituency in Patna. In the 2020 Bihar Assembly elections, he registered a decisive victory with a margin of nearly 84,000 votes, defeating Luv Sinha, son of Shatrughan Sinha, while Pushpam Priya Choudhary also suffered a significant defeat in the same contest. Earlier, in 2017, Nabin had drawn national attention by filing a seditious case against Congress leader Abdul Jalil Mastan, questioning his citizenship after controversial remarks allegedly urging public insult of the Prime Minister's image.

Beyond individual achievements, the BJP's strength lies in its identity as a cadre-based political movement, not merely an electoral party. From booth-level volunteers to national leadership, the organization emphasizes participation, discipline, and collective responsibility. Party workers view themselves not as instruments of power but as active partners in nation-building. This culture of trust, ideological commitment, and mutual respect between leadership and cadre remains the BJP's most enduring asset. It is this organizational DNA that allows the party to adapt, regenerate, and sustain momentum across political cycles.

Viewed in this broader context, Nitin Nabin's appointment as Working National President is far more than a routine elevation. It represents a strategic signal about the BJP's future direction—one that prioritizes youth leadership, ideological firmness, organizational discipline, and seamless coordination with the Sangh. If Nitin Nabin succeeds in navigating the complex challenges ahead—particularly in politically demanding regions like West Bengal—he will not only add a new chapter to the BJP's organizational history but also help redefine the contours of youth leadership in Indian politics. At this juncture, politics transcends the pursuit of power and becomes a reflection of vision, patience, and long-term foresight.



The Trump corollary and India's strategic future

By: Satyabrata Borah

The United States has long enjoyed a unique geopolitical position, buffered by vast oceans and abundant resources that allowed it to thrive with minimal external entanglement. As the 19th-century German statesman Otto von Bismarck famously observed, God seemed to have a special providence for fools, drunkards, and the United States of America. This natural advantage meant that global power projection was often a choice rather than a necessity for Washington. The new National Security Strategy released by the Trump administration in late 2025 revives this insular impulse, prominently declaring a pivot toward the Western Hemisphere through the assertion of a "Trump Corollary" to the historic Monroe Doctrine. This corollary aims to restore American preeminence in the Americas, denying non-hemispheric powers influence over key assets while addressing threats like migration and drug trafficking. It signals a broader recalibration of US grand strategy, one that prioritizes domestic renewal and selective engagement over the expansive primacy of recent decades.

This shift emerges amid profound domestic and international transformations. Internally, the United States grapples with polarized debates over its global role, with establishment voices advocating sustained hegemony clashing against calls for restraint. The Trump administration's document explicitly challenges the post-Cold War consensus of liberal internationalism, criticizing past elites for overextending American resources in pursuit of a unipolar order. Internationally, the erosion of Western dominance is unmistakable, as rising powers and the Global South increasingly withhold consent to US leadership. The strategy reflects this reality by emphasizing "flexible realism" and "America First" principles, accepting that the era of the United States single-handedly upholding a global order is over. It declares that propping up the world like Atlas is no longer feasible or desirable, implicitly acknowledging the advent of multipolarity without fully embracing a new architectural framework.

The NSS elevates the Western Hemisphere as the primary theater of American security, viewing it as the frontline for protecting the homeland. The Trump Corollary builds on the original 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which warned European powers against interference in the Americas, but adapts it to contemporary challenges. It commits the US to countering hostile foreign incursions, particularly from actors like China seeking economic leverage or strategic footholds. This includes safeguarding critical geographies such as the Panama Canal and Caribbean assets, while fostering partnerships to combat migration and narcotics. Military posture will readjust accordingly, shifting resources from distant commitments to hemispheric priorities. This regional focus is portrayed as a commonsense restoration of power, aligning with economic nationalism and border security imperatives.

In Europe, the strategy delivers blunt criticism, accusing the continent of civilizational decay through policies on migration, free speech suppression, and loss of self-confidence. It urges Europeans to reclaim their vitality, framing this as complementary to America's own domestic renaissance. Transatlantic ties are reformed transactionally, with less emphasis on unconditional support for institutions like NATO. The document signals a desire to negotiate an end to the Ukraine conflict as a core interest, aiming to reestablish strategic stability with Russia and prevent further alliance expansion. This marks a departure from confrontation, prioritizing de-escalation over indefinite containment.

Toward China, the approach is pragmatic rather than ideological. While recognizing strategic competition, particularly in economic domains and the Indo-Pacific, the NSS avoids escalation. It frames rivalry in terms of

business opportunities, trade routes, and maintaining preeminence, allowing for managed interdependence. Recent decisions, such as permitting exports of advanced Nvidia H200 AI chips to vetted Chinese customers in exchange for revenue shares, underscore this conflict-avoidance posture. Reassurances during tensions with allies like Japan further illustrate a preference for stability over provocation. The strategy maintains commitments to a free and open Indo-Pacific through alliances, but within a hierarchy where hemispheric concerns dominate.

This evolving US posture carries significant implications for India, a nation whose strategic partnerships with Washington deepened during the unipolar era. The NSS mentions India positively but sparingly, positioning it as a partner in Indo-Pacific stability and a counterweight in broader coalitions against Chinese influence. References highlight cooperation on critical minerals and joint efforts with Quad members to preserve regional security. Yet, India's role appears instrumental rather than central, a means to sustain US interests in the Western Pacific amid burden-shifting to frontline states. The document's silence on deeper bilateral commitments reflects a downgrading from earlier strategies that hailed India as a leading global power.

Delhi should approach these signals cautiously. The US-India relationship flourished under assumptions of American primacy and shared ideological threats, particularly containing China. That era has waned, and the NSS's transactional realism suggests Washington views partners through a narrower lens of utility. India's value lies in its geographic position and growing capabilities, but not as an indispensable ally warranting unqualified support. Notably, the strategy omits discussion of subcontinental dynamics, including Pakistan's deepening integration into Middle Eastern security frameworks. In 2025, Islamabad forged a Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement with Saudi Arabia, enhancing its role in Gulf stability and aligning with US efforts to bolster regional partners against Iranian threats. This development, coupled with historical US reliance on Pakistan in Middle Eastern contingencies, revives old frictions. Washington's endorsement of Pakistan's expanded security contributions underscores that the subcontinent remains an area of uncertainty in bilateral ties, potentially complicating India's regional ambitions.

For India, the NSS underscores the imperative of strategic autonomy in a multipolar world. Clinging to outdated paradigms of US-led order risks misalignment with emerging realities. Opportunities exist in diversified supply chains, where US efforts to reduce dependence on China could benefit Indian manufacturing in sectors like semiconductors and clean energy. Collaboration on public goods, such as digital infrastructure and health initiatives, offers avenues for influence without over-reliance. Yet, challenges abound: a more inward-focused America may free China to assert dominance in Asia, intensifying pressures along the Himalayas and in neighboring states. India's multi-alignment approach, balancing relations with the US, Russia, and others, gains renewed relevance.

The Trump administration's strategy refutes the ideological foundations of perpetual primacy, embracing a world where great powers coexist with defined spheres. It accepts multipolarity's inevitability, even as internal tensions between isolationist impulses and deep-state commitments persist. For India, this transition demands vigilance and adaptability. The US remains a vital partner, but no longer the guarantor of a favorable order. Delhi must navigate this landscape by strengthening indigenous capabilities, deepening ties with like-minded powers, and pursuing interests unencumbered by great-power rivalries. In an era where America steps back from global Atlas-like burdens, India's rise will depend on its own strategic foresight and resilience.

Rijju seeks apology from Rahul, Kharge in Parl for Cong workers' 'threat' to PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Dec 15: Union Minister Kiren Rijju on Monday sought an apology from Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi for their party workers' alleged threat to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's life.

At a hurriedly called press conference here, Rijju alleged that at Sunday's Congress rally in the national capital, some party workers had threatened to dig the grave of the Prime Minister, which was the "most unfortunate and tragic" thing to happen in Indian democracy.

"Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi should tender an apology for the Congress workers' threat to the life of the Prime Minister. They should tender the apology on the floor of both Houses of Parliament. It is most unfortunate and tragic that Congress workers openly declared to dig the grave of Prime Minister Modi," he said.

The parliamentary affairs minister said the workers and leaders of the Congress and the BJP are political rivals, not enemies. "We propagate different ideologies but work together for a developed India as dreamt by Prime Minister Modi," he said.

Rijju said the political leaders wish each other in public despite political fights, which are separate issues, and lead-



ers criticise each other in different ways.

"We oppose each other differently. We never think of killing each other, nor do we talk about that. What kind of mentality is this? What kind of practice is this where some people are threatening to kill political rivals openly?" he posed.

Rijju said Modi is the prime minister of 140 crore people, the prime minister of the largest democracy in the world.

"The whole world respects PM Modi, the whole of India respects PM Modi. But if some people in the opposition threaten to kill the prime minister, it is most unfortunate and tragic. It will not end by just condemning the incident.

"In Parliament, the Congress president

(Kharge) and the Leader of Opposition (Rahul Gandhi) should tender an apology. They should tender an apology to the country on the floor of Parliament," he said.

Rijju said if there is any humanity left in the Congress and if they respect the people of the country, they should immediately tender an apology in both houses of Parliament.

"Then only will we accept that they have admitted their mistake. Abusing a prime minister is not acceptable in a decent society. The prime minister has always said that we never consider the opposition as enemies but as political opponents.

"We are all working for the country. But to openly declare taking the life of the honourable prime minister, to dig the grave of Modi ji, is the most unfortunate thing we have seen in the political history of India," he said.

Stepping up the campaign on the issue of alleged election irregularities, top Congress leaders on Sunday attacked the BJP and the election commissioners at a 'Vote Chor Gaddi Chhod' rally in the national capital, alleging that "vote chori" is in the ruling party's DNA and its leaders were "gaddar" who were conspiring to take away voting rights of people and should be removed from power. (PTI)

New opportunity is party's blessing: BJP's national working president Nitin Nabin

PATNA, Dec 15: Newly appointed BJP national working president Nitin Nabin on Monday termed his elevation as a blessing of the party and thanked its leadership for the trust reposed in him.

Nabin, who is Bihar's PWD minister, pledged to carry forward the work of his late father and former BJP MLA Nabin Kishor Prasad Sinha.

He was talking to reporters this morning after paying floral tributes to a statue of his father at a park in Patna.

"I have always worked on the ideas of my father, who considered the party as his mother and prioritised the nation over everything. I think that is the reason the party has blessed me with this opportunity to continue working with BJP workers," he said.

The BJP leader also visited Patna's Mahavir Mandir to offer prayers.

Nabin was appointed on Sunday as the BJP national working president and is likely to eventually succeed JP Nadda as its national president, signalling a generational shift in the ruling party.

He expressed gratitude towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi and praised his leadership.

"Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, development has reached every town and village of the country. At the same time, Bharatiya Janata Party has also expanded its footprint and stands today as the party of the poor," he asserted.

Nabin emphasised that "no class in India today is left untouched" by the development schemes of the NDA government.

He claimed that PM Narendra Modi has taken the idea of 'Antyodaya' to every nook and corner of the country.

"Antyodaya was pioneered by personalities like Deendayal Upadhyaya and Syama Prasad Mookerjee, and promoted by Atal Bihari Vajpayee," Nabin said, adding that "now PM Modi has taken it to every village and town of the nation".

On the question of the party's strategy for the West Bengal elections, he said, "Be it Bengal, Assam or Uttar Pradesh, our party workers are always ready. This is the beauty of Bharatiya Janata Party. Others work during elections, but BJP



karyakartas work 24x7."

Nabin, 45, is considered dynamic, ideologically rooted and deeply committed to the organisation, party leaders said.

He also comes from the RSS background.

A five-time MLA, Nabin represents Bankipur assembly constituency in Bihar and has served twice as a minister in the Bihar government. (PTI)

Goa nightclub fire: HC converts civil suit into PIL

PANAJI, Dec 15: The Goa bench of Bombay High Court on Monday converted a civil suit against Birch by Romeo Lane at Arpora, where a devastating fire on December 6 killed 25 persons, into a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) observing "someone has to be held accountable in such kind of cases".

The HC also asked the state government to file a reply on permissions granted to the ill-fated nightclub.

The petition was filed by Pradeep Ghadi Amonkar and Sunil Divkar, owners of the land on which the nightclub stood.

Converting it into a PIL, the division bench of Justices Sarang Kotwal and Ashish Ashish Chavan said "someone has to be held accountable in such kind of cases". It observed that the local panchayat had failed to take suo motu cognisance of the club and had taken no action despite complaints.

Commercial operations were going in the structure despite it being served a demolition order, the HC bench pointed out.

Advocate Rohit Bras de Sa, the lawyer representing Amonkar and Divkar, was made amicus curie in the matter and has been asked to file a detailed affidavit in the matter. The bench asked the Goa government to reply on the process of permissions to be granted for such establishments. The HC bench fixed January 8 as the next date for hearing in the matter.

In their plea, Amonkar and Divkar had highlighted "the alarming pattern of statutory violations that have remained inadequately addressed despite multiple complaints, inspections, show-cause notices, and even a demolition order".

These violations not only constitute brazen contraventions of multiple state and national laws but also present immediate threats to public safety, ecological integrity, and the rule of law in the state of Goa, the petition contended. (PTI)

Govt to bring Bill replacing MGNREGA with new law guaranteeing 125 days of wage employment



NEW DELHI, Dec 15: A bill to repeal the MGNREGA and bring a new law for rural employment -- Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, 2025 -- is set to be introduced in the Lok Sabha.

According to a copy of the bill, it seeks to introduce the VB-G RAM G Bill, 2025, in Parliament and repeal the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005.

The bill aims at establishing a "rural development framework aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047", by providing a statutory guarantee of 125 days of wage employment in every financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual work. The bill has been listed in the Lok Sabha in the supplementary list of business issued on Monday.

Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, in the statement of purpose of the Bill, said MGNREGA has provided guaranteed wage-employment to rural households over the past 20 years.

However, "further strengthening was

become necessary in view of the significant socio-economic transformation witnessed in the rural landscape driven by widespread coverage of the social security interventions and saturation-oriented implementation of major government schemes", he said.

While the MGNREGA focused on the goal to "enhance the livelihood security", the new bill says it aims to promote "empowerment, growth, convergence and saturation for a prosperous and resilient rural Bharat", and lays emphasis on "empowerment, growth, convergence and saturation through public works aggregating into forming Viksit Bharat National Rural Infrastructure Stack".

Water security through water-related works, core rural infrastructure, livelihood-related infrastructure, and special works to mitigate extreme weather events will be the "thematic focus". It will also facilitate adequate farm-labour availability during peak agricultural seasons.

According to the bill, it is crucial to facilitate the availability of farm labour, especially during the peak agricultural

season. It has a provision to empower states to notify in advance, for a certain duration, covering peak sowing and harvesting seasons, during which execution of works under this bill will not be undertaken.

With a focus on institutionalised convergence, the bill seeks to integrate 'Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans' with the PM Gati Shakti to address the "varying needs" of village panchayats.

A comprehensive digital ecosystem, including biometric authentication at various levels, global positioning system or mobile-based worksite monitoring, real-time management information system dashboards, proactive public disclosures, and use of artificial intelligence for planning, audits and fraud risk mitigation, will be used to modernise governance, accountability and citizen engagement, the bill stated. It will be a centrally sponsored scheme, and every state government will have to prepare a scheme for giving effect to the guarantee proposed under this bill, within a period of six months from the date of the commencement of the Act.

The centre would make an allocation for each state, to be estimated based on certain parameters. Further, expenditure in excess of the approved normative allocation shall be the responsibility of the state governments.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, better known as MGNREGA, aims at enhancing the livelihood security of households in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It was enacted in 2005. The Winter Session of Parliament, which started on December 1, will conclude on December 19. (PTI)

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL,
OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER::
KARBI ANGLONG EAST DIVISION.
D I P H U

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tender / Quotation affixing Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council Challan amounting Rs. 10/- (Rupees Ten) only are invited from registered Govt. Contractors for the following works under "CAMP A 2025-26" and will be received by the office of the undersigned up to 3:00 P.M. on 29/12/2025 and will be opened on the same day. If the office remain closed due to any reason on that day the tender will be received and opened on the next day upto 3:00 P.M. (I.S.T.) The Tenderer or their authorized agents /representative may be present at the time of opening tender.

Sl. No.	Name of Schemes/Works.	Tender Amount	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time for completion
1	2	3	4	5
1	Full Chain-linked fencing (4'ht with 10 Gauge, 3" dia link) with 3 stand barbed wire (one stand below the chain link and two stand above the chain link) to be fitted on Pre-cast RCC pillars of specific specification and size (2.1m x 0.125m x 0.125m) as per details specification attached at 2.5 m apart including transportation, fitting and fixing for 1919 RM @ Rs. 1661/-RM.	31,87,459/-	63,749/- Genl. 2% 31,875/- ST/SC 1%	90 days

The following documents required to be submitted along with tender papers.

- 2% Earnest Money in case of General and 1% in case of ST/SC over the value of works in the form of call deposit from any recognized bank in favour of DFO, Karbi Anglong East Division, Diphu.
- Up to Date GST documents/clearance certificate from competent authority
- Up to Date Income Tax clearance from competent authority
- Up to Date Professional Tax Clearance from the Authority of KAAC, Diphu
- Up to Date Trading License if Non -Tribal
- Up to Date Registration Certificate from Contractor of PWD or others Department
- Work Experience/ Financial capacity from Departmental Authority concerned.
- Xerox copy of PAN card.
- Xerox copy record page of Bank pass book where Account No. Bank Name, IFSC Code No. & Address is recorded.
- The Tenderer must furnish financial soundness certificate equivalent to the offered amount issued by any Nationalized Bank in India.

TERMS AND CONDITION.

- Rate of bid should be quoted clearly and distinctly both in figure and words against each Scheme of work in flat percentage basis above/below.
- No construction materials will be supplied by the department.
- Successful bidder will have to sign a Deed of agreement under APWD form-2
- The undersigned have the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without reasons thereof.
- Earnest Money will be return to the successful tenderer after completion of works and in respect of un-successful tender Earnest Money will be returned after allotment of works
- Tender paper will be provided on payment of Rs. 100/- (Rupees one hundred) only.
- The Department will not be bound to accept the lowest tender rate and reserved right to reject all tender without assigning any reason thereof.
- Each work tender should be submitted in separate form and envelop where in the name of work and group No. written clearly.
- Payment will be made after receiving the "CAMP A" fund from the Govt.

N.B.:- No tender will be accepted failing to furnish the above documents

Sd/-
Divisional Forest Officer
Karbi Anglong East Division, Diphu.
Dated: 12/12/2025

Memo No. B/KAE/Tender/CAMPA/2025-26/7657-62

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR OF SERICULTURE, DIPHU :: KARBI ANGLONG.

No.Addl.DSDE.213/2013-2014/59,

Dated Diphu the 15 the Dec, 2025.

NOTIFICATION

It is information to all concerned that the following Roll Number of the candidates applied for the post of Junior Assistant under the department of Sericulture, Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong has been selected for Viva-Voce & Computer Test which will be held on the 22nd December, 2025 from 10:AM to 4:PM at Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council New Secretariat building, Diphu.

Roll Number of the Selected Candidates for Viva-Voce & Computer Test :-

0009	0010	0015	0022	0024	0028	0031	0034	0038	0049
0059	0060	0064	0070	0072	0078	0079	0080	0084	0089
0093	0095	0097	0105	0106	0108	0109	0111	0115	0121
0126	0129	0130	0138	0139	0141	0142	0145	0150	0151
0152	0156	0159	0160	0161	0164	0165	0167	0177	0178
0180	0184	0185	0186	0187	0189	0192	0195	0198	0199
0207	0213	0217	0228	0235	0236	0242	0245	0247	0251
0255	0259	0260	0262	0263	0267	0269	0275	0277	0278
0281	0284	0292	0295	0297	0300				

- N.B. : 1) No TA & DA will be borne by the department.
2) The selected candidates are requested to bring their original testimonials on the day of the interview.

Sd/-
i/c Additional Director,
Sericulture, Diphu.

Memo No.Addl.DSDE.213/2013-2014/59-(A),

Dated Diphu the 15/12/2025.

Manipur violence: SC asks why entire leaked clips not sent for forensic test

NEW DELHI, Dec 15: The Supreme Court on Monday questioned why the entire available leaked audio clips, which a plea alleged pointed to the role of former Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh in the 2023 ethnic violence, were not sent for forensic examination.



The top court said it was "little disturbed" by the affidavit filed on behalf of the petitioners on November 20 that "states to the effect that only select clippings were sent".

The court asked the government authorities why the entire available leaked audio clip of around 48 minutes was not sent to Gujarat's National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) for examination.

The NFSU had virtually given a clean chit, saying the leaked audio clips were "tampered with".

Singh resigned as the chief minister of Manipur on February 9, amid rumblings within the state BJP and growing demands for a change in leadership.

On Monday, an apex court bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and Alok Aradhe expressed unhappiness, saying it was "little disturbed" by the affidavit filed on behalf of the petitioners on November 20 in the matter.

The counsel appearing for the respondents said the affidavit was not served upon them.

"Now this affidavit, which according to you has not been served upon you, states to the effect that only select clippings were sent..." the bench said.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioners, said that probably the full audio clips filed by them were not sent to NFSU.

When the counsel for the re-

spondents said they would respond to the affidavit, the bench asked why the full material was not sent to the NFSU and observed, "But why should time be wasted again?"

The bench then sought to know "how much is the material actually available?"

Bhushan said the total audio tapes were of roughly 56 minutes and the petitioners have filed 48 minutes in the court. He said the remaining part of the audio clips identifies the person who made that record, and if his identity was disclosed, his life could be in danger.

"Once the entire tape was available with you, the entire tape ought to have been sent to the NFSU. Why should they send only this limited one?" the bench asked.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, who appeared in the matter, sought a week's time to respond to the affidavit.

The bench observed that the audio clips of 48 minutes ought to have been sent to the NFSU.

Taking the affidavit on record,

the bench fixed the matter for hearing on January 7, while noting that Bhati has sought some time to respond to the affidavit.

The apex court was hearing a petition filed by the Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust (KOHUR), which has sought an independent SIT probe into the matter. On November 3, the apex court observed that the NFSU said that the leaked audio clips were "tampered with".

According to NFSU's report, the audio clips exhibited signs of editing and tampering and were not scientifically fit for forensic voice comparison, the court had said.

Bhushan had referred to a separate forensic report and said it had found that one of the recordings was unedited.

On August 19, the top court expressed displeasure over the Central Forensic Science Laboratory's (CFSL) exercise to test the audio recordings, calling it "misdirected". The court said it hadn't asked about the authenticity of the audio clips but directed testing of the voice samples.

While hearing the plea on August 25, the apex court referred the matter to NFSU, Gandhi Nagar, to examine the audio clips in question to determine whether they were modified, edited or tampered with in any manner.

It had also asked the NFSU to determine whether the voice in the disputed audio clips matches the voice in the admitted audio clip, so as to give a clear finding that it was the same person who was speaking in all the audio clips.

On May 5, the apex court examined a forensic report on the authenticity of the leaked audio clips and asked the state government to file a fresh report on the probe.

The top court had previously sought a sealed-cover forensic report from the CFSL on the authenticity of the leaked audio clips.

Over 260 people were killed and thousands displaced since the ethnic violence broke out between the Imphal valley-based Meitei and neighbouring hills-based Kuki communities in May 2023.

The clashes began after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against an order of the Manipur High Court on the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

Bhushan had alleged that the recorded conversation prima facie showed the complicity and involvement of the state machinery in the violence against the Kuki Zo community.

KOHUR's plea alleged that Singh was instrumental in "inciting, organising and thereafter centrally orchestrating the large-scale murder, destruction and other forms of violence against the Kuki-dominated areas in Manipur". (PTI)

Search operation ends in Anjaw truck accident, 20 bodies recovered

ITANAGAR, Dec 15: The multi-agency search and rescue operation in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh, where a mini-truck on which 21 people from Assam were travelling plunged into a deep gorge, has been officially called off by the district administration on Monday.



Till Sunday, 20 bodies were recovered and one survivor rescued following four days of intensive efforts by disaster response teams, Anjaw Deputy Commissioner Millo Kojin said.

The DC in an official order said that the search and rescue operation, which began on December 11, was formally concluded at 10 am on Monday after exhaustive combing of the accident site near Lailiang, about 40 km from Hayuliang sub-division.

Though earlier it was estimated that 22 labourers were in the ill-fated vehicle, but a communication from the senior superintendent of police of Assam's Tinsukia district on Sunday confirmed that there were only 21 people in the mini truck, including the driver, the DC said. The accident occurred on the night of December 8 along the Hayuliang-Chaglagam road when a mini truck carrying 21 labourers from Tinsukia district of Assam fell into a deep gorge. The incident came to light only on the evening

of December 10 after one injured survivor managed to reach a nearby Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) labour camp and alerted authorities.

Following the report, a large-scale rescue operation was mounted involving the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Indian Army, BRTF, local police and the district administration.

Despite extremely challenging terrain and weather conditions, rescue teams successfully retrieved 20 bodies from the gorge, while one labourer survived the mishap.

In a separate order, the district administration confirmed that the NDRF team completed its as-

signed task and has been released from duty with immediate effect, after all mortal remains were handed over to the district administration and subsequently to the relatives of the deceased following completion of legal formalities.

The deputy commissioner, who is also chairman of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), placed on record appreciation for the professionalism, dedication and coordinated response of all agencies involved in the operation, carried out under extremely difficult conditions. The district administration also expressed deep condolences to the bereaved families of the victims. (PTI)

of December 10 after one injured survivor managed to reach a nearby Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) labour camp and alerted authorities.

Tea auction centre in Tripura expected to begin operations next financial year

'Run for Tea' Scheduled tomorrow

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Dec 15: The tea sector in Tripura is set to receive a significant boost with the state's own tea auction centre likely to become operational from the next financial year. Most of the work, including infrastructure development, has been completed.

Chairman of the Tripura Tea Development Corporation (TTDC), Samir Ranjan Ghosh, stated today that all essential infrastructure for the auction centre is in place and the facility is expected to start functioning soon.

Addressing a press conference, Ghosh said the current state government has undertaken several key initiatives to strengthen the tea industry, with the establishment of the tea auction centre being one of the most important measures. He noted that once the centre becomes operational, tea growers in Tripura will be able to sell their produce through a transparent auction system, ensuring better price realisation.

At present, tea produced in Tripura is sent to auction centres in Assam and West Bengal. Due to the large volume of tea available in those markets, growers from Tripura often do not receive fair prices despite producing quality tea. The local auction centre is expected to reduce transportation costs and shorten the time required for marketing tea, directly benefiting growers.

Ghosh also remarked that the tea



industry in Tripura had remained neglected for many years. However, since the formation of the present government in 2018, the sector has shown steady progress as a result of focused policies and initiatives.

To further promote Tripura tea, the TTDC, in collaboration with the Tea Board of India, organizes the annual 'Run for Tea' event to raise awareness about the quality of tea produced in the state. This year's event will be held on December 17, beginning at 6:30 am from the TTDC office.

The run will be flagged off by Industries and Commerce Minister Santana Chakma, Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Tinku Roy, Mayor and MLA Dipak Majumder, along with chairpersons of various public sector undertakings and other dignitaries. A 3-kilometre run has been planned, and cash prizes will be awarded to the top three finishers. The event is open to participants from all sections of society.

Three women arrested with drugs worth ₹2.5 crore in Tripura

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Dec 15: In a major crackdown on drug trafficking, Tripura Police today seized a large consignment of narcotics worth around ₹2.5 crore and arrested three women near Dharmanagar Railway Station in North Tripura district.

Acting on specific intelligence inputs, a team from Dharmanagar Police Station carried out a special operation in the station's adjoining area. North District Superintendent of Police Avinash Rai said the operation led to the recovery of 44,000 Yaba tablets, believed to have a black-market value of approximately ₹2.5 crore.

The arrested women have been identified as Mafia Begum (45) of the Hospital Road area under Sonamura Police Station in Sepahijala district, Ankuri Bibi (40) of the Silghati area under Kakraban Police Station in Gomati district, and Hafifa Begum (55), also a resident of the Kakraban Police Station area in Gomati district.

According to preliminary investigations, the accused were allegedly transporting the Yaba tablets aboard a Silchar-Agartala passenger train. After the seizure, they were taken to Dharmanagar Police Station for interrogation.

Police said further investigation is underway to identify and apprehend other members of the drug trafficking network. The operation was conducted in the presence of Sub-Divisional Police Officer Jayanta Karmakar, Officer-in-Charge of Dharmanagar Police Station Meena Debbarma, DCM, and other security personnel.

Local body polls in Arunachal record 56 pc voter turnout

ITANAGAR, Dec 15: A voter turnout of 56.33 per cent was recorded in the local body elections in Arunachal Pradesh on Monday, officials said.

Polling began for panchayati raj institutions across the state, along with the civic bodies of Itanagar and Pasighat, at 7 am amid tight security arrangements, they said.

A moderate turnout was seen in the initial hours due to cold weather, but it picked up as the day progressed, they added.

The polling percentage is likely to increase as reports from various districts are yet to be updated, State Election Commission (SEC) Secretary Taru Talo informed.

Barring a few stray incidents of clashes between supporters of different political parties, the polling remained largely peaceful, he said.

While the turnout for the panchayat elections was estimated at 53.60 per cent till the closing of polling at 4 pm, the polling percentage for Itanagar and Pasighat civic bodies was recorded at 55.3 and 60.10 per cent, respectively, he added. Talo said voting is still underway in several polling stations, as many people are waiting in long queues inside the booths.



Over 40,000 security personnel and around 15,000 polling staff were deployed for the election, officials said. Chief Minister Pema Khandu exercised his franchise at the Gyangkar polling booth in Tawang district. The ruling BJP has already won 58 zilla parishad constituencies unopposed, while the National People's Party (NPP) secured one seat. Four BJP candidates were also elected unopposed to the Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC).

In addition, as many as 5,037 BJP candidates for gram panchayat seats have been declared elected without a contest. Altogether, 440 candidates were

contesting for 186 zilla parishad seats, while 39 are in the fray for 16 IMC wards and 21 for eight wards of the Pasighat Municipal Council (PMC). In total, 8,31,648 people were eligible to vote in this election -- 7,59,210 for panchayats and 72,438 for civic bodies.

A total of 2,171 polling stations were set up for panchayat elections, 67 for the IMC and 12 for the PMC polls. While EVMs were used for the municipal polls, ballot boxes were used for the panchayat elections.

The counting of votes will be held on December 20. A public holiday was declared in the state on Monday for the elections. (PTI)

Tripura LoP demands removal of Bikash Debbarma from Cabinet for 'inflammatory' statement

AGARTALA, Dec 15: Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Tripura Assembly, Jitendra Chaudhury, on Monday demanded the removal of Tribal Welfare minister Bikash Debbarma from the Manik Saha cabinet for his alleged unconstitutional and inflammatory statement against BJP's ally Tipra Motha Party (TMP).

The TMP and the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) are junior partners of the NDA government in Tripura.

At a rally in Agartala on December 13, Debbarma had reportedly threatened TMP leaders and workers that he would "rip them apart like

chicken" if they don't stop 'hooliganism'.

Chief Minister Manik Saha, BJP state president Rajib Bhattacharjee, and two more ministers, Sushanta Chowdhury and Tinku Roy were present at the event.

"The way Tribal Welfare minister Bikash Debbarma has threatened to rip apart TMP leaders and workers like chicken is totally unconstitutional, inflammatory, and it attracts cognizable offence. I strongly condemned the minister's statement," Chaudhury said in a video post.

He, however, said the political parties have

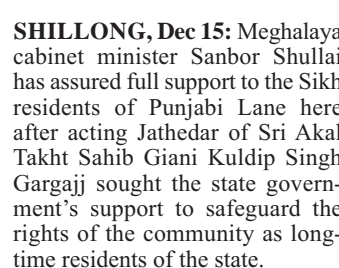
their own views over the aggressive activities of the TMP, but a minister can't make such an inflammatory statement against any political party.

"I urge Governor N Indrasena Reddy and the chief minister to remove Bikash Debbarma from the cabinet immediately. If it is not done, the political atmosphere, which has already been contaminated will be destroyed in the state," he said.

Chaudhury also requested the police to take lawful action against the minister after analysing the video footage of the rally. (PTI)

Meghalaya minister assures full support to Shillong's Sikh community

SHILLONG, Dec 15: Meghalaya cabinet minister Sanbor Shullai has assured full support to the Sikh residents of Punjabi Lane here after acting Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj sought the state government's support to safeguard the rights of the community as long-time residents of the state.



Shullai gave the assurance during a meeting at Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar here, where Giani Gargaj was also present. He is on a visit to the Meghalaya capital in connection with religious programmes marking the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur. "I can assure you that the government stands with the Sikh community here," Shullai said.

Earlier, the acting Jathedar participated in a 'nagar kirtan' organised from Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Laitumkhrah, which culminated at Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar, followed by a Gurmata Samagam attended by a large number of devotees from across Meghalaya, Assam and other parts of the Northeast.

Addressing the congregation, Giani Gargaj recalled the sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur, who laid down his life to protect religious freedom and stand against oppression. He said the Sikh community

has historically stood with the oppressed and continues to uphold the values of truth and justice. Referring to concerns over Punjabi Lane, the Jathedar said any move that results in the displacement of Sikh families who have been residing in Shillong for nearly two centuries would be unjust. He asserted that Sri Akal Takht Sahib and Sikhs across the world stand firmly with the community in Shillong. He also urged members of the Sikh community to remain rooted in the teachings of the Gurus and encouraged parents to teach Punjabi and Gurmukhi to children so they stay connected with the Guru Granth Sahib.

The gurdwara management committee honoured Giani Gargaj on the occasion, and the Jathedar also felicitated several Sikh personalities for their service to the community. Senior Sikh leaders and a large number of devotees were present. (PTI)

CM Conrad Sangma lays foundation stone for Meghalaya House annexe in New Delhi



SHILLONG, Dec 15: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Monday laid the foundation stone for a new annexe of the Meghalaya House in New Delhi.

The ceremony was held in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong and General Administration Department (GAD) Minister Sosthenes Sohtun.

The annexe on Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Road will be constructed in two phases. The first phase will comprise 24 guest rooms along with a meeting hall and will be built at an estimated cost of Rs 22 crore, officials said.

The existing Meghalaya House complex, originally built in 1971, is spread over a 1.99-acre plot.

Speaking on the occasion, the CM said the Meghalaya House in Delhi must primarily serve the people of the state by ensuring a comfortable and welcoming

stay for visitors and officials alike.

He noted that the addition of new rooms would cater to the growing number of people from the state visiting Delhi for official meetings, interviews, examinations, medical purposes and other engagements.

He directed the officials to ensure that the new building is constructed with the highest standards of quality, keeping in mind modern amenities and facilities. "We are hopeful that we will have good infrastructure with proper service," he said. "Once completed, the 24 guest rooms will significantly enhance our capacity to accommodate visitors from the state. I look forward to the timely completion of the project," he added.

Emphasising the importance of cultural representation, Sangma stated that the building should be iconic and reflect the culture and traditions of Meghalaya's people. (PTI)

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India's new ball bowlers made life difficult for us: Markram

DHARAMSALA, Dec 15: India's new-ball bowlers and his own team's failure to deal with the general challenge of higher dot balls in a low-scorer led to South Africa's loss in the third T20 International against India, visiting skipper Aiden Markram has said.

The pace duo of Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana struck early to leave South Africa reeling at 7 for 3 inside the first four overs, a setback from which the visitors never recovered as they slumped to a seven-wicket loss after posting just 117. The result gave India a 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

"They got the ball in the right areas and before you know it, you're four, five, six down. For sure Arshdeep bowled really well. Both the new ball bowlers bowled really well," Markram said at the post-match press conference.

"You can have friendly conditions, but ultimately the bowlers still have to land the ball in the right areas and that's exactly what they did."

"You have to give credit to them for that. From ball number one,



they were straight on it and made life really difficult. You have to give a lot of credit to them for that," he added.

Reflecting on the defeat, Markram acknowledged the challenging conditions but stressed the need for adaptability.

"Yeah, it's a tough one. You've got your captain's cap on, you're always a fan of it because I feel like you're always in the game. If you've got your batting cap on, you're obviously one flat wicket."

"It's a tricky balance. The conditions were tough with the time of year and the cold playing a role, but I don't really see a problem with it. Low-scoring games can be great to watch and real nail-biters, there's a time and a place for everything," he added.

Asked if a low scoring game eases the pressure of going for the big shots, the skipper said "It actually feels quite tough to score just because naturally the fielders are always going to be tighter in the ring."

"They're not going to be sitting back because they know it's tough. You generally end up facing a lot more dot balls than you would on a flat wicket."

"It comes with its own unique way of having pressure out there. Each of them pose a very different challenge, but one that's all part of batting I suppose." (PTI)

Messi arrives in Delhi for final leg of GOAT India Tour

NEW DELHI, Dec 15: Argentine football superstar Lionel Messi arrived here on Monday for the final leg of his G.O.A.T India Tour after his flight from Mumbai was delayed considerably due to inclement weather.

Messi, who was in Mumbai for the second day of his three-day whirlwind trip to India, was to land in the national capital around 10:45am but his charter flight was held up due to foggy conditions here.

He landed at the Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport around 2:30pm, and straightaway proceeded to the Leela Palace Hotel where he will have a Meet and Greet session for around an hour with a select group of people.

His final set of engagements includes an appearance at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium for a ticketed event and a photo-shoot programme at Purana Qila before leaving for the airport for the return to Miami, his current base.

The World Cup winner regaled fans in Mumbai last evening, posing alongside cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar and a bevy of Bollywood stars and politicians. Before Mumbai, he also made similar appearances in Hyderabad and Kolkata. (PTI)

Shafali Verma named Player of the Month for her Women's World Cup final exploits



DUBAI, Dec 15: India opener Shafali Verma's match-winning performance with the bat in the Women's World Cup final against South Africa last month has earned her the ICC 'Player of the Month' award for November.

Shafali, who came in as a replacement for the injured Pratika Rawal in the semifinal against Australia, smashed a 78-ball 87 -- the highest by an Indian opener in a Women's World Cup final -- as the hosts amassed a mammoth 298 for 7 and then secured a 52-run win to lift their maiden World Cup trophy in Navi Mumbai.

Shafali shared a 104-run stand with fellow opener Smriti Mandhana to set the platform for the big total.

The 21-year-old beat Thailand's Thipatcha Putthawong and UAE's Esha Oza for her first-ever 'Player of the Month' award.

"My first ICC Women's Cricket World Cup experience didn't go as I expected but it ended far better than I could have ever wished or imagined," said Shafali in an ICC release.

"I'm grateful that I could contribute to the team's success in the final and that I was able to be a part of making history in winning the World Cup for the first time and in front of a home crowd."

"I'm truly honoured to be

named the Women's Player of the Month for November. I dedicate this award to my teammates, coaches, family and everyone who has supported my journey until now. We win and lose as a team, the same goes for this award," added Shafali.

South Africa spinner Simon Harmer won the men's award for his inspired bowling in the Test series against India, which the Proteas won 2-0.

Harmer beat Bangladesh's Taijul Islam and Pakistan all-rounder Mohammad Nawaz to take the POTM award for the first time.

The 36-year-old returned with a combined haul of 17 wickets from the series as South Africa clinched their maiden Test rubber win in India in 25 years.

He returned with figures of four for 30 and four for 21 in the series opener in Kolkata, followed by three for 64 and six for 37 in the second match in Guwahati, ending the series with his 17-wicket haul at an average of 8.94 and an economy of 1.91.

"Playing for my country is a dream come true and anything else that comes from it as a result is a bonus. I share this award with my teammates, coaches and support staff and dedicate it to my family who allow me to go out and live my dream, often having to leave them at home to do so," said Harmer. (PTI)

IIM-A to conduct economic and environment impact assessment studies for 2030 CWG

NEW DELHI, Dec 15: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Ahmedabad has been roped in to conduct the economic, social and environment impact assessment studies for multi-sport events in the country, including the 2030 Commonwealth Games, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Monday.

Mandaviya was responding to a question on the preparations for the 2030 Games from three MPs on whether social and environmental-impact assessments have been conducted for planned infrastructure expansion in Ahmedabad, which will host the mega-event.

India is also bidding to host the 2036 Olympics in Ahmedabad.

"Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad has been appointed by Gujarat Sports Infrastructure Development Company Limited to conduct economic, social and environment impact assessment studies for multi sporting events," Mandaviya said.

On whether the government has finalised the estimated cost for hosting the Games, Mandaviya said, "...host state for Commonwealth

Games 2030 and Indian Olympic Association have taken due care in their assessment of the sports infrastructure and facilities, accommodation and other logistical requirements for successful hosting of the Games."

"Games operations cost including cost escalation for the games has been estimated by the hosts as part of Games proposal," he added.

A reliable source had told PTI earlier that the operational cost, excluding the cost of infrastructure development, would be between Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 crore.

The Minister also listed the sustainability measures that will be taken up during the Games.

"...the Games' sustainability strategy will align with existing city frameworks, including the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) and the Climate Resilient City Action Plan (CRCAP), which focuses on mitigation of climate change impact through initiatives in urban planning and any strategic initiatives related to climate mitigation will be based on the long-term strategy outlined by the city," he stated. (PTI)

BCCI not recognised as NSF: Sports Minister Mandaviya in Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI, Dec 15: The BCCI is not a recognised National Sports Federation (NSF), Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya stated in the Lok Sabha on Monday, reiterating a long-held status that is expected to change once the new National Sports Governance Act comes into effect next year.

Mandaviya was responding to a query from Trinamool Congress' Kolkata Dakshin representative Mala Roy.

Roy asked whether the Government intends to take control of big sports bodies such as the BCCI and the cash-strapped All India Football Federation (AIFF) for their "proper and smooth functioning."

Mandaviya reiterated that National Sports Federations (NSFs) are voluntary bodies, which are expected to follow "healthy management practices."

"Further, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is not recognised as a National Sports Federation (NSF)," Mandaviya said. The National Sports Governance Act was passed in August this year and its rules are set to be notified soon. Mandaviya has promised full-scale implementation of the act early next year.

It has the provision for a National Sports Board (NSB) to create a stringent system of accountability and all NSFs will have to attain NSB's recognition for access to central government funding. The BCCI has not been a recognised NSF so far as it is not reliant on government funding.

However, it will have to register itself as an NSF once the new Act comes into effect given that cricket has become an Olympic sport, which is set for a debut in the 2028

Games in the T20 format.

The Ministry has already provided some relief to the Board when it comes to provisions related to the Right to Information Act that will be applicable on NSFs under the new act.

It has amended the RTI-related provision in the act, placing only those bodies under its ambit which rely on government grants and assistance. The RTI has been a thorny issue for the BCCI, which has steadfastly opposed coming under it as the Board is not dependent on government funds unlike a majority of other NSFs.

In the Lok Sabha on Monday, the Minister also said that accounts of the NSFs receiving annual grant of more than Rs. one crore are subject to audit by the Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) of India. (PTI)

Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer set to miss last game of year with hamstring injury

MUNICH, Dec 15: Bayern Munich goalkeeper Manuel Neuer could miss his team's last game of the year because of a hamstring tear.

The club said on Monday that the injury to Neuer's right hamstring was confirmed by a medical examination after the 39-year-old club captain played the entirety of Sunday's 2-2 draw with Mainz. That was a rare case of the unbeaten Bundesliga leader Bayern dropping points.

Bayern said Neuer would be unavailable "for the time being," without giving further information on the severity of the injury. The visit to Heidenheim in the Bundesliga on Sunday is the club's last before the winter break. The German champion is next in action on Jan. 11 against Wolfsburg. (AP)

England recalls Tongue for third Ashes test but no place for Bashir

ADELAIDE, Dec 15: England recalled Josh Tongue in place of Gus Atkinson for the third Ashes test in Adelaide but there was no place for specialist spinner Shoaib Bashir despite the match being played on a pitch expected to suit slow bowlers.

Tongue's return is the only change from the England team beaten by eight wickets at the Gabba to slip 2-0 behind in the five-match series.

It makes it a must-win match in Adelaide for England, whose selectors have designated allrounder Will Jacks as the spinner option in the team despite Bashir being in the touring group.

Bashir missed out on pacy pitches in Perth and Brisbane, and has now failed to dislodge Jacks. Australia, meanwhile, has brought its top spinner, Nathan Lyon, back for the match. Speaking before England announced its team, Lyon said: "I would be surprised if their No. 1 spinner isn't playing, if I'm honest with you."

Atkinson has been dropped after taking just three wickets at 78.66.

Tongue was England's top wicket-taker against India in the summer and took five wickets in his only previous Ashes test — at Lord's in 2023 when he dismissed Steve Smith in each innings. (AP)

Wankhede to host Physical Disability T20 Series from Dec 16 to 18

MUMBAI, Dec 15: The iconic Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai will host a three-match Physical Disability T20 Series between India and India A teams from December 16 to 18, the parent body Differently Aabled Cricket Council of India (DCCI) announced on Monday.

The three-day T20 series aims to promote inclusivity, resilience, and sporting excellence, while highlighting the growing stature of physical disability cricket on the national and international stage.

Unmesh Khanvilkar, General Secretary of the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA), said: "Host-



ing the Physical Disability Cricket Series for the very first time is a

proud milestone for MCA — celebrating resilience, redefining ability, and reaffirming that cricket truly belongs to everyone.

"Our President, Mr. Ajinkya Naik, is deeply committed to promoting and celebrating physical disability cricket, and we will continue to extend our full support."

DCCI General Secretary Ravi Chauhan expressed his excitement, stating: "DCCI extends its heartfelt gratitude to MCA for hosting physical disability cricket. Your commitment to inclusivity and opportunity has strengthened the spirit of the game and empowered our athletes to shine." (PTI)

Not just Ro-Ko, compulsory for all current India players to play 2 Hazare games: BCCI



NEW DELHI, Dec 15: The BCCI has made it mandatory for all current national team players to turn up in at least two one-day matches of the upcoming Vijay Hazare Trophy starting December 24.

It is understood that with a gap of three weeks between the last T20I against South Africa in Ahmedabad (December 19) and the first ODI against New Zealand (January 11, 2026), the Board wants all its senior players to play domestic cricket.

The diktat has been communicated to the players by the Ajit Agarkar-led national selection committee.

This is in line with the recommendations of a review that was undertaken after the Test de-

backle in Australia earlier this year. The review had sought greater emphasis on domestic cricket across formats.

While veterans Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have already intimated their availability for the tournament, other senior stars like Shubman Gill, Jasprit Bumrah, KL Rahul, Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav have also been asked to play at least two games for their respective teams.

Save Shreyas Iyer, who will take a lot more time to get fit, others are expected to represent their state teams.

"There are six rounds of Vijay Hazare Trophy scheduled between December 24 and start of the New Zealand ODIs. It is up to the players

and their state associations to decide which two rounds they would like to play.

"But after the second T20I in Mullanpur, the players have been categorically told that playing Hazare isn't optional," a senior BCCI official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Exceptions would be made only if a player is declared unfit by the Centre of Excellence, but officials believe there is enough time to recuperate after the South Africa series.

The diktat would also help counter the narrative that the selection committee and head coach Gautam Gambhir only want to make an example out of Kohli and Rohit, who have nothing to prove.

The decision to make Vijay Hazare Trophy mandatory for all is indicative that rules will be same for everyone.

Bumrah's close family member in hospital
Jasprit Bumrah was forced to fly back home for personal reasons ahead of the third T20I in Dharamsala. As per reliable sources, a very close family member of the bowler is currently hospitalised, prompting the cricketer to return home.

"If all goes well, then he might return for the fourth or even fifth game (in Ahmedabad). But first priority is recovery of his family member."

T20 WC and NZ series squad on same day
With the ICC setting a deadline for the T20 World Cup squad announcement, India's lineup for the global event and the preceding series against New Zealand will be announced on the same day, which could be some time in the first week of January.

"The squad that will be selected for the New Zealand T20Is will be the same that will be named for the T20 World Cup," the source added. (PTI)



DHARAMSALA, Dec 15: Having played alongside Shubman Gill since the age of 12, Abhishek Sharma knows that it is just a matter of time before his currently off-colour best buddy starts winning T20I matches for India, including games in the upcoming T20 World Cup next year.

Gill's selection in the Indian T20I playing eleven has been questioned after a settled Sanju Samson was benched. The vice-captain in the format has managed only 291 runs in 15 innings at a strike-rate of 137.3.

He struck only four sixes in those games and on Sunday against South Africa in the third T20I here, Gill scored a painstaking run-a-ball 28, which didn't matter much since Abhishek (35 off 18 balls) had

given the team a rousing start in a chase of a paltry target of 118.

"I'll tell you one thing straight away, that trust me, these two guys are going to win matches in World Cup (in February-March) and in this series as well," Abhishek replied when asked about Gill and skipper Suryakumar Yadav's poor run of form in the ongoing five-match series which India leads 2-1 right now.

When it came to Gill, his closest friend of more than a decade, Abhishek was predictably protective.

"Because I've been playing with them since so long, especially with Shubman, so I know which match he can win, which conditions, irrespective of the team, whoever it is," he said.

"So I have a lot of faith in him from the beginning, and I hope everyone will see him very soon and everyone will have faith in him," added the world's No.1 T20 batter.

Once Abhishek got out at a team score of 60, India needed more than 10 overs to score the remaining runs with both Gill and Surya not able to bat freely.

"There was a bit of help for the fast bowlers, and as I was batting, I knew that if I gave a good start here, the match could get over in the Powerplay, and that's what happened."

"...that was the plan for the rest of the batters, that they would just knock out or finish the match, so it was a very simple plan after that," Abhishek explained the rationale behind taking it easy after a blistering start.

Abhishek said he had to keep in mind that in cold December evenings in this part of the country, the pacers would get movement both in the air and off the surface.

"Conditions of course, I mean, as a batter you have to keep those things in mind that the ball is swinging a bit or it's seaming a bit, so I tried to play a few shots which is suitable for those wickets and pitches, so that's the plan always." (PTI)