

WORLD
● Japan's Cabinet OKs record defence budget that aims to deter China
● Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak convicted in trial over 1MDB corruption scandal

NATION
● Sahibzades represent ultimate expression of bravery against religious fanaticism, terror: PM
● Pro-Hindu protesters march to B'desh dy high commission office in Kolkata, submit memorandum

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Integrated draft electoral rolls after SR records 1.35 pc growth in voters in state

GUWAHATI, Dec 30: Assam has registered a 1.35 per cent increase in the number of voters as per the integrated draft electoral roll for the state, published after the Special Revision conducted ahead of next year's assembly elections, an official statement said on Tuesday.

The draft roll reflects a total of 2,52,01,624 electors, representing a 1.35 per cent increase from the previous final roll published in January 2025, the statement issued by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said.

The draft electoral roll was published on December 27 following the completion of House-to-House (H2H) verification process conducted from November 22 to December 20 this year.

A total of 7,86,841 additions and 4,47,196 deletions have taken place from January 6 to December 27 this year, the statement said.

The demographic breakdown for the draft roll shows male electors at 1,25,72,583, outnumbered by females at 1,26,28,662, with a roll gender ratio of 1,004.

There are 379 third gender voters in the draft roll.

The elector population ratio is at 643, with the total polling stations being 31,486.

Mankachar assembly constituency has the highest number of

polling stations at 402, while Dima has the lowest at 146.

The highest number of voters, as per the draft rolls, is in Dalgaoon constituency, with 3,18,326 electors. The least number of 1,00,319 voters is in Amri seat.

While there are 63,314 service electors, the number of PwD voters is 2,02,433.

There are 2,45,084 youngest electors, in the age bracket of 18 to 19 years, while 1,36,546 voters are aged 85 years and above.

The statement said that during the pre-revision phase, booth-level officers achieved 100 per cent coverage, visiting 61,03,103 households.

During the process, 4,78,992 deceased electors and 5,23,680 shifted electors were identified.

Another 53,619 multiple entries were identified.

The statement added that the names identified during the H2H verification have not yet been deleted. These will only be processed for removal or shifting after formal applications are received during the current claims and objections period.

The CEO statement said the 'revision' phase is now open for public participation. Claims and objections (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

State BJP hails Batadrava Project initiation

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Dec 30: The Assam unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday said the Batadrava Cultural Project would serve as a blueprint of the Assamese vision for the future, reflecting the State's civilisational ethos and cultural self-respect.

Addressing the media at the party's central headquarters, State BJP spokesperson Kalyan Gogoi said the BJP government under chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has been working towards holistic development of Assam under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah.

Gogoi listed several major initiatives and infrastructure projects undertaken in recent years, including Advantage Assam 2.0, the bamboo-based bio-ethanol project at Numaligarh, the Sati Radhika Peace Park under the Brahmaputra riverfront project, the Gateway of Guwahati ferry terminal at Panbazar, the fourth unit of the Namrup fertiliser plant with a production capacity of 12 lakh metric tonnes, and the new terminal at Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport.

He said that towards the close of the year, the Union home minister dedicated to the people of Assam the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

B'deshi groups' plan to establish 'Muslim supremacy' in NE busted 11 people in Assam, Tripura in police net

GUWAHATI, Dec 30: Eleven people have been arrested in Assam and Tripura for their alleged links with Bangladesh-based fundamentalist groups that were aiming to destabilise the Northeast, police said on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference, Guwahati Police Commissioner Parthasarathi Mahanta said the Special Task Force (STF) made the arrests on the basis of intelligence inputs provided by central agencies.

"An operation was carried out last night in Barpeta, Chirang, Baksa and Darrang districts of Assam, besides Tripura. We have arrested a total of 11 jihadi elements, who were working under direct orders from Bangladesh-based groups," he said.

Those arrested were members of the Imam Mahmud Kafilah (IMK) module, he said.

"Ten of them were apprehended from Assam, and one from Tripura. Their main aim was to destabilise Assam and the rest of the North-east. They wanted to establish 'Muslim supremacy' in this part of the country," he claimed.

Mahanta said the police teams have made a lot of seizures, sans any arms and ammunition, during the simultaneous raids.

He said the IMK is a



Those arrested from Assam were identified as Nasim Uddin alias Najimuddin alias Tamim (24), Junab Ali (38), Afrahim Hussain (24), Mizanur Rehman (46), Sultan Mehmud (40), Md Siddique Ali (46), Rasidul Aalam (28), Mahibul Khan (25), Sharuk Hussain (22) and Md Dilbar Razak (26), he said.

Jagir Miah (33) was nabbed from Tripura, he added.

"The Indian security and intelligence apparatus has been keeping a hawk eye on jihadi activities in the Northeast, particularly in Assam," Mahanta said.

He said the IMK is a Bangladesh-based offshoot of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), which is banned in India.

"IMK was founded in 2018 by ex-JMB member Jewel Mahmud alias Imam Mahmud Habibullah alias Sohail, who claims to be the Amir of IMK and propagates the ideology of 'Ghazwatul Hind'," he said.

"It has been reliably learnt that following the regime change in Bangladesh in August 2024, senior leaders of JMB, Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) and Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) issued directions to IMK leadership to ac-

tivate and expand its Indian modules," the police commissioner said.

Reacting to the development, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "Fundamentalist elements are active in Assam. We are Bangladesh's neighbour, so Assam will have this problem of fundamentalists for a long period."

Following the arrests, a big operation is underway at present, he said, without sharing details.

Mahanta said Bangladeshis nationals Umar and Khalid were assigned to coordinate with the Assam cell, the head of which was Tamim of Barpeta Road.

"The activities were being coordinated through a secure social media platform. One such group is titled 'Purba Akash', which functioned as a principal communication and recruitment platform. Persons based in Assam, West Bengal and Tripura were being radicalised, recruited, financially mobilised and connected with the outfit," he said.

Mahanta claimed that among the people targeted were individuals possessing Indian passports who had visited Bangladesh, as well as known former members of proscribed groups. "The cumulative effect (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Prohibitory orders withdrawn in KA as situation normalises

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Dec 30: The District Administration, Karbi Anglong, on Tuesday withdrew the prohibitory order imposed under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, with immediate effect across the district.

The restrictions, imposed on December 22 as a precautionary measure following law and order concerns arising from incidents in neighbouring West Karbi Anglong, had prohibited the assembly of five or more persons and regulated movement of individuals and private vehicles during night hours.

After a review, the district administration said the law and order situation in Karbi Anglong is now normal and under control. In view (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Himanta favours three children to every Hindu to counter Muslim growth in Assam

BARPETA, Dec 30: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday advised Hindus to give birth to three children, if possible, in order to arrest the falling population growth compared to the Muslims in the state.

He also claimed that if Hindus do not give birth to more children, there may not be people left to "look after the house".

His statement came ahead of the assembly election in the state, which is likely to be held in March-April next year.

"In minority areas, their birth rate is high. The birth rate is decreasing day by day among the Hindus. So, there lies the difference," Sarma told reporters on the sidelines of an official function in

Barpeta district.

He was responding to a query on reported rise in Muslim population in some constituencies in Assam.

"That is why we tell every Hindu person that you should not stop at one child and give birth to at least two children. If possible, give birth to three children," he added.

The CM said the Muslim people, on the other hand, are advised not to give birth to "7-8 children", and to have fewer offspring.

"We tell the Hindus to give birth to a little more number of children, otherwise there will be no one to look after the house," he claimed.

Sarma also clarified that, as the

delimitation of the assembly constituencies has taken place, the exact nature of the population pattern is not immediately known to him.

On December 5, the Assam government diluted the two-child norm for ST, SC, tea garden, Moran and Matak communities, thereby vacating its own stand to gradually implement the family planning rule for the entire state.

In a notification, the Health and Family Welfare Department had said the principal policy, 'Population and Women Empowerment Policy of Assam, 2017', has been amended accordingly.

Sarma had earlier said the Assam government would implement the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

NH-715 contractor owner arrested over alleged ₹4 crore payment default by Jorhat police



HT Correspondent
JORHAT, Dec 30: Mukesh Jalan, owner of Sadguru Engineering & Allied Services Private Limited, was arrested by a Jorhat Police

team from Guwahati in the early hours of Tuesday in connection with alleged financial irregularities and non-payment of dues to local subcontractors involved in the four-lane National Highway-715 project in the district.

According to police sources, the arrest followed the lodging of an FIR at the Teok Police Station by subcontractors who had supplied construction materials and labour for the project.

A case has been registered under Sections 316(5), 318(4), 351(3) and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The complainants alleged that Sadguru Engineering & Allied Services Private Limited abandoned the project without completing the work and defaulted on payments amounting to around ₹4 crore. They further claimed that despite several meetings held under the (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

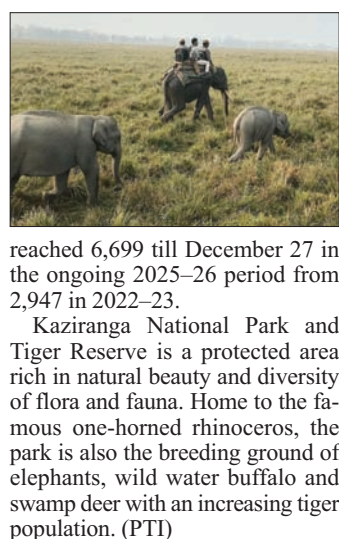
Kaziranga records highest-ever foreign tourist footfall in 2025-26: CM

GUWAHATI, Dec 30: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said Kaziranga National Park registered the highest-ever foreign tourist footfall in 2025-26.

He maintained that it was a reflection of the state's conservation, culture and community-driven tourism. "The world is discovering @kaziranga like never before," Sarma said in a post on X.

"A 127 per cent surge in foreign tourists reflects rising global confidence in Assam's conservation, culture and community-driven tourism, setting new benchmarks for wildlife destinations worldwide," he added.

The chief minister said the number of foreign tourists visiting the UNESCO World Heritage Site



reached 6,699 till December 27 in the ongoing 2025-26 period from 2,947 in 2022-23.

Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve is a protected area rich in natural beauty and diversity of flora and fauna. Home to the famous one-horned rhinoceros, the park is also the breeding ground of elephants, wild water buffalo and swamp deer with an increasing tiger population. (PTI)

India surpasses Japan to become world's 4th largest economy, says govt

NEW DELHI, Dec 30: India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy with a size of USD 4.18 trillion, and is poised to overtake Germany to become the third-largest by 2030, the government has said.

With continuing good growth numbers, India is also the world's fastest-growing major economy.

India's real GDP grew 8.2 per cent in the second quarter of 2025-26, up from 7.8 per cent in the first quarter and 7.4 per cent in the fourth quarter of the last fiscal.

"With GDP valued at USD 4.18 trillion, India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy, and is poised to displace Germany from the third

rank in the next 2.5 to 3 years with a projected GDP of USD 7.3 trillion by 2030," according to a government release providing a snapshot of reforms in 2025.

The US is the world's largest economy, and China occupies the second spot.

The growth momentum further surprised on the upside, with GDP expanding to a six-quarter high in Q2 of 2025-26, reflecting India's resilience amid persistent global trade uncertainties, it said.

Domestic drivers, led by robust private consumption, played a central role in supporting this expansion.

The release further said international agencies have echoed this

optimism and cited projections made by various entities.

The World Bank has projected a 6.5 per cent growth in 2026; Moody's expects India to remain the fastest-growing G20 economy with a growth of 6.4 per cent in 2026 and 6.5 per cent in 2027.

The IMF has raised its projections to 6.6 per cent for 2025 and 6.2 per cent for 2026; the OECD forecasts 6.7 per cent growth in 2025 and 6.2 per cent in 2026.

Also, S&P anticipates a growth of 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal and 6.7 per cent in the next; the Asian Development Bank has lifted its 2025 forecast to 7.2 per cent; and Fitch has raised its FY26 projection (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

BJP likely to publish candidate list for Assam assembly polls in Feb: Himanta

BARPETA, Dec 30: The BJP is likely to announce the list of its candidates for the upcoming Assam assembly polls in February next year, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Tuesday.

Earlier this month, Sarma had said that the ruling party is likely to formalise its alliance with existing NDA partners AGP and other smaller local parties for the upcoming elections by January 15.

"We will declare our candidates in the first or second week of February," Sarma told reporters on the sidelines of an official function in Barpeta district.

Elections to the 126-member Assam assembly are likely to be held in March-April of next year.

Asked about his plans in 2026,

Sarma said, "My new year resolution is to win the elections. We will definitely win the polls and we will try to do better than last time. In the new year, we will seek the blessings of the people so that the BJP government returns to power."

The BJP currently has an alliance with Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) and Bodolandy People's Front (BPF).

Besides, Rabha Hasong Joutha Sangram Samiti (RHSS) and Janashakti Party (JP) are also NDA constituents in Assam.

Presently, the ruling BJP's strength in the 126-member Assam Assembly is 64, while its allies AGP has nine MLAs, UPPL has seven and BPF (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Started with just 10 beehives in 1997 Assamese entrepreneur's honey, beehive venture captures Northeast market

HT Correspondent
JORHAT, Dec 30: An innovative beekeeping and agri-enterprise initiative by Leela Charan Dutta of Charigaon in Jorhat has carved out a strong market across the Northeast, turning local enterprise into a sustainable livelihood model and generating employment for dozens.

Starting with just 10 beehives in 1997, Dutta went on to establish C.K. UDYOG at Charigaon.

Nearly three decades later, the enterprise directly employs 32 people and supports many more indirectly, with its products reaching markets across Assam and other Northeastern states.

Dutta, known for his low-profile demeanour, began his entrepreneurial journey with bank loans and a focus on beekeeping. Over



the years, he expanded operations using improved techniques and equipment, increasing the number of beehives to more than 100.

The unit now produces over eight tonnes of honey annually,

He introduced improved varieties of missa fish, initially sourced from Bangladesh, and currently operates fish ponds spread over 22 bighas. Together with allied farming activities, his ventures generate an estimated annual turnover of around ₹3 crore.

Speaking about his journey, Dutta said the honey business is seasonal, which prompted him to diversify and ensure year-round income and employment.

"I started with beekeeping, then moved into manufacturing beekeeping equipment and honey-based products. Later came fisheries, duck farming and fruit cultivation," he said.

With 32 permanent employees at C.K. UDYOG and many others linked indirectly, Dutta said the enterprise (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

supplying not only honey but also beehives and improved bee species to various states in the region.

Beyond apiculture, Dutta diversified into fisheries, duck rearing and dragon fruit cultivation.

Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia passes away

DHAKA, Dec 30: Bangladesh's first woman prime minister Khaleda Zia, who played a major role in restoring democracy after a period of tumultuous military rule and dominated the country's politics for decades, died on Tuesday after a prolonged illness. She was 80.

"My mother is no more," Zia's elder son and Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) acting Chairman Tarique Rahman said.

Zia was a three-time prime minister and held the position of chairperson of BNP.

Her personal physician, Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, said she breathed her last early on Tuesday while receiving treatment at Evercare Hospital in Dhaka.

Zia's family members, including her elder son Tarique Rahman, his wife Zubaida Rahman, and their daughter Zaima, were present at the hospital. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was also at the hospital.

Her party said she passed away at 6:00 am local time, "just after Fajr prayer".

Zia's funeral will be held on Wednesday after Zohr prayers at Parliament's South Plaza and the adjoining

Manik Mia Avenue, Law Advisor Asif Nazrul said.

She will later be laid to rest with full state honours beside the grave of her husband, former president and BNP founder Ziaur Rahman, at Zia Uddyan in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka, Nazrul told reporters after a special meeting of the interim government's Advisory Council at the state guest house Jamuna.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir attended the meeting as a special invitee.

In a televised address to the nation, Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus announced a three-day state mourning and a one-day general holiday.

"At the death of former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia, I declare three days of state mourning and a one-day general holiday tomorrow on the day of her Namaz-e-Janaza (funeral prayers)," he said.

Yunus urged people to maintain discipline and order during the funeral prayers and the observance of mourning across the country.

Zia had been suffering from multiple complex and chronic health conditions, including liver and kidney complications, heart disease, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



Sensex, Nifty close marginally lower amid thin year-end trading, foreign fund outflows weigh

MUMBAI, Dec 30: Stock markets ended marginally lower on Tuesday amid thin year-end trading as persistent foreign fund outflows and a muted trend in global equities weighed on investors' sentiment.

Falling for the fifth consecutive day, the 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 20.46 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 84,675.08. During the day, hit a high of 84,806.99 and a low of 84,470.94, gyrating 336.05 points.

Ending the day on a flat note, the 50-share NSE Nifty slipped 3.25 points or 0.01 per cent to 25,938.85.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Eternal, Infosys, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, HCL Tech and Titan were among the biggest laggards.

However, Tata Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv and Axis Bank were among the biggest gainers.

"Indian equity markets ended flat in a lacklustre session amid mixed global cues, overshadowing strong November IIP data showing 6.7 per cent growth—the highest in 25 months. Muted year-end ac-



tivity and persistent concerns over FII outflows kept investors on the sidelines," Siddhartha Khemka - Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined by 0.20 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.05 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, consumer durables lost 0.81 per cent, followed by IT (0.81 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.77 per cent),

realty (0.74 per cent), capital goods (0.45 per cent) and services (0.39 per cent).

Metal jumped the most by 1.95 per cent. PSU bank (1.81 per cent), auto (1.03 per cent), commodities (0.65 per cent) and bankex (0.59 per cent) also settled higher.

The BSE Sensex has declined by 892.4 points or 1.04 per cent in the past five trading days.

"Markets traded on a subdued

note on the final expiry of the calendar year and ended almost unchanged. After an initial dip, the Nifty moved within a narrow range for most of the session," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

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

Markets in Europe were trading marginally higher.

US markets ended lower on Monday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹ 2,759.89 crore on Monday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth ₹ 2,643.85 crore, according to exchange data.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 0.47 per cent to USD 62.23 per barrel.

On Monday, the Sensex declined by 345.91 points or 0.41 per cent to settle at 84,695.54. The Nifty edged lower by 100.20 points or 0.38 per cent to 25,942.10. (PTI)

Maruti Suzuki partners Kerala Grameena Bank for vehicle financing

NEW DELHI, Dec 30: Maruti Suzuki India Ltd on Tuesday said it has partnered with Kerala Grameena Bank for retail vehicle financing.

The company has signed an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Kerala Grameena Bank to provide retail financing solutions for new cars, pre-owned cars, and commercial vehicles, the Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL) said in a statement.

The collaboration with Kerala Grameena Bank will offer the growing customer base of the bank a comprehensive range of finance solutions across the Maruti Suzuki model range. The strategic partnership will also offer greater customer benefits and competitive financing offers, it added.

"The Kerala market has a strong affection towards Maruti Suzuki vehicles and this strategic partnership will provide our customers with competitive, cus-

tommer friendly financing options that improve the overall car buying experience," MSIL Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales, Partho Banerjee, said.

Kerala Grameena Bank Chairperson Vimala Vijaybhaskar said, "By combining Maruti Suzuki's strong dealership network with Kerala Grameena Bank's deep grassroots presence, we will offer convenient, affordable, and digitally enabled car loan solutions to customers, especially in rural and semi-urban areas."

She further said this collaboration will help Kerala Grameena Bank reach first-time car buyers and small entrepreneurs, improve access to personal mobility, and support economic activity across the state, while reaffirming its commitment to inclusive and customer-centric banking. (PTI)

Modi for mission-mode reforms to sustain long-term growth

NEW DELHI, Dec 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called for mission mode reforms across diverse sectors to sustain long-term growth.

Interacting with a group of eminent economists and experts at NITI Aayog ahead of Union Budget for 2026-27, Modi also made a case for building world-class capabilities and attaining global integration.

The theme of the interaction was 'Aatmanirbharta and Structural Transformation: Agenda for Viksit Bharat'.

He stressed that India's policy making and budgeting must remain anchored with the vision for 2047.

The Prime Minister spoke about the need to ensure that the nation remains a vital hub for the global workforce and international markets.

Speaking about Viksit Bharat as a national aspiration, the Prime Minister noted that the vision of a developed India by 2047 has transcended government policy to become a genuine mass aspiration. (PTI)

Bihar govt commissions 1st phase of ₹ 2,800 cr Kajra Solar Project



NEW DELHI, Dec 30: In a major boost to Bihar's renewable energy plans, the first phase of the ₹ 2,800 crore Kajra Solar Power Plant in Bihar has been commissioned, an official statement said on Tuesday.

The Bihar government is setting up the project in the Lakhisarai district to increase the share of clean energy in its overall energy consumption.

Under the first phase, a 185 MW solar power plant along with a 254 MW-hour battery energy storage system has been constructed at an estimated cost of ₹ 1,810 crore. A transmission line and a transformer facility have been successfully energised for power evacuation, Bihar Energy Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh said.

Singh, who is also the Chairman & Managing Director of Bihar State Power Holding Company Ltd, said the solar plant can supply uninterrupted electricity for 4 to 5 hours during peak hours through the battery energy storage system.

In the second phase, a 116 MW solar plant, along with a 241 MW-hour battery energy storage system, is being constructed at an estimated cost of ₹ 1,055 crore. The department aims to commission the entire project by January 2027.

After completion of the project, the total capacity of Kajra Solar Power Plant will be 301 MW and the total battery energy storage system capacity will be 495 megawatt-hours. (PTI)

Tata Power arm, Bengal Chamber sign pact to boost rooftop solar adoption among MSMEs in state



KOLKATA, Dec 30: Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL) on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) to accelerate the adoption of rooftop solar solutions among micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the state, officials said.

The partnership aims to roll out structured awareness and outreach programmes across key industrial sectors in the state, with a focus on enabling MSMEs to shift to cleaner and cost-efficient energy solutions, a statement by the company said.

TPREL said its rooftop solar arm, Tata Power Solaroof, has already facilitated the installation of over 85 MWp of rooftop solar capacity in West Bengal through more than 20 channel partners, enabling localised engagement and execution across industrial clusters, it said.

The company has a presence across residential, commercial and industrial segments, offering end-to-end rooftop solar solutions, including high-performance modules with a 25-year performance warranty, financing options, insurance and after-sales support, it added.

At the national level, Tata Power Solaroof operates through a network of over 650 channel partners, supporting rooftop solar deployment across the country.

Rooftop solar installations in India have crossed 3 lakh, accounting for over 4 GWp of installed capacity. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

11 people in Assam

of IMK's activities poses a grave threat to India's unity and integrity. The IMK maintains active cross-border linkages with its Bangladesh-based patrons. Following the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina government in 2024, the Aamir of IMK was released from custody," he said. After his release, recruitment and mobilisation activities of the outfit intensified and several meetings were held in parts of Assam, Tripura and West Bengal, he added.

"The IMK projects itself as a Ghazwatul Hind-centric extremist module and propagates an ideology aligned with proscribed transnational jihadi organisations. It was found that following the change of government in Bangladesh, cadres of JMB, ABT and AQIS were released or emboldened," Mahanta said.

This has resulted in revival of their ideological influence and Indian networks, including through IMK-linked platforms, which disseminate extremist propaganda advocating violent jihad and armed conquest of India, he added. "Radical literature is systematically circulated to indoctrinate cadres and sympathisers through online platforms. In Assam, such extremist content was circulated within the encrypted platform titled 'Purba Akash'," Mahanta said. IMK also exploits social and religious gatherings and several clandestine meetings have been held at local mosques since December 2024, advocating violent armed struggle in India to stop "atrocities on Muslims", he added. Talking about their funding pattern, the police commissioner said IMK's operations are bankrolled through a combination of Hawala and small account transactions.

"Recruits and local supporters contribute cash donations. Funds collected are routinely transferred to Bangladesh via Hawala networks. Multiple bank accounts were used for funding," he added.

Several Indian operatives also use UPI platforms to channel money and lakhs of rupees have been systematically remitted from Assam and Tripura to Bangladesh to support extremist training and logistics, Mahanta said. Additionally, extremist material relating to weapons and bomb-making circulated within Assam bears similarity to material earlier recovered from IMK-linked activities in Bangladesh, he added. (PTI)

State BJP hails

Batadrava Cultural Project at Bordowa, the 5,000-seat Jyoti-Bishnu Auditorium in Guwahati, and the Guwahati Police Commissionerate office. Referring to Gurujana Srimanta Shankardeva, Gogoi said the Batadrava Project symbolises the ideals laid down by the Vaishnavite saint, who shaped Assamese society in a holistic manner. He added that the project would stand as a living representation of Assamese heritage and serve as a guiding framework for future generations. The spokesperson said that after eviction of encroachments, the Avirbhav Kshetra has been developed by integrating 162 bighas of land adjoining Batadrava Than, which, he claimed, would bring long-term benefits to the State and reflect the government's commitment to protecting jati, mati and bheti. Gogoi also said the newly inaugurated Jyoti-Bishnu Auditorium, named after cultural icons Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and Bishnu Prasad Rabha, is the largest auditorium in eastern India, equipped with modern facilities and a seating capacity of 5,000. On law and order, he said the inauguration of the Guwahati City Police Commissionerate office has strengthened policing infrastructure in the State.

Citing official figures, Gogoi claimed that Assam's conviction rate has increased from 3 per cent to 25 per cent over the last five years, while the crime rate per lakh population has declined significantly.

The State BJP expressed gratitude to the Assam government for dedicating major projects to the people at the close of the year. Gogoi also criticised the Congress, alleging that despite decades in power it failed to address Assam's core issues, while asserting that the BJP government has taken firm steps, including eviction of illegal encroachments on satra lands and construction of the Batadrava Cultural Project at a cost of ₹222 crore, to deliver lasting solutions.

Integrated draft electoral

can be filed from December 27, 2025, to January 22, 2026, with special campaign dates fixed for January 3-4 and January 10-11. Weekly lists of claims and objections will be shared with recognised parties.

Any decision by an electoral registration officer can be appealed to the district magistrate within 15 days, with a second appeal available to the CEO within 30 days. The final electoral roll will be published on February 10, 2026, the statement added. (PTI)

Prohibitory orders withdrawn

of the improvement and with the New Year approaching, the District Magistrate ordered the withdrawal of the restrictions from all parts of the district. The administration has appealed to the public to continue maintaining peace and extend cooperation to ensure a safe and orderly environment.

Himanta favours three

two-child norm for the people to avail benefits under specific state schemes. At a press conference on November 9, the chief minister had claimed that the growth of the Hindu population was coming down, while that of Muslims was increasing.

According to the 2011 census, Assam had a total Muslim population of 1.07 crore, making up 34.22 per cent of the total 3.12 crore residents of the state. There were 1.92 crore Hindus in the state, around 61.47 per cent of the total population. The BJP has been regularly highlighting the demographic change, stating that at least nine districts became Muslim majority as per the 2011 census from six in 2001, and the number, the party claims, has increased to at least 11 at present. In 2001, when Assam had 23 districts, Muslims were in majority in six -- Dhubri (74.29), Goalpara (53.71), Barpeta (59.37), Nagaon (51), Karimganj (52.3) and Hailakandi (57.63). The number of districts increased to 27 in 2011 and nine out of them had Muslim majority. These were Dhubri (79.67), Goalpara (57.52), Barpeta (70.74), Morigaon (52.56), Nagaon (55.36), Karimganj (56.36), Hailakandi (60.31), Bongaigaon (50.22) and Darrang (64.34). (PTI)

NH-715 contractor owner

chairmanship of the District Commissioner, with officials of the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) and company representatives, the issue remained unresolved and the dues were not cleared. Police said Jalan has been brought to Teok Police Station for interrogation and further investigation into the matter is underway.

BJP likely to publish

has three members. In the opposition camp, the Congress' strength is 26. AIUDF has 15 members and CPI(M) has one MLA. There is one Independent legislator as well. When asked if the BJP will go to polls in alliance with both UPPL and BPF in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), the CM said, "Today we are all together. However, the situation in BTR and Dispur is different. At Dispur, we are all together. In BTR, UPPL and BPF are different."

The BJP has an alliance with BPF as well as UPPL, but there is no partnership between the two BTR-based parties, he stressed. "We have a good relationship with both parties, and that will remain. For the election, we will have to evaluate what the other party says if we go ahead with one of them. I believe that we will be able to sort this out in due course of time," Sarma said, without specifying any direction on the possible alliance.

He emphasised that there is an "atmosphere" for the BJP to contest 5-6 seats out of 15 in BTR. "But it may change when we talk with our alliance partner. Still, depending on our organisational strength, we should get 5-6 seats even if we have an alliance there. For the rest of the seats, we will hold discussions," Sarma said. (PTI)

India surpasses Japan

to 7.4 per cent on stronger consumer demand. "India is among the world's fastest-growing major economies and is well-positioned to sustain this momentum. With the ambition of attaining high middle-income status by 2047-the centenary year of its independence, the country is building on strong foundations of economic growth, structural reforms, and social progress," the government said. The release also highlighted that inflation remains below the lower tolerance threshold, unemployment is on a declining trajectory, and export performance continues to improve. Furthermore, financial conditions have stayed benign, with strong credit flows to the commercial sector, while demand conditions remain firm, supported by a further strengthening of urban consumption. (PTI)

Bangladesh's former Prime

high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis and infection-related problems. She was admitted to Evercare Hospital on November 23 for routine tests, during which doctors detected a chest infection and decided to keep her under observation. Her condition worsened on November 27, prompting her transfer to the hospital's Coronary Care Unit (CCU). In the early hours of Tuesday, Dr Hossain, who was also a member of the medical board overseeing her treatment, described her condition as "very critical".

As her condition deteriorated, Rahman, along with other family members, rushed to the hospital.

Zia last appeared in public on November 21 when she joined the Armed Forces Day reception at Dhaka Cantonment. In his condolence message, Chief Adviser Yunus said he was "deeply saddened and grief-stricken" by the passing of Zia, noting that the nation had lost not just a political leader but a towering stateswoman who represented an important chapter in Bangladesh's history. With her demise, the nation has lost one of its great guardians," he said. In a statement posted on social media, Rahman reflected on his mother's political legacy and personal sacrifices. "To many, she was the leader of the nation, an uncompromising leader, the Mother of Democracy, the Mother of Bangladesh. Today, the country mourns the loss of a guiding presence that shaped its democratic aspirations. "To me, Khaleda Zia was a tender and loving mother who devoted her entire life to the country and its people," he wrote. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi mourned Zia's death, saying as the first woman premier of Bangladesh, her important contributions towards the development of the country, as well as India-Bangladesh relations, will always be remembered. Modi also recalled his "warm meeting" with her in Dhaka in 2015. "We hope that her vision and legacy will continue to guide our partnership," he said. Several other countries, including the US, Pakistan, China, Germany, Australia, and the European Union (EU), also expressed deep sorrow over the death of Zia and paid tribute to her political legacy and role in shaping the country's democratic journey. Party leaders, activists, supporters and Zia's admirers crowded the Evercare Hospital premises soon after her death was announced, while the BNP said it would hold a week-long mourning. BNP has emerged as the forerunner in the upcoming Feb 12 general election in the changed political landscape, with the absence of the disbanded Awami League of deposed premier Sheikh Hasina. Its former ally Jamaat is now emerging as BNP's main rival. In a condolence message posted on the Awami League's X account, her arch rival Hasina, who is on exile in India, described Zia as a significant figure in Bangladesh's political history. "As the first woman prime minister of Bangladesh, and for her role in the struggle to establish democracy, her contributions to the nation were significant and will be remembered," she said.

BNP had earlier said that if physically well, Zia would be the next prime minister if the party is voted to power in the February 12 election, otherwise Rahman is their nominee for the position.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said Yunus' advisory council, effectively the cabinet, has called an emergency meeting after Zia's death, and he was invited to join the meeting. (PTI)

Assamese entrepreneur's honey

represents "Assamese entrepreneurship and Assamese pride". Today, his honey and apiculture products are widely known across the Northeast, marking a successful example of grassroots enterprise built through perseverance and innovation.

Novotel Guwahati GS Road unveils multi-format in-house New Year celebrations

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 30: As the city prepares to welcome 2026, Novotel Guwahati GS Road has announced what it describes as the city's largest curated in-house New Year celebration, offering multiple, clearly defined experiences under one roof.

Unlike single-format parties, the hotel has designed its New Year programme to cater to varied preferences—ranging from a relaxed family dinner to a high-energy countdown, a rooftop celebration, and a leisurely New Year brunch—allowing guests to choose without moving across different venues in the city.

On December 31, the hotel will host three parallel experiences across its signature outlets.

At The Square, its all-day dining restaurant, a refined New Year's Eve buffet with a curated global spread and live music will be offered from 8 pm to midnight, positioned for families and guests seeking a calm and elegant setting.

The buffet is priced at ₹2,000 plus taxes, with beverages available à la carte and an optional liquor add-on.



For those looking for a livelier atmosphere, 188 Downtown will host a grand celebration featuring an elaborate buffet, customised beverages, live music and a DJ-led countdown.

The high-energy experience will run from 8 pm to midnight and is priced at ₹3,999 plus taxes.

The hotel's rooftop venue, Skye, will offer a midnight countdown under the stars with a live band, handcrafted cocktails and finger food, set against panoramic city

views.

The rooftop celebration is priced at ₹2,999 plus taxes and will also run from 8 pm to midnight.

Celebrations will continue on January 1 with Aarambh - The Grand New Year Brunch, a single brunch experience spread across all three outlets.

The Square will focus on Indian cuisine with regional specialities, while 188 Downtown will feature global flavours in an alfresco-style setting. Skye will host live grill

counters, seafood, signature meats and DJ-led music in a poolside brunch atmosphere.

The brunch is priced at ₹2,599++ for the non-alcoholic package and ₹3,999++ for the alcoholic package, with access to all three outlets.

Speaking about the initiative, Vineet Kumar Mishra, general manager of the hotel, said the approach was shaped by evolving guest preferences.

"Some guests prefer a quiet dinner, others enjoy music and energy, while many look forward to a relaxed brunch the next day. Instead of a single large party, we have structured distinct experiences within the hotel so guests can choose what suits them best, while enjoying consistent standards of food, service and safety," he said.

With this format, the hotel aims to position itself as a one-stop New Year destination for families, working professionals and groups seeking choice, comfort and well-defined experiences.

For reservations and enquiries, guests may contact Novotel Guwahati GS Road at +91 75778 84004.

Leaders demand probe, justice and compensation for victims amid rising tensions

Assam Opposition delegation visits arson-hit West Karbi Anglong

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Dec 30: An all-party delegation led by Leader of the Opposition in the Assam Legislative Assembly, Debabrata Saikia, visited the arson-affected areas of West Karbi Anglong on Tuesday to assess the situation and meet affected families.

The delegation included senior Congress leaders such as APCC Working president Pradip Sarkar and MLAs Rekibuddin Ahmed, Abdul Rashid Mandol, Nurul Huda, Bhaskar Jyoti Baruah and Sibamoni Bora. Regional allies, including Rajnar DAI president and MLA Akhil Gogoi, CPM MLA Monoranjan Talukdar, APLC president JI Kathar and CPI (ML) Liberation leader Ruby Kumar Phangcho, also participated.



The visit came amid heightened fear and anxiety in the Professional Grazing Reserve (PGR) and Village Grazing Reserve (VGR) areas, following the government's plan to remove alleged encroach-

ments. Local MLA Rupsing Teron also visited Kheroni to engage with residents.

Speaking to the media, Debabrata Saikia criticised the BJP-led state government and the Karbi

Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), alleging administrative failure in maintaining law and order. He accused the authorities of selectively suppressing information and depriving certain sections of the population of government schemes.

The delegation paid respects at the residence of Suruj Dey, who was killed during the arson incident and visited the family of Linus Phangcho, a youth who lost his life in police firing during the unrest.

Opposition leaders described the violence as a consequence of "administrative negligence" and demanded a high-level investigation, immediate accountability from the state government and justice and compensation for the victims' families.

MASS condemns killing of Angel Chakma

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, Dec 30: The Manab Adhikar Sangram Samiti (MASS) of Assam has strongly condemned the brutal and inhuman killing of Angel Chakma, an MBA student in Tripura.

MASS emphasised that the rights of all citizens are protected under Indian law and called on the Union Government to take urgent and effective measures to address discrimination and violence against people of Mongolian origin from the North East.

The organisation urged the authorities to ensure the safety and dignity of North East students and professionals working across India, highlighting the need for a shift in societal attitudes to prevent such tragic incidents in the future.

Assam's traditional manuscript painting showcased in Delhi

Artist Sujit Das demonstrates unique Assamese techniques at week-long exhibition

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Dec 30: A demonstration and exhibition of Assam's traditional manuscript painting was organised by the DC Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, at The Kunj, New Delhi, from December 24 to 30.



Noted artist Sujit Das represented Assam as an invited artist, showcasing the state's rich cultural heritage. During the event, Das demonstrated traditional Assamese manuscript painting techniques, using *hengul* and *hailal* on *sanchi pat*, the traditional paper made from the bark of the *sanchi tree*. He also presented *satriya*-style paintings, highlighting Assam's unique

artistic traditions.

Visitors from across the country and abroad appreciated the exhibition and purchased Assamese manuscript paintings. They also lauded the Government of India's efforts to revive this nearly lost art form. The exhibition and demonstration concluded on December 30, a release added.

1984 batch alumni reunite at Nagaon Govt HS Boys' School

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Dec 30: A grand reunion and felicitation programme was held at the Nagaon Government Higher Secondary Boys' School on Friday to commemorate the 1984 batch of students. The event was marked by a series of dignified and heartfelt moments, bringing together former students, revered teachers and staff members.

The programme began with the alumni paying floral tributes to the departed souls of their beloved teachers. The students also remembered and paid homage to their 32 batchmates who have passed away.

A special felicitation ceremony was organised to honour the teachers who had taught the alumni during their school days. The teachers felicitated included Jibeswar Goswami, Govinda Saikia, Faizuddin Ahmed, Umakanta Medhi, Dilip Kumar Gogoi, Ganesh Chandra Phukan, Kinaram Bora, Banti Goswami Bora, Padram Bora, Navakanta Ligira, Prafulla Chandra Muktar, Umesh Dutta Borahakur, Idris Ali Israfil, Tankeswar Saikia, Manmath Katoki and Yogeswar Saikia.

NFR achieves major ROB-RUB milestones in 2025

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Dec 30: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has achieved significant infrastructure milestones in 2025 with the completion of 16 Road Over Bridges (ROBs) and 22 Road Under Bridges (RUBs), strengthening safety, mobility and rail-road connectivity across its jurisdiction.

The projects form part of Indian Railways' ongoing drive to eliminate manned level crossings, ensuring uninterrupted train movement, reducing road congestion and lowering the risk of accidents. The works were prioritised based on traffic volume, safety impact, public benefit and technical feasibility, improving operational efficiency for both passenger and freight traffic.

Key achievements include the completion of the 290-metre-long Panbazar ROB in Guwahati at a cost of ₹ 47 crore, featuring a wide carriage-way, 1.5-metre footpaths on both sides and modern engineering elements like a 60-metre Bow String Girder with composite girders. The bridge has significantly eased traffic along the busy Panbazar-Paltan Bazar corridor while providing adequate clearances for train operations.

Another landmark project is the ROB connecting Raha (NH-27) with Chaparmukh Railway Junction and further towards West Karbi Anglong. Constructed at a cost of Rs 84.6 crore with a total length of 1,179 metres, this bridge has emerged as a critical regional link, improving the movement of people and goods and



eliminating delays caused by level crossings.

In addition, 22 RUBs were completed during the year, enhancing rail-road safety, reducing traffic bottlenecks and facilitating smoother travel for commuters and freight. Several RUB projects are currently underway with new works being taken up as required to meet growing traffic and safety needs.

Through these initiatives, NFR has reinforced its commitment to eliminating manned level crossings and developing safe, efficient and future-ready rail infrastructure. The 2025 milestones highlight the railway's focus on passenger safety, operational excellence and inclusive infrastructure growth, contributing to the socio-economic development of the region.

Teacher's Award for Netaji HS Headmaster; residents appeal for extension of tenure

HT Correspondent

GOSSAIGAON, Dec 30: Residents of Gossaigaon have appealed to the State government and Education Department to extend the service tenure of Badal Chandra Dey, Headmaster of Netaji Higher English School, by two years, citing his exceptional contribution to education. There is also a demand to honour him with a prestigious Teacher's Award in recognition of his lifelong dedication to society.

Established in 1995 at Gossaigaon No 2 under Gossaigaon sub-division of Kokrajhar district, Netaji Higher English School is an Assamese- and Bengali-medium institution that has grown steadily over the years. Locals attribute much of this progress to the tireless efforts, vision and commitment of Headmaster Dey and his colleagues. The school currently has an enrolment of 419 students.

Dey's contribution was particularly significant during the turbulent years of ethnic violence between the Bodo and Adivasi communities in 1996 and 1998, when education was severely disrupted due to fear, displacement and use of school buildings as shelters. Despite these challenges, Dey and his colleagues took extraordinary initiatives to ensure continuity in education, even spending from their own pockets to support poor Adivasi children. The teachers visited numerous villages, including Gossaigaon No 2, Babubil, Guwabari, Thurihari, Kadamguri, Dhaoliguri, Bhodayaguri, Kanupara, Gaburchand, Barjabil, Daikhorguri, Habruvil,

Telipara, Matiyajuri, Rangapara, Kamarpara, Padmapukhuri, Basbari, Ghughujhora, Satyapur, Borbil, Mohanbohar, Sukan Baonai, Alokjhar, Oxiguri, Madati, Hansbil, Samajjhora, Daolaguri, Hesper and several others.

By engaging with village elders and guardians, they successfully motivated parents from Adivasi, Bodo and other communities to enrol their children in school. Many students from these villages continue their education at Netaji Higher English School in both Assamese and Bengali mediums.

The school has since been provincialised, with improved infrastructure including school buildings, an assembly hall and staff rooms. Students now have opportunities in academics, sports and co-curricular activities. The school's matriculation results have been consistently satisfactory with student Jahiran Nessa securing a First Division in 2022, scoring 82 in Mathematics and 92 in Social Science.

Dey is also known for his deep engagement with tribal communities, having learned the Santali language to communicate effectively with Adivasi parents, building trust and encouraging greater participation in education.

Scheduled to retire in 2026, Badal Chandra Dey has been widely acknowledged as an educationist dedicated to uplifting children from marginalised and displaced backgrounds. Local residents have urged the government to extend his tenure by two years and formally recognise his contribution with a Teacher's Award.



Wild boar attacks three in Sootea, Biswanath

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Dec 30: Panic erupted in Sootea as a wild boar from the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve attacked three individuals while they were bringing back their cows from a paddy field.

The victims—Parag Bordoloi, Sanjib Saikia and Niku Saikia, residents of Malargaon, Sootea, sustained serious injuries and were immediately taken to Biswanath Chariali Civil Hospital. They were later referred to Tezpur Medical College and Hospital (TMCH) for advanced medical treatment.

A team from the Biswanath Wildlife Division, Forest Department and Sootea Police reached the site. The wild boar was subsequently killed by the authorities following standard protocol.

Cancer awareness camp organised at Nagaon Marwari Hindi School

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Dec 30: A cancer awareness camp was organised at Nagaon Marwari Hindi School on Monday in collaboration with the Nagaon Lions Club and Nagaon Medical College and Hospital.

More than a hundred students participated in the awareness programme, which aimed at educating young minds about cancer, its causes and preventive measures.

Dr Bishnu Ram Das, Principal of Nagaon Medical College and Hospital and Dr Gitali Das addressed the students and explained various causes of cancer along with ways to prevent the disease through healthy lifestyle practices and early awareness.

Several doctors and dignitaries



were present on the occasion, including Kishor Kumar Dev Principal of Marwari Hindi School, Jiten Agarwala president of Nagaon Lions Club, Maharshi Vishal Bor-

doloi Secretary, Madan Saha, Biswajit Mahanta, Bakul Bora, Mala Sarma Bordoloi, Nanu Das, Hemanta Bordoloi and other members of the Lions Club.

Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat campaign events held at Nagaon GNDG Commerce College

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Dec 30: The Women's Cell of Nagaon GNDG Commerce College organised on-the-spot poster-making and essay writing competitions among students as part of the "Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat Campaign" on Monday to spread awareness and encourage social responsibility. The programme was inaugurated by the Vice Principal of the college, Bijumoni Pathak, in the presence of faculty members of the Women's Cell and participating students. Addressing the gathering, she stressed the need for creating massive public awareness

against child marriage, ensuring legal compliance, empowering girls and promoting girls' education.

The presence and active participation of Professors Natasha Barua, Dr Puja Neog, Dr Jonali Sarma, Rupshikha Goswami and Bhupesh Tumung encouraged the students to actively engage in the competitions.

The first and second rank holders in both competitions will be awarded certificates and prizes. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr Puja Neog, Assistant Professor, Department of Hindi, Nagaon GNDG Commerce College.

Tragic road mishap at Nono Panikhati

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Dec 30: A devastating road accident near Nono Panikhati, on the outskirts of Nagaon town, claimed the lives of two people and left one critically injured on Tuesday.

Eyewitnesses reported that a speeding vehicle, a van with registration number AS 02 AV 5099, lost control and struck multiple pedestrians, including a youth and a schoolgirl, before crashing into a divider in front of Panikhaiti Swahid High School.

The deceased were identified as Rajimul Haque (41) and Pooja Laskar (17), who were declared dead on arrival at a private nursing home in Nagaon. The critically injured 13-year-old, Tarizur Zaman is undergoing treatment in the ICU at a private hospital.

The vehicle involved has been seized by the police, who have launched a thorough investigation into the circumstances of the accident.

The tragic incident has sent shockwaves through the Panikhaiti and Nagaon communities with locals expressing grief and outrage over the loss of life. Authorities have urged drivers to exercise caution and adhere to speed regulations to prevent further tragedies.

Awareness programme under 100-Day special campaign for Bal Vivaah Mukta Bharat

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Dec 30: An awareness programme under the 100-Day Special Awareness Campaign for Bal Vivaah Mukta Bharat (BVMB) was held on Tuesday at the DC Conference Hall, Sonitpur. The initiative was organised by the District Hub for Empowerment of Women (DHEW), Department of Women and Child Development in association with the District Administration.

The programme was chaired by District Commissioner Ananda Kumar Das and attended by CEO, Sonitpur Zilla Parishad Jayanta Kumar Borah and District Social Welfare Officer Rubi Kalita. Principals and Headmasters of high and higher secondary schools, Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and other district-level officials participated.

Sessions focused on child marriage prevention, child protection mechanisms and legal safeguards for women and children. Participants were sensitised about the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, including the formation of Internal Committees in schools and workplaces and the use of the SHE-Box portal for online complaint redressal. The ongoing campaign "Suroxito Xaishab, Sonali Axom" was also highlighted.

Resource persons included Abha Borah, Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee, Sonitpur; Dipu Bhuyan, Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel under DLSA and Rajib Gohain, who elaborated on child rights, legal provisions, institutional responsibilities and available support systems.

Maj Gen Anurag Vij visits Tezpur Group, interacts with NCC cadets

ADG NCC for North Eastern Region inspects training, attends cultural programme, pays tribute to 1962 war martyrs

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Dec 30: Major General Anurag Vij, ADG NCC for the North Eastern Region, visited the Tezpur Group on December 29, inspecting the Army Camp of the SW Cadets currently underway at 155 BH.

During his visit to the Darrang College Unit of 5 Assam Battalion NCC, Maj Gen Vij was honoured with a guard of honour presented by the cadets and received a warm welcome from the commanding officer, Col. Unni Krishna and administrative officer, Col. Madhab Chandra Boro. In connection with the maiden visit of the top-ranking officer, a colourful cultural programme was organised, featuring Bihu, Bagumba and other ethnic dance performances showcasing the traditional cultural richness of the region.

Speaking on the occasion, the ADG complimented the cadets for their enthusiasm and skills and held a detailed interaction with them



over tea. He was briefed by officers on the conduct of training before addressing the cadets, motivating them to acquire life-saving skills and become responsible citizens of the nation. The visit concluded with a tribute to brave

soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the country, as Maj Gen Vij laid a wreath at the 1962 war memorial near the circuit house area in Tezpur, which marks the site where the ashes of martyrs of the 1962 operations were immersed in 1963.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow.
- Helen Keller

SHANTI Bill gets Prez assent

The new nuclear bill, titled Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI), passed by Parliament, has received the assent of the President of India, Droupadi Murmu. With this, it has become an Act governing various aspects of nuclear energy in the country. There is a strong push towards expanding nuclear power for electricity generation. At a time when the entire world is deeply concerned about the accelerating climate crisis—which threatens to reach catastrophic levels—the pro-nuclear lobby is aggressively projecting nuclear power as “clean energy.” However, the criteria for any genuinely green source of energy include sustainability, cost of installation and decommissioning, cost of generation, and humanitarian consequences. Nuclear energy fails on several of these counts. The nuclear energy process involves multiple stages—from uranium mining and transportation to enrichment, reactor installation, electricity generation and long-term waste management. A foolproof system for handling radioactive waste is essential, yet remains unresolved globally. In addition, the enormous costs of decommissioning nuclear plants must be factored in. Given that nuclear energy is inherently hazardous, any accident can have grave consequences. In such situations, the protection of affected communities must be paramount.

A serious concern is the inseparable link between nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. As M. V. Ramana explains, “Technically speaking, having a nuclear reactor means you’re going to have more capacity to make nuclear weapons.” Nuclear power plants require the highest level of security and therefore demand direct and strict government control. Any laxity can prove disastrous. The SHANTI Act runs directly contrary to these requirements by allowing blanket entry of private players into nuclear power generation. An analysis by Friends of the Earth India (FoE) and the National Alliance of People’s Movements (NAPM) warns that such an opening is extremely dangerous and significantly increases the risk of nuclear incidents and accidents. Granting operational control over fissile and highly radioactive materials to private entities could have catastrophic and irreversible consequences. Private businesses, driven primarily by profit motives, are far more likely to compromise on safety and security. The Act clearly prioritises business interests over public safety, environmental protection, workers’ rights, and the wellbeing of affected communities.

Significantly, just two days after Parliament passed the SHANTI Bill—allowing private participation and capping operator liability at ₹3,000 crore—U.S. President Donald Trump signed the National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA) on December 19, 2025. The Act advises the U.S. Secretary of State to work with the Indian government to “align India’s domestic nuclear liability rules with international norms.” This clearly explains the motivation behind opening India’s nuclear sector to private players and removing supplier liability. It is high time that concerned citizens and organisations should raise the issue vociferously and force the government to stall this act and hold detailed debate in the parliamentary standing committee and with civil society members and various stake holders.

Do This Before the Year Ends

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



As the year comes to a close, many people turn their attention to resolutions. New goals. Fresh targets. Bigger ambitions. The calendar changes, and the mind begins to plan its next climb. There is another ritual worth considering before that climb begins. A quieter one. Less visible, yet deeply effective.

Letting go. Before stepping into a new year, it helps to pause and ask a simple question. What truly deserves to travel forward with us? Old grievances, half-remembered arguments, minor insults, and emotional residue from situations that no longer exist often find a way into the future without invitation.

Forgiveness, when seen clearly, becomes a practical act of mental hygiene. It clears space. It restores balance. It prevents yesterday’s noise from leaking into tomorrow’s decisions. What others chose to do remains their action. Their responsibility. When such experiences are carried forward as unresolved emotion, they quietly turn into mental weight. Over time, this weight affects clarity, judgment, and even physical well-being.

Breathing Space

Life today already moves at an exhausting speed. Minds are crowded with alerts, opinions, reactions, and constant comparison. Adding unresolved negativity to this environment only reduces inner capacity. A lighter mind responds better. It adapts faster. It sees beyond immediate irritation. This is where the Japanese idea of “Yutori” becomes deeply relevant.

Yutori translates loosely as spaciousness. Room to breathe. A breathing space or leeway in time and thought. It reflects a conscious choice to create buffers in life rather than filling every moment with urgency. It is about preventing inner suffocation. Letting go and Yutori work together quietly. One clears the mind. The other protects that clarity.

Letting go releases emotional accumulation. Yutori ensures space is not immediately filled again. In practical terms, Yutori shows up in small ways. Leaving early enough to arrive without stress. Allowing gaps between tasks. Taking a walk without tracking steps or outcomes. Sitting with a cup of tea without scrolling through a screen. These moments create breathing room. They reduce the inner rush that often triggers anxiety and control.

Bliss Philosophy Helps

The end of a year offers a natural pause to practise this approach. Instead of reviewing every hurt or replaying unresolved moments, one can simply decide what deserves closure. Emotional release does not require detailed analysis. It requires intention. Bliss Meditation practitioners often talk about awareness of life’s impermanence. When mortality is understood as a fact rather than a fear, priorities shift.

Bliss Meditation supports this shift by refining attention. It helps the mind distinguish between what needs engagement and what drains energy. Emotional accumulation that serves no growth quietly falls away when awareness increases. Accumulating resentment begins to feel unnecessary. Carrying grudges looks inefficient. Emotional clutter loses its appeal.

A mind that understands impermanence values clarity. A mind with clarity values space. This inner clarity has collective importance. Societies today function on rapid reaction. Offence spreads quickly. Retaliation travels faster than reflection. In such an environment, choosing forgiveness and mental spaciousness becomes a stabilizing force. It reflects maturity. It reflects strength without display.

Caring for Earth

There is also a broader responsibility unfolding. The coming decades demand thoughtful care for the planet. Environmental stress, social imbalance, and mental fatigue require calm decision-making. A mind trapped in minor conflicts cannot rise to planetary concerns. Inner order becomes a prerequisite for external stewardship. Caring for Earth begins with caring for attention. Sustainable action grows from inner stability.

See this way, letting go becomes more than a personal habit. It becomes a ritual. A Bliss ritual. A moment at the edge of the year to consciously release unnecessary weight. To clear emotional storage. To enter the next phase with mental space intact. Such rituals do not announce themselves. They do not demand validation. Yet they quietly reshape the quality of life. As the calendar turns, perhaps the most valuable resolution is about making room. Room in the mind. Room in time. Room in the heart.

A longer journey deserves lighter steps. Bliss on.

New Year’s resolution: Self-reliant Assam and the evolution of work culture

As another year slips away in the flow of time and a new one knocks at the door, the question arises—will our fate or our economic character change merely because the date on the calendar has changed? The answer would be deeply disappointing if we do not bring about a radical transformation in our current work methods and mindset. In the social and economic context of Assam, the New Year’s resolution should not remain confined to emotional exuberance for a single day; rather, it must become an uninterrupted struggle to straighten the backbone of our nation. When we speak of a “Self-Reliant Assam”, the grim statistics should flash before our eyes—those that reveal how every day, several crores of rupees flow out of Assam to other states just in the name of eggs and meat. This money is none other than our hard-earned income, which is slipping into others’ hands solely because of our lazy nature and production-averse mentality. Businessmen from Andhra Pradesh grow rich by supplying us with eggs, farmers from Uttar Pradesh or Bihar build economic empires by providing us with lentils and potatoes, and we, remaining mere consumers who buy those goods, deliver speeches on patriotism. The responsibility for this massive economic plunder does not lie with outsiders; it lies with ourselves. For nature has bestowed upon us a land where gold truly grows, but the mentality and physical labour required to harvest that gold are gradually disappearing from among us. At this juncture of the New Year, we must ask ourselves—shall we remain lifelong consumers lost in the market crowd, or shall we take the driver’s seat in the market through production? If we truly wish to become self-reliant, our first battle must begin from our own homes, from our own minds—where the mistaken notion that “work” means only “job” is deeply rooted.

The weakest aspect of Assam’s economy is the unplanned gap between our agriculture and industry, which our younger generation has neither understood nor attempted to understand. We immediately think of agriculture as muddy, dirty work fit only for the poor, yet in the modern world, farming is the most profitable and respectable “agro-business” or agricultural commerce. Thousands of bighas of land in Assam still lie fallow, or we remain content with cultivating rice just once a year, which is one of the main reasons for our economic backwardness. If farmers in Punjab or Haryana can earn crores through three or four crops a year on the same plot, why can we not do so on our fertile soil? The problem is not one of money; the problem is the lack of a scientific outlook and continuity in hard work. Our youth love riding bikes around, but feel ashamed to drive a tractor into the fields. This very “shame” has made the Assamese nation economically hollow. When an Assamese youth migrates to Kerala or Tamil Nadu for employment, he does not hesitate to take up any work in hotels or construction there, yet the same work in Assam wounds his self-respect. Outsiders—workers and businessmen—have seized our markets by exploiting this dual character. In the New Year, we must vow that no matter how small the work, if it makes us self-reliant, there is no shame in doing it. An educated youth who opens a modern piggery or poultry farm, or grows vegetables and markets them himself, is a far more valuable asset to society than a government clerk; for he not only feeds himself but directly contributes to increasing the country’s GDP.

A common complaint heard in our state is that industries do not develop here or that the government does not provide sufficient facilities. But have we ever seriously considered that the mentality prevailing here is itself anti-industry? Whenever we hear of industry or factories, we prepare to protest, thinking of pollution or land grabs, while ignoring the fact that such an industry could open employment paths for thousands. Assam has no shortage of raw materials—our bamboo, cane, tea leaves, rubber, and various fruits are produced in abundance, yet industries for processing them and adding value are negligible here. As a result, our raw materials go out cheaply, only to return packaged at exorbitant prices to our markets. For instance, Assam’s Bhut Jolokia or lemons have global demand, but most companies dominating the market with their pickles or sauces are from outside Assam. To change this situation, we need an “entrepreneurship” mindset that dares to take risks without merely waiting for government subsidies or loans. As a New Year’s resolution, our youth must dream of becoming “job creators” rather than remaining “job seekers”. In today’s digital age, e-commerce has turned the world into a small market. The gamusa or mekhela-chador woven by a village artisan can be sold in America or London through proper branding and online marketing. But for that, we need professional knowledge and a commitment to maintaining quality. If we merely float on emotion and compromise on standards, we will never establish ourselves in the global market. Another crucial factor hindering the evolution of our work culture is the addiction in our society to “easy money”. In recent years, a frightening trend has emerged in Assam where there is a race to become suddenly rich through brokerage, syndicates, or corruption without hard work. This tendency has misled our new generation and turned the dignity of labour into an object of ridicule. When a youth sees his neighbour acquiring expensive cars and houses merely through political patronage or under the guise of contracting without doing any real work, his desire to earn ten or fifteen thousand rupees through honest labour or farming dies. Stopping this social decay should be one of our primary responsibilities in the New Year. Elders, parents, and conscious sections of society need to be strict in this regard. We must stop according social respect to corrupt individuals and learn to honour the rickshaw puller or vegetable vendor who earns an honest living. Until society values a person’s character and hard work more than the source of their money, build-



DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himanshu Ranjan Bhuyan

arriving at eleven and leaving by two is also part of our crippled work culture. Unless these change, the slogan of a “Developed Assam” will remain mere wall writing. The role of Assam’s women in the struggle for self-reliance is immense. Women act as a driving force in our rural economy, yet we rarely recognise their labour or consider it part of the formal economy. The magic that the daughters and daughters-in-law of every Assamese household can create on the loom is rare elsewhere in the world. Unfortunately, our textile industry still remains at the cottage level. We have not been able to take the pat-muga industry of Sualkuchi to the international level it deserves. In contrast, Banarasi or Mysore silk has captured our markets. In our New Year plans, special importance should be given to advancing women entrepreneurs. Rather than limiting ourselves to forming self-help groups and taking loans, emphasis must be placed on how that money can be used for genuine production-oriented work. Today, there is immense potential for women to become economically self-reliant in food processing, handicrafts, and tourism sectors. If we can scientifically package our homemade pitha, laru, and snacks to last long without spoiling, these products can create demand across India. During Bihu season, we see higher demand for plastic-packed snacks or biscuits from outside, while our healthy homemade delicacies lag behind due to lack of proper marketing. We must learn to take pride in our indigenous products and be ready to give them commercial form. A nation becomes strong only when every family is economically independent. And that independence will come only when every member of the

household—man or woman—engages in productive work. The tourism sector could be a golden goose for Assam’s economy, but we have not nurtured it properly. Nature has showered Assam with beauty—hills, rivers, forests, wildlife; what do we lack? Beyond Kaziranga or Manas, every corner of Assam holds tourism potential. But tourism is not just about having beautiful places; it involves good connectivity, security, and most importantly—an “attitude of hospitality”. In many places, tourists cannot find decent hotels to stay, clean food to eat, or sometimes face non-cooperation from locals. In the New Year, we must resolve to make Assam a safe and attractive destination for tourists. Instead of depending solely on the government, local youth can choose self-employment paths as home-stay operators or tourist guides. If states like Meghalaya or Sikkim can advance economically relying mainly on tourism, why can we not? Our river tourism and eco-tourism potential is immense. By running cruises on the Brahmaputra or arranging camping on its banks, our youth can earn lakhs. But for that, we must move beyond traditional thinking and adopt a modern business perspective. We should remember that a tourist’s arrival benefits not just one hotel; it increases earnings for drivers, shopkeepers, guides, and everyone connected to local handicrafts. Therefore, we should unite and work to develop tourism as an industry.

Finally, without radical reform in our education system, the dream of a self-reliant Assam will never materialise. Even today, our schools and colleges teach curricula that have little connection to real-life employment. Thousands of graduates and postgraduates emerge each year with degrees but no practical skills. As a result, they spend their days applying only for government jobs and suffer frustration when they do not get them. From the New Year, we must change our concept of education. Instead of mere bookish knowledge, emphasis should be on technical education, vocational training, and skill development. Students should be prepared from school life itself so that they can stand on their own feet upon completing studies. We parents must also understand that not every child can or needs to become a doctor or engineer. Society equally needs good electricians, plumbers, or mechanics, and their earnings are no less. Raising a new generation that understands the dignity of labour will be our greatest investment for the future. In 2026, we must dream of an Assam where no youth has to migrate to other states seeking work; instead, people from outside scramble to buy products made in Assam. To turn this dream into reality, we need relentless hard work, indomitable willpower, and a positive work culture. Come, let us control emotion with reason and, through action, truly make the golden Assam golden—not confine it merely to wishes and words. Heartfelt New Year wishes to all. May everyone remain well. (The author is the recipient of the ‘Yuba Lekhak Sanman - 2025’ from the Government of Assam)

New Year’s resolution, our youth must dream of becoming “job creators” rather than remaining “job seekers”. In today’s digital age, e-commerce has turned the world into a small market. The gamusa or mekhela-chador woven by a village artisan can be sold in America or London through proper branding and online marketing

The Truth Drowned in the noise of achievements: An introspection for 2025

The year gone, questions remain: India in 2025

By: Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

History isn’t just a collection of dates and events; it’s also a mirror of society’s collective consciousness. The past few years, and especially the year 2025, have served as such a mirror for India—one in which we have seen both our achievements and our uncomfortable truths. This year has witnessed hope and despair, progress and backwardness, pride and guilt—all of these emotions simultaneously.

In 2025, India captured global attention on many fronts. Digital payment systems simplified the lives of ordinary citizens. Technologies like UPI demonstrated that technology can reach the masses if intended. Startup culture instilled entrepreneurial confidence in young people. India demonstrated extraordinary capabilities in space research with limited resources, and the expansion of infrastructure—roads, railways, and airports—bolstered the image of a “fast-growing India.” These achievements are undeniable, but this also calls for introspection, as the question is not just about development, but about its social impact.

Parallel to the dazzling growth

figures, the reality of unemployment and inflation in 2025 remained equally stark. Educated youth had degrees, but no jobs. The uncertainty of recruitment exams, delayed results, and instability in the private sector put an entire generation under psychological pressure. Inflation robbed the common man of balance in his kitchen. Pulses, vegetables, gas, education, and health—everything became more expensive, but incomes did not rise in the same proportion. This economic imbalance gradually transformed into social discontent.

In 2025, the plight of farmers and laborers remained undisclosed. Weather vagaries, lack of fair crop prices, mounting debt, and policy-level neglect kept farmers in constant insecurity. At times, dialogue was stalled, and at others, attempts were made to suppress movements. Ironically, those who feed the nation face the most uncertain future. The plight of laborers was no different. Millions of people working in the unorganized sector remained deprived of social security, stable employment, and a dignified life. The hands that build the edifice of development are often the most tired and least secure.

The deplorable state of public education and healthcare systems was further exposed in 2025. The poor condition of government schools and hospitals is no longer a state problem, but a national challenge. Teachers continue to work under resource constraints and administrative pressure, while health workers continue to perform their duties in an environment of excessive workload, limited facilities, and insecurity. Privatisation has provided choice, but not equality. Education and healthcare have gradually become commodities rather than rights, and those who were already socio-economically disadvantaged have suffered the most.

2025 was also a disturbing year for democracy. The tendency to equate dissent with anti-national sentiment narrowed public discourse. Growing pressure on writers, journalists, and social activists signaled that questioning power was becoming increasingly risky. Arrests based on social media posts, attempts to restrict expression, and questions raised about the autonomy of constitutional institutions reminded us that democracy doesn’t survive solely on the electoral process. It thrives on a free press, fearless citizens, and ac-

countable institutions.

The politics of religion and identity repeatedly divided society in 2025. Religious fanaticism, mob mentality, and moral policing challenged the fundamental concepts of equality, fraternity, and secularism enshrined in the Constitution. Religion, which should have been a personal sphere of faith, became a tool of power and politics. The result was increased distrust in society, a breakdown in communication, and a deepening of fissures in human relationships.

Amidst all this gloom, 2025 also offered some tangible glimpses of hope. Youth asked questions, students raised their voices, farmers and workers organised and demanded their rights. Civil society organisations and independent journalism proved that Indian democracy had not been completely silenced. This resistance was not just against power, but also against the social apathy that slowly erodes us from within.

2025 made it clear that development cannot be measured solely by GDP figures. Unless villages are safe, farmers are confident, laborers live with dignity, teachers and health workers are protected, and students are free from fear about

the future, ‘Developed India’ will remain just a catchy slogan. Technology is meaningful only when it is connected to human emotions, and governance can be considered successful only when its impact reaches the last person in line.

The biggest lesson of the past year, and especially of 2025, is that the responsibility to save India lies not only with governments but also with conscious citizens. In a democracy, silence is not neutrality; it often becomes injustice’s strongest ally. When we remain silent in the face of injustice, we unwittingly stand in its favor. 2025 made us realize that silence is no longer an option. Questioning, expressing disagreement, and maintaining dialogue are the greatest acts of patriotism today.

2025 is not just a passing year, but both a warning and an opportunity. A warning that if we normalize inequality, intolerance, and repression, democracy will be hollowed out from within. And an opportunity to seriously re-think the direction of development, the language of politics, and the role of citizens. If we truly learn something from 2025, those lessons can make the years to come more humane, more just, and more democratic.

21st Century Technologies of Education and Employment

By: Dr Mukul Chandra Bora, Rupam Gogoi

After the adaptation of Industry 4.0 and Industry 5.0 by World Economic Forum 21st century has transformed engineering education to meet the demands of rapid technological change, globalization, and sustainability. Traditional core branches like mechanical, civil, electrical, and chemical engineering remain foundational but at the same time new interdisciplinary and specialized courses are emerging to address Digitalization, AI, Renewable energy, Biotechnology and Smart infrastructure. The different technological domains which will dominate the employment market of 21st century are Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Engineering, Data Science and Big Data Engineering, Robotics and Automation Engineering, Cybersecurity and Blockchain Engineering, Renewable Energy and Sustainable Engineering, Biotechnology and Biomedical Engineering, Internet of Things (IoT) and Smart Systems Engineering, Aerospace, Space Technology, and Advanced Materials, Quantum Computing and Advanced Computational Engineering, Cyber Forensics and Smart Agritech. It is important to note by all the stakeholders of Education sector in India that the 21st century engineering courses should emphasize interdisciplinary knowledge, problem-solving, and technological fluency and that is why modern engineers are expected to integrate AI, data, sustainability, and digital infrastructure into solutions for real-world challenges and that is why the focus has shifted from purely mechanical or electrical expertise to holistic, innovative, and socially responsible engineering. Future of Smart Agritech in the 21st Century

The 21st century has brought unprecedented challenges to agriculture, including climate change, population growth, resource scarcity, and soil degradation. To address these challenges, Smart Agritech—the integration of advanced technologies such as IoT, artificial intelligence (AI), drones, robotics, and data analytics into agriculture—is revolutionizing the sector. It represents the future of sustainable, productive, and climate-resilient farming.

1. Precision Agriculture: Precision agriculture uses sensors, drones, and satellite imagery to monitor soil health, moisture levels, and crop growth in real-time. By analysing data with AI and machine learning, farmers can make informed decisions on irrigation, fertilization, and pest management, reducing waste and increasing yield.

2. IoT and Smart Farming: Internet of Things (IoT) devices connect equipment, sensors, and weather stations to provide continuous monitoring of farms. Smart irrigation systems, automated tractors, and climate-controlled greenhouses op-



timize resource use, conserve water, and increase efficiency.

3. Robotics and Automation: Autonomous tractors, robotic harvesters, and drone sprayers are reducing labour dependency while increasing accuracy in planting, fertilizing, and harvesting. Automation also minimizes crop loss and enhances operational efficiency.

4. AI and Data Analytics: AI-driven platforms predict crop diseases, optimize planting schedules, and provide market insights. Big data analytics enables farmers to forecast yields, manage supply chains, and respond to changing environmental conditions.

5. Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Practices: Smart Agritech promotes sustainable farming by optimizing inputs, reducing chemical usage, and enabling regenerative agriculture. Technologies like vertical farming and hydroponics allow cultivation with minimal land and water, addressing urban food security.

6. Blockchain for Agri-Traceability: Blockchain ensures transparency in the supply chain, tracking produce from farm to consumer. This builds trust, reduces fraud, and enables fair pricing for farmers.

7. Hydroponics and Aquaponics: As the world's population is increasing at an exponential rate, the availability of fertile agricultural land is rapidly declining which makes soil-less farming a vital option to meet future food demands and ensure human survival. Aquaponics and hydroponics are modern farming techniques that support sustainable agriculture without the use of

soil. Hydroponics involves growing plants in nutrient-rich water, resulting in faster growth, higher productivity, and efficient use of water and space. Aquaponics integrates hydroponics with aquaculture, where fish waste supplies nutrients to plants, and plants naturally purify the water. Both systems conserve water, reduce chemical fertilizer use, and allow year-round cultivation.

The future of agriculture is only Smart Agritech which promises higher productivity, sustainability, and resilience and integration of AI, IoT, robotics, and data analytics, 21st-century agriculture can feed a growing population, manage climate risks, and strengthen rural economies. Countries adopting these technologies will lead in food security and sustainable development. Smart Agritech also offers vast employment potential across technical, managerial, and research roles, making it a major job generator of the 21st century.

Employable Technologies of 21st Century: The 21st century is defined by rapid technological advancement, globalization, and the integration of digital systems into nearly every sector. This has created a demand for highly skilled professionals in emerging technologies. Educational and professional programs that combine technical expertise with practical application are among the most employable today and is the future employment for Engineers to be admitted in different engineering courses across the globe.

Cybersecurity and cyber forensics are among the most important technological domains of the 21st century, as the modern world increasingly

depends on digital infrastructure for communication, governance, finance, and daily activities. While digitalization has improved efficiency and connectivity, it has also made systems vulnerable to cyberattacks, data breaches, and digital crimes. As a result, employability in cybersecurity and cyber forensics is growing rapidly across sectors. Organizations require skilled professionals to safeguard sensitive data, networks, and critical systems from cyber threats. Cybersecurity specialists work in areas such as network security, ethical hacking, cloud security, threat analysis, and risk management. Cyber forensics professionals focus on investigating cybercrimes, recovering digital evidence, and supporting legal and judicial processes. These domains offer wide career opportunities in government agencies, IT companies, defence organizations, law enforcement, and financial institutions. With continuous technological advancement, certified and skilled professionals enjoy strong job prospects and long-term career growth.

Cloud computing and DevOps play a significant role in employment generation in the digital economy. Cloud computing enables organizations to access scalable computing resources, reduce infrastructure costs, and support remote and global operations. As businesses migrate to cloud platforms, there is growing demand for cloud architects, cloud engineers, security specialists, and system administrators. DevOps further enhances employment opportunities by bridging the gap between software development and IT operations. It emphasizes automation, continuous integration and deployment (CI/CD), containerization, and monitoring, creating roles such as DevOps engineers, site reliability engineers, and automation specialists. Together, cloud computing and DevOps support startups, IT services, e-commerce, finance, healthcare, and government initiatives, leading to large-scale job creation. These technologies also encourage skill-based employment through certifications and hands-on expertise. With continuous digital transformation, cloud computing and DevOps are expected to remain strong drivers of innovation, productivity, and sustainable employment generation worldwide.

Financial Technology (FinTech) and Blockchain are transforming the global financial ecosystem by integrating digital innovation with traditional financial services. FinTech uses technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, mobile applications, and cloud computing to improve banking, payments, insurance, and investment services, making them faster, more inclusive, and customer-centric. Blockchain, a decentralized and secure digital ledger, enhances transparency, trust, and efficiency in transactions, smart contracts, digital identity, and cryptocurrencies. The rapid growth of FinTech and Blockchain

has created vast employment opportunities across sectors, demonstrating their wide adoptability in industries and government offices worldwide for seamless data verification and service delivery. Demand is rising for professionals in software development, data analytics, cybersecurity, blockchain architecture, Regulatory Technology, and digital payments, along with non-technical roles in compliance, finance, law, and strategy.

The most employable technological programs of the 21st century are AI/ML, data science, cybersecurity, cloud computing, robotics, IoT, blockchain, and renewable energy technologies. These programs offer high-demand skills, interdisciplinary knowledge, and opportunities across multiple sectors. Professionals trained in these areas are well-positioned to thrive in a global economy that prioritizes digital transformation, sustainability, and innovation. 21st century engineering courses provide exceptional employment potential due to their alignment with emerging technologies, global digital transformation, and sustainability goals. Fields such as AI, data science, cybersecurity, robotics, IoT, renewable energy, cloud computing, and biotechnology offer high-paying, globally relevant roles. Graduates from these programs are equipped to meet the growing needs of smart infrastructure, healthcare innovation, digital industries, and energy transition, making them highly employable and strategically valuable in a rapidly evolving job market.

Although traditional engineering disciplines such as mechanical, civil, electrical, and chemical engineering provide a strong foundation in core engineering principles, they mainly secure employment in sectors like construction, manufacturing, utilities, and infrastructure. However, in the 21st-century job market, employment has become highly competitive and technology-driven. Industries now demand skills beyond conventional engineering knowledge, including digital literacy, data analysis, automation, sustainability, and interdisciplinary problem-solving. Without exposure to these modern skills and competencies, traditional engineers may face limited career growth, reduced adaptability, and lower employability in high-tech sectors. While core engineering knowledge continues to be valuable, staying competitive and accessing high-demand, well-paid jobs requires continuous upskilling. Employers increasingly prefer candidates who combine fundamental engineering expertise with digital, analytical, and sustainable technology skills. Therefore, a major transformation in the technical education curriculum is the need of the hour. Such reforms are essential to ensure employability and to eliminate the notion of universities and institutes producing "certificates of unemployment" in India.

When wealth went cosmic and markets turned inward

By: Dipak Kurmi

In an era when SpaceX rockets crisscross the skies and satellites form dense constellations around the Earth, wealth itself appears to have taken on a cosmic scale. The prospect of SpaceX eventually going public, with a speculative valuation of around 1.5 trillion dollars, has led to projections that its founder, Elon Musk, could one day command a personal fortune of one trillion dollars or more. Such figures stretch the limits of comprehension. Humanity can peer light years into the universe, study distant galaxies and theorise about black holes, yet numbers of this magnitude still defy intuitive understanding. As of late 2025, Musk's net worth hovers near 750 billion dollars on Forbes' real-time billionaire list, and daily fluctuations of 100 billion dollars have become almost routine, turning personal wealth into something as volatile and expansive as the cosmos itself.

This is not merely a story about one individual, but about a broader transformation in global wealth accumulation. Billionaires' fortunes have surged at a pace that mirrors the seemingly infinite nature of the universe. According to the Forbes 2025 list, there were more than 3,000 billionaires worldwide with a combined wealth exceeding 16 trillion dollars. That figure, however, was compiled earlier in the year, when Musk's wealth was less than half of its current level. Adjusted for subsequent market movements, the aggregate billionaire wealth may now be closer to 20 trillion dollars. These sums appear surreal, almost abstract, prompting the cynical observation that modern finance understands black holes better than it understands its own numbers. Yet, behind the abstraction lies a powerful reality: unprecedented concentrations of capital are reshaping economies, markets and social expectations.

While global billionaire wealth soared, the fortunes of Indian billionaires told a more restrained story in 2025. The benchmark Sensex index rose by just over eight per cent during the year, adding approximately 6,500 points. Significantly, most of these gains were concentrated in the final three months, particularly after the rollout of what many described as GST 2.0. Until September, the index had remained largely flat, delivering near-zero returns and dampening sentiment. As of December 28, Forbes' real-time list placed six individuals of Indian origin among the top 100 billionaires, including Lakshmi Mittal, whose steel empire is headquartered in London and whose future domicile remains uncertain. Their presence underscored India's continuing role in global wealth creation, even amid domestic market lethargy.

Mukesh Ambani remained the wealthiest Indian, with a net worth exceeding 110 billion dollars and a global rank of 16, followed by Gautam Adani at 66 billion dollars and rank 27. Savitri Jindal and Shiv Nadar were closely matched at around 36 billion dollars each, occupying ranks 58 and 59 respectively, while Dilip Shangvi stood at about 25.5 billion dollars at rank 92. These valuations, derived largely from stock market capitalisation and promoter shareholdings, are often dismissed as

paper wealth, susceptible to sharp reversals. While that scepticism has merit, it does not diminish the central role of stock markets as engines of capital formation and as barometers of economic confidence. Paper wealth may fluctuate, but markets themselves wield tangible power. The long arc of the Indian stock market provides useful perspective. When the Sensex was launched in 1986, it stood at a modest 570 points, at a time when India's economy was far more closed and cautious. By 1990, it crossed the 1,000-point mark, a milestone that seemed momentous then. Today, it has surged past 85,000 points, despite enduring nearly four decades of scandals, crises and structural upheavals. In crude terms, this represents a cumulative return of nearly 16,000 per cent since inception, a figure that is itself somewhat misleading given the constant churn in index constituents. What is more revealing is that the Sensex's annualised returns broadly track India's nominal GDP growth over time, underscoring the deep linkage between economic expansion and equity valuations.

Yet, 2025 stood out as a year of deviation and defiance. During the first half of the fiscal year, when GDP data is available, the Sensex rose by just over five per cent, lagging behind nominal economic growth. This divergence was accentuated by the behaviour of foreign portfolio investors, who withdrew a record one lakh crore rupees from Indian equities. Unlike previous episodes, this exodus occurred even as India remained the fastest-growing major economy. Global investors defied conventional wisdom, choosing to reduce exposure at a time when macroeconomic fundamentals appeared relatively strong. Their exit highlighted the growing complexity of capital flows, influenced as much by global risk appetite and geopolitical signals as by domestic performance.

Crucially, the vacuum left by foreign investors was filled by domestic participants. The relevance of FPIs has diminished steadily, and they now account for barely 17 per cent of India's stock market valuations. In 2025, it was local retail investors who emerged as the primary stabilising force, shaping market dynamics through their alliances and occasional dalliances. Mutual funds, the preferred vehicle for many first-time and cautious investors, saw assets under management surge past 80 trillion rupees by the end of November. This marked a structural shift in Indian finance, with household savings increasingly channelled into capital markets rather than languishing in low-yield instruments. The democratisation of equity investment has been one of the most striking trends of recent years. Stock ownership, once confined to a narrow elite, has spread across the middle and upper-middle classes in metropolitan centres and Tier I, II and III cities. By 2025, India had more than 200 million demat accounts, with over half of them believed to be active. Even after adjusting for multiple accounts held by individual investors, an estimated 80 to 90 million people participate in the equity markets. This cohort represents a growing constituency that views stocks not as speculative gambles but as long-term wealth-building tools, albeit with a persistent

bias towards caution.

That caution remains deeply ingrained. Despite rising participation, surveys consistently show that Indian investors prioritise safety and capital protection over high returns. Many are willing to accept lower yields in exchange for perceived security, reflecting cultural attitudes shaped by decades of financial repression and volatility. While alternative asset classes such as gold, silver and real estate have delivered respectable returns in recent years, the shift from savings to investments marks a significant behavioural change. It signals greater financial literacy and a gradual acceptance of market-linked risk, even if that acceptance remains tentative.

This complex blend of optimism and restraint was vividly reflected in the IPO boom of 2025. More than 100 companies tapped the primary markets, and towards the year's end, retail investors queued up in hopes of quick listing gains. In several cases, the difference between offer prices and listing-day valuations exceeded 50 per cent, reinforcing the allure of IPOs as a fast track to profits. Yet, the picture was uneven. Alongside high-profile offerings from companies such as Tata Capital, Groww, LG Electronics and Meesho, there were less impressive entrants whose stock prices slipped below issue and listing levels within months. The good apples came mixed with the bad, testing investor discernment.

Notably, retail behaviour during the IPO frenzy was more nuanced than critics often assume. Despite elevated grey market premiums that hinted at lucrative listings, retail portions of several issues were not fully subscribed or lagged institutional demand. This suggested a degree of selectivity and restraint, even if due diligence was sometimes sacrificed in favour of hearsay and informal tips. Interestingly, foreign portfolio investors, who had been net sellers in the secondary market, returned enthusiastically to participate in select IPOs. Their behaviour underscored a familiar paradox: scepticism about broader market valuations coexisting with opportunistic engagement where growth narratives appeared compelling.

Taken together, these trends paint a portrait of a financial system in transition. Global wealth is scaling unprecedented heights, epitomised by figures such as Elon Musk, while domestic markets grapple with moderation, maturity and shifting participation. India's stock market in 2025 was not defined by runaway exuberance but by resilience and rebalancing. Foreign capital retreated, domestic capital advanced, and retail investors emerged as the market's backbone. IPOs flourished, but not blindly, and caution tempered enthusiasm.

In the end, the story of 2025 is not merely about astronomical wealth or headline-grabbing billionaires. It is about the quiet restructuring of financial power, the slow broadening of ownership, and the growing confidence of domestic investors to anchor markets once dominated by global flows. In a world where numbers often lose meaning at scale, these underlying shifts matter far more than the spectacle of trillion-dollar fortunes. (The writer can be reached at dipakurmipltd@gmail.com)

Pariksha Pe Charcha : Beating Exam Blues with Guru Modi

By: Er Prabhat Kishore

Examinations are often a source of stress for students and their families. This is a common challenge faced by students of all ages, especially teenagers who are preparing for significant milestones such as board exams or competitive exams. The intense focus on academic performance, coupled with expectations from society and family, often leads to stress, anxiety, and depression, which impact mental health.

To transform the narrative of exam-related stress, "Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC)" has been initiated by Hon. Prime Minister on 16th February 2018 at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi. This is the PM's annual interactive event, in which students, teachers, and parents from across the country and abroad join him to discuss exam stress and celebrate examinations as an Utsav and an integral part of life. The Prime minister shares valuable tips on various topics like how to take board and entrance exams, stress management, students' personal growth, career ambitions etc.

Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC) is the PM Modi's Masterclass on acting exams. It opens space for honest talk on preparation, pressure, and purpose. The event emphasizes innovative approaches to tackle exam-related anxiety, fostering a celebratory attitude towards learning and life. Society, teachers, and parents must collaborate to create an environment where students can thrive without undue stress. With the right approach, students can beat exam pressure and unleash their full potential.

The PPC programme has witnessed extra-ordinary growth since its launch in 2018. The 1st edition of PPC (on 16th February, 2018 with 22000 participants), the 2nd edition (on 29th January, 2019 with 1.03 lakh participants), the 3rd edition (on 20th January, 2020 with 2.63 lakh registrations), the 4th edition (on 7th April 2021 through virtual connection during COVID 19 pandemic – 14.02 lakh registrations, including 10.5 lakh students, 2.6 lakh teachers and 92 thousand parents), the 5th edition (on 1st April, 2022 with 15.73 lakh registrations, including 12.12 stu-

dents, 2.71 lakh teachers and 90 thousand parents / 1203553 participants, including 969836 students, 47200 teachers and 186517 parents), the 6th edition (on 27th January, 2023 with 38.79 lakh registrations, including 31.24 lakh students, 5.60 lakh teachers, 1.95 lakh patents / 848991 participants or viewers, including 718110 students, 42337 teachers, 88544 parents), the 7th edition (on 29th January, 2024 with 2.2624 Crore registrations including 2.0562 Crore students, 14.93 lakh teachers and 5.69 lakh parents), and the 8th edition (on 10th February, 2025 with 35668817 registrations) has created history in the education sector across the world.

In 2025, PPC 8.0 has set a remarkable Guinness World Record as students from 245 countries, teachers from 153 countries and parents from 149 countries participated in the event. It reflects the event's immense popularity and relevance.

Over the years, PPC has evolved into an opportunity that aims to transform exam-related stress into positive energy. By offering real questions and offering actionable solutions, the PM has bridged the gap between policy and practice, empowering students to thrive under pressure. The event's inclusivity, digital reach, and innovative approach ensure its continued success as a cornerstone of student engagement in Bharat. With each passing year, PPC reinforces the message that exams are not the end but a beginning.

The 9th edition of the PPC is scheduled to be held in January 2026. To select participants, an online Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) competition is being conducted on the MyGov Portal from 1st December 2025 to 11th January 2026 for students of classes 6 to 12, teachers and parents. Students from all types of management schools i.e. Govt schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Sainik schools, Eklayva Model Residential schools, CBSE schools will participate in the event.

The registration is simple and free of cost. Participants can register themselves by using a Mobile Number/Email ID or DigiLocker (MeriPehchaan), the steps for which are as follows :- Step(1)- Visit the official web-

site <https://innovateindia1.mygov.in>; Step(2)-Click on the "Participate Now" button on the homepage; Step(3)- Select one of the four categories i.e. Student (Self Participation), Student (Through Teacher Login)-for bulk registration, Teacher or Parent; Step(6)-Click on "Click to Participate" under the selected category; Step(5)- Register by entering Name, Mobile Number, Email ID, DOB, Gender, Class etc.; Step(6)- To Answer the 5 mentioned Multiple Choice Questions, and/or frame questions, related to life skills, exam preparation & stress career guidance etc., under "Question to PM" in a maximum of 500 characters; and Step(7) Finally to "Submit" the entry.

The competition is the mode through which students, teachers and parents has been invited to take part in the PPC programme. The themes of the event include "Make Exams a Celebration", "Contribution of Our Freedom Fighters", "Save the Environment", and "Clean India". Selected questions of participants, shortlisted by NCERT, will feature in the programme. Selected students will get an opportunity to directly participate in the PPC event with PM and interact with him. Each participant will get a specially designed certificate of Participation. 2500 participants will get PPC Kit by the Education Ministry, Government of India. 10 Exam-Warriors will get chance to visit PM house.

High enrolment States should try for registration of at least 50% of the class 6 to 12 enrolment, whereas other States/UTs & ABs should set target of 100% registration of class 6-12 students. All teachers of class 6 to 12 should be reached out.

People must join hands in celebrating the Utsav of examination "Pariksha Pe Charcha" as envisioned by our Honorable Prime Minister in order to make learning more joyful and meaningful for our future nation builders. Along with students, society, family, and teachers must put exam in right perspective rather than making it a life and death situation punctuated by undue stress and pressure. (Author is an engineer and educationist.)

Global tributes pour in for Bangladesh ex-PM Zia

Leaders recall her political legacy



DHAKA/BEIJING, Dec 30: Countries across the globe, including the US, China, and India, on Tuesday recalled Khaleda Zia's decades-long role in shaping Bangladesh's politics as they expressed deep sorrow over the death of the former prime minister. Zia, the longtime chief of Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) and a three-time prime minister, died earlier in the day in Dhaka after a prolonged illness. She was 80. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi mourned Zia's death, saying that as the first woman premier of Bangladesh, her important contributions towards the development of the country, as well as India-Bangladesh relations, will always be remembered. Modi also recalled his "warm meeting" with her in Dhaka in 2015. "We hope that her vision and legacy will con-

tinue to guide our partnership," he said. In a condolence message, Chinese Premier Li Qiang described Zia as a veteran politician and an "old friend" of the Chinese people who played an important role in advancing relations between Bangladesh and China during her tenure as prime minister. In a media briefing in Beijing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said during her tenure as prime minister, Zia actively advanced bilateral ties establishing a long-term, friendly, equal, and mutually beneficial comprehensive cooperative partnership. Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen said Zia was a steadfast champion of freedom and a key figure in her country's political history. Yao said Zia "embodied the democratic aspirations" of the Bangladeshi people and inspired the nation through her resilience, courage and leadership.

He said that the Communist Party of China (CPC) would continue to maintain its longstanding and friendly relations with the BNP under the leadership of Zia's son and BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman. In a social media post, the US Embassy in Dhaka said Zia played a significant role in shaping the modern history of Bangladesh and her leadership has made a significant contribution to the development and progress of the country. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said he was "deeply saddened" by the passing of Zia, describing her as a leader whose lifelong service to Bangladesh left a "lasting legacy". "Begum Zia was a committed friend of Pakistan," he said. President Asif Ali Zardari in a social media post said Zia's leadership and services will be remembered with respect.

In a statement, the German Embassy in Dhaka said Zia played a significant role in shaping Bangladesh's political landscape over the course of her long public career.

Germany recalled its engagement with her over the decades, including her meeting with former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer during his visit to Dhaka in 2004 and with former German President Christian Wulff during his state visit in 2011.

She also held several other high-level meetings with senior German representatives over the years, the statement said.

The United Nations in a condolence message expressed deep condolences over the death of Zia, extending sympathy to her family and reaffirming solidarity with Bangladesh.

In a condolence message, the British High Commission in Dhaka extended its heartfelt condolences to Zia's family, friends and the people of Bangladesh "at this very sad time".

The European Union (EU) also expressed condolences over the death of the former prime minister, extending sympathy to the people of Bangladesh. (PTI)

Russia's nuclear-capable Oreshnik missiles entered active service, Moscow says

MOSCOW, Dec 30: Russia's nuclear-capable Oreshnik missile system has entered active service, Russia's Ministry of Defence said Tuesday, as negotiators continue to search for a breakthrough in peace talks to end Moscow's war in Ukraine. Troops held a brief ceremony to mark the occasion in neighbouring Belarus where the missiles have been deployed, the ministry said. It did not say how many missiles had been deployed or give any other details. Russian President Vladimir Putin said earlier in December that the Oreshnik would enter combat duty this month. He made the statement at a meeting with top Russian military officers, where he warned that Moscow will seek to extend its gains in Ukraine if Kyiv and its Western allies reject the Kremlin's demands in peace talks. The announcement comes at a critical time for Russia-Ukraine peace talks. US President Donald Trump

hosted Zelenskyy at his Florida resort Sunday and insisted that Kyiv and Moscow were "closer than ever before" to a peace settlement. However, negotiators are still searching for a breakthrough on key issues, including whose forces withdraw from where in Ukraine and the fate of Ukraine's Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, one of the 10 biggest in the world. Trump noted that the monthlong US-led negotiations could still collapse. Putin has sought to portray himself as negotiating from a position of strength as Ukrainian forces strain to keep back the bigger Russian army. At a meeting with senior military officers Monday, Putin emphasised the need to create military buffer zones along the Russian border. He also claimed that Russian troops were advancing in the eastern Donetsk region of Ukraine and pressing their offensive in the southern Zaporizhzhia region.

Moscow first used the Oreshnik, which is Russian for "hazelnut tree," against Ukraine in November 2024, when it fired the experimental weapon at a factory in Dnipro that built missiles when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union. Putin has praised the Oreshnik's capabilities, saying that its multiple warheads, which plunge toward a target at speeds up to Mach 10, are immune to being intercepted. He warned the West that Moscow could use it against Ukraine's NATO allies who've allowed Kyiv to use their longer-range missiles to strike inside Russia. Russia's missile forces chief has also declared that the Oreshnik, which can carry conventional or nuclear warheads, has a range allowing it to reach all of Europe. Intermediate-range missiles can fly between 500 to 5,500 km. Such weapons were banned under a Soviet-era treaty that Washington and Moscow abandoned in 2019. (AP)

Zia's funeral today

DHAKA, Dec 30: The funeral of Bangladesh's former prime minister Khaleda Zia will be held on Wednesday and she will be buried with full state honours beside her husband, late president Ziaur Rahman, the interim government said on Tuesday.

The longtime chief of Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) and a three-time prime minister died earlier in the day in Dhaka after a prolonged illness. She was 80. Zia's funeral will be held on Wednesday after Zohr prayers at Parliament's South Plaza and the adjoining Manik Mia Avenue. Law Advisor Asif Nazrul was quoted as saying by news portal bdnews24.com. She will later be laid to rest with full state honours beside the grave of her husband, former president and BNP founder Ziaur Rahman, at Zia Uddin in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka, Nazrul told reporters after a special meeting of the interim government's Advisory Council at the state guest house Jamuna. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir attended the meeting as a special invitee. Earlier in a televised address to the nation, Chief

Adviser Muhammad Yunus announced a three-day state mourning and a one-day general holiday.

"At the death of former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia, I declare three days of state mourning and a one-day general holiday tomorrow on the day of her Namaz-e-Janaza (funeral prayers)," he said.

Yunus urged people to maintain discipline and order during the funeral prayers and the observance of mourning across the country.

"I know that all of you are deeply saddened at this time. I hope that you will show patience during this time of mourning and cooperate with all those concerned who are involved in observing the formalities, including her Namaz-e-Janaza," he said. Quoting the Chief Advisor's press wing, BBC Bangla reported that during the mourning period, the national flag will be flown at half-mast at all government, semi-government and autonomous institutions, educational institutions, and on all government and private buildings across the country, as well as at Bangladesh missions abroad. (PTI)

The meeting for the eternal Condolence Yunus said

European leaders to discuss US-led peace efforts as Russia-Ukraine tensions spike

KYIV, Dec 30: European leaders were due to hold talks Tuesday on US-led peace efforts to end the nearly four-year war between Russia and Ukraine, amid a flare-up in tensions between Moscow and Kyiv over Russian claims, denied by Ukraine, of a mass drone attack on a lakeside residence used by President Vladimir Putin. The virtual European meeting was expected to gather leaders who attended talks in Berlin earlier this month, according to Polish government spokesman Adam Szlapka, although it was not clear who would be taking part. It was the first meeting of European leaders since US President Donald Trump hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at his Florida resort on Sunday. Trump insisted that Ukraine and Russia are "closer than ever before" to a peace settlement, although he acknowledged that outstanding obstacles could still prevent a deal.

At the same time, Russian and Ukrainian officials have exchanged bitter accusations over Moscow's allegations that Ukraine attempted to attack the Russian leader's residence in northwestern Russia with 91 long-range drones almost immediately after Trump's Sunday talks with Zelenskyy. The claims and counter-claims threatened to derail peace efforts. "I don't like it. It's not good," Trump said Monday after Putin told him by phone about the alleged attack. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiiha noted Tuesday that Russia "still hasn't provided any plausible evidence" to support its allegations. Moscow won't do so because "no such attack happened," he wrote on X. "Russia has a long record of false claims," he added, referencing the Kremlin's denials it intended to attack Ukraine ahead of its February 24, 2022, all-out invasion of its neighbour. Zelenskyy, speaking Monday, also branded the allegation as "another lie" from Moscow designed to sabotage peace efforts. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov countered Tuesday that the alleged Ukrainian attack is "aimed at thwarting President Trump's efforts to promote a peaceful resolution" to the war. Russia and Ukraine have

throughout the war exchanged accusations about attacks that cannot be independently verified because of the fighting. Peskov didn't say whether Moscow would present physical evidence of the attack, such as drone wreckage, saying that such a step would be a matter for Russia's military. "I don't think there needs to be any evidence here," he said. The rural Novgorod region is home to one of the Russian presidency's official residences, Dolgie Borody, close to the town of Valdai, about 400 kilometres northwest of Moscow. The area has been used to host a vacation retreat for high-ranking government officials since the Soviet era. The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said that since Trump launched a diplomatic push at the start of the year to end the war, "the Kremlin has sought to delay and prolong peace negotiations in order to continue its war undisturbed, prevent the US from imposing measures intended to pressure Russia into meaningful negotiations, and even to extract concessions about bilateral US-Russian relations." (AP)

UN chief's New Year message issued in Hindi, Urdu

'A safer world begins by investing more in fighting poverty and less in fighting wars'

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 30: In a first, UN chief has issued his New Year's message for the year 2026 in Hindi, among other languages, calling on world leaders today to invest in development, not destruction. Antonio Guterres' New Year message has been issued in 11 languages, including in the six official UN languages of Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish as well as Hindi and Urdu. His video message on the occasion has been issued with Hindi subtitles as well. In an urgent appeal for the new year, Secretary-General Guterres called on world leaders today to get "priorities straight" and invest in development, not destruction. "As we enter the new year, the world stands at a crossroads. Chaos and uncertainty surround us," Guterres said in his message for 2026 Monday. "People everywhere are asking: Are leaders even listening? Are they ready to act?" He said the scale of human suffering in the world today is staggering - over one-quarter of humanity lives in areas affected by conflict. More than 200 million people globally need humanitarian assistance, and nearly 120 million people have been forcibly displaced, fleeing war, crises, disasters or persecution. "As we turn the page on a turbulent year, one fact speaks louder than words: global military

spending has soared to \$2.7 trillion, growing by almost 10 per cent," he said. Yet, as humanitarian crises around the world intensify, global military spending is projected to more than double - from \$2.7 trillion in 2024 to an astonishing \$6.6 trillion by 2035 - if current trends persist. Data shows that \$2.7 trillion is thirteen times the amount of all global development aid combined and is equivalent to the entire Gross Domestic Product of the continent of Africa. "On this New Year, let's resolve to get our priorities straight. A safer world begins by investing more in fighting poverty and less in fighting wars. Peace must prevail," Guterres said. In 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between India and the UN Department of Global Communications establishing the 'Hindi@UN' Project, with the primary focus on broadcasting UN news in Hindi. The Government of India has pledged 1.5 million dollars per annum for a period of five years, over and above the cumulative contribution of 6.8 million dollars till date for the purpose. Earlier this year, Permanent Representative of India to the UN Ambassador P Harish and Under Secretary General Department of Global Communications (DGC) Melissa Fleming signed an MoU, renewing the Hindi@UN Project for a period of five years, from April 1, 2025 to March 31 2030. (PTI)

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF WORKS
KAAC SECRETARIAT
DIPHU-782460

No. KAAC/S.E-W-46(Pt-2)HRN/2024-25/ Dated.30/12/2025.

SHORT RE-TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing Non refundable KAAC court fee stamp (receipt) Rs.10.00 (Rupees Ten) only eventually to be drawn up in form are hereby invited from KAAC registered contractor/reputed firms of Works Department and will be receive by the undersigned upto 4 P.M. on 09/01/2026 and will opened on the same date, place and the hours in presence of the tenderers or their authorized agent if any.

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

SL. No.	Name of Works	Tender Amount (Rs.)	A/A Amount (Rs.)	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion
1.	Construction of Boundary Fencing with RCC Pillar at Kheroni PGR Land (Professional Grazing Reserve).	5,31,50,000.00	5,31,50,000.00	ST/SC/OBC=1% General-2%	Days 180

Detail N.I.T/ documents and name of works amounts may be obtained from Office of the Addl. Chief Engineer (Works) KAAC, Diphu during working hours on payment of Rs. 1500/-

Terms & Conditions
N.B

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

Sd/-
 Additional Chief Engineer (Works),
 Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu

Memo No. KAAC/S.E-W-46(Pt-2)HRN/2024-25/19(A) Dated. 30/12/2025.

Komkar village backs pre-feasibility studies of Siang Upper Multipurpose Project

Over 95% households endorse MoU, marking a milestone in community-supported development



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Dec 30: In a significant step towards strengthening national water security and regional development, the people of Komkar village in Upper Siang district on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, expressing their support for the preparation of the Pre-Feasibility Report (PFR) of the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP), a project declared of national importance by the Government of India in 2008.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Minister Pema Khandu (virtually), Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Ojing Tasing, Mariyang-

Geku MLA Oni Panyang, Chief Secretary Manish Kumar Gupta, IAS and senior government officials. Representatives from 245 out of 257 households of Komkar village, over 95 per cent consensuses formally endorsed the agreement, demonstrating strong community backing for PFR-related studies.

The development marks a pivotal milestone in advancing the SUMP, reinforcing a model of informed consent, sustained dialogue and community participation while balancing developmental aspirations with environmental and social sensitivities. Village representatives reiterated their commitment to national interest and the long-term safety and prosperity of the

Siang belt and the Adi community. They appreciated the State Government's extensive consultations and awareness-building initiatives, particularly regarding the project's strategic, ecological and water-security aspects.

In his address, Chief Minister Pema Khandu thanked the villagers for becoming the first in Upper Siang to extend formal support for PFR studies, following similar agreements by four villages in Siang district earlier. He clarified that the agreement pertains strictly to PFR preparation and assured that no construction decision would be taken without exhaustive consultations and consent of all Project Affected Families (PAFs). He also highlighted emerging hydrologi-

cal concerns, including potential diversion or reduction of water flow in the Siang River due to upstream interventions, stressing the project's necessity for ecological flow and regional water security.

Khandu further expressed gratitude to the Government of India for approving a ₹ 350 crore Special Development Package for Siang and Upper Siang districts, aimed at strengthening education, healthcare, livelihoods and infrastructure. He urged Komkar village to form a Village Development Committee to identify priority programmes under the package.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to transparency and public participation, the Chief Minister assured that public opinion and consent would remain central at every stage of pre-construction activities following the PFR. Chief Secretary Manish Kumar Gupta lauded the villagers for their exemplary unity, while MLA Oni Panyang described the consensus as a reflection of maturity and collective wisdom, setting a benchmark for participatory decision-making in the district.

Minister Ojing Tasing noted that the MoU followed over a year of detailed deliberations with all households. He emphasised the strategic importance of SUMP in safeguarding the region against downstream risks and ensuring long-term stability for Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, commending the villagers for prioritising both state and national interests.

Suspected heroin seized under Operation Dawn 2.0, probe widens to organised network

West Siang Police bust drug supply link, one arrested in Namsai



HT Correspondent

AALO, Dec 30: In a significant breakthrough under Operation Dawn 2.0, West Siang Police tightened the noose on an inter-district drug network with the arrest of one Sunanda Khein and the recovery of suspected heroin from Namsai district.

The action is a continuation of the investigation into Aalo Police Station Case No 67/25 registered under Section 21(a) of the NDPS Act. During the course of investigation, police traced the source of narcotic procurement to Namsai district, thereby strengthening the case beyond the initial arrests made in Aalo.

Acting on specific leads, a police team led by Sub-Inspector Lakhi Mena, the Investigating Officer of Aalo PS Case No 67/25,

along with the Anti-Drug Squad of West Siang Police, proceeded to Namsai district on December 29 and conducted focused enquiries into suspected drug peddling activities. The investigation led the team to Junglai village, where the suspect, Sunanda Khein, son of Karakon Khein, was located and brought to Namsai Police Station for enquiry.

During interrogation, the accused allegedly disclosed his involvement in illicit drug trafficking in Aalo and revealed that a quantity of narcotic substance was concealed at his residence. Following this disclosure, the police team, along with personnel from Namsai Police, conducted a search of the accused's residence in the presence of Inspector Tayi Gadi, Officer-in-

Charge of Namsai Police Station and independent witnesses.

The search led to the recovery and seizure of suspected heroin weighing approximately 10 grams and one mobile handset suspected to have been used in connection with drug trafficking. The seized contraband was weighed, sealed, labelled and documented in strict compliance with legal procedures. The entire operation was video-graphed using the e-Sakshya application to ensure transparency and evidentiary integrity.

The accused was subsequently brought to Aalo Police Station along with the seized articles for further legal action.

Police said the investigation has revealed the involvement of a wider organised network engaged in the procurement and distribution of narcotic drugs. Further investigation is underway to identify and apprehend other persons involved, including suppliers and distributors.

West Siang Police reiterated its commitment to combating the drug menace and taking firm action against drug peddlers and organised networks. The police stated that such intelligence-driven operations reflect the resolve of the department, under the leadership of the Director General of Police, Arunachal Pradesh to safeguard youth and society from the harmful effects of narcotic drugs.

The entire operation was carried out under the close supervision of Kardak Riba, APPS, Superintendent of Police, West Siang district and Inspector Yomken Riram, Officer-in-Charge, Aalo Police Station, ensuring strict legal compliance, inter-district coordination and professional execution.

Indian Army builds homestay at Taksing under Vibrant Village Programme

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Dec 30: As part of its initiative towards border area development, the Indian Army under Operation Sadbhavna has constructed a double-storey homestay at the remote border village of Taksing in Upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh. The facility has been dedicated to the local community under the Vibrant Village Programme.

The project has been executed by the Spearhead Division of the Spear Corps with the objective of strengthening community welfare, generating sustainable livelihood opportunities and promoting border tourism in the region. The homestay is expected to serve as a reliable source of income for local residents while also improving tourism infrastructure in this strategically important border area.

Local villagers have warmly appreciated the initiative and acknowledged the Indian Army's continued efforts towards inclusive development and strong civil-military cooperation in remote and border regions of the state.

The initiative reflects the spirit of "Seema Suraksha ke Saath Sabka Vikas & Sabka Vishwas," reaffirming the Indian Army's commitment not only to safeguarding the nation's borders but also to contributing meaningfully to the socio-economic development of border communities.

Newly elected NES executive members take oath in Itanagar

Prof Tana Showren reiterates Pan Arunachal vision, focus on education and heritage preservation



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Dec 30: The newly elected executive members of the Nyishi Elite Society (NES), led by its president Prof Tana Showren, took the oath of affirmation and interacted with leaders and stakeholders on Monday at the NES Secretariat and Heritage Centre, Richi Jullang, Itanagar.

Addressing the gathering, Prof Showren extended his wishes for peace, prosperity, well-being, communal harmony, brotherhood and better development, while emphasising the importance of safety measures to ensure good health and spirit without accidents or incidents.

Speaking to the media, Prof Showren said that the Nyishi tribe resides across several districts of the state and firmly believes in progress, development and the concept of Pan Arunachal. He stated that the Nyishi tribe is non-communal in nature and has always stood for peace, development and welfare. What one community does affects others, he said, adding that collective and progressive thinking is essential for the all-round development of Arunachal Pradesh.

He further stated that the NES has never sought development benefits exclusively for

Nyishi people or Nyishi-dominated districts. Instead, the society has consistently worked with collective wisdom and a Pan Arunachal outlook. In sectors such as health, education and infrastructure, the NES has offered suggestions and advice to both the state and central governments, whenever required, for the overall development of the state.

Referring to the education sector, Prof Showren said that during the last tenure the NES focused significantly on education and adopted several schools. He noted that the state government is undertaking major reforms in the education sector and that the NES has also contributed suggestions. Infrastructure has been created in some adopted schools and efforts will continue to ensure growth in the education sector.

On the Nyishi Heritage Village near Hoj in Papum Pare district, the NES president said that a committee has been constituted for the project. While some civic amenities and logistics are yet to be completed, the government has sanctioned facilities such as lighting and water supply. He said that despite the project's challenging location, the society is committed to preserving the heritage village and ensuring that its infrastructure is properly maintained

and utilised.

Prof Showren also informed that the NES will soon move a proposal in the next general election of the house to take the oath of affirmation in Nyishi dialect, giving priority to the mother tongue.

The swearing-in ceremony included the newly elected president and general secretary along with the central executive members of the Nyishi Elite Society for the tenure 2025-28. Prof Tana Showren was sworn in as president and Er Takar Nabam as general secretary. The 37-member executive body includes vice presidents Dr Toko Onuj, Saikha Yangda and Lokam Kani, Secretaries Dr Robin Hissang, Taba Tade Goyang, Rajesh Dawe, Tuchi Tukap, Joram Lali, Runka Cheda, Prof Hui Tag, Tuchi Tajo, Dr Tana Aruna Likha, Neelam Yapin Tana, Nabam Narin, Tage Lapung, Norbu Sonam, Dr Tabing Nabam, Nabam Jalow, Tabia Chobin, Gugli Davi, Tadar Kadung, Dr Kapu Sopin, Akom Gonso Don, Amitab Chiri and Tuchi Topu Tara.

The Assistant Secretaries who took the oath of affirmation along with the president and general secretary are Likha Tado, Gumku Tako Dui, Solung Sonam, Dr Bengia Tada, Takam Anju, Tana Bida, Yitu Murtem, Yumlam Take, Debia Sita Neelam and Kipa Natung.

The newly sworn-in executive members will be assigned various responsibilities to work for the welfare of the community, society and the overall development of the state.

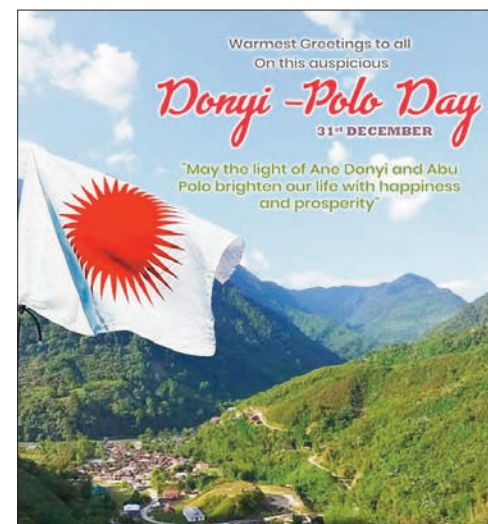
Several lawmakers, including Pani Taram, Jikke Tako, Rotom Tebin, Likha Soni and Toko Tatung, along with former NES leaders, senior members of society and other dignitaries, were present during the function held on Monday afternoon.

Governor extends Donyi Polo Day greetings to people of Arunachal

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Dec 30: The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt General KT Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd), has extended his warm greetings and best wishes to the people of the state, particularly the followers of the Donyi Polo faith, on the auspicious occasion of Donyi Polo Day.

In his message, the Governor expressed hope that the occasion would inspire a collective resolve to preserve, protect and proudly promote age-old cultural practices and traditions, which form the soul of the indigenous identity of Arunachal Pradesh.



The Governor said that Arunachal Pradesh is truly blessed with a rich mosaic of indigenous faiths and cultures, among which the legacy of the Abo Tani people holds a special place. He noted that several tribes of the state regard themselves as the sons and daughters of Abo Tani, their revered ancestral forebear and are united by shared lineage, customs and vibrant oral traditions.

He stated that every ritual and tradition reflects a deep acknowledgment of the blessings and influence of nature, nurturing peaceful coexistence and respect for the environment. Deeply rooted in reverence for nature, community harmony and strong moral values, the Donyi Polo faith embodies a way of life that emphasises balance, resilience and unity. The Governor further expressed hope that the occasion would inspire both elders and youth to safeguard and carry forward this priceless cultural heritage for generations to come.

On this significant day, the Governor said that he joins the people of Arunachal Pradesh in offering prayers for peace, progress and harmonious coexistence among all communities of the state.

Chief Minister calls Dong festival a catalyst for sustainable tourism and local livelihoods

Sunrise Festival holds immense potential for Arunachal: Khandu

ITANAGAR, Dec 30: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Tuesday said the Sunrise Festival in Anjaw holds immense potential not only for the border district but for Arunachal Pradesh as a whole.

The Sunrise Festival at Dong in Anjaw district is the first-ever New Year festival in Arunachal Pradesh, built around the unique experience of witnessing India's earliest sunrise.

Khandu described the opening day of the Sunrise Festival as a "magical experience", as the northeastern state welcomed India's first rays of the rising sun amid gentle winds, lush green landscapes and warm sunshine.

Sharing moments from the festival site on X, the chief minister said the early hours at Dong, marked by yoga and meditation, reflected the calm, beauty and spiritual energy of the easternmost corner of the country.

Khandu, along with Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, formally declared open the five-day Sunrise Festival on Monday at Dong.

He said the festival has been conceived with a long-term vision to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for local entrepreneurs, promote responsible tourism and help small businesses grow in the remote border district.

"A decade from now, the aim is to see this festival grow while strictly following the principle of 'leave no trash, leave no trace'," Khandu said, adding that the festival holds immense potential not only for Anjaw district but for Arunachal Pradesh as a whole.

The chief minister said that the focus would remain on balancing tourism growth with environmental responsibility and community participation.

Nestled near the meeting point of the Lohit River and the Himalayan foothills, Dong is known as one of the most off-beat destinations in the country.

The festival seeks to turn this natural phenomenon into a shared cultural experience, bringing together travellers, local communities and artists to celebrate nature, heritage and new beginnings.

The inaugural day saw visitors settling into the village with traditional welcomes and cultural performances by indigenous communities, while the mornings were marked by guided treks to the sunrise point, yoga sessions and quiet moments of reflection as the sun rose over the mountains, officials said.

The festival also highlights local culture and adventure through village walks, storytelling, music, art residencies and interactions with the indigenous Meyor tribe.

Adding to the experience, the venue also featured an impressive display by the Indian Army, showcasing modern equipment and technology, underlining the preparedness and presence of the armed forces in the frontier region.

The festival will continue till January 2 with each day centered on themes of culture, adventure, renewal and gratitude, culminating in the first sunrise of the New Year and a closing ceremony honouring local communities, volunteers and participants who made the event possible, they added. (PTI)



Kadhing Perme hands over charge as Director of Secondary Education

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Dec 30: Kadhing Perme, Director of Secondary Education, handed over charge to his succeeding officer Tanyang Tatak, Joint Director, on December 30, 2025, being the last working day of the month, as December 31 was a state holiday.

Born on December 5, 1965, Kadhing Perme has served the Education Department for more than 40 years and two months. He began his career as an Assistant Teacher and was subsequently promoted through various ranks, including Junior Teacher, Post Graduate Teacher, Vice Principal/Headmaster, Principal, Deputy Director of Secondary Education (DDSE) and Joint Director, before superannuating from the post of Director of Secondary Education.

Throughout his long service, Perme was known for his punctuality and sincerity, which he considered his foremost priorities. He consistently worked with dedication for the benefit of the student community and the overall improvement of the education sector.

On the occasion, the outgoing Director advised the officers and officials of the Directorate to continue working with sincerity and dedication, uphold the dignity of the office and ensure timely disposal of work for the benefit of society at large.

'Bengal's demography has changed' Mamata abetting infiltration for poll benefits: Shah

KOLKATA, Dec 30: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday alleged that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was abetting the infiltration of Bangladeshis, which has "dangerously altered" the state's demography over the past few years.

Addressing a press conference in Kolkata with months left for elections in the state, Shah said people of West Bengal were anxious over infiltration, which the BJP would end after coming to power in the state with a "two-thirds majority in 2026".

He said the assembly elections would take place in April, and the issue of "driving infiltrators out of the country" would be the key agenda.

Claiming that "a new BJP government will be formed in the state after April 15, 2026, as people have made up their minds", Shah announced that a "strong national grid" would be set up to end infiltration in Bengal.

"Insaan chhod dijiye, parinda bhi pur nahin maar paye, is prakr ki mazboot grid ki rachana hum karenge (forget humans, even birds won't be able to breach the grid we intend to build)," Shah said.

"Na keval ghoospet rokenge, saare ghoospetiyon ko chun chun ke Bharat ke bahar nikalne ka kaam bhi BJP ki Bangal sarkar karegi (The BJP-led government in



Bengal will not only stop the infiltrators, but it will also identify them one by one and drive them out of the country)," he added.

Shah alleged the Centre has not been able to complete fencing of the India-Bangladesh border because the West Bengal government was not providing the required land.

"Mamata Banerjee blames the BSF for not stopping infiltration. I am asking her from this public platform, which is the only state government bordering Bangladesh that doesn't provide land to erect border fences. It is your government which doesn't provide land, which is why the task of border fencing doesn't get completed," he

said. Shah maintained that CM Banerjee must answer why the infiltration problem is more acute in Bengal than in BJP-ruled Assam, Tripura or in the country's western states like Rajasthan and Gujarat, besides Punjab and Kashmir.

"Why does it happen only in Bengal? That's because infiltration happens here under your direct monitoring, resulting in slow but steady change of the state's demography to strengthen your vote bank," he said.

Shah said the party will stop infiltration from the eastern borders and ensure revitalisation of Bengal once it comes to power in the state.

"BJP will form a government in West Bengal with a two-thirds ma-

majority," he said. Shah said members of the Matua community have no reason to fear because of the SIR exercise.

"It is our pledge that all religiously persecuted refugees will be accommodated in the country. Even Mamata Banerjee cannot cause harm to the Matuas," he said. Coming down heavily on the TMC government on corruption and women's safety, Shah alleged that the TMC has surpassed the Left in establishing the politics of fear and violence.

"There is no safety for women in Bengal. The incidents at RG Kar Medical College, Sandeshkhali and at the South Calcutta Law College stand testimony to how unsafe this state has become for women," he said. Shah said top TMC leaders have been to jails on charges of swindling public money, with machines to count cash recovered from their homes malfunctioning because of overheating.

"Bengal's development has come to a complete halt under this corrupt regime. TMC is now synonymous with corruption. Its top leaders have been to jail on charges of swindling public money," he alleged.

The BJP leader claimed that West Bengal's economy has witnessed an unprecedented slide, with more than 7000 industries fleeing from the state. (PTI)

Congress leader Adhir meets PM Modi; raises issues of Bangla-speaking migrants, Matua community

NEW DELHI, Dec 30: Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Tuesday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and raised the issue of "attacks" on Bangla-speaking people, especially in BJP-ruled states, and the problems faced by the backward Matua community in West Bengal.

Chowdhury, a former Congress chief in West Bengal, urged the prime minister's intervention in helping stop such "attacks", which, he said, could lead to communal tension and possibly violence in the state.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, the former five-time MP said he raised the issue of migrant workers and also the problems being faced by the Matua community.

Asked about the prime minister's response, Chowdhury said, "He assured he is watching the situation and this should not happen." To a query about the political significance of the meeting which comes ahead of West Bengal assembly polls, he said, "There is no political significance. I came to Delhi a few days ago; coincidentally, I got to meet him".

Chowdhury handed over a letter to Modi, in which he alleged that Bangla-speaking people are being treated as "infiltrators" in parts of the country.

"Their only offence is that they speak in the Bangla language. They are often misunderstood by the administration concerned as persons belonging to neighbouring Bangladesh and treated as infiltrators," he wrote.

Several parts of West Bengal have a majority Muslim population and share a border with Bangladesh. Communal tension is rising among communities in these areas as a result of such "attacks" elsewhere in the country, he said.

Sources close to the Congress leader said he flagged the issue of alleged targeting of Bangla-speaking people in BJP-ruled states.

He urged the prime minister to "sensitise all state governments" against discrimination, violence, and



persecution of migrant labourers from other parts of the country.

A 30-year-old migrant worker, Jewel Rana from the Jangipur region in Murshidabad district in West Bengal, was killed in Sambalpur of Odisha on Wednesday following an altercation over a 'bidi'.

Two migrant workers in Mumbai were also arrested on suspicion of being illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. The West Bengal Migrants Welfare Board has also said that it received 1,143 complaints of harassment in 10 months, especially in the BJP-ruled states.

Chowdhury had earlier accused both the ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and the BJP of using the backward Matua community in West Bengal as a vote bank while failing to support them as they face uncertainty over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Matuas are a Dalit Hindu refugee community that migrated from Bangladesh over decades following religious persecution and have a significant presence across North 24 Parganas, Nadia and parts of South 24 Parganas. "There is a conspiracy to delete names of most Matua community members from the voter list," Chowdhury had said. (PTI)

Seven killed, 12 injured as bus falls into gorge in Almora

DEHRADUN, Dec 30: Seven people were killed and about 12 injured after a bus fell into a gorge in Uttarakhand's Almora district, police said on Tuesday.

The accident occurred in the Bhikiyasain area when the bus was en route to Ramnagar in Nainital from Dwarahat in Almora, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Devendra Pincha said.

According to the SSP, 18 to 19 passengers were on board when the driver lost control of the vehicle, and it fell into a gorge, six kilometres ahead of Bhikiyasain.

Upon receiving information about the accident, the police, along with State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams, reached the spot and launched rescue and relief operations, he said.

Six people died on the spot in the accident, while another succumbed to injuries on the way to hospital, the officer added.

SSP Pincha said 12 people, including the driver, were injured in the accident and rescued from the gorge. The injured were admitted to the hospital.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident. In a Facebook post in Hindi, Dhami said, "I pray to God for the speedy recovery of all the injured. The entire incident is being continuously monitored, and I am in constant contact with the local administrative officials."

"I pray to God for the peace of the departed souls and strength to their grieving families to bear this immense loss," he added. The chief minister in his post also said that the injured passengers have been admitted to nearby hospitals by the district administration, and those seriously injured have been referred to higher medical centres for better treatment. (PTI)

Civic polls: BJP, Shiv Sena alliance cracks in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Pune

MUMBAI, Dec 30: The BJP and Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena will go solo in the January 15 polls to Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and Pune municipal corporations, as seat-sharing talks between the two parties have fallen through.

Leaders from both parties, who are allies in the ruling Mahayuti, are now indulging in a blame game over the breakup.

In Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Shiv Sena MLA and cabinet minister Sanjay Shirsat claimed that the BJP snapped the tie-up because of "arrogance" stemming from its growing strength in the region.

Shirsat said his party had consistently insisted on an alliance with the BJP for the civic polls, and voters in the region also shared the sentiment.

"However, some local BJP leaders deliberately broke the alliance. We feel bad that the tie-up has ended," the Sena minister told reporters.

He further alleged that despite talks with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis resolving the deadlock over contentious seats, the issue was deliberately revived.

The BJP continued seat-sharing discussions while simultaneously preparing its own candidates, keeping the Shiv Sena "in the dark" to gain an advantage, he claimed.

Shirsat said the Shiv Sena has now asked all its candidates to file nomination forms and expressed apprehension about obstacles.

He further warned against mud-slinging, saying the Shiv Sena would respond in the same manner if attacked. Rejecting Shirsat's allegations, BJP Minister Atul Save accused Shiv Sena leaders of repeatedly changing their stand on seat-sharing.

"Sena leaders sought seats from where BJP corporators have been winning consecutively. It was their arrogance that led to the break-up," Save said, adding that the BJP was still keen on an alliance, but the Shiv Sena would have to come forward, as only a few hours remained for filing nominations.

BJP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Bhagwat Karad echoed similar views, saying the BJP had been "gracious enough" to offer more seats to the Shiv Sena, but its demands increased.

"We could not proceed with an alliance



over such unrealistic demands," he said.

In Pune too, the BJP and Shiv Sena have decided to go it alone after seat-sharing talks fell through.

While hectic parleys were held over the past few days, the talks reportedly collapsed after the Sena failed to get the expected number of seats.

Shiv Sena leader Nana Bhangire said the party decided to contest independently after the BJP offered only 16 seats.

He said the party would contest 165 seats in the Pune Municipal Corporation elections and all candidates would be given 'AB' forms. "The sentiments of party workers have been respected, and the Sena will fight on its own strength in Pune," Bhangire said.

He said that the party had initially demanded at least 25 seats and made it clear that an alliance would not be possible unless seats were allotted "with dignity".

Local Sena leaders and workers had also expressed dissatisfaction, alleging that the BJP was offering seats that were difficult for either party to win.

The BJP and Shiv Sena on Monday reached a seat-sharing agreement to contest 137 and 90 seats, respectively, in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation polls.

Elections to 29 municipal corporations in Maharashtra, including Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and Pune, will be held on January 15, and the votes will be counted the next day. The deadline for filing nominations is Tuesday, while January 2 is the last date for withdrawal, and the final list of candidates will be published on January 3. (PTI)

Education key to development for tribal community, says President Murmu

GUMLA (JHARKHAND), Dec 30: President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday emphasised the importance of education for the development of the tribal community and urged educated individuals to help people avail the benefits of various government welfare schemes.

She said the Centre has been working for the inclusive growth of tribal communities so that development reaches the last person in society.

Murmu was addressing the Antarrajyiy Jansanskritik Samagah Samaroh-Kartik Jatra (interstate folk cultural gathering) in Jharkhand's Gumla district, which saw participation of people, mostly from tribal communities, from the state, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

"Education is the key to development. Education refines the personality, creates opportunities for development, and becomes a medium for inclu-



sive growth and social justice," Murmu said.

She observed that after getting educated, many people prefer to settle in towns and do not return to their villages.

"We should visit our villages and make people aware of various government schemes and their benefits. The government will do its work, but we should also contribute our part after getting education. Government schemes will be successful only when people are aware of

them," Murmu said.

The function was also attended by Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Chhattisgarh Governor Ramen Deka and Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai.

"This government believes in the inclusive growth of the tribal community and has been working to take development to the last person of society. The government has started several schemes in the name of Birsa Munda, not only to benefit tribal people, but also

to those who are still deprived of basic facilities. The government is working on a mission mode so that they get all amenities such as housing, drinking water, road, schools and others," she added.

Speaking on demand of a tribal university in Gumla, Murmu said she would make efforts, but expressed hope that the state government would fulfill the demand of the people.

The President arrived in Jharkhand on Sunday night on a three-day visit.

On Monday, she addressed the 22nd Santali "Parsi Maha" (language day) and centenary celebrations of the Ol Chiki script of the Santali language at Dishom Jaherthan courtyard in Karandih on the outskirts of Jamshedpur city in East Singhbhum district.

She also attended the 15th convocation of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) on the same day. (PTI)

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT A. H. & VETERINARY OFFICER
KARBI ANGLONG, DIPHU.

No.KDVD/Ad & Interview Etc /2/2023/511 Dated Diphu the 30/12/2025.

ADVERTISEMENT

Applications are invited from eligible candidates registered in employment exchange in standard form for filling up the following vacant sanctioned **Grade-IV posts** in the Scale of **Pay Band-1, 12000-37500+ Grade Pay of Rs.3900/- plus** other allowances as admissible under rule as per State Govt. norms RoP, 2017 in A.H. & Veterinary Department, Karbi Anglong, Diphu as per details given below on or before **09/01/2026.**

Sl No.	Department Name	Name of Post	No. of Post	Qualification
1	District Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Department	Animal Attendant under SDVO, Hamren	1	Class-VIII passed
2		Poultry Attendant under Govt Pig cum Poultry farm, Diphu	1	
3		Semen Carrier under ICDP, Manja	1	
4		Animal Attendant BBP, Manja	1	
5		Peon under FDF, Manja & Govt Pig cum Poultry farm, Diphu-one each.	2	
Total		Grade-IV-6 Nos.		

TERMS & CONDITION

- The candidates should not be less than 18 years and not be more than 40 years as on 01/01/2025. The upper age limit is relaxable as follows
 - By 5 years for SC/ST candidate, i.e upto 45 years.
 - By 3 years for OBC/MOBC candidate, i.e 43 years.
 - By 2 years for Ex-Servicemen i.e upto 42 years.
- Incomplete applicants shall be summarily rejected on the post.
- Application received either by post or by hand after the last date of submission of application will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- The selected candidate will be entitled with new pension scheme (NPS) 2005 as directed of Government.
- Self-Attested copies of all testimonials, certificate of educational qualification, Birth Certificate, Caste/Tribe Certificate, Current employment exchange registration number and two copies of recent passport size photographs.
- The authority reserves all rights to cancel/reject the application without assigning any reason thereof and no further communication will be entertained.
- Candidate willing to apply more than one post shall have to submit separate application form for each post.
- The complete application should be addressed and submitted to the District. A.H & Vety. Office, Karbi Anglong on or before 09-01-2026 during office hours except on holidays under NI Act. Candidates should indicate the name of the post applied for on the front cover of envelope.
- The eligible candidates shall apply in Standard form of application along with KAAC money receipt of Rs. 10/- (Rupees ten) for ST/SC and Rs.20/- (Rupees twenty) for others candidates as application fees.
- Canvassing in any form will lead to disqualification.
- No TA/DA will be provided to any candidate from the department for the same.
- The competent authority reserves all rights to enhance or reduce the post and also to cancel/postpone the interview at any time without assigning any reason thereof and without any intimation to the candidate.
- The applicant shall write his or her preferred place of posting in the space given between " Department/Office and 1. Name in full (Block)" in standard form.
- The transfer of the employees shall be governed by the order No. KAAC/esst-675/P(B)/MISC/2025-26/15 Dated 22nd Oct.2025.
N. B. Next working day will be counted for interview if some unavoidable holiday/Bandh Call arise.

Sd/-
District A.H. & Vety. Officer
Karbi Anglong, Diphu.
Dated Diphu the 30/12/2025.

No. KDVD/Ad & Interview Etc. /2/2023/511-A /

No evidence so far of racial abuse in Tripura student's death, says Dehradun Police

DEHRADUN, Dec 30: The Dehradun Police on Tuesday said the probe into the death of Tripura student Anjel Chakma has so far found no evidence of racial abuse, and that the youth was assaulted after tempers flared up when he objected to some "banter" among the attackers who had come in a group to a liquor shop.

Dehradun Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ajay Singh said the police had taken note of social media posts attributing a racial motive to the incident. "Our investigation so far has found no evidence of racial discrimination or violence," the SSP said.

He said that between December 9, the day of the incident, and December 26, when Anjel died, no complaints of racial abuse were made during interactions with the police. The SSP added that the FIR filed in the case "does not mention any allegations of racial bias."

Providing details of the incident that occurred in the Selaqui area, Singh said a birthday party was hosted on December 9 by one of the accused, Suraj Khwas, a resident of Manipur.

The SSP said the two groups, including the deceased and his brother



on one side and the six persons on the other, had a heated argument. In the confusion, the dispute escalated and led to the incident.

"There was some banter among the guests. The victim's side found certain remarks offensive, which led a dispute. In the fight that followed, Anjel Chakma and his brother Michael Chakma were injured. Anjel died during treatment at a hospital," the SSP said, adding that Anjel had suffered fatal injuries to his spine and neck in the incident.

The SSP said five of the six ac-

cused named in the FIR taken into custody. Two of them were found to be underage and sent to correction home, while three are under judicial custody. The other accused, Yagyraj Awasthi (22), a Nepalese national, who had earlier worked in Haridwar and other places, is absconding.

"Our teams are working to trace him," he said, adding that a bounty of ₹ 25,000 has been announced on his name and a non-bailable warrant has been issued.

Singh said statements of local residents have been recorded and digital

evidence, including CCTV footage, has been collected. "So far, no instance of any accused using racial slurs against the deceased has come to light," he said.

The SSP added that the investigation is being carried out fairly and in a transparent manner, and that strict legal action will be taken accordingly.

Anjel Chakma, a final-year MBA student at a private university here, was seriously injured when he was allegedly attacked by some youngsters with a knife and a bracelet on December 9. He died on December 26, after being hospitalised for 17 days.

His father, a BSF jawan currently posted in Tangjeng in Manipur, had alleged that his son was "brutally attacked" when he tried to defend his brother, who faced racial slurs and was called "Chinese" by the attackers.

The assailants called his son "Chinese momo" and hurled other racial abuses, the father of the victim told PTI over the phone. Anjel told them that he "was also Indian, not Chinese" but they attacked him with knives and blunt objects, the devastated father said. (PTI)

Anjel's family wants capital punishment for those involved in his murder

AGARTALA, Dec 30: Seeking the harshest punishment for his killers, the family of Anjel Chakma, who was murdered in Dehradun, on Tuesday demanded capital punishment or life imprisonment for all the accused.

Anjel, a resident of Machmara in Tripura's Unakoti district, had gone to Dehradun after completing his graduation from Holy Cross School, Agartala, to pursue an MBA.

He was attacked by a group of youths in the presence of his younger brother, Michael, and succumbed to his injuries on December 26 after battling for life for 17 days.

Recalling Anjel's last wish, his maternal uncle Momen Chakma said his nephew wanted to travel to Nepal to witness snowfall.

"He had ordered special shoes as part of his preparation for the trip. The shoes arrived when he was already in the ICU. I will go to Nepal with those shoes to fulfil his unfinished wish," Momen, a state government engineer, told PTI.

"We will never get back Anjel, but his family wants capital punishment or at least life term imprisonment for those involved in



the gruesome murder. Anjel had repeatedly said he was an Indian, but the killers mindlessly stabbed him twice in the back and broke his neck, leading to his death after 17 days of battle for life," said Momen said.

He urged the government to take steps so that people from the Northeast don't face racial hate crimes.

"Anjel was about to join a company after his final semester examination as he had received a placement offer based on his first-year result, in which he scored 80 per cent," Momen said over the phone.

He (Anjel) had told his father, Tarun Prasad Chakma, a BSF jawan posted in Manipur, to take voluntary retirement once he got a job, Momen said.

"The family's dream of having a decent life has been completely shattered by the unfortunate inci-

dent on December 26," Momen, who rushed to Dehradun soon after the incident, said.

"Anjel's family is completely devastated by the incident. Both father and younger son are undergoing 'Sarema' (a mandatory post-death ritual observed by Buddhists) at a local monastery for a week. His mother, Gouri Mati Chakma, is also completely shattered," he said.

Momen said Anjel's family is heading towards uncertainty because his father had bought a new home at Nandannagar on the outskirts of Agartala with a huge loan.

"Besides, Anjel had taken an educational loan to pursue an MBA from Dehradun. We all know pursuing such a course in Dehradun is expensive. Now everything is lost," he said.

Tripura Social Welfare Minister Tinku Roy met Anjel's mother Gouri Mati Chakma at their home and handed over two cheques amounting to ₹ 9.12 lakh as financial assistance.

Out of the total amount, ₹ 5 lakh was provided by the Tripura government and ₹ 4.12 lakh was given by the Uttarakhand government. (PTI)

NESO demands capital punishment for those responsible for killing Tripura student in Dehradun

SHILLONG, Dec 30: The North East Students' Organisation (NESO) on Tuesday demanded capital punishment for those responsible for the killing of a 24-year-old student from Tripura in Dehradun and sought the direct intervention of Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami in the matter.

The NESO is an umbrella organisation of student organisations from all north eastern states. In a memorandum to the Uttarakhand chief minister, NESO said Angel Chakma was assaulted and stabbed in Dehradun on December 9 and succumbed to his injuries on December 26 after battling for life for over two weeks in hospital.

His brother, Michael Chakma, was also assaulted during the incident, it said.

The NESO alleged that the attack was racially motivated, and the victims subjected to derogatory and demeaning racial abuse targeting their physical features.

Such incidents, it alleged, were part of a recurring

pattern of harassment and violence faced by people from the north east in different parts of the country.

Seeking urgent steps to ensure the safety of students and residents from the region in Dehradun and across Uttarakhand, the NESO urged the state government to implement effective measures to provide mental, social, and physical security through appropriate authorities.

Apart from capital punishment for the perpetrators, the organisation demanded the establishment of at least one special police station to deal exclusively with cases of racial discrimination and atrocities against people from the north east.

NESO also called for the enactment of a stringent anti-racism law, saying the existing legal framework was inadequate to address crimes rooted in racial and ethnic discrimination.

The organisation said it hoped for immediate action from the Uttarakhand government to ensure justice and prevent recurrence of such incidents. (PTI)

Uttarakhand govt to take stringent steps against culprits in Anjel Chakma murder: Tripura CM

AGARTALA, Dec 30: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Tuesday said that his Uttarakhand counterpart Pushkar Singh Dhami assured him that his government will take stringent steps against those who are involved in the murder of Anjel Chakma.

Chakma, a 24-year-old student from the northeastern state, was attacked by six men on December 9, and he succumbed to his injuries on December 26.

Two Tripura ministers visited the victim's house at Machmara in Unakoti district, and handed over to his family cheques amounting to Rs 9.12 lakh, provided by the governments of Uttarakhand and Tripura.

"Money will not bring back the life of Anjel Chakma. We strongly condemned the murder of the MBA student. I had words with Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami yesterday, who assured me of taking stringent steps against the culprits," Saha told the reporters.

Of the total six accused, five have already been arrested, while steps have been taken to arrest the sixth one, he said.

The chief minister said a delegation of a Chakma stu-

dent's organisation met him on Monday to talk over the incident.

"I assured them that the Uttarakhand government will take steps to punish those involved in the murder case," he said.

Ministers Tinku Roy and Santana Chakma handed over to the deceased student's family two cheques. While the Tripura government extended financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh while Uttarakhand government provided Rs 4.12 lakh.

Roy said, "Our chief minister is in touch with the Uttarakhand CM over the issue. He will ensure that the killers get maximum punishment."

Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition in the Tripura Assembly, Jitendra Chaudhury, condemned the way a promising tribal student was murdered in Dehradun.

"This was not the first case of an attack on people from the Northeast. There are instances of racial discrimination meted out to the students of the region. This is the fallout of RSS Hindu-Hindi-Hindustan agenda," he claimed. (PTI)

4 constables, 5 women arrested for fraud involving fake drugs



AIZAWL, Dec 30: Four constables were among nine people arrested in connection with a series of frauds in Mizoram involving fake drugs, police said on Tuesday.

Acting on a tip-off, officers of the Special Narcotics Police Station in Aizawl arrested the four policemen and five women in the operation, they said.

Superintendent of Police Zosangliana said the accused women would scout for buyers to purchase drugs or other contraband items, which were fake, and once the deal was settled, they would set a time and venue.

"When the sellers and buyers met at designated places for the purchase, the constables pretending to be CID officers would arrest the buyers. The buyers were usually released after they gave the money, which would be divided by the accused among them," he said.

"The accused have carried out such frauds more than six times," he added.

Three of the constables were arrested from New Capital Complex on December 15 on the basis of intelligence inputs when they were waiting for a consignment of methamphetamine tablets, police said.

One of the accused, in the meanwhile, received a phone call informing him that the drugs will be handed over to them at Khatla. When the police team reached Khatla, they seized the meth tablets from a woman, they said.

The woman, the mastermind of the racket, was arrested, and the methamphetamine tablets were found to be fake during subsequent examination, they said.

Further investigation led to the arrest of another constable and four other women, they added. (PTI)

Tripura sees rise in self-reliant women through SHGs: Agriculture Minister

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Dec 30: The true measure of a country's or a state's development lies in the empowerment of its women. If women are developed, then the country or state is truly developed.

This was said by Agriculture and Farmer's welfare Minister Ratan Lal Nath today while addressing the Naye Chetana National Campaign 4.0 at Mohanpur RD Block under West District.

He said that Naye Chetana 4.0 was launched on 25th November this year by Union Minister for Agriculture Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Union Minister Annapurna Devi.

"This is about to end. Naye Chetana means

new thinking, new steps, new direction, new dreams. In rural India, the fight against gender-based violence, discrimination, women's safety, and developing them financially—all such issues were kept in focus to start Naye Chetana. How will you know which country and state is developed? Can road construction, communication systems, or school buildings indicate development? A state or country is developed when women and girls are developed and making progress," said the Agriculture Minister. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasized women, the poor, youth, and farmers.

"We never consider religion or caste for devel-

opment. We and our government work for all, so that we can make Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat. PM Modi has been working to make women self-reliant. Since the present government came to Mohanpur block, the number of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) is 1,024 with 10,200 members, and there are 54 village organizations. Pradhans must engage with them—if you develop them financially, then Panchayats will also develop. We must work to make SHGs self-reliant so that women will also be self-reliant. Now, many women are Lakhpati Didis. In Tripura, 1.08 lakh are Lakhpati Didis, and 1,523 are in Mohanpur," said the minister.

Tripura to restore historic jackson gate: CM

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Dec 30: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Tuesday said that the state government has taken an initiative to re-present the history of Jackson Gate, which is associated with royal memories.

Saha said this after visiting the proposed construction site of Jackson Gate in Agartala on Tuesday.

He said that Jackson Gate was built in the name of Sir Francis Stanley Jackson in 1927.

"He was the then Governor of the Bengal Province. In 1927, a contractor named Srinivas Saha constructed this Jackson Gate. It

was built in imitation of the Charminar Gate in Hyderabad. Its main purpose was to welcome Sir Jackson on the occasion of the coronation of the last Maharaja of Tripura, Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur. This gate was built over the Akhaura Canal in Agartala. As usual, he was very happy to come and see it," he said.

The Chief Minister said that people still talk about Jackson Gate, but questioned where it is now. He said the gate was demolished in 1981 during the then Left Front period.

"This gate was most likely demolished to facilitate the entry of large vehicles. Many memories of

the royal period were destroyed. We have taken the initiative to come forward and pay our respects. Therefore, we have decided to revive the history of Jackson Gate and the history of the royal family. The royal family ruled Tripura for many years and contributed a lot to the state," he said.

The Chief Minister also said that by using the name of the Jana Shiksha Samiti, it is being claimed that the Maharajas did nothing for the development of education.

"Isn't it strange? I was listening to the former Chief Minister's speech. When they started the Jana Shiksha Samiti movement,

the Maharaja formed another organization so that it could be suppressed. However, we have seen that a lot of work was done during the Maharajas' time. The Bharatiya Janata Party government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has made arrangements to pay tribute to the Maharajas," he said.

During the visit, the Chief Minister was accompanied by Agartala Municipal Corporation Mayor and MLA Dipak Majumdar, Municipal Corporation Central Zone Chairman Ratna Dutta, Secretary Kiran Gite, Municipal Corporation Commissioner DK Chakma, and other senior officials.

Mizoram marks transformative 2025 with rail link, full literacy tag

AIZAWL, Dec 30: From being declared India's first fully literate state to getting rail connectivity, Mizoram witnessed transformative infrastructure gains and achieved key social milestones in 2025.

Mizoram was declared the country's first fully literate state on May 20, with a literacy rate of 98.2 per cent. The achievement reflected decades of community-driven efforts in education, building on a legacy that began with the establishment of the first school in 1894 by Christian missionaries.

The state had recorded a literacy rate of 91.33 per cent in the 2011 Census.

With the inauguration of the Bairabi-Sairang railway line, Mizoram found a place on the national railway map.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the over Rs 8,000-

crore project on September 13, describing it as one of the most challenging railway works undertaken in the country.

The line connected Aizawl with the national rail network for the first time, 38 years after Mizoram attained statehood and 78 years after Independence, making it the fourth northeastern state capital to be rail-linked.

In March, the long-pending demand for relocating the Assam Rifles unit from the congested heart of Aizawl was fulfilled, with bases shifted to Zokhawsang, about 15 km east of the capital.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah termed the move a milestone for Mizoram's development and a gesture of the Centre's responsibility towards the Mizo people.

On the economic front, Mizoram earned national recognition in



November when NITI Aayog declared it the "Ginger Capital of India".

Ginger remains the state's flagship crop, supported by the ZPM government's 'Bana Kaih' hand-

holding scheme, which provides minimum support prices for select agricultural produce.

The Lalduhoma government, which completed two years in office, also rolled out the Mizoram

Universal Health Care Scheme (MUHCS) in March, offering cashless treatment with coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family annually.

Officials said nearly 60,000 beneficiaries have availed treatment under the scheme, with healthcare expenditure crossing Rs 100 crore.

However, the year was not without challenges.

Mizoram began 2025 amid strong opposition to the Centre's decision to regulate movement along the 510-km Indo-Myanmar border, replacing the Free Movement Regime with a border pass system. Civil society organisations staged repeated protests against the new protocol and the proposed fencing of the border.

The state continued to shoulder a heavy humanitarian burden,

hosting around 31,000 refugees from Myanmar who fled after the 2021 military coup. Fresh violence in July led to the arrival of over 3,000 more people.

Mizoram also sheltered more than 2,000 refugees from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts and nearly 7,000 people displaced by ethnic violence in Manipur.

Political tensions flared over the adoption of the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act by the state assembly in August, triggering widespread protests and a statewide shutdown called by the opposition Mizo National Front (MNF) in October.

The dilapidated condition of NH-6/306, Mizoram's main lifeline, led to repeated strikes by transporters, disrupting supplies during the monsoon months.

Natural and animal health crises also hit the state. A rodent outbreak linked to bamboo flowering damaged crops across all 11 districts, while African swine fever continued to devastate the piggy sector, affecting thousands of families.

Drug trafficking and substance abuse remained a serious concern, despite intensified enforcement and the launch of 'Operation Jericho', an anti-drug exercise involving police, excise authorities and civil society groups.

In electoral politics, the ruling ZPM saw mixed fortunes. While it performed well in local body polls early in the year, it suffered setbacks later, losing the Dampa assembly by-election to the MNF and failing to secure a majority in the Lai Autonomous District Council. (PTI)

'Border 2' incomplete without 'Sandese Aate Hai', I'm sure they will credit us: composer Anu Malik



Veteran musician Anu Malik says "Border 2", the upcoming sequel to the hit 1997 war drama "Border", is incomplete without "Sandese Aate Hai" and he hopes the reimaged version of the song includes him and lyricist Javed Akhtar in the credits.

The new rendition of 'Sandese Aate Hai', renamed 'Ghar Kab Aaoge', has been reimaged by composer Mithoon, with additional lyrics penned by Manoj Muntashir.

This reinterpretation includes an ensemble of vocalists like Sonu Nigam, Arijit Singh, Vishal Mishra, and Diljit Dosanjh. "I believe the song is recreated. I'm not a part of it. I'm sure they will give my name to it as I've created the song. They should because people know about our contribution, they can't get away. They can't make 'Border 2' without 'Sandese Aate Hai'." Both Anu Malik and Javed Akhtar are up there (in their contri-

but), so they will have to put our name somewhere," the musician told PTI in an interview.

"Border" was directed by JP Dutta and starred Sunny Deol in the lead alongside Jackie Shroff, Suniel Shetty, and Akshaye Khanna. The new film is directed by Anurag Singh and it boasts of an ensemble including Deol, Varun Dhawan, Diljit Dosanjh, and Ahan Shetty among others.

Malik is hopeful the new version of 'Sandese Aate Hai' is as "brilliant" as the original song as it has two powerful singers - Nigam and Singh. Nigam and Roop Kumar Rathore sang the original.

"I think it is going to be brilliant because Sonu is a fabulous singer. He is one of the best singers that we've today and Arijit is a magical singer. So, it will be a magical combination of Arijit and Sonu together but the tune is going to be Anu Malik. You can't get away from Anu Malik and Javed sahab,

the song he has written is so great," he said. Malik said he poured his heart and soul into the original score of "Border", especially 'Sandese Aate Hai'.

"When I was offered a chance to do this, I gave it all that I had for my love for my country. I believe that there is no country better than India, and I'm not saying it because I am an Indian, I'm not saying other countries are bad," he said.

Recalling how they created the track at his house in just seven-and-a-half minutes, Malik said while he and Akhtar were brainstorming ideas for the song, an old melody sprung in his mind and that's how it all came together.

"While I was doing this song, this note came in my head, 'Aye Guzarme Wali Hawa Bata...' and suddenly Javed sahab heard it and said, 'Sing it again'. It reminded me of an early tune I had made for some other director, which was not

used. He said, 'Can you join that phrase we had written?', I said, 'Okay!,' the composer said.

"I remember the phrase, 'I said I will sing'. Javed sahab suddenly got up and gave me a huge hug. He said you've made this song in seven and a half minutes." Malik praised JP Dutta, and said he subtly guided him while working on the soundtrack of "Border". The two later collaborated on films like "LOC Kargil", "Umrao Jaan", and "Paltan".

"JP Dutta was the one who inspired me in a silent way, I love him very much. He is a terrific human being, he speaks less but he knows what he wants and his father OP Dutta, these two people when they were in front of me, I used to look up to them," Malik said.

"Border 2" produced by T-Series and JP Dutta's J P Films, will release theatrically on January 23, 2026. (PTI)

Rima Das among 11 filmmakers honoured by New York Women in Film and Television



Filmmaker Rima Das received an Excellence in Directing award from the New York Women in Film and Television for her directorial 'Village Rockstars 2'.

New York Women in Film and Television (NYWIFT) is one of the most respected nonprofit organisations in the US entertainment industry, dedicated to supporting, promoting, and celebrating women working across film, television, and digital media, according to a press release.

Das was among 11 international filmmakers who got honoured for their contribution to cinema.

The filmmaker said the recognition is "deeply meaningful".

"Receiving this recognition from New York Women in Film and Television for 'Village Rockstars 2' is deeply meaningful to me. I see this not just as a personal honour, but as a reaffirmation that stories from India, told with honesty and lived experience, can travel across borders," she said in a statement.

"My cinematic journey and ambitions are expansive, and this support strengthens my belief in building a more inclusive global cinema," she added.

The film is a sequel to Das' multiple award-winning movie 'Village Rockstar'.

It had its world premiere at the Busan International Film Festival 2024, where it bagged the Kim Jiseok Award for Best Film.

Other recipients alongside Das were Suzannah Herbert for 'Natchez', Cherien Dabis for 'All That's Left of You', Shonali Bose for 'A Fly on the Wall', Rachel Immaraj for her directorial 'An Unquiet Mind', Elena Neuman for 'Looking UP', Kerstin Karlhuber for 'After All', Lisa Cunningham for 'Me Period', Jackie Quinones for 'Miles Away', Sara Khaki and Mohammadreza Eyni for 'Cutting Through Rocks', and Rachel Israel for 'The Floaters'. (PTI)

Isha Malviya to star in Punjabi film 'Ishqa'n De Lekhe'



Bigg Boss 17" fame Isha Malviya is set to make her big screen debut with Punjabi film "Ishqa'n De Lekhe".

Directed by Manvir Brar, the film is written by Jassi Lohka. It is expected to release in theatres on March 6, 2026.

Malviya who will feature alongside Gurnam Bhullar in the film, gained popularity after appearing in reality show "Bigg Boss 17". She is also known for featuring in television series "Udaariyaan", where she essayed the role of Jasmine Kaur Ahluwalia.

The 22-year-old actor shared the poster of the film on her Instagram handle on Monday. "In cinemas 6 march 2026," read the caption. It featured the close up of both the actors looking at each other.

The film will have music composed by Avvy Sra, Gaurav Dev and Kartik Dev, Himanshu Sharma, Gurnam Bhullar, and V Rakx. It is executive produced by Jaswinder Lahri. (PTI)

Actor Mohanlal's mother dies

Actor Mohanlal's mother, Shanthakumari Amma, passed away at his residence here on Tuesday following age-related ailments, family sources said. She was 90.

Mohanlal's mother had been undergoing treatment for several years for various health issues. The actor was reportedly not at home when she passed away. His close friends, including superstar Mammooty, and several industry colleagues later visited his residence to pay their tributes. Mohanlal's father, Viswanathan Nair, a senior government official, had passed away years ago. The Malayalam superstar has often credited his parents and their influence for his success in the film industry.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Assembly Speaker A N Shamsheer were among those who consoled her demise. (PTI)

Bollywood legends salute Mumbai Police's digital decade

"Aaj khush to bahut honge hum!" (We must be very happy today!), posted megastar Amitabh Bachchan from his 'Deewar' movie as he led a galaxy of stars to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Mumbai Police on social media.

A star-studded thank you notes, from Bachchan to cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar, were seen on the "online beat" tagging @MumbaiPolice to celebrate a decade of wit, grit, and digital policing.

Superstar Shah Rukh Khan posted his iconic dialogue from the movie 'Chak De India' "70 minute nahi, poori zindagi ka sawaal hai!" (It's not just about 70 minutes, it's a question of a lifetime!), while Tendulkar, whose career is synonymous with the number 10, gave the force a "Well Played" nod.

The master blaster used to wear the No. 10 jersey at the ground while playing.

"The number 10 has its own charm," Tendulkar said and added "and so do 100 and 112 (police helplines).

"Congratulations @CPMumbaiPolice & MumbaiPolice for 10doring online support and guidance to Mumbaikar in the past decade! Well Played!" posted the former Team India captain.

The Mumbai Police, tasked with maintaining law and order in the bustling metropolis, started their online presence through popular social media platforms X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram on December 28, 2015 as part of their outreach to citizens.

Over the years, the Mumbai Police have shared innovative social media campaigns, often drawing on popular dialogues from Bollywood films. Celebrating a decade of strong relationship with Mumbaikars, police on Sunday posted a video of their effective presence on social media.

"From 'Dus' k till dawn, We have been with you 24/7, online and offline. Over the last 10 years, we have built a stronger and clear relationship with Mumbaikars," said the force in a message.

"We stepped into a new beat, beyond the streets and onto screens across the city," said Police Commissioner Deven Bharti, who originally conceptualised the digital outreach a decade ago.

"We've shared alerts in emergencies, laughter in lighter moments, and strength during the city's toughest hours. We sincerely thank every Mumbaikar who has followed, shared, trusted and engaged with us. Your voice has made this journey meaningful," the senior IPS officer stated.

Megastar Bachchan tweeted, "Aaj khush to bahut honge hum! @MumbaiPolice & @CPMumbaiPolice have completed 10 glorious years on social media, forever looking out for Mumbaikars Online!" "Sadrakshanaya Khalnigrahanaya, which means "To Protect the Good and Restrain the Evil" in Sanskrit, emphasizing their commitment to safeguarding citizens and curbing wrongdoing," said the legendary actor.

Superstar Salman Khan praised the city police for edu-



ating citizens on cyber safety and digital discipline.

On his X handle, the 'Dabangg' actor wrote, "Swagat nahi karogay, sabse creatively impactful account ka? Thank you @MumbaiPolice for educating citizens on cyber safety and digital discipline. Cheers to 10 years of trust, tech and tireless service." Bollywood actors Akshay Kumar, Suniel

Shetty, Ajay Devgan, Ayushmann Khurana, Shahid Kapoor, Abhishek Bachchan, cricketers Hardik Pandya, Suryakumar Yadav, among others, showered praise on the Mumbai Police and expressed gratitude for their service.

The Mumbai Police's X handle has 4.7 millions followers. (PTI)

Unsustainable: Bindra-led Task Force rejects idea of NIS, Patiala becoming National Sports Academy



NEW DELHI, Dec 30: Asked to evaluate the idea of broad-basing Patiala's prestigious National Institute of Sports as an academy for training of sports administrators, a Sports Ministry-instituted Task Force chaired by Olympic hero Abhinav Bindra has rejected the proposal, calling it a "restrictive and unsustainable" plan.

The Task Force on Capacity Building of Sports Administrators was constituted under Bindra, the 2008 Olympic gold-winning former rifle shooter, by the Sports Ministry to design a "future-ready, sustainable, and professional gov-

ernance system for Indian sport". It was also mandated to assess the idea of establishing a National Academy for Sports at NS NIS (Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports) in Patiala which would be dedicated to "capacity building" of sports administrators.

The NS NIS is a highly-rated training facility for boxing, weightlifting, and athletics besides being a premier institute for diplomas in coaching.

"While the idea of a single National Academy is well-intentioned, it risks becoming restrictive and unsustainable," the

nine-member panel noted.

"While NSNIS is rightly regarded as the premier institute for sports coaching, its privileged status has also created unintended consequences. Recruiters in Central and State services, as well as PSUs, tend to give preference almost exclusively to NSNIS-trained coaches, limiting opportunities for graduates of other credible institutions," it pointed out.

"In some cases, even internationally certified coaches are not considered eligible for government or PSU roles. Designating

NSNIS as the National Academy for Sports Administrators risks replicating this imbalance in the field of sports governance," it added. The Task Force felt such "exclusivity" could stifle the growth of other universities and institutes offering sports management programmes by "concentrating recognition and opportunity too narrowly."

The panel recommended instead of being turned into an academy, the NIS should be "empanelled" as one of the key institutions delivering modules for building administrative capacity.

"...India's scale and diversity demand a networked model, where NSNIS plays a leading but not singular role, complemented by multiple institutions that together build a broad, inclusive, and sustainable ecosystem for sports administration," it said.

"...investing in a network of institutions spreads resources more effectively, creates multiple access points across the country, and ensures far greater impact in both scale and reach."

Inclusivity and Scale

The Task Force felt that a single National Academy would also risk

creating a "monopoly of credentialing."

"Given the size and diversity of India, and the current maturity of the Indian sports ecosystem, it is imperative that multiple institutions are empowered to deliver capacity-building programmes in order to ensure scale, inclusivity, and regional reach."

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, while talking about the report, said "a revamp of the course structure at the NIS could definitely be considered" to keep up with the changing demands of coaching internationally. (PTI)

IOA to convene National Athletes' Forum in Ahmedabad on January 10

NEW DELHI, Dec 30: Indian Olympic Association (IOA) will organise the first National Athletes' Forum on January 10 in Ahmedabad with an aim to strengthen athlete-led governance and accountability in the country's sport.

The Forum will bring together current and former athletes, athlete representatives, and key stakeholders from across the country for direct, solution-oriented engagement, the IOA said in a release.

The Forum will focus on critical issues, including athlete rights and responsibilities, ethical and transparent governance, safe sport and integrity, mental health and well-being, anti-doping education, grievance redressal, and structured career transition pathways.

Discussions will be geared towards converting athlete feedback into actionable reforms.

"The Athletes' Forum is expected to strengthen the role of the Athletes' Commission and contribute meaningfully to the evolution of athlete-centred governance within Indian sport," the release added.

The IOA said the Athletes' Forum represents its firm commitment to move beyond consultation and ensure that athletes play an active, influential role in shaping policies that affect their careers, welfare, and future.



"This is the first time in India's sporting history that athletes are being brought together through a dedicated national forum to directly influence governance. Athlete voices can no longer be peripheral -- this Forum signals a decisive shift towards athlete-led reform, accountability, and shared decision-making," IOA President P T Usha said.

"Sustained excellence in sport is impossible without safeguarding athlete dignity, safety, and

well-being. This Forum makes it clear that athlete welfare is central to policy, not an afterthought."

IOA Athletes' Commission Chair MC Marykom stated: "Athletes know the system from the inside. This Forum gives us a credible platform to speak openly about challenges and solutions, and to ensure that athlete experiences are reflected in governance and reform."

Adding the perspective of ac-

tive athletes, Sharath Kamal, Vice Chairman of the IOA Athletes' Commission, said: "As athletes, we often feel the impact of policies long after decisions are made. This Forum changes that equation. It allows athletes to be heard at the right time -- before decisions are taken -- and helps build a more transparent and accountable sporting ecosystem."

The IOA will hold its Annual General Meeting in Ahmedabad on January 9. (PTI)

PM, top sports personalities to participate in VBYLD 2026 next month

NEW DELHI, Dec 30: India's World Cup-winning women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur, badminton great Pulella Gopichand, and tennis stalwart Leander Paes are among the top sports personalities who will be a part of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBYLD) 2026 to be held here at Bharat Mandapam from January 9 to 12.

The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports aimed at giving India's youth a "meaningful role in shaping the vision of a Viksit Bharat".

A total of 2,000 youths from states and Union Territories have been finally selected to participate in the national-level Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue following a country and state-level evaluation that saw participation from over 50 lakh youngsters, according to the ministry.

January 12, observed as the National Youth Day on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, will be a key highlight of the programme, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will spend time engaging with the selected young leaders.

A group of young participants will also have the opportunity to present the best ideas before the Prime Minister and "receive his guidance, feedback and encouragement on their vision for a Viksit Bharat 2047."



Throughout the programme, young leaders will interact closely with domain experts like singer-cum-politician Maithali Thakur, shooter Shreyasi Singh, Gopichand, and Paes on governance, sports, entrepreneurship, agriculture, sustainability, culture and technology, helping them further refine and strengthen their ideas.

The participants will also have the opportunity to learn from interactions with national icons like entrepreneur Sridhar Vembu, and astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla.

VBYLD 2026 will also bring in young minds from beyond India, with 80 Indian diaspora youth selected under the Know India Pro-

gramme of the Ministry of External Affairs participating in the event.

Vehicle free zones

As part of the Fit India Movement, the ministry is also encouraging educational institutions to declare campuses as vehicle-free zones, allowing only cycling and walking.

This initiative has already been implemented at Sawai Madho Singh Stadium, Jaipur; Rajgir Sports Complex in Bihar; the Infosys campus.

"Several IIT campuses are expected to adopt this model soon," Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said. (PTI)

Ellyse Perry, Annabel Sutherland withdraw from WPL due to personal reasons



MUMBAI, Dec 30: Australian all-rounders Ellyse Perry of Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Annabel Sutherland of Delhi Capitals on Tuesday withdrew from next month's Women's Premier League, citing personal reasons.

The WPL announced in a release that Indian all-rounder Sayali Satghare will join the RCB as a replacement for Perry, while Australian leg-spinner Alana King has been named by Delhi Capitals as the replacement for Sutherland.

"Australian all-rounders Ellyse Perry (Royal Challengers Bengaluru) and Annabel Sutherland (Delhi Capitals) have withdrawn from the upcoming edition of the league due to personal reasons," WPL stated in a release.

"RCB have named Sayali Satghare as a replacement for Perry. Satghare will join RCB at her reserve price of ₹ 30 lakh. DC have named Alana King as a replacement for Sutherland.

"The Australian leg-spinner, who represented UP Warriorz in the previous season, has featured in 27 T20s and picked up 27 wickets. King will join DC at a reserve price of ₹ 60 lakh," it added.

Left-arm seamer Tara Norris has also been replaced by Australian all-rounder Charlie Knott in the UP Warriorz's camp.

Norris, who played for the Delhi Capitals in the inaugural edition of WPL in 2023, has been named in the USA squad for next year's Women's T20 World Cup qualifier to be held in Nepal.

"Knott has been signed at a reserve price of ₹ 10 lakh," WPL said.

The fourth edition of the WPL will be held in two legs at Navi Mumbai and Vadodara from January 9 to February 5. (PTI)

Pay dispute hits Pak hockey, players allege underpayment of daily allowance for Pro League matches

LAHORE, Dec 30: A pay dispute hit Pakistan hockey as some senior players threatened to boycott the men's FIH Pro League second phase in February, alleging that they have not been given the full daily allowances for matches earlier this month.

At least two members of the national men's team confirmed that a clear message had been sent to the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) that many players would not be available for the FIH Pro League if the financial issues were not sorted out before that.

"We were assured we would be paid 30,000 rupees daily allowance for the duration of the Pro League event in Argentina earlier this month. Last week we got the daily allowances in our accounts but at the rate of just 11,000 rupees which is a sham," one player said.

"If you look at the exchange rates 30,000 means around 110 dollars while 11,000 is just 40 dollars which is a huge difference to us," he added.

Pakistan played four matches in FIH Pro



League in Argentina earlier this month, losing all of them. They will play four matches in February in Australia.

The PHF has told the players that the daily allowances for all players and officials were

sent to them by the Pakistan Sports Board which has a policy of giving a daily allowance of USD 40 for athletes going abroad for participation in an event.

"The PHF policy is to pay players 30,000 daily allowance but since the PSB is funding the entire expenses of the team for the two phases of the Pro League Hockey we can't do much in this matter," PHF Secretary Rana Mujahid said.

He said after government approval, funds were approved for the FIH Pro League participation and the PSB has also paid for the tickets and hotel expenses of the team besides the daily allowances.

Pakistan were promoted to the FIH Pro League through the Hockey Nations Cup played in Malaysia earlier this year. New Zealand, who won the Hockey Nations Cup against Pakistan in the final, were unable to join FIH Pro League this time.

Under the rules, FIH extended the invitation to the runners-up side Pakistan, who confirmed their participation in the FIH Pro League. (PTI)

Former world heavyweight champion Joshua is 'stable' after 2 die in car accident in Nigeria

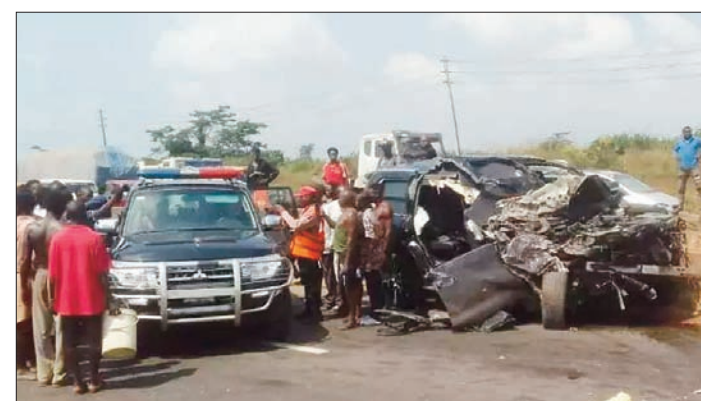
LAGOS, Dec 30: Anthony Joshua, the two-time former world heavyweight champion from Britain, was in a stable condition in the hospital after being involved in a car crash in Nigeria that killed two people who were close friends and team members, his promoter said.

Eddie Hearn's Matchroom Boxing said on X that Joshua "sustained injuries in the accident and was taken to hospital Monday for checks and treatment" and he will "remain there for observation."

It named Sina Ghami and Latif Ayodele as the two passengers who had "tragically passed away."

Photos on social media showed Joshua being extricated from a wrecked vehicle while he was wincing in pain.

"Following thorough clinical evaluations, medical professionals have confirmed that both patients (hospitalized after the accident) are stable and do not require any emergency medical intervention at this time," a joint statement by Lagos and Ogun state governments said.



The Lagos state commissioner for information, Gbenga Omotoso, confirmed the accident in a post on X, adding that the government had sent ambulances to the crash site.

The crash occurred on a major thoroughfare — the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway which links Ogun state to Lagos, the country's economic capital — at about 11 a.m. local time. Nigeria is the homeland of Joshua's parents.

Ogun State Police earlier said in a statement: "The vehicle convey-

ing Mr. Joshua, a Lexus SUV, was involved in the accident under circumstances that are currently being investigated. Joshua, seated in the rear of the vehicle, sustained minor injuries and is receiving medical attention with another injured person."

According to Olusegun Ogungbemi, spokesperson for the Federal Road Safety Corps, preliminary investigations indicated the vehicle was "traveling beyond the legally prescribed speed limit on the corridor, lost

control during an overtaking maneuver and crashed into a stationary truck," which was by the side of the road.

The Ogun state government said that "preliminary reports indicate that two male foreign nationals died on the spot."

"Life is much more important than boxing"

Joshua beat YouTube-turned-boxer Jake Paul on Dec. 19 in a bout in Miami, which he was using to regain sharpness in the ring. He lost the world heavyweight title in 2021 to Oleksandr Usyk.

"Life is much more important than boxing. I am praying for the lost lives, AJ and anyone impacted by today's unfortunate accident," Paul said Monday.

Nigeria's president calls Joshua

Nigeria's president, Bola Tinubu, called Joshua in hospital.

"I spoke with AJ on the phone to personally convey my condolences over the death of his two associates," the president said on X. "I wished him a full and speedy recovery, and prayed with him. AJ assured me he is receiving the best possible care. I also spoke with his mother and prayed for her. She was deeply appreciative of the call."

No further details on Joshua's condition were given.

"Anthony Joshua is in an undisclosed hospital being treated for his injuries," Lanre Ogunlowo, the commissioner of police for Ogun state, told the AP. He said he has no further information on the injuries.

Hearn had earlier told Daily Mail Sport that he was "away on a family holiday and awoke to the news of this incident."

"We are trying to contact Anthony and in the meantime we don't want to speculate on how he is but thankfully he appears OK from what I have seen in the images."

Joshua briefly went to boarding school in Nigeria at the age of 11. He returned there for the first time in 17 years in 2019, ahead of a fight against Andy Ruiz Jr. Joshua has been in talks to fight fellow Briton Tyson Fury in 2026. (AP)

Joshua's assignments in the ICC World Test Championship start in March 2026 with a tour of Bangladesh followed by tours to West Indies in July and England in August-September.

In November-December 2026 and March 2027, Pakistan will host Sri Lanka and New Zealand.

The Test side has had interim coaches in Aaqib Javed and Mahmood ever since the PCB and Australian Jason Gillespie parted ways in early 2024 because of differences over selection matters. (PTI)

PCB parts ways with Pakistan Test head coach Azhar Mahmood

Tuesday's BPL matches postponed following Khaleda Zia's death

DHAKA, Dec 30: The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has called off the two BPL matches scheduled for Tuesday, following the death of former prime minister of the country Khaleda Zia this morning.

The two matches have been rescheduled for Wednesday.

The decision to postpone the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) matches was taken just two hours before the toss of the opening match of the day between Sylhet Titans and Chattogram Royals at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

Zia, the first female PM of the country, served two terms -- from 1991-1996 and 2001-2006. She was the chairperson and leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

"BPL 2026 stands united in respect during the period of national mourning for Former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia. Matches scheduled for 30 December 2025 have been rescheduled to 31 December 2025," the BCB said on its 'X' handle.

"All remaining Sylhet Phase matches will continue as per the original schedule." (PTI)

Australia still best team in women's cricket, says Gardner ahead of India series



SYDNEY, Dec 30: Star all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner believes Australia remain the "best team in the world" despite no longer being the reigning T20 or ODI champions, and is confident they will bounce back against India when the two teams renew their rivalry in February.

Gardner said Australia's setbacks at the T20 and ODI World Cups exposed the team to pressure it is not accustomed to.

"We've certainly been put under pressure recently. But I can still sit

here confidently saying that we're the best team in the world," Gardner told cricket.com.au.

Australia will host the newly-crowned 50-over world champions India for a full series comprising three T20 Internationals, as many ODIs and a Test during February and March next year.

"India's going to come across with a lot of confidence, as they should. They've obviously played some really good cricket recently," Gardner said.

"They challenged us in the ODI

series before the World Cup and then had the upper hand in that semi-final."

Gardner said familiarity with home conditions would work in Australia's favour but acknowledged India's growing threat.

"They're also coming over to our conditions, which we know better than them. If they do challenge us, we know what to do in those moments as well."

The series will be the first meeting between the two sides since India's semifinal win over Aus-

tralia in last month's ODI World Cup, which ended Australia's title defence.

"Over the last 12 to 18 months, we've only lost about two games, and I think the two games that we lost were both in semi-finals.

"It kind of shows the consistency of the group. It's just about putting those pieces together to hopefully win those trophies," she added.

Australia were also eliminated at the semifinal stage of the 2024 T20 World Cup, losing a low-scoring contest to South Africa.

As a result, Australia are not the reigning world champions in either white-ball format for the first time in more than seven years.

Gardner identified handling pressure in key moments as the main area for improvement.

"Just winning those small moments in those high-pressure situations, which, ultimately in a World Cup, when you're playing in finals cricket, you need to be able to do. And for us, we weren't able to do that," said the 28-year-old.

"Sometimes when you're under pressure, maybe you make the wrong decision.

"It's making sure that we know the mental side of our game as well is in the best place that it can be, because ultimately that's going to help you make the right decision on the field," she added. (PTI)

World Blitz: Erigaisi stuns Carlsen to emerge joint leader on day one



DOHA, Dec 30: Top Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi demonstrated strong endgame technique and quick calculation to stun Magnus Carlsen and emerge joint leader, with the Norwegian world No.1 slamming the table in frustration, on day one of the World Blitz Championships here.

Erigaisi then went on to defeat another top GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan and drew three other games to emerge joint leader late on Monday.

With Erigaisi -- who ended day one on 10 points from 13 games and was tied for the top spot with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and American Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana -- in menacing form, it was Carlsen who lost a tense endgame in Round 9.

Erigaisi had just nine seconds on his clock while Carlsen was down to three. Just as the Norwegian -- who had also slammed the table after losing to India's D. Gukesh in Norway Chess earlier this year -- was about to make a queen move, it slipped from his hand and flew off the table.

Alexander Grischuk, who happened to be passing by at that moment, jumped and tried to move out of the way quickly. By the time Carlsen picked up his queen and put it back on the board, his time had already run out. The Norwegian couldn't hide his anger and slammed his fist on the table to give it a mighty tremor, though Erigaisi remained unruffled by the drama.

The leaders are trailed by six players on 9.5 points. The co-champions in the 2024 edition of World Blitz, Carlsen and Ian Nepomniachtchi, sit on 9/13.

Dutchman Jorden van Foreest emerged as the first sole leader in the 'Open' section after Round 6. The 26-year-old, who won the Dutch championship this year, defeated the likes of Alireza Firouzja and Erigaisi, who suffered his only loss on Monday to the Dutch player.

However in Round 7, van Foreest fell to Abdusattorov, who briefly joined a six-way tie for the lead at 6/7. But things didn't go well for them after that, and both finished the day on 8/13.

By the end of Round 10, Erigaisi stood alone at the top with 8.5/10, having drawn only once (with Firouzja) and lost once (to van Foreest). Entering the final round of the day, three players were tied at 9.5/12.

Carlsen finished on 9/13, suffering a second setback on the day against Caruana after overlooking a rook.

Six more rounds will be played on Tuesday to reach the semifinals, followed by the final. Carlsen, who is aiming for his ninth World Blitz title to go with his sixth Rapid crown he won on Sunday, would be keen to overcome the setbacks with his never-say-die attitude.

Humpy, Deshmukh slip in women's blitz

Two-time World Rapid champion Koneru Humpy could not recreate the form she displayed on way to the bronze on Sunday in the Rapid section, slipping to joint 61st position after 10 rounds, concluding her day on five points with leading Chinese GM Tan Zhongyi for company. The 38-year-old Indian lost five games.

Teenage women's World Cup winner Divya Deshmukh was joint 30th with six points, while GMs D Harika and R Vaishali were further down on 5.5 points.

Dutch International Master Eline Roeters emerged as an unlikely sole leader with 8.5/10 points, while Aleksandra Goryachkina, winner of the Women's World Rapid crown on Sunday, was joint second with two others on eight points.

Five more rounds will be played on Tuesday with the top-four players moving into the semifinals, followed by the final. (PTI)

Bradman's baggy green from historic home series against India up for auction



SYDNEY, Dec 30: A rare Baggy Green cap worn by the legendary Sir Donald Bradman during a 1947/48 series against India is set to go under the hammer next month.

Bradman gifted the cap to Indian all-rounder Sriranga Wasudev Sohoni during the series, which marked India's first international cricket tour as an independent nation.

Unlike most surviving Baggy Green caps from Bradman's era, many of which are preserved in museums or closely held private collections, this cap has never been publicly displayed or offered for sale. It has remained in uninterrupted family ownership for more than 75 years, according to the Australian Associated Press (AAP).

"This is a genuine piece of cricket

history that Sir Donald Bradman personally gifted," Lloyds Auctions Lee Hames said.

"Its uninterrupted family ownership for 75 years and its direct link to 'The Don' make it one of the most important Bradman-related pieces to come to auction."

The Test cricketers of Bradman's era wore a different cap for each series.

The cap will be offered at a public auction, drawing international interest from private collectors, museums, institutions and fans.

Widely regarded as the greatest batter the game has known, Bradman amassed 715 runs in six innings at an astonishing average of 178.75 during the 1947/48 Test series, which Australia won 4-0. His tally included three centuries and a double hundred.

Bradman, who died aged 92 in 2001, averaged an astounding 99.94 runs per Test innings. The bidding for his cap at Lloyds Auctions will open at one Australian dollar. The process will be closed on January 26.

It's not the first of Bradman's caps to be sold as a baggy green from the same India series fetched a staggering ₹ 2.63 crore last year. (PTI)

Bindra-led Task Force highlights deficits in Indian sports administration; Mandaviya promises revamp

NEW DELHI, Dec 30: An Abhinav Bindra-led Task Force set up by the Sports Ministry has pointed out "systemic deficits" in India's sports administration, including "inadequate and ill-equipped" athletes for governance roles, and recommended the setting up of an autonomous statutory body to train a specialised cadre that would also feature IAS officers.

The 170-page report of the Task Force has been submitted to Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, who on Tuesday said "all its recommendations will be implemented".

To address the current "gaps" that ail the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the National Sports Federations (NSFs) and the state departments, the committee has recommended that a National Council for Sports Education and Capacity Building (NCSECB) be set up under the Ministry "to regulate, accredit, and certify sports administration training."

The nine-member Task Force was set up in August this year and featured, among others Adil Sumarivala and former Target Olympic Podium Scheme's CEO Cdr. Rajesh Rajagopalan.

The panel highlighted lack of a professional cadre of sports administrators, and outdated training opportunities for them

with "limited focus on competencies or continuous professional development."

It also said that most athletes are "ill-equipped" when it comes to skills needed to transition from their sporting careers into administrative roles.

"This report is both diagnostic and prescriptive. It identifies the structural, functional, and systemic gaps that currently constrain sports governance, but more importantly, it charts a roadmap for transformation," said Bindra in its preface.

The Task Force was entrusted with a wide-ranging mandate and it included evaluation of the current administrative framework across institutions such as SAI, NSFs and state associations.

"We engaged deeply with the sporting ecosystem. We consulted athletes, government officials, SAI administrators, NSF representatives, state functionaries, academic experts, and international institutions," Bindra said in the report.

The SAI, which has also been deemed understaffed by the parliamentary standing committee on sports, came in for some heavy scrutiny even from the Task Force along with the state sports departments.

Describing the two as the "backbone" of India's sports administration, the panel concluded that "both institutions face deep



systemic and capacity challenges that hinder professionalism, efficiency, and governance effectiveness."

"These gaps not only constrain the implementation of national policies but also weaken coordination with federations and other stakeholders, limiting India's ability to build a modern, athlete-centric sports ecosystem," it pointed out.

"Neither SAI nor state departments have a dedicated sports administration service. Instead, roles are filled by generalist civil servants or contractual staff, often lacking sector-specific expertise.

"This has resulted in ad-hoc decision-

making, weak institutional continuity, and an absence of long-term professionalisation." The panel then mentioned the "poor coordination" between SAI, NSFs, and State Departments, calling it "limited and fragmented."

"Overlapping roles, duplication of functions, and unclear accountability frameworks reduce efficiency and create systemic bottlenecks," it said.

No clear pathway for athletes in governance

The panel noted that while the soon-to-be implemented National Sports Governance Act makes athlete representation in NSF Executive Committees mandatory, there is no system in place to train them for the job.

"India does not yet have a structured Dual Athlete Career Pathway integrated with the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model, which supports athletes in combining elite performance with education, leadership, and governance skills," it said.

"...the real gap lies in athlete preparedness to take up these governance and leadership roles effectively. Most athletes retire without the relevant skills in administration, leadership, or governance, leaving them underprepared for the responsibilities such positions demand," it added. (PTI)

'Nari Shakti' defines Indian sports in 2025 but familiar doping and administrative woes persist

NEW DELHI, Dec 30: Whether it was the brutal boxing ring, the rough and tumble of a cricket field, the mind games on a chess board or finding the precise target in shooting and archery, the year 2025 well and truly belonged to India's path-breaking sportswomen who were an unstoppable force across disciplines.

A 19-year-old chess prodigy Divya Deshmukh became India's first woman World Cup winner. The Harmanpreet Kaur-led cricket team smiled through a difficult phase and shut out kitchen taunts on social media to claim the silverware in the ODI format against all expectations.

At the shooting range, another 19-year-old, Suruchi Singh, amassed four World Cup gold medals, including three individual, in the 10m air pistol competition to make her presence felt in a category that was synonymous with double Olympic-medallist Manu Bhaker up until now.

On the football pitch, while the men hobbled from one setback to another, the women offered a glimmer of hope by qualifying for next year's AFC Asian Cup.

With that singular triumph, they managed to be the face saver for a sport that is under immense scrutiny for consistently poor men's results and administrative collapse under current All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Kalyan Chaubey.

The Sheetal superiority

At the archery arena, 18-year-old wonder woman Sheetal Devi didn't just become the first ever armless para world champion but also made it to the national team for an able-bodied international competition. In doing so, the remarkable young woman from Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar became the living embodiment of the Olympic spirit that pushes athletes to go faster, aim higher, and strive to be stronger.

She wasn't the only one to make a statement though, the Indian blind women's cricket team too returned a

world champion from Sri Lanka. Led by Deepika TC, these women told gut-wrenching tales of how even three meals a day was nothing short of luxury for them as they chased a World Cup.

They weren't up for a windfall even after the trophy but life was certain to get a lot better as some sponsors and state governments stepped up to lift them financially. Inside the boxing ring, the men struggled to get going through the year but Jaismine Lamboria and Minakshi Hooda lifted spirits with gold medals in the world championship.

Of the two, Jaismine, who competes in the Olympic-approved 57kg division, is a legitimate medal hope in the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

Chanu unchallenged

There was no challenging the Mirabai Chanu supremacy in weightlifting for another year.

The diminutive Manipuri, who burst into the national consciousness with a disarming smile and a silver in the Tokyo Olympics, continued to be the one to beat despite not even being close to her best.

She picked up a world championship silver to go with a Commonwealth Championships gold despite being pulled back by a persisting back issue.

With her coveted 49kg category no longer a part of the Olympic roster, it remains to be seen how she recalibrates her path to the Los Angeles Games in 2028.

Antim bright spot in wrestling

On the wrestling mat too, Antim Panghal made sure that Olympic bronze-winner Aman Sehrawat's underwhelming performance wasn't the only talking point of the year.

Her bronze in the world championship was worth its weight in gold given that Indian wrestling did not have much to celebrate due to doping controversies and grapplers such as Aman turning up overweight in the biggest event.

90m for NC, cricket roller-coaster



As is the case every year, Indian sport was a sum total of many triumphs and several heartbreaks.

And in all of this, it wasn't that men didn't have their moments.

The cricket team, for one, picked up the Champions Trophy and later the Asia Cup in Dubai with astonishing ease, while javelin throw ace Neeraj Chopra finally scaled the 90m peak in the Doha Diamond League.

However, Chopra could not medal at the World Championships, hampered by an adductor muscle niggle, while the cricketers endured a challenging Test season, marred by a home whitewash at the hands of a meticulous South Africa.

The red-ball struggles were down to a transitional phase in Indian cricket triggered by the retirements of the two of its biggest batting icons -- Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

Even though the country got a new captain in Shubman Gill to obsess over, the

two veterans remained the biggest draws for fans and the most talked about subjects for the ever-increasing tribe of cricket pundits. This was despite the fact that both Rohit and Kohli are now just ODI players.

Under-fire head coach Gautam Gambhir and chief selector Ajit Agarkar persistently evaded a direct response on the duo's 2027 World Cup chances.

But the two made a quiet statement of intent by showing up for the domestic grind to make sure that the powers that be do not see them as "non-committal".

The men's hockey team too had a fairly decent year as the senior side won the Asia Cup to qualify for the 2026 World Cup and the juniors claimed a bronze at their home World Cup.

New sports law, CWG bid and doping woes

India's growth in terms of international performances was more or less satisfactory this year too. But what remained a