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Himanta bins Cong's 'vote chori' slur

Deletion of names from poll rolls: Oppn parties move police, CEO



GUWAHATI, Jan 9: Opposition parties in Assam on Friday approached the police and the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) against the BJP, alleging that it conspired to delete names from the electoral rolls ahead of the assembly polls, a charge rejected by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Sarma maintained that revision of electoral rolls is a regular process to

ensure ineligible names are struck off, and eligible voters included through a due procedure.

He also made light of the Congress' 'vote chori' allegation here, stating that elections are yet to take place.

Assam has registered a 1.35 per cent increase in voters as per the draft electoral rolls, published on 30 December after the Special Revision (SR) was conducted ahead of the Assembly polls. A total of 7,86,841 additions and 4,47,196 deletions have taken place.

Five of the opposition parties — the Congress, CPI(M), Rajgor Dal, Assam Jatiya Parishad and the CPI(ML)L — filed a complaint at Dispur Police Station here, claiming that state BJP president Dilip Saikia has specifically entrusted cabinet minister Ashok Singhal to carry out the deletion process in 60 legislative assembly constituencies (LACs).

They also submitted a memorandum to the CEO, claiming anomalies and discrepancies in the ongoing revision of electoral rolls.

A Special Revision (SR) of electoral rolls is underway in Assam, with the final voter list to be published on February 10. Assembly elections are likely to be held in March-April.

"When the Election Commission revises the voters' list, all political parties have the right to appoint Booth (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Zero corruption in govt recruitment: CM

GUWAHATI, Jan 9: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday asserted that there was "zero corruption" in the state government's recruitment process, as he handed over appointment letters to over 4,300 candidates.

"Another day, another promise fulfilled! 4,374 candidates today got their appointment letters under ADRE Grade IV," Sarma said in a post on X.

"The entire process has been completed within 1 year and with ZERO corruption. No Rhetoric, just delivering on every single commitment since Day 1. Congratulations," he added.

The Assam Direct Recruitment Examinations (ADRE) were introduced by the Sarma-led government, which are conducted under the supervision of a special committee for selecting candidates for grade-3 and grade-4 posts, mainly for clerical jobs, peons, drivers and similar technical and non-technical positions. (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

2026 assembly polls: BJP steps up outreach 3 hill districts

Continue to support us, pleads Dilip Saikia



HT Correspondent
KHERONI, Jan 9: With the 2026 Assam Assembly elections approaching, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has intensified its organisational outreach across the state.

As part of efforts to consolidate the party's base in the hill districts, Assam Pradesh BJP president Dilip Saikia arrived in Donkamokam in West Karbi Anglong on Thursday to

spearhead strategic preparations.

During his visit, Saikia held a high-level consultative meeting with party workers and office-bearers from Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts.

The meeting focused on reviewing the BJP's grassroots strength and chalking out a strategy aimed at securing a decisive victory in the upcoming Assembly elections.

The party leadership reiterated its

objective of securing a third consecutive term in Assam while maintaining a strong foothold in the hill regions.

Discussions during the meeting revolved around strengthening booth-level committees, sharpening electoral strategies for a clean sweep in the five Assembly constituencies across the three hill districts, and ensuring close coordination between district leadership and grassroots karyakartas.

Addressing party workers, Saikia credited the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for what he described as transformative development in Assam.

He said the BJP government's inclusive development agenda has given a new direction to the state, ensuring that even remote hilly areas are integrated into the broader national growth process.

He urged the people of Karbi Anglong to continue supporting what he termed the BJP's journey of development. (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Union cabinet approves Kaziranga elevated corridor, PM to lay foundation stone on Jan 18

Corridor project a landmark intervention: CM

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Jan 9: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday announced that the Union Cabinet has approved the state government's flagship project to construct an elevated corridor through Kaziranga National Park, a move aimed at protecting wildlife while improving connectivity in Upper Assam.

Addressing the reporters here, Sarma said the elevated corridor between Bokakhat and Kaziranga will be built at an estimated cost of over Rs 6,000 crore.

He described the project as a landmark intervention that balances infrastructure development with ecological conservation.

"The elevated corridor will significantly reduce wildlife mortality caused by vehicular movement and ensure safe passage for animals across the national park,"



Sarma said.

The Chief Minister added that the project would also shorten travel time between Guwahati and Jorhat, improving economic and tourism prospects in the region.

Once completed, the corridor is

expected to generate long-term revenue for the state, including around nine per cent GST and additional income linked to forest-related activities.

Sarma also announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi

will visit Assam on January 17.

During the visit, the Prime Minister will inaugurate the first Vande Bharat sleeper train service between Kolkata and Guwahati, marking a major boost to rail connectivity in the Northeast.

In addition, new trains connecting Dibrugarh to Lucknow and Guwahati to Rohtak via Delhi will be flagged off, further integrating Assam with key regions of the country.

The Chief Minister said that during his January 17 visit, the Prime Minister will also witness the traditional Bodo dance Bagurumba, highlighting Assam's rich cultural heritage on a national platform.

On January 18, Modi will travel to Kaziranga to lay the foundation stone of the elevated corridor project. Sarma said the Prime Minister's (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Zubeen case probe: 5-member Spl PP team formed

CM announces grant of ₹ 5 cr to trust to be formed by Garg family

GUWAHATI, Jan 9: The Assam Cabinet on Friday approved a five-member team of special public prosecutors in cultural icon Zubeen Garg's death case, with senior advocate Ziaul Kamar to lead it.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, addressing a press conference after a Cabinet meeting, said, "A team of special public prosecutors (PPs) will take forward the legal battle. Senior advocate Ziaul Kamar will be the special PP. Brojendra Mohan Choudhury will be the additional PP, and Kishore Dutta, Pranjal Dutta and Bikash Jamar will be the assistant PPs."

"This five-member team will

help in taking forward the legal process," he said.

Sarma further said that the Cabinet has also okayed a grant of ₹ 5 crore for the trust to be set up by Garg's family in his name.

"The Cabinet has welcomed the family's decision. Later also, if plans for preserving Garg's memory and works are shared, the government will always try to help the trust," he added.

The 52-year-old singer-composer-actor had died while swimming in the sea on September 19 in Singapore, where he had gone to attend the North East India Festival. A Special Investigation Team (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Guv reviews govt initiatives

MORIGAON, Jan 9: Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya has reviewed key development schemes in Morigaon district, interacting with beneficiaries, officials and grassroots stakeholders to assess the impact of government initiatives, an official statement said on Friday.

During the visit, the governor visited Kumoi Anchalik Secondary School, where he spent time with students and shared a mid-day meal with them.

He advised students to consume nutritious food for healthy physical and mental growth and appreciated the school authorities for maintaining food quality.

Acharya urged the students to pursue excellence in academics as well as in co-curricular activities, terming them as the future architects of a 'Viksit Bharat'.

The governor later visited the Amrit Sarovar site at the Krishi Vignyan Kendra (KVK), where he took note of the ongoing work and directed (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Sonowal Kachari organisations stage sit-in over delay in autonomous council elections



HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, Jan 9: Various organisations of the Sonowal Kachari community on Friday staged a sit-in demonstration at Chowkidinghee in Dibrugarh, protesting the delay in holding elections to the Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council.

Raising slogans of "No election, no BJP", the agitators said the protest has assumed special signif-

icance as it is being held in the home district of former chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

The protest was jointly spearheaded by the All Assam Sonowal Kachari Students' Union (AASKSU), the Sonowal Kachari Youth Council (SKYC) and members of the Sonowal Kachari community.

Leaders of the organisations alleged that the state government has

failed to fulfil its commitments regarding the conduct of the autonomous council elections.

They pointed out that as per official notifications, the elections were scheduled to be held in 2024 but were later deferred to February 2025. Despite repeated assurances, the elections have not been conducted so far.

The protesters further stated that on November 10, 2025, the Election Commission of India had published the draft electoral roll for the council and invited objections.

Subsequently, on November 28, the Additional Chief Secretary of the state's Plains Tribal Welfare Department notified the delimitation of 32 constituencies of the council.

Despite these formal steps, the elections are yet to be held, raising what the agitators described as serious doubts and unanswered questions.

Expressing strong resentment, the protesters warned that if the Sonowal (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Efforts on to secure GI tags for 33 NE products

GUWAHATI, Jan 9: Efforts are being made to secure GI (Geographical Indication) tags for 33 unique products from the Northeast, and a pact in this regard was signed in Guwahati, a statement said.

The agreement was signed between the Textiles Committee under the Ministry of Textiles and the North Eastern Handloom and Handicraft Development Corporation (NEHDC), it said.

Among these products, 18 are from Nagaland and 15 from Meghalaya, the statement said.

However, it was not immediately known what these products were.

A GI tag is a name or sign identifying a product as originating from a specific place, possessing (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

National textile ministers' meet conclude with focus on strengthening sector



GUWAHATI, Jan 9: Strengthening the country's textile sector through innovation, sustainability and export growth was the focus of a two-day National Textile Ministers' Conference, which concluded on Friday, an official statement said.

From Union ministers Giriraj Singh and Pabitra Margherita to Textile ministers of different states and Union Territories (UTs), the participants also deliberated on branding Textiles of India, at the conference held at Sonapur, on the outskirts of Guwahati.

The discussions centred around strengthening the country's textile ecosystem through innovation, sustainability, heritage preservation and export growth.

Union MoS Margherita said the conference witnessed deliberations on various aspects of the textile sector and expressed confidence that this would lead to a clear roadmap for fulfilling the vision of making India a global textile hub.

On the second day, discussions focused on expanding exports, competitiveness and branding of textiles of India.

A Centre and state dialogue focused on competitiveness, support, expectations and vision of achieving USD 100 billion in textile exports by 2030.

Ministers and senior officials underscored the importance of collaborative efforts, with states encouraged to leverage flagship schemes of the Ministry of Textiles, including infrastructure development, technology upgradation and sustainability-driven initiatives.

Another key session deliberated on traditional textiles, handlooms and handicrafts, with emphasis on preserving India's rich (CONTD. ON PAGE 2)

Dibrugarh University literature fest to host 150 speakers from 25 countries in Feb

DIBRUGARH, Jan 9: The third edition of the Dibrugarh University International Literature Festival (DUILF) will bring together over 150 speakers, writers and poets from 25 countries in February, the organisers said on Friday.

Acclaimed litterateurs expected to attend include Ann Morgan, author of 'A Year of Reading the World'; award-winning Djiboutian novelist Abdourahman Waberi; South Korean author Kyung-sook Shin; renowned Indian writer Yessie Dorei Thongchi; celebrated Australian author Gideon Haigh; and Egyptian novelist Mai Khaled, they said.

Organised by the Dibrugarh University in association with the

Foundation for Culture, Arts and Literature (FOCAL), a Guwahati-based non-profit trust, the four-day festival from February 18 will continue to strengthen and establish India's presence on the global literary map, the organisers added.

In addition to authors, the festival will feature storytellers, performers and cultural practitioners, with an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 literary enthusiasts expected to attend.

DUILF 2026 will feature author conversations, panel discussions on topics ranging from poetry, fiction to international affairs, films and sports, readings, workshops and community-led cultural experiences.

DUILF curator and chief coordinator Rahul Jain said, "DUILF was envisioned as a space where global literary voices meet the unique cultural imagination of North East India. The 2026 edition deepens this dialogue by bringing Middle Eastern and North African narratives into conversation with young audiences, students and readers."

Morgan, who is scheduled to attend the DUILF for the third time, said, "It is rare to see such a wide range of international voices brought into conversation with young people in this way. The Assamese warmth and hospitality build connections that last a lifetime, opening hearts and minds." (PTI)

Focus on seed production, multi-tier cropping to boost farm economy

AAU targets production of 5,000 quintals of paddy seeds in upcoming season

HT Correspondent
JORHAT, Jan 9: Assam Agricultural University (AAU) has set an ambitious target of producing 5,000 quintals of paddy seeds in the forthcoming agricultural season.

The target was announced by AAU Vice-Chancellor Dr Bidyut Chandan Deka while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the two-day Farmers' Fair, being held on January 9 and 10 at the ICR Farm of the varsity campus at Borbheta here.

Dr Deka, who presided over the inaugural function, also advocated the adoption of two- or three-tier cropping systems on a commercial scale to strengthen Assam's agricultural economy.

Vice-Chancellor of Jagannath Barooah University, Professor (Dr) Jyoti Prasad Saikia, who attended the programme as the chief guest,



said farmers play a crucial role in the country's development process.

He noted that organising such fairs provides farmers with an effective platform to upgrade their skills

and modernise agricultural practices.

Emphasising the need to accord due importance and dignity to farmers, Dr Saikia said that experience

enhances efficiency in people's lives and stressed the collective responsibility of building a healthy society.

Chief General Manager of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Regional Office, Guwahati, Loken Das, AAU Director (Research-Agriculture) Dr Sanjay Kumar Chetia, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Dr Prasanna Kumar Pathak, also addressed the gathering.

Earlier, AAU Director (Extension Education) Dr Manoranjan Neog delivered the welcome address.

The Farmers' Fair features interaction programmes between farmers and scientists, training sessions for farmers, meetings of agricultural entrepreneurs and seed producers, and specialised interactions with mushroom farmers as part of its two-day schedule.

Lifeline to Vodafone Idea: Annual payout capped at ₹ 124 cr over next 6 yrs

NEW DELHI, Jan 9: Offering a lifeline to struggling debt-laden telecom operator, the government has capped annual payouts to clear past dues at ₹ 124 crore over the next six years, easing near-term cash flows, the company said on Friday.

Between March 2032 and March 2035, the yearly outgo will be trimmed to ₹ 100 crore, Vodafone Idea said in a stock exchange filing citing a communication received from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

It went on to state that the remaining of the adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues shall have to be paid in equal installments annually over six years starting March 2036.

The government had on December 31 approved a partial moratorium Vodafone Idea's past dues, freezing them at ₹ 87,695 crore that was to be cleared from 2031-32 to 2040-41. This amount, too, will be reassessed by a committee based on an audit.

The payment schedule details sent Vodafone Idea shares higher by 9 per cent in morning trade but stock pared most of its gain by afternoon as analysts remained cautious about upcoming funding needs to support its 5G expansion plans. The stock closed at ₹ 11.27, down 2 per cent, on the BSE.

The relief measures approved by the Union Cabinet on December 31 were aimed at protecting the interest of the government (which has about 48.9 per cent stake in the telco), enable orderly payment of dues to the Centre by way of spectrum auction charges and AGR dues, ensure competition in the sector and safeguard the interests of 20 crore consumers of Vodafone Idea.

AGR dues refer to payments owed by telecom companies to the government based on adjusted gross revenue (AGR). It is the revenue on which telecom operators must pay licence fees and spectrum usage charges. It is defined to include all revenues, even non-telecom income (like interest, rent, asset sales).

Besides these outstanding, the AGR dues for 2017-18 and 2018-19, which were finalised



based on the Supreme Court order of September 2020, will now have to be paid over 2025-26 to 2030-31 fiscal years without any change. These, the company said on Friday, work out to ₹ 124 crore payout annually.

Vodafone Idea has been battling a prolonged financial crisis, driven by intense price competition, high debt, and massive AGR liabilities that arose from a change in the definition of AGR. The company has struggled with persistent losses, a shrinking subscriber base, and limited ability to invest in network expansion, even as rivals accelerated 4G and 5G rollouts.

Repeated rounds of government relief and equity conversion of dues have kept the company afloat, but its long-term viability continues to hinge on sustained policy support, fresh capital infusion, and a turnaround in operating performance.

Some had expected that the Cabinet would waive a part, if not all, of the AGR dues. But instead, it decided to give a moratorium, which would allow the company to recover.

Vodafone Idea will pay the government ₹ 1,144 crore over the next 10 years and rest of the adjusted gross revenue dues, frozen at ₹ 87,695 crore by the Union cabinet, from March 2036 onwards.

Vi, however, said the entire AGR dues comprising principal, interest, penalty, and interest on penalty for the period from 2006-07 to 2018-19 as of December 31, shall be frozen and be payable in various tranches.

The moves provide a fresh lease of life to the

company as the debt-ridden firm had to pay around ₹ 18,000 crore by March 2026 and a similar amount every year for the next six years in the absence of relief from the government.

VIL, in a letter to the DoT earlier this year, said its liabilities to the government are about ₹ 2 lakh crore, including ₹ 1.19 lakh crore towards spectrum dues.

The company said in case of no support, the Centre will face significant direct monetary loss with no recovery of spectrum dues, equity value of ₹ 53,083 crore becoming nil, and no recovery of AGR dues.

The annual liabilities of Vi were more than double its annual operational cash generation - in the range of ₹ 8,400-9,200 crore for the last three years.

Vi said a committee is to be constituted by the DoT to reassess the AGR dues, whose decision shall be final.

"Thereafter, the reassessed amount is to be repaid between March 2036 and March 2041 in equal annual installments," the filing said.

Analysts expect that the reassessment is likely to reduce Vi's AGR dues and the relief given by the government may help it raise ₹ 25,000 crore debt that the company has been looking for investment in the networks.

"In our view, this could fast-track the completion of Vi's ₹ 250 billion (₹ 25,000 crore) bank debt raise and potentially enable another equity raise down the line. Besides meaningfully lifting concerns on Vi's ability to continue as a going concern, these should also enable the company to revive its network investments," a Citi report said.

An Ambit Capital report said decisive government action with possible upside from reassessment would enable Vi to raise bank funding -- necessary for carrying out survival capex.

The report said a favourable verdict from the Supreme Court has already enabled Vi to raise ₹ 3,300 crore through non-convertible debentures recently. (PTI)

Stock markets take downtrend for 5th day

Sensex, Nifty tank nearly 1 pc

MUMBAI, Jan 9: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty buckled under selling pressure for the fifth straight session on Friday, falling nearly 1 per cent, as investors turned cautious due to growing concerns over potential US tariff hikes amid lingering geopolitical worries.

The relentless foreign capital flight from Indian equities also affected the market sentiment, traders said.

After a brief rebound in early trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex failed to carry forward the momentum and tumbled 604.72 points, or 0.72 per cent, to sink below the 84,000-level and settle at 83,576.24. During the day, it dropped 778.68 points, or 0.92 per cent, to 83,402.28.

A total of 3,104 stocks declined, while 1,062 advanced and 176 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 193.55 points or 0.75 per cent to 25,683.30.

In the past five trading days, the BSE benchmark declined 2,185.77 points, or 2.54 per cent, and the Nifty tumbled 645.25 points, or 2.45 per cent.

"Market sentiment stayed subdued amid elevated geopolitical and global trade-related concerns, particularly renewed uncertainty around potential US tariff actions and related Supreme Court developments. Persistent foreign institutional selling and weakness across broader risk assets further compounded the negative bias, while heavyweights also added to the downside pressure," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

From the Sensex pack, NTPC, IICI Bank, Adani Ports, Bharti Airtel,

Sun Pharma and Bajaj Finance were among the biggest laggards.

In contrast, Asian Paints, HCL Tech, Bharat Electronics and Reliance Industries were among the gainers.

"On the macro front, market participants remained cautious ahead of the domestic inflation data for December, scheduled to be released on Monday."

"On the global front, market participants stayed on the sidelines amid caution ahead of a US Supreme Court decision on the validity of American tariffs. Sentiment was further dented after US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick indicated on Friday that the India-US trade agreement had been delayed," Ashika Institutional Equities said in a note.

The BSE smallcap gauge tanked 1.74 per cent, and the midcap index dropped 0.90 per cent. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Corridor project a

presence underlines the Centre's commitment to Assam's development and to environmentally sensitive infrastructure.

The elevated corridor through Kaziranga has long been one of the Assam government's flagship initiatives, envisioned to resolve the long-standing conflict between conservation and connectivity.

With Cabinet approval now in place, the project is expected to move swiftly into the implementation phase, officials said, calling it a major step towards sustainable development in the state.

Himanta bins Cong's

Level Agents (BLAs). BJP has appointed its BLAs, and we have told them to ensure ineligible names are struck off, eligible voters included, and if any correction is needed, it be made," Sarma said.

"This is a process...even if a name has to be deleted, the person is given due notice and opportunity to present his side," the CM told reporters on the sidelines of a programme here when asked about the opposition crying foul against the ruling party.

He maintained that the revision of electoral rolls is for the purpose of sanitising it, and if no names could have been deleted or included, there would have been no need for the exercise.

He underlined that all political parties can appoint their BLAs and raise complaints with the EC regarding the rolls.

On Congress's charge of 'vote chori', Sarma said, "How can vote chori have taken place when election hasn't happened yet? When the Election Commission's process is on, and no (final) list has been published, where is the question of vote chori?"

Asked about the opposition parties' filing a police complaint, he said, "Very good. They should file the case." The five opposition parties, in the police complaint, alleged that the state BJP president "instructed the BJP MLAs to take necessary steps for deletion of names in 60 LACs and also entrusted Hon'ble Minister Shri Ashok Singhal in a Zoom meeting held on 04/01/2026".

"This is the evil design to delete the names of supporters of opposition parties from the electoral rolls," it claimed, urging the police to secure the footage of the video conference involving Saikia as it "contains crucial evidence".

The opposition parties claimed that this was a "larger conspiracy to delete the names of large numbers of genuine voters from the electoral rolls".

"Therefore, you are requested to register a case under proper sections of penal law and take necessary steps to book the conspirators to save democracy," the complaint said.

A police officer said the matter is being looked into.

In a separate memorandum submitted to the CEO, the opposition parties raised similar allegations and urged the CEO to restrain the CM, the BJP state president and other unauthorised persons from interfering in the revision of the electoral rolls.

They also asked the CEO to enquire into its accusation that the ruling party was conspiring of omitting voters who were supporters of the opposition camp.

The Rajor Dal has sent a separate complaint over the matter to the chief election commission, alleging conspiracy to illegally delete 10,000 opposition votes per constituency in the state ahead of the Assembly polls. (PTI)

Zero corruption in

Sarma, in his pre-poll promise in 2021, had assured of one lakh government jobs, with the dispensation claiming of surpassing the figure with nearly 1.5 lakh recruitments. (PTI)

Continue to support

stating that progress initiated under the vision of Prime Minister Modi has reached every corner of Assam in an impartial manner.

Sounding the poll bugle, the state BJP president appealed to party workers and voters in Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao to work towards a historic mandate in 2026.

He called upon the electorate to ensure a decisive victory from every booth, targeting wins in all five hill-based Assembly seats.

The Donkamokam visit marks the beginning of a series of intensive election-oriented activities as the BJP prepares to defend its stronghold in the hill districts ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

Guv reviews govt

officials to undertake plantation drives to enhance green cover.

Acharya also chaired a review meeting at the KVK with the district commissioner and heads of various departments and took stock of the implementation of various central and state government schemes.

The governor also interacted with beneficiaries under the 'Gaon Mein Governor,' an initiative launched by Lok Bhavan, Assam.

He also inspected the Tata Semiconductor project site and took stock of the progress of work.

The governor expressed hope that the project would generate employment opportunities, preventing the exit of skilled youth outside the state.

The governor also paid a visit to the residence of Anuraj Das, an 85-year-old veteran sportsman from Morigaon district, and acknowledged his contribution to sports under the 'Amar Mati Amar Nayak' initiative of Lok Bhavan (PTI)

National textile ministers'

textile heritage while ensuring market access, value addition, branding and livelihoods for artisans and weavers.

Participants stressed the need for convergence of schemes, design innovation and digital platforms to enhance income generation, the statement added. (PTI)

Efforts on to secure

unique qualities, reputation, or characteristics linked to that location.

The agreement was inked during a conclave of northeastern states in the textile sector held at Sonapur on the outskirts of Guwahati on Thursday, the statement said.

Beyond GI registration, the collaboration will focus on capacity building, branding and market linkages to ensure sustainable growth and wider recognition of Northeastern crafts, it said.

The two organisations will also work with the Centre and state governments to strengthen the textiles, handloom, handicrafts, khadi and allied sectors in the region, it added.

The initiative is expected to empower artisans and weavers by safeguarding their traditional knowledge and craftsmanship, while enhancing global visibility of Northeastern textiles and handicrafts and creating new economic opportunities through branding and market expansion, the statement said. (PTI)

Sonowal Kachari organisations

Kachari Autonomous Council elections are not conducted by January, they will not allow the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to campaign in Sonowal Kachari-dominated areas during the election period.

They also cautioned that the agitation would be intensified if the government continues to delay what they described as the democratic process.

The protesters reiterated that timely elections to the autonomous council are a constitutional and democratic right of the Sonowal Kachari community and demanded immediate action from the state government to restore trust and transparency.

Zubeen case probe:

(SIT) of the state police's CID is probing the death and submitted its charge sheet before the court on December 12.

It has charged four accused, festival organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, the singer's secretary Siddhartha Sharma and his two band members, Shekharjyoti Goswami and Amritprava Mahanta, with murder, and a fifth one, the singer's cousin and suspended police officer Sandipan Garg, with culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

The singer's two personal security officers (PSOs) -- Nandeswar Bora and Prabin Baishya -- have been charged with criminal conspiracy and criminal breach of trust by misappropriating funds or property entrusted to them.

The Kamrup (Metro) District and Sessions Court is hearing the case, with January 17 fixed as the next date.

The CM had earlier said that special PPs will be appointed for the case, with Garg's wife Garima, also pleading with the government to expedite the process. (PTI)

GEMA announces 2nd edition of ELECTROFEST - Northeast's premier electrical expo from January 24

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Jan 9: The Guwahati Electric Merchant Association (GEMA) has announced the second edition of Electrofest, scheduled to be held from January 24 to 27, 2026, at Vrindawan Gardens, Shree Gauhati Gaushala, Athgaon in Guwahati.

The official poster of Electrofest was unveiled on Thursday by GEMA president Nawal Kishor Sarma, secretary Saketraj Pugalia, expo chairman Gopal Pasari, expo convenors Abhishek Kejriwal, Deepak Agarwal, Rohit Surana and Saurabh Bothra, treasurer and expo convenor Naveen Sethia, and expo team member Mehul Pasari, in the presence of other dignitaries.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarma said the four-day extravaganza is set to be the largest gathering of the electrical industry in the Northeast, showcasing the latest innovations and products shaping the future of energy and infrastructure.

He added that the second edition of Electrofest reflects GEMA's commitment to empowering the electrical fraternity of the region and will provide a unique platform to explore cutting-edge technologies and build lasting business relationships.

Expo chairman Gopal Pasari informed that more than 140 stalls will feature a comprehensive range of electrical products, with over 50 leading companies from across the country exhibiting innovations in switches, fans, lighting, solar energy, transmission lines, switchgear and related segments.

The project has been cleared by the

Gunnebo Safe Storage strengthens presence in Northeast with new display centre in Guwahati

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Jan 9: Gunnebo Safe Storage, a global leader in physical security solutions, has strengthened its footprint in Northeast India with the inauguration of a new Display Centre in Guwahati, Assam.

Strategically located in the gateway to the Northeast, the centre brings Gunnebo's trusted security solution brands, Steelage and ChubbSafes, closer to regional businesses, jewellers, financial institutions and other asset-intensive sectors.

The Guwahati Display Centre was inaugurated by Anirban Mukhuti, Head of Marketing and Product Management - Asia, Gunnebo Safe Storage, marking an important milestone in the company's brand store expansion across emerging and high-growth markets in India.

The centre has been developed in collaboration with Gunnebo's authorised channel partner, Dishant PSS Inc.

Located at B G Complex, opposite Sankardev Academy, Kamarpatti, Pan Bazaar, Guwahati, Assam 781001, the display centre is designed to offer customers a first-hand experience of Gunnebo's certified physical security solutions.

Tata Power to set up ₹ 6,675 cr 10 GW ingot & wafer manufacturing facility in AP

AMARAVATI, Jan 9: Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd (TPREL) will set up a greenfield 10 GW ingot and wafer manufacturing facility at Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, with an investment of ₹ 6,675 crore.

The project will be the largest ingot and wafer manufacturing facility in the country, reinforcing Andhra Pradesh's position as a leading hub for advanced solar manufacturing, state government officials said.

The project has been cleared by the

State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) chaired by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu.

The facility will be developed at the IFFCO Kisan Special Economic Zone, where the Government of Andhra Pradesh has earmarked 200 acres for the project, including 120 acres for the initial phase and 80 acres for future expansion.

The ingots and wafers produced at the facility are critical inputs for solar cells, modules, and semiconductor ap-

lications, and the project aligns with the Government of India's push to strengthen domestic manufacturing and reduce import dependence for strategic components.

The project is expected to generate around 1,000 direct jobs, in addition to significant indirect employment during construction and allied activities. As part of its clean energy commitment, TPREL will also establish a 200 MW captive green power plant to supply renewable energy to the facility. (PTI)

Coca-Cola India integrates responsible waste practices at Coke Studio Bharat Live concerts through #MaidaanSaaf

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Jan 9: Coca-Cola India is integrating responsible waste collection and recycling practices at Coke Studio Bharat Live concerts in New Delhi and Guwahati, using the platform to demonstrate how large, high-footfall cultural events can be managed with greater material recovery and public participation.

The company is activating its flagship initiative #MaidaanSaaf in partnership with Greenmyna, with a focus on responsible waste collection, segregation and recycling at large public gatherings.

The initiative combines structured on-ground systems, trained volunteers and clear guidance to help audiences dispose of waste responsibly during the concerts.

At both venues, the #MaidaanSaaf activation includes staffed waste-segregation stations, temporary material recovery hubs and clearly marked collection points across audience areas and consumption zones.

Trained volunteers will assist with on-ground segregation, guide audience participation and help ensure that post-consumer waste is channelled through authorised re-



covery pathways.

These efforts are aimed at supporting organised waste handling during the concerts while reinforcing responsible disposal behaviour among fans, vendors and event partners.

The initiative also covers recovery from beverage consumption points, demonstrating how structured systems can enable material collection even in dynamic live-event environments.

Commenting on the initiative, Devyani R L Rana, Vice President - Public Affairs, Communications

and Sustainability, Coca-Cola India and Southwest Asia, said that live cultural events like Coke Studio Bharat create moments of shared experience for audiences across cities.

She said that through #MaidaanSaaf, the focus is on integrating responsible waste practices into the delivery of such events, making waste collection and segregation visible, practical and relevant for organisers and attendees, while showing how partnerships and on-ground systems can support better material recovery at scale.

Karbi Students' Association alleges bribery at Diphu Treasury

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Jan 9: The Karbi Students' Association (KSA), Semson Teron faction, has formally submitted a memorandum to the District Commissioner (DC) of Karbi Anglong, alleging systemic corruption and bribery within the Diphu Treasury Office.

The memorandum, submitted by KSA General Secretary Ajay Rongcheon on Thursday, claims that contractors are routinely coerced into paying bribes to process bills and that official files are frequently stalled without "illegal gratification." The student organisation says it possesses video evidence showing a Treasury staff member accepting cash from a contractor and argues that such practices are delaying vital developmental works across the district.

When approached by local media, Treasury Officer Chinmoy Hazarika acknowledged the complaint. "As a formal complaint has been lodged with the DC, it is inappropriate for me to comment at this time. We will wait for the DC to constitute an inquiry and find evidence," Hazarika said.

The KSA has demanded the immediate transfer of the Treasury Officer to ensure an impartial investigation.

Students' union presses for speedy action six years after signing ABSU urges time-bound implementation of BTR Accord



HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Jan 9: A tripartite review meeting was held on Thursday under the chairmanship of Neeraj Kumar Bansod, IAS, joint secretary, North East, Ministry of Home Affairs, between the Government of India, Government of Assam, BTC authority and representatives of ABSU, UBPO and Ex-NDFB Welfare Association through video conference to discuss the implementation of the Bodo Accord, 2020.

The students' union raised key issues regarding time-bound implementation, including amendment of the Sixth Schedule to grant more autonomy to the

Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), inclusion of more villages, full-fledged status to BKWAC, village notification and elections, ST Hill status for Boro Kacharis in Karbi Anglong, school provincialisation, Forest Rights Act, 2006, ex-gratia for martyrs' families, case withdrawals, release of six ex-NDFB members from jail, establishment of educational institutions, infrastructure development with ₹ 1,500 crore and direct recruitment in Army, paramilitary, Assam police and other services.

A detailed review of the implementation of the Accord was conducted, but the signatory

organisations emphasised speedy action, noting that six years have already passed. ABSU warned that any further delay would lead to continued democratic and peaceful movements.

Officials from the Government of Assam included Mukesh Chandra Sahu, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary and Principal Secretary, BTC and SN Choudhury, IAS, Commissioner & Secretary, Education Department. From BTC, Deputy Chief Rihon Daimary and Additional Principal Secretary Pranjiit Wary attended.

Signatory organisations were represented by Dipen Boro president, ABSU, Umesh Daimary vice president, ABSU, Khanindra Basumatary general secretary, ABSU, Dinesh Brahma assistant general secretary, ABSU, Abit Narzary speaker, ABSU, Rujugwrr Mochahary president, Ex-NDFB Welfare Association, Biliirthi Wary vice president, Ex-NDFB, Manaranjan Basumatary president, UBPO, Pitambar Brahma general secretary, UBPO and others.

ABSU president Dipen Boro said the meeting reviewed the implementation of the BTR Accord and urged authorities to ensure its time-bound execution.

ATTSA protests non-implementation of skill development scheme

Tea tribe students demand action on Jagannath Singh Sukanbaidya initiative



HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, Jan 9: The Assam Tea Tribe Students Association (ATTSA) staged a protest on Friday at Hollokuhwa village under the 24 Deopani MAC Constituency, expressing deep frustration over the non-implementation of the "Jagannath Singh Sukanbaidya Skill Development

Scheme," a flagship project aimed at empowering the tea tribe community.

ATTSA members raised slogans and highlighted that the scheme was intended to provide vocational training in weaving, hospitality, entrepreneurship and other skills to enhance employability and self-reliance among Adivasi/Tea Tribe

youth.

The association pointed out that while the government announced the construction of 500 "Jagannath Community Halls cum Skill Centres" with a budget of ₹ 750 crore, no visible progress has been made in the Hollokuhwa area. Protesters specifically criticised local leadership, including Deputy Speaker Dr Numal Momin, for failing to deliver the promised facilities in the Bokajan Legislative Assembly segment.

"We are deeply disappointed. If this scheme were implemented, many of our youth would have found a path toward a better future. The government must be held accountable for these empty promises," said Probin Tanti, Executive Member, CC, ATTSA.

The association warned of further democratic protests if the government continues to neglect the educational and professional development of the tea tribe community.

Karbi Sanghari Armu Chingrum Amei concludes at Chengbong

HT Correspondent

KHERONI, Jan 9: The Karbi Sanghari Armu Chingrum Amei, a major socio-religious congregation of the Karbi community, concluded successfully on Thursday at Chengbong in West Karbi Anglong. The event, marked by traditional fervour and the hoisting of sacred religious flags, witnessed a massive turnout of devotees and cultural enthusiasts from across the region.

The venue witnessed a vibrant atmosphere as thousands gathered to take part in the day-long programme. Traditional Karbi prayers and rites were performed to honour the community's deities, beginning

with the hoisting of the sacred flags symbolising unity and faith among the Karbi people. The occasion also served as a lively platform for folk songs, traditional music and dances, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the Karbi tribe.

Several prominent leaders and traditional heads graced the gathering. Chief executive member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) Tuliram Ronghang attended the event as chief guest. Others present included Member of Parliament Amarsing Tisso, Karbi King (Lindokpo) Longsing Ronghang, along with executive members and officials of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous

Council.

The Karbi Sanghari Armu Chingrum Amei is regarded as an important platform for the preservation and promotion of the Karbi community's religion, culture and heritage. Discussions during the sessions focused on the history of the tribe, the worship of Karbi deities and strategies to safeguard ancestral traditions for future generations.

As the programme drew to a close on Thursday evening, the congregation reaffirmed the cultural identity and spiritual unity of the Karbi people, marking another successful chapter in the community's traditional calendar.

65th Bodo Sahitya Sabha conference kicks off in Chirang



HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, Jan 9: The 65th annual conference of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) began on Friday with a three-day programme at Thengpakri Fwthar, Borlaogon near Bijni in Chirang district.

As part of the inauguration, BTC Executive Member Dhiraj Borgoyary opened the main gate of the conference, while District Commissioner Jatin Borah inaugurated the main pandal in the presence of office bearers of the reception committee and Bodo Sahitya Sabha members.

An exhibition and book fair featuring over 500 stalls has been arranged, alongside multi-com-

munity cultural programs aimed at engaging visitors and the general public. Literary delegates from various Indian states, as well as from Nepal, Bangladesh and Japan are participating in the conference. Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma is expected to attend the open session on the concluding day, January 11.

The Bodo Sahitya Sabha will discuss key issues including Bodo medium education, language development and community welfare. Nilokanta Goyary, General Secretary of BSS, said several thousand delegates and observers from various committees across the state have participated in the conference.

T Stanes holds tea cultivation interaction in Jorhat

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, Jan 9: T Stanes & Company Limited, a 164-year-old heritage agri-solutions company, recently organised a one-day brainstorming and technical interaction session in collaboration with the Bokahola Group of Tea Gardens at the historic Chameli Memsahab Bungalow in Jorhat, Assam. Setting the tone for the programme, managing director of the Bokahola Tea Company, Prabhat Kamal Bezbaruah, highlighted the critical importance of Integrated Crop Management (ICM) in modern tea cultivation, stressing the need to adopt scientific and holistic approaches to sustain productivity.

Advisor of T Stanes & Company Limited, Jayanta Chakraborty, underlined that a balanced strategy integrating plant nutrition, plant protection, soil health and sustainability is essential to preserve Assam tea's renowned productivity and aroma while ensuring long-term profitability for planters.

General manager of the Bokahola Group, Rupankar Goswami, presented a comprehensive overview of the current scenario of Assam tea plantations, outlining key challenges and emerging opportunities in the sector. This was followed by a presentation by Dr Bakul C Joshi, COO and president of T Stanes & Company Limited, who elaborated on the company's leadership in eco-friendly and sustainable cultivation practices. He explained why T Stanes is widely and affectionately known as the "Friends of Earth" within the agri-fraternity. The session witnessed active participation from senior planters and management representatives from the Jorhat and Golaghat circles, reflecting a shared commitment towards sustainable growth in Assam's tea industry.

Sanjoy Sahana, marketing manager for Eastern and Central India at T Stanes & Company Limited, conducted an in-depth interactive session with the planters, outlining a practical roadmap towards sustainable, strategic and profit-oriented tea plantations in Assam. The one-day programme proved to be highly enlightening, equipping participants with actionable insights and renewed confidence to further strengthen Assam tea's legacy of productivity, quality and global recognition.

Karbi organisations call for grand Hacha Kekan celebration

Karbi tradition aims to elevate the traditional post-harvest festival



HT Bureau

DIPHU, Jan 9: Five prominent Karbi organisations have issued a joint appeal for a unified celebration of Hacha Kekan on January 14, aiming to elevate the traditional

post-harvest festival.

The Karbi Cultural Society (KCS), Karbi Rong Asar Amei (KRAA), Karbi Anglong Rong Asar Amei (KARAA), Sarkari Goan Buras (SGBs) and the Karbi

Film Society met at the KCS Central Committee office in Taralango on Friday. They urged every Karbi household to light lamps in homes and granaries on the evening of January 14 to mark the harvest's arrival. KCS president Humsing Bey highlighted the festival's deep spiritual and social significance. "In our oral history, it was Songsar Richo (the heavenly deities) who introduced paddy, known then as Kathi, to our ancestors," he said.

The festival celebrates the transition of grain from the fields to the home, a process called Sok Keroi, followed by the traditional Hacha Kekan dance performed before the village headman to invoke blessings for year-long food security.

The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) has declared January 14 and 15 as public holidays. The central celebration at Taralango on January 15 will feature a menu exclusively of ethnic Karbi cuisine.

Electrification of Tinsukia-Dibrugarh and Makum-Ledo rail sections completed

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Jan 9: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has successfully completed the electrification of the strategically important Tinsukia-Dibrugarh and Makum-Ledo rail sections, strengthening rail infrastructure in Upper Assam and the Northeast.

Railway officials said the move will reduce dependence on diesel locomotives, lower fuel costs and cut carbon emissions and noise pollution, promoting cleaner and more sustainable rail operations.

"With electric traction now operational, trains on these sections will run at higher speeds with improved acceleration and reliability. Passengers can expect faster, smoother and more punctual services, while freight operations will become more efficient, supporting regional trade and industry," an official said.

These rail sections are vital links connecting key commercial, industrial and tourism hubs in Assam. Electrification will enhance network capacity, ensure smoother connectivity with the national railway grid and enable seamless movement of passenger and goods trains.

The project is part of Indian Railways' nationwide electrification drive aimed at energy efficiency, reduced operational costs and environmentally friendly transport. Officials expressed confidence that the completion will boost rail connectivity in the Northeast and pave the way for additional passenger and freight services in the coming years.



Inaugural Ginger Festival held at Matipung

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Jan 9: The inaugural Ginger Festival-cum-Buyer-Seller Meet was successfully held on Thursday at the Arboretum-cum-Craft Centre, Matipung. Organised by the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) in collaboration with the Agriculture and Tourism Departments, the event aimed to connect local farmers with domestic and international markets.

The festival drew an international presence, with Tomaz Mencin, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to India, attending alongside his spouse, Darja Zorko Mencin. Other notable attendees included Darsing Ronghang, MLA of Howraghat (representing CEM Dr Tuliram Ronghang), Diganta Barah, IPS, Commissioner & Secretary of Tourism and filmmaker and actress Bobbita Sharma. Over a dozen Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), including Jirsong Agro and Pirbi Agro Organic, showcased organic ginger, spices and vegetables. The event also featured technical sessions on organic certification and agro-tourism, highlighting KAAC's vision to promote Karbi Anglong's indigenous agriculture as a sustainable tourism attraction.

NFR installs IP-based surveillance system at NJP Depot

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Jan 9: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has taken another step towards improving safety and operational efficiency with the installation of an IP-based Video Surveillance System (VSS) on the Tower Wagon at New Jalpaiguri (NJP) Depot under the Katihar Division.

The system uses advanced IP cameras to transmit high-quality video through wired and wireless networks, enabling centralized, real-time and round-the-clock monitoring of tower wagon activities, particularly during maintenance and overhead equipment (OHE) works.

The surveillance system will help identify potential hazards, ensure adherence to safety protocols and allow the use of recorded footage for post-event analysis, training and continuous improvement. Its scalable and easy-to-maintain technology is expected to strengthen supervision, safeguard assets and improve workforce management. The initiative reflects NFR's commitment to technological upgradation, enhanced safety standards and more efficient and reliable railway operations across the region.

Tezpur University study flags blood markers for early gallbladder cancer detection

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, Jan 9: Researchers of Tezpur University have identified distinct blood-based metabolic signatures that can differentiate gallbladder cancer cases occurring with and without gallstones, a finding that could support early detection of one of the most aggressive gastrointestinal cancers. The study, led by assistant professor Dr Pankaj Borah and research scholar Dr Chinmoyee Baruah of the Department of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, has been published in the Journal of Proteome Research of the American Chemical Society. The research reports the identification of specific blood metabolites that may serve as potential biomarkers for gallbladder cancer. Gallbladder cancer has a disproportionately high incidence in Northeast India, where it is the third most common cancer. The disease often progresses silently, with most patients diagnosed at advanced stages. Although gallstones are a recognised risk factor, many patients develop the cancer without any history of gallstones, highlighting the need for reliable early diagnostic tools.

Three-day fair showcases SHG products, traditional food and culture Asomi Bhogali Mela begins in Morigaon

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, Jan 9: The Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM), Morigaon, in collaboration with the district administration, on Thursday organised a three-day Asomi Bhogali Mela at the Morigaon Bihutoli ground. The fair commenced on Friday and will conclude on January 11, 2026.

The Asomi Bhogali Mela was inaugurated by Morigaon district commissioner Anamika Tewari in the presence of CEO of MZP Ananta Kumar Gogoi, deputy CEO Abhijit Chakraborty, DIPRO Pinky Devi, district veterinary officer Dr Nilutpal Kakati, district project manager of ASRLM Samir Choudhary, along with BPs, BCs and other officials of ASRLM, Morigaon.

A total of 30 outlets run by self-help groups from different parts of the district are participating in the mela. The fair has drawn significant public response by showcasing ethnic dresses of various castes and tribes, along with traditional Assamese delicacies such as pithas and larus and a range of decorative items prepared by SHGs. Products displayed at the mela



represent five development blocks of the district, namely Bhurbandha, Kapili, Mayong, Laharighat and Bhuragaon. The event aims to promote rural livelihoods, local craftsmanship and traditional food culture while providing market exposure to women-led self-help groups.

Apart from the exhibition and sale of SHG products, the three-day programme will feature a variety of traditional games. Several cultural programmes highlighting Assamese folk traditions are scheduled to be organised on January 11, the concluding day of the mela.

Our Jagiroad Correspondent

adds: The District Mission Management Unit, Morigaon, under the Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission (ASRLM), on Thursday organised the Asomi Bhogali Mela 2026 with a three-day programme at Bihutali, Morigaon. The fair was formally inaugurated by the Morigaon district commissioner Anamika Tewari.

Addressing the gathering, the district commissioner expressed her satisfaction at the wide range of quality products prepared by women entrepreneurs and encouraged them to continue innovating to establish a strong presence in today's competitive market. She lauded the women-led self-help

groups for adopting digital modes of payment, terming it a significant step towards financial empowerment and modern entrepreneurship.

Highlighting the immense agricultural potential of Morigaon district, Tewari said farmers are now successfully cultivating fruits and vegetables that were once uncommon in Assam. Emphasising the strength and resilience of women, she remarked that Assamese women never get tired and that their collective courage and determination have the power to turn the impossible into reality.

On the occasion, the Samridhi catering and lunch service, implemented by women of self-help groups, was also formally launched.

Chief executive officer of the Zila Parishad, Ananta Gogoi in his address, stated that the progress of the state is intrinsically linked to the progress of women and appreciated their proactive participation and leadership in development activities. Earlier, the district project manager of ASRLM, Morigaon, Samir Chowdhury, delivered the opening address of the programme.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

A place for everything, everything in its place.
- Benjamin Franklin

Indo-Bangla relations and cricket

In recent times, India has shown more interest than before in improving diplomatic ties with its Eastern neighbour -Bangladesh. However, the recent ouster of Bangladeshi medium fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman from the coming high profile IPL cricket tournament has angered large number of sports enthusiasts in Bangladesh. The latter are particularly upset that the Indian Cricket Board took the final decision to deprive Rahman from an opportunity to play for the popular Kolkata Knight Riders team sponsored by actor Shahrukh Khan. The Board of Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) disallowed Rahman following angry protests from BJP supporters who hurled abuses against the KKR owner. Almost immediately the Bangladesh cricket authorities, in a mirror reaction to the BCCI's decision, announced that it would not allow any Bangladeshi to play any IPL match in India, for reasons of safety of the players at present. In a sense Bangladeshi authorities copied the BCCI's stand. Normally, the episode involving Mr Rahman would have been reported in some detail, given that (a) both India and Bangladesh take their cricket seriously and (b) of some amount of aggressive "needling" or provoking has somehow become factored in India vs Bangladesh matches, no matter the venue.

But such details would have been strictly carried on the sports page, as back-of-the-newspaper stuff. This has changed drastically. Nowadays, supporters of both teams behave more like typical football fans, rowdy and ruthless towards each other. Bangladeshis nowadays go out of their way to root for Pakistan in any India vs Pakistan sports fixture anywhere in the world. Given this backdrop, it comes as a surprise to find Bangladeshis are also angry with India for treating them at par with Pakistanis. Players from Pakistan have not been allowed by the BCCI to play in the IPL tournament for the last 2/3 years -- an unhappy, and avoidable outcome of Indo-Pak political disputes over the years. Not unexpectedly, now there are reports in most Bangladeshi papers suggesting that the goodwill generated by the unexpected visit of Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar to Bangladesh to convey India's condolences and respects to former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, has been totally offset by the flak New Delhi has copped over the axing of Mustafizur Rahman from the IPL.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board said that this ousting of Mustafizur from KKR after a deal was a political decision reached at the highest level. The reports in New Delhi also mentioned about IPL officials not being consulted on this move by the BCCI. So, this was a political decision taken in a hurry with no relationship with the sports management. Jay Shah, son of India's Home Minister Amit Shah now heads the International Cricket Council (ICC).

India's economic momentum in an age of tariff wars

When US President Donald Trump declared April's "Liberation Day" and announced a sweeping escalation of tariffs on imports from several friendly economies, the global consensus was grim. Economists, market strategists, and multilateral institutions warned of retaliatory trade wars, collapsing markets, and a deep global recession. Equity indices across continents plunged, confidence evaporated, and forecasts uniformly predicted slowing growth, surging inflation, and stagflationary pressures, particularly within the United States itself. Yet, nine months later, the outcomes have confounded conventional wisdom. The US economy posted a striking 4.3 per cent growth rate, while India recorded a robust 8.2 per cent expansion in the second quarter of the current financial year. Far from derailing momentum, the tariff shock has revealed new fault lines in global trade and, more importantly, underscored India's capacity to remain on a fast-growing trajectory despite severe external disruptions.

The epicentre of the trade confrontation was the US-China relationship. Washington initially imposed a staggering 150 per cent tariff on Chinese imports, prompting an equally forceful response from Beijing. China not only mirrored the tariff escalation but weaponised its dominance in rare-earth elements by banning exports of medium and heavy rare earths such as dysprosium, neodymium, samarium, gadolinium, terbium, lutetium, scandium, and yttrium. Although countries like China, Vietnam, Brazil, Russia, and India together hold the largest rare-earth reserves, China controls nearly 90 per cent of global refining and separation capacity. These minerals, shipped from across the world to Chinese processing facilities, are indispensable for manufacturing high-performance magnets made from neodymium, dysprosium, iron, and boron. Such magnets are critical to drones, robots, electric vehicles, missiles, fighter aircraft, and advanced industrial machinery, where high torque, speed, thermal resistance, and precision are non-negotiable.

This strategic chokehold forced Washington to recalibrate. By October, on the sidelines of the APEC summit in Gyeongju, South Korea, President Trump was compelled to negotiate with President Xi Jinping. China agreed to lift its rare-earth export ban universally for one year, while the US relented on restrictions over advanced Nvidia H200-series AI chips, allowing their export to China. The détente restored a degree of mutually advantageous interdependence and ultimately saw US tariffs on Chinese goods reduced to 47 per cent. The episode reinforced a central truth of modern geopolitics: in a deeply integrated global economy, even the most powerful nations face hard constraints when strategic supply chains are disrupted.

Despite the tariff onslaught, China's trade performance remained surprisingly resilient.



As the world's manufacturing hub, Beijing has long run large trade surpluses with major economies, including the US, the European Union, and India. Of its \$380 billion trade surplus, nearly one-third comes from trade with the US alone. Although Chinese exports to the US fell sharply by 29 per cent in November 2025 compared with a year earlier, exports to the EU rose by 15 per cent in the same period. Overall, China's exports to the rest of the world grew by 5.9 per cent, driven by remarkable increases to Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, which expanded by 26 per cent, 14 per cent, and 7 per cent respectively. Much of this resilience stemmed from trans-shipment strategies, whereby goods were rerouted through third countries to bypass punitive tariffs, exposing the porousness of unilateral trade barriers in a globalised system.

India, too, was widely expected to suffer significant collateral damage. Early estimates suggested that Trump's 50 per cent tariff, including a 25 per cent levy on imports linked to Russian energy purchases, could hit nearly 26 per cent of India's exports to the US. In practice, the impact was far milder, closer to 10 per cent. Like China, India adapted by rerouting exports through intermediary economies and recalibrating supply chains. Simultaneously, US importers, anticipating reciprocal tariffs during Trump's campaign, stockpiled inventories at scale. This inventory glut kept import prices lower for several months and diluted inflationary pressures. Crucially, the burden of higher tariffs was distributed unevenly: roughly one-third absorbed by US importers, one-third by Indian exporters through margin compression, and the remaining third passed on to American consumers. As a result, US inflation eased from 3 per cent in October to 2.7 per cent in November, defying dire predictions.

Another major prop to US growth in 2025 has been the artificial intelligence investment boom. America's largest technology firms poured trillions of dollars into building and expanding data centres, high-performance computing clusters, and digital infrastructure. These expenditures boosted GDP through capital formation, but they generated limited employment. Consequently, despite headline growth, US unemployment

climbed from 4 per cent to 4.6 per cent during Trump's second term. This imbalance points to structural fragilities ahead. With AI adoption nearing saturation and trade disruptions persisting under elevated tariff regimes, sustaining similar growth rates appears unlikely. As inventory buffers thin, a greater share of tariff costs will be transmitted to consumers, potentially reigniting inflation and constraining interest-rate cuts.

The political ramifications of these economic undercurrents are already visible. Electoral setbacks for the Republican Party in Georgia, Mississippi, New York's mayoral race, and state and national contests in Virginia and New Jersey suggest mounting voter unease. If growth slows and inflation resurfaces, the Republicans could face defeat in the November 2026 Congressional elections, enabling Democrats to reclaim majorities in both Houses. The US, therefore, confronts a delicate balancing act between protectionism, growth, and political survival.

In contrast, India's economic resilience has been anchored in its structural strengths. A vast domestic market, a thriving services export sector, and strategic trade diplomacy have insulated growth from external shocks. India has moved decisively to diversify supply chains for critical inputs such as rare-earth magnets and key minerals, reducing overdependence on any single source. Free trade agreements with the UK, New Zealand, the UAE, Singapore, and Malaysia have lowered tariffs, expanded market access, and strengthened economic partnerships at a time of global fragmentation.

Domestic policy has also played a pivotal role. Although India faced turbulence from higher US tariffs, record foreign portfolio outflows, and the rupee weakening beyond 91 to the dollar, a calibrated policy mix restored confidence. The Reserve Bank of India's cumulative 125 basis point interest-rate cuts revived credit growth, while the implementation of long-pending labour codes improved industrial flexibility. Tax relief for the middle class and rationalisation of GST slabs boosted disposable incomes and consumption sentiment. Public expenditure on infrastructure remained strong, crowding in private investment, while a favourable mon-

soon supported agricultural output and rural demand.

The scale of fiscal momentum is evident in capital spending figures. By the first half of the fiscal year, 52 per cent of allocated government capital expenditure had already been utilised. Average GDP growth in the first two quarters stood at 8 per cent, with manufacturing and services expanding by 9 per cent. Together, these sectors now contribute nearly 60 per cent of gross value added and close to half of India's exports, underscoring the economy's gradual shift towards higher-value activities. This diversification has made growth less vulnerable to external demand shocks and commodity price volatility.

Looking ahead, India's prospects remain favourable, though not without challenges. Credit transmission remains uneven, as MSMEs and households continue to exercise caution despite lower policy rates. Slowing tax revenues following recent reforms and the risk of resurgent inflation as consumption accelerates warrant close monitoring. Sectors adversely affected by global tariffs, including textiles, jewellery, automobiles, and shrimp exports, require targeted support through tax incentives and credit guarantees to preserve competitiveness and employment.

One of India's most promising growth engines lies in health tourism. Already a \$40 billion industry, medical tourism is projected to reach \$100 billion by 2030. India's appeal lies not in low-cost care alone, but in globally benchmarked treatment delivered at affordable prices. Expertise in cardiac surgery, oncology, organ transplantation, neurosurgery, advanced orthopaedics, and robotic interventions has positioned India as a trusted global medical hub, much as IT services once did in the digital domain. This sector offers significant spillovers in employment, foreign exchange earnings, and soft power.

Parallel to this, India's demographic and educational strengths continue to pay dividends. Alongside China, India is one of the few countries supplying large numbers of STEM graduates to the global workforce, supporting AI development, digital infrastructure, and high-tech manufacturing worldwide. As the world's fourth-largest economy, India is poised to become the third-largest in the coming years. In an era marked by trade wars, geopolitical fragmentation, and volatile capital flows, India's ability to sustain high growth reflects not accidental fortune but adaptive strategy.

Despite formidable headwinds, the evidence suggests that India will continue to grow impressively in 2026 and beyond. While globalisation is being reshaped by tariffs and strategic rivalries, India has demonstrated that resilience, diversification, and domestic demand can transform disruption into opportunity. (The writer can be reached at dipakurmigpltd@gmail.com)

When the Earth Pushes Back

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



India's hills and fragile ecosystems are under visible strain, and the signals are becoming impossible to dismiss. Landslides, flash floods, soil erosion, water scarcity, and rising heat are no longer occasional disruptions. They are appearing with increasing regularity across different regions. What connects these events is not climate alone, but the way development is being pursued.

Across the country, hills are being treated as available land rather than living systems. Mining, road expansion, construction, and real estate projects are often cleared in fragments, each assessed on its own merit. The cumulative ecological impact rarely receives the same attention. Over time, this approach weakens natural structures that once absorbed stress quietly.

The pattern is evident in the Aravalli range, where mining and construction have affected groundwater recharge and drainage. In the Western Ghats, slope cutting and deforestation have increased landslide vulnerability. In the Himalayan belt, aggressive infrastructure projects are destabilising already fragile terrain. Even parts of the Deccan plateau are showing signs of erosion and water stress. These are not isolated developments; they point to a systemic issue.

Keep the Balance

Hills perform multiple functions at once. They regulate local climate, hold soil together, recharge aquifers, and support biodiversity. When one of these functions weakens, the others follow. Development planning, however, often isolates impact. Roads are assessed for traffic benefits. Mining leases for economic return. Construction projects for compliance. The ecological chain connecting these activities is rarely evaluated in full.

Once hills are cut or mined beyond a threshold, recovery becomes difficult. Rainwater runs off instead of soaking into the ground. Rivers carry excess silt. Downstream cities face flooding. Rural areas lose water security. What begins as a local intervention gradually affects regions far beyond the project site. Nature responds to pressure, not paperwork.

Ecological Intelligence

India does not need to choose between growth and conservation. It needs to integrate the two. Environmental clearances must evolve beyond procedural approval. Long-term land stability, water behaviour, and ecological recovery must become central to decision-making. This requires listening to geologists, ecologists, hydrologists, and local communities together, not selectively.

Project design also matters. Slopes can be stabilised instead of cut sharply. Infrastructure can follow natural contours. Mining sites can be scientifically restored. Native vegetation can be protected and replanted alongside construction. Monitoring must continue after approvals, not end with them. Many of these practices are already known. What is missing is consistent enforcement and accountability. Development becomes costly when ecological limits are ignored. Flood repairs, landslide damage, water shortages, and health impacts eventually burden the same economy that development is meant to strengthen.

Recognise the Limits

India's relationship with its land is at a turning point. The choice lies between continued extraction and long-term stewardship. Stewardship does not mean slowing progress unnecessarily. It means recognizing limits and planning within them. It means treating hills as assets that need care, not obstacles to be removed.

Public concern around ecosystem damage is rising across regions. People are connecting environmental degradation with everyday disruptions, climate stress, and declining quality of life. This awareness aligns closely with the thinking behind the BlissEarth Mission, which emphasizes mindful living and responsibility toward the planet. Technology can support this shift through satellite monitoring and transparent data. But tools alone cannot replace intent. The Earth has a natural capacity to heal when given space and time. Forests regenerate. Water tables recover. Soil regains strength. Healing, however, requires restraint. Strong systems are built by working with the land, not by pushing it beyond its limits. Bliss On.

Foreigner myth vs real electoral threats

By: Satyabrata Borah

India's democracy is often hailed as one of the world's greatest achievements, a vibrant tapestry woven from the votes of nearly a billion people. At the heart of this monumental exercise stands the Election Commission of India, an institution that has, over decades, earned a reputation for safeguarding the sanctity of the ballot. Yet, in recent times, particularly with the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, questions have arisen about priorities, processes, and the broader implications for electoral integrity. The Commission's firm stance on excluding foreigners from voter lists is constitutionally sound, but it has sparked a debate that touches on deeper issues of inclusion, trust, and the real threats facing our elections.

The Election Commission was established in 1950, just as independent India was finding its feet. In those early years, conducting elections in a vast, diverse, and largely illiterate nation was no small feat. Literacy rates were low, infrastructure sparse, and logistical challenges immense. But the Commission rose to the occasion, conducting the first general elections in 1951-52 with remarkable success. Over the subsequent decades, it has overseen seventeen Lok Sabha elections and hundreds of state assembly polls, each time expanding the reach of democracy. From introducing the Electronic Voting Machines in the 1980s to make counting faster and reduce booth capturing, to the widespread adoption of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail in recent years for greater transparency, the ECI has innovated continuously. The introduction of photo identity cards in the 1990s helped curb impersonation, while systematic voter education programs have boosted turnout, especially among women and marginalized communities.

This evolution has not been without hurdles. There have been moments of criticism, such as delays in addressing electoral malpractices or perceptions of uneven enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct. Yet, on balance, the Commission has built institutional integrity by treating the franchise as more than a mere formality. It has been a substantive right, one that empowers citizens to shape their destiny. The ECI's efforts to include remote tribes, migrant workers, and displaced populations reflect this commitment. Voter turnout has steadily climbed, crossing 67 per cent in the 2019 general elections, a testament to growing public faith. International observers have often praised India's elections as free and fair, crediting the Commission's impartiality and robustness.

In this context, the current emphasis on purging electoral rolls of potential foreigners merits careful scrutiny. The Constitution is clear: only citizens can vote. Article 326 explicitly restricts the franchise to adult citizens. The Representation of the People Act reinforces this, mandating that voter lists comprise eligible citizens. The ECI, in its recent submissions to the Supreme Court, has underscored this as a core constitutional duty. It argues that allowing even a single non-citizen on the rolls undermines the citizen-centric nature of our democracy. The Special Intensive Revision, initiated in several states and union territories, aims to verify and update rolls intensively, removing duplicates, deceased entries, and suspected ineligible voters.

This process began gaining momentum amid allegations of irregularities in voter lists, particularly in border states or areas with historical migration. Political parties across the spectrum have, at times, raised concerns about infiltrators

influencing elections. The Commission responded by launching the SIR, publishing draft rolls, and inviting claims and objections. In some states, millions of names have been scrutinized, leading to deletions where eligibility could not be verified. Over six crore entries were reportedly removed in initial drafts across multiple regions. The ECI maintains that this is routine housekeeping, amplified to address specific concerns, and not targeted at any community.

However, critics argue that the scale and timing of this revision raise red flags. Door-to-door verifications, demands for additional documents, and tight deadlines have created anxiety among genuine voters, especially the poor, migrants, and minorities who may lack easy access to paperwork. Reports emerged of long-time voters receiving notices questioning their citizenship, forcing them to produce birth certificates or other proofs that many do not possess. In a country where documentation gaps persist despite initiatives like Aadhaar, such requirements can feel exclusionary. The maxim from criminal justice—that it is better for guilty persons to escape than for an innocent one to suffer—finds echo here. No one disputes the need to exclude non-citizens, but if the process risks disenfranchising even a fraction of legitimate voters, it erodes the very trust the ECI has built.

The fear of foreigners "taking over" the electoral process seems exaggerated when viewed against the numbers. India's voter base is massive, and documented cases of large-

struck down. Black money continues to flow, distorting the level playing field. Criminalization of politics remains another stubborn issue. A significant number of lawmakers face serious charges, yet mechanisms to debar them swiftly are limited. Inner-party democracy is waning, with tickets distributed based on winnability rather than ideology or clean records.

Then there is the misuse of state machinery. Transfer of officials, selective enforcement of laws, and allegations of bias in deploying security forces have surfaced periodically. Social media and fake news pose modern threats, spreading disinformation at lightning speed and polarizing voters. Hate speech during campaigns often goes unchecked, deepening societal divides. Voter turnout discrepancies, delays in releasing data, and questions over EVM reliability fuel skepticism in some quarters.

Polarization itself is a growing concern. Elections are increasingly fought on identity lines, with religion, caste, and region weaponized to consolidate vote banks. This not only strains social fabric but also pressures institutions like the ECI to navigate a minefield of accusations from all sides. When every action is viewed through a partisan lens, impartiality becomes harder to demonstrate.

Is the intense focus on foreigner infiltration a genuine priority, or does it serve as a convenient diversion? Some observers suggest the latter, arguing that whipping up paranoia about outsiders invites certain voter groups while overshadowing accountability on governance failures like unemployment, inflation, or agrarian distress. In border areas, migration is a complex reality shaped by history, geography, and economics. Painting it in stark terms of invasion risks alienating communities and stoking unnecessary tension.

The ECI must balance its duty to purify rolls with the imperative of inclusion. Transparency is key: detailed guidelines, extended timelines for objections, and public disclosure of deletion criteria would build confidence. Collaboration with civil society and political parties in verification drives could mitigate fears of targeting. Technology, like linking Aadhaar for de-duplication while protecting privacy, offers tools to streamline without hardship.

Ultimately, the strength of India's democracy lies in its inclusivity. The ECI's legacy is one of expanding the vote—from universal adult suffrage in 1950, abolishing separate electorates, to enabling service voters and overseas Indians. Occasional slippages have been corrected through judicial interventions and internal reforms. The current controversy is a test of that resilience.

As India prepares for future elections, the Commission would do well to refocus on holistic integrity. Strengthening enforcement against money and muscle power, mandating real-time disclosure of donations, and fostering voter education on digital literacy could yield greater dividends. Addressing booth-level discrepancies and ensuring seamless EVM-VVPAT reconciliation would silence doubters.

Democracy thrives when citizens feel empowered, not anxious about their right to vote. The fear of foreigners should not overshadow the real work of making elections truly representative. By prioritizing substantive threats and upholding inclusion, the ECI can continue its proud tradition of guarding India's democratic soul. Our elections are not just about numbers on a roll; they are about the voice of every citizen shaping the nation's future. Let us protect that voice jealously, without letting shadows distract from the light.



scale infiltration affecting outcomes are rare. Border security, citizenship laws like the Citizenship Amendment Act, and the National Register of Citizens in certain states already address immigration concerns. Yet, the narrative of an external threat has gained traction, often amplified in political discourse. This phantom fear distracts from more pressing, tangible challenges to electoral integrity.

Consider money power, for instance. Despite spending limits, elections have become increasingly expensive. Candidates and parties pour resources into campaigns, with unaccounted cash allegedly playing a role in influencing voters. Electoral bonds, introduced to bring transparency, faced criticism for anonymity favoring ruling parties before being

The future of jobs in India: employers seek to boost tech talent to drive AI and digital growth

By: Ricky Li, Ian Shine

When Indian prime minister Narendra Modi began his third term in June 2024, he set out an ambitious tech agenda to help make the country a digital leader. This included the IndiaAI Mission and programmes to boost skills in areas from cybersecurity to data management.

He will hope that as well as attracting new talent to these areas, it will encourage existing talent to stay. Around 18 million people a year currently leave the country to find work – close to double the number leaving any other nation – and it is hitting the tech sector hard, with a third of top graduates from the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology among those emigrating.

This is creating a talent gap that the government must tackle to accelerate its digital drive. Skill India Digital Hub is just one example of how the country is trying to do this, by promoting and providing “continuous learning” in areas such as AI, machine learning and automation.

Nationwide initiatives such as this are also aiming to boost workforce participation by traditionally underrepresented groups such as women (around a third of whom work, compared with three-quarters of men in India and about 50% of women globally) to support emerging employment hotspots.

This is part of why 67% of companies operating in India expect to tap into “diverse talent pools” to

fill the roles they have available over the coming years, far above the global average of 47%, according to the World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs Report 2025.

Some of this diversity will come from overseas, including in the case of C-suite jobs, and some will come from employers removing degree requirements and moving towards skills-based hiring. Around 30% of companies in India plan to take the latter approach, compared with 19% globally, with an expected rise in apprenticeship programmes in the semiconductor sector in particular.

What does the future of work look like in India? It will see the country building on its strong IT sector by doubling down on digital. Its fastest-growing jobs are all expected to come in technology-related roles, with specialists in big data, AI and machine learning and security management all likely to be in high demand.

But a surge in upskilling and reskilling will be needed to make that happen, and unlike in the US and other Western countries, corporate sponsorship is expected to play a significant role in doing so, particularly around generative AI.

India’s key labour-market trends

According to the World Economic Forum’s Executive Opinion Survey, India falls behind when it comes to the “ease of finding skilled employees in the local labour market” and “filling vacancies by hiring foreign labour”,

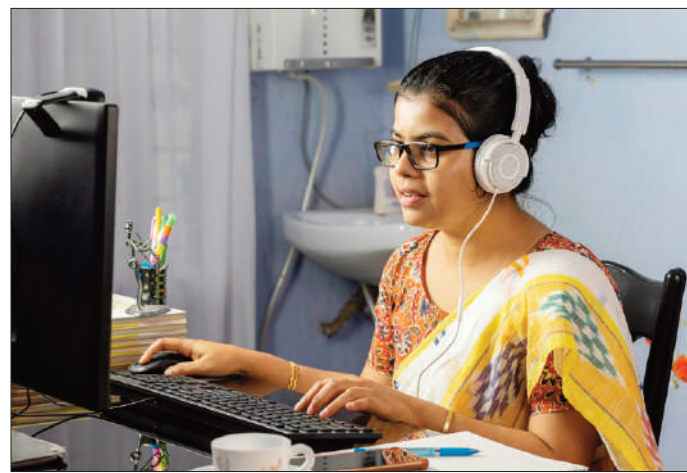
scoring lower than the average for its income group and region – particularly in the case of finding skilled employees. Both are ranked at 3 out of 7, where 1 is the lowest possible score.

But the business landscape is transforming, with organizations citing three leading drivers of expected change by 2030: increased digital access, climate-mitigation efforts and geopolitical tensions.

The first two of these trends are driving heavy investment in AI, robotics and autonomous systems, as well as in energy technologies. Employers in India expect to outpace global adoption of certain technologies, with 35% believing that semiconductors and computing technologies will transform their operations this decade, while 21% see quantum computing and encryption as leading catalysts for change.

But to achieve this change, India will need far more of the types of talent that employers currently feel they lack – a gap they believe is slowing their ability to embrace new technologies. Around 63 in every 100 Indian workers will require training by 2030, according to the Future of Jobs Report, although 12 in every 100 are unlikely to be able to upskill, translating into more than 70 million workers that may not gain the training they need in the next five years.

In terms of desired public policies to improve the availability of relevant talent, India is broadly in line with global averages for



funding and providing reskilling and upskilling opportunities, and the government is partnering with tech giants including Microsoft and Intel to launch training programmes in areas such as AI skills.

But with such strong appetite among businesses to move forward in AI and other digital realms, companies are increasingly taking it upon themselves to cultivate the skills they need, with almost 9 in 10 focusing on offering online learning platforms as part of a focus on career development, according to LinkedIn research.

At the same time, the Future of Jobs Report shows surging demand for people with an aptitude for analytical and creative thinking, as well as a strong focus on leadership skills along with resilience, flexibility and agility. This tallies with some of the offer-

ings at home.

“India today stands at the confluence of three powerful forces – demographic advantage, digital transformation and a deep developmental commitment,” says Shri Jayant Chaudhary, the country’s Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, as well as Minister of State for Education. “With the world’s largest youth population and a vibrant skilling ecosystem, we are uniquely positioned to become the skill capital of the world. The India Skills Accelerator is not just a platform for dialogue about this issue, but a catalyst for systemic transformation, anchored in data and shared accountability to create innovation and targeted solutions.”

What’s next for India?

The public and private sectors need to continue their strong work to enhance tech skills among the population, embedding this not just within the workforce but within educational institutions as early an age as possible.

“The National Education Policy has already initiated transformative changes – promoting flexibility, vocational pathways and digital skilling”, says Dr Sukanta Majumdar, Minister of State for Education and Development in India’s north-eastern region. “Our federal model of implementation, involving both central and state governments, can serve as a valuable model for others.”

Retaining talent once it has been trained is the next step, and salaries

and career opportunities will be a key part of that. Wages are growing in India, but not as fast as the global average, with 43% of firms projecting growth through to 2030, versus a global average of 52%, which could be a missed opportunity in the country.

Job prospects will depend directly on companies’ ability to hold on to talent. If they are able to retain skilled staff, this will power progress in areas such as AI, semiconductors, big data and computing, and these same companies will then expand and create new roles.

Preparing people for the jobs of tomorrow is a primary focus of the World Economic Forum’s Reskilling Revolution, which brings together businesses, governments and civil society to address the growing need to transform education, skills and learning in order to meet the demands of our rapidly changing world.

There is also increasing demand for India to bring in more foreign workers, with 34% of companies wanting to see new immigration policies, compared with 26% worldwide. This is clearly seen as one of the quickest ways to close the talent gap that threatens to hold businesses back, and given the lower wages India offers than the US and Western Europe, turning to elsewhere in Asia, as well as Africa and parts of the Middle East, may offer its best bet, with attractive visa policies likely to help. (Courtesy- World Economic Forum)

Indian Army SSC Officer Recruitment 2026 – 379 Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 21/02/2024.

Indian Army has released two employment notifications for the recruitment of 379 Short Service Commission (SSC) Officer posts for 67th SSC (Tech-Men) & 67th SSC (Tech-Women) – Oct 2026 at Pre-Commissioning Training Academy (PCTA). Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here .

Indian Army SSC Officer Recruitment 2026
Name of post: SSC Officer (Men & Women)
No of posts: 379 posts

Vacancy details:

SSC(Tech)-67 Men: 350 posts

SSC(Tech)-67 Women: 29 posts

Nationality: A candidate must either be :- (i) A citizen of India, or (ii) a subject of Nepal, or (iii) a person of Indian origin who has migrated from Pakistan, Burma, Sri Lanka and East African countries of Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Zaire and Ethiopia and Vietnam with the intention of permanently settling in India, provided that a candidate belonging to categories (ii) and (iii) above shall be a person in whose favour a certificate of eligibility has been issued by Government of India. Certificate of eligibility will however not be necessary in the case of candidates who are Gorkha subjects of Nepal. A candidate in whose case a certificate of eligibility is necessary, will attach such certificate alongwith the application.

Age Limit: 20 to 27 Years as on 01 Oct 2026 (Candidates born between 01 Oct 1999 and 30 Sep 2006, both days inclusive).

Educational Qualification:

Candidates who have passed the requisite Engineering Degree course or are in the final year of Engineering Degree course are eligible to apply.

Candidates studying in the final year of Engineering degree course should be able to submit proof of passing Engineering Degree Examination alongwith mark-sheets of all semesters/years by 01 OCT 2024 and produce the Engineering Degree Certificate within 12 weeks from the date of commencement of training at Pre-Commissioning Training Academy (PCTA). Such candidates will be inducted on Additional Bond Basis for recovery of the cost of training at Pre-Commissioning Training Academy (PCTA) as notified from time to time as well as stipend and pay & allowances paid, in case they fail to produce the requisite degree certificate.

How to Apply for Indian Army Recruitment?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for Army Recruitment by visiting at official recruitment portal of Indian Army. They may follow below mentioned steps .

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on Online Application Form link .

A new webpage will be opened.

Enter all your personal and educational details as required .

Upload your passport sized photograph and signature and other required documents.

At the end click on submit button .

Don't forget to take a print of submitted application form .

Important Dates of Indian Army Recruitment 2026

Starting date of online application submission: 6th January 2026

Last date of online application submission: 4th February 2026

NRL Recruitment 2026 – 2 Asstt. Accounts Officer & Legal Officer Posts

Last Date: 28/01/2026.

Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 2 Asstt. Accounts Officer & Legal Officer Posts. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

NRL Recruitment 2026

1. Assistant Accounts Officer

No of posts: 1, SC

Pay: Rs 40000 to 140,000

Age Limit: 37 years

Essential Qualification:

i) CA (Inter)/ CMA (Inter) and

ii) Bachelor's degree in any subject with minimum 60% marks.

Experience: 3 years of post qualification experience.

2. Officer (Legal)

No of posts: 1, ST

Pay: Rs 50000 to 160,000

Age Limit: 37 years

Essential Qualification: 3 years LLB or 5 years integrated Law/ LLB course with not less than 60% marks or equivalent CGPA

i) CA (Inter)/ CMA (Inter) and

ii) Bachelor's degree in any subject with minimum 60% marks.

Experience: 3 years of post qualification experience.

How to Apply for NRL Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy by visiting at official online portal of NRL. They may follow below mentioned steps .

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on Online Application Form link .

A new webpage will be opened.

Enter all your personal and educational details as required .

Upload your passport sized photograph and signature and other required documents.

At the end click on submit button .

Don't forget to take a print of submitted application form .

Important Dates of Numaligarh Refinery Limited Recruitment 2026

Starting date of submission of online application: 8th January 2026, 10:00 hrs

Last date of Submission of online application: 28th January 2026, 23:59 hrs

Assam Special TET 2026 – LP/ UP TET Exam, Online Apply

Last date : 07/02/2026

Govt. of Assam has released the official notification of Special Assam Teacher Eligibility Test (TET)-2026 for Lower Primary and Upper Primary level for the Bodo, Garo, Manipuri and Hmar medium as per the guidelines laid down by NCTE. Interested and eligible candidates having permanent residence of Assam may appear in Paper I (Lower Primary) and Paper II (Upper Primary) of Special TET-2026.

The qualified candidates of the Special Assam TET-2026 will be eligible to participate in the recruitment process for the teacher post of elementary level schools provided they have other academic and professional qualification as per NCTE norms.

Assam Special TET Details

Name of exam: Special Assam Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) – 2026

Name of authority: State Level Empowered Committee, TET, Govt. of Assam

Name of department: Department of Education, Government of Assam

Type of exam: Written Exam (OMR)

Date of exam: Not announced

Duration of exam: 2 Hours 30 Minutes for each Paper. An additional 20 minutes time (per hour) will be there for visually impaired candidates.

No of papers: 2 Papers

Paper-I: Lower Primary (LP)

Paper-II: Upper Primary (UP)

Type of questions: Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

No of questions: 150 MCQs for each Paper.

Negative marking: There is no negative marking .

Medium of exam: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo and English

Validity of TET certificate: TET Certificate has a lifetime validity.

Qualifying marks: A candidate is required to score 60% i.e. 90 marks out of 150 to qualify the Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET). However, for SC/ST (Hills)/ ST (Plain)/ OBC/MOBC/ PWD (PH), there will be a relaxation of 5%. Thus, for these candidates, qualifying marks will be 83 out of 150 i.e. 55%.

Mode of application: Online

Helpline: 042303631 (10 A.M. to 5 P.M.) (Monday to Saturday)

Eligibility Criteria of Assam TET

Residency: Candidate must be a permanent resident of the State of Assam.

Educational Qualification: Candidate must have minimum academic and professional qualification as per NCTE norms as follows:

Lower Primary TET (Classes I to V)

Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 2-year Diploma in Elementary Education (by whatever name known)

OR

Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 4-year Bachelor of Elementary Education (B. El.Ed.)

OR

Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 2-year Diploma in Education (Special Education)

OR

Graduation and two year Diploma in Elementary Education (by whatever name known)

Upper Primary TET (Classes VI to VIII)

Graduation and 2-year Diploma in Elementary Education (by whatever name known)

OR

At least 50% marks in Graduation and B. Ed.

OR

At least 55% marks in Post Graduation or equivalent grade and three year integrated B.Ed.-M.Ed. OR

Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 4-year Bachelor in Elementary Education (B. El. Ed.)

OR

Senior Secondary (or its equivalent) with at least 50% marks and 4-year B.A./B. Sc. Ed. OR

B.A. Ed/B. Sc. Ed. OR

Graduation with at least 50% marks and 1-year B. Ed.(Special Education)

Note: Minimum percentage of marks in graduation shall not be applicable to those incumbents who had already taken admission to the Bachelor of Education or Bachelor of Elementary Education or equivalent course prior to the 29 July, 2011.

Relaxation: Relaxation up to 5% in the academic marks in HSSLC or Graduation shall be applicable for candidates belonging to SC/ST/OBC/MOBC/PWD(PH) to appear in Special Assam TET- 2026 (The degree of handicap in case of PH candidates should be minimum 40% and to be certified by the competent authority) both for Paper-I (LP Level) and Paper-II (UP Level).

Examination Fee of Assam Special TET

Candidates need to pay a specific amount of money as examination fee to complete the online application process. Examination fee needs to paid online. Details regarding this are provided below-

Category	Paper I	Paper 2
General	Rs.550/-	Rs.550/-
SC/ST	Rs.450/-	Rs.450/-
OBC/ MOBC	Rs.450/-	Rs.450/-
PWD (PH)	Rs.300/-	Rs.300/-

How to Apply for Assam TET Exam?

Interested and eligible candidates who want to pursue their career in the field of education may apply for Assam Special TET 2026 online. They may follow below mentioned steps to apply online.

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section.

Click on Online Application Form link.

A new web page will be opened, click on Registration button.

Read all the instructions given on the webpage and click on Next button.

Enter all your personal and educational details as required.

Upload your passport sized photograph and signature.

Pay the examination fee as per your category and at the end click on submit button.

Don't forget to take a print of submitted application form.

Important Dates of Assam Special TET 2026

Starting date of online application: 7th January 2026

Last date of online application: 7th February 2026

Issue of E-Admit Card: To be updated

Date of Assam Special TET Exam: To be updated

Assam Agriculture Recruitment 2025 – Download Admit Card for 489 Posts

Last Date: 31/12/2025.

Assam Agricultural University (AAU) has released a recruitment notification for the recruitment of 489 Accountant, Programmer, Manager & Other Posts under the CSS-ATMA (Agriculture Extension), Directorate of Agriculture, Assam on contractual basis. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Assam Agriculture Recruitment 2025

1. Deputy Project Director

No of posts: 22 posts

Salary: ₹52,000 per month

Educational Qualification: Post Graduate in Agriculture/Allied Sector

Experience: Minimum 5 years of managerial or supervisory experience

2. Accountant cum Clerk

No of posts: 18 posts

Salary: ₹30,000 per month

Educational Qualification: B.Com

Experience: Minimum 3 years of accountancy experience

3. Computer Programmer

No of posts: 19 posts

Salary: ₹25,000 per month

Educational Qualification: B.Tech in Computer Science or MCA

Experience: 1 year experience (B.Tech) / 2 years (MCA)

4. Block Technology Manager (BTM)

No of posts: 103 posts

Salary: ₹30,000 per month

Educational Qualification: Post Graduate in Agriculture & Allied Sector with

Computer Skills OR Agri Graduate with 5 years of experience as ATM

Experience: Minimum 2 years field experience.

5. Assistant Technology Manager (ATM)

No of posts: 327 posts

Salary: ₹25,000 per month

Educational Qualification: Graduate/Post Graduate in Agriculture/Allied Sector.

Experience: Minimum 1 year experience.

Other Criteria of Assam Agriculture Recruitment

Nationality: The candidate must be an Indian citizenship.

Age Limit:

Deputy Project Director, Accountant cum Clerk & Computer Programmer: 21 to 40 years as on 01/01/2025.

Block Technology Manager & Assistant Technology Manager: 45 years as on 01/01/2025.

Application Fee: Category-wise application fee is as under.

General: ₹200

Reserved Category: ₹100

BPL & PWD Candidates: Nil

How to Apply for Agriculture Department Recruitment?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy through online mode by visiting official AAU Online Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for Assam Agriculture Recruitment.

Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process..

In the next stage, click on "Online Application Form" Link and Login.

Fill your all personal and educational details and upload necessary documents.

At the end, pay the application fee as per your category and submit the form.

Don't forget to take a print out of the application form .

Important Dates of Agriculture Vacancy 2025

Starting date of submission of online application: 11th December 2025

Last date of submission of online application: 31st December 2025

Date of release of admit card: 10th January 2026

'Calibrated capitulation'**Cong claims govt may lift curbs on Chinese firms bidding for contracts**

NEW DELHI, Jan 9: The Congress on Friday cited a media report to claim that the Modi government is now proposing to lift five-year-old curbs on Chinese companies bidding for Indian government contracts and claimed that this is "nothing short of a calibrated capitulation" to Chinese aggression.

The opposition party also demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi must explain his government's sudden "U-turns" on China policy during the forthcoming Budget session of Parliament.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge attacked the government over the issue.

"Main desh nahi jhukne doonga". What is happening today is the exact opposite of that. Two recent examples -- The ban on Chinese companies, in place for 5 years, is being lifted. The sacrifice of our brave Indian soldiers in Galwan was insulted by Modi ji when he gave China a CLEAN CHIT," Kharge said in a post in Hindi on X.

"Now, by rolling out the 'red carpet' for Chinese companies, he is showing just how deep the 'red color' runs in his 'red eye'," Kharge said in an apparent swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

US President Trump is commenting daily on India's Russian oil exports but Prime Minister Modi is silent and "averting his gaze", the Congress chief said.

"The 'sir' thing looks more like 'surrender'. For us, foreign policy means prioritizing national interest above all. But the Modi government has dealt a severe blow to our Non-Aligned and Strategic Autonomy foreign policy," he said.

"The Modi government's foreign policy swings like a wild pendulum—now this way, now that way—and the people of India are bearing the cost of it," Kharge said.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared on X a media report which claimed that India's finance ministry plans to scrap five-year-old restrictions on Chinese firms bidding for government contracts.

There was no immediate response from the government on the claims.

"Eight months after China gave full military backing (and fronting) to Pakistan during Operation Sindoor and was described by Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Rahul R Singh as one of India's 'adversaries', the Modi government is now proposing to lift five-year-old curbs on Chinese companies bidding for Indian government contracts," Ramesh said on X.

This move follows earlier decisions allowing Chinese firms to invest in India's electronics sector, liberally granting visas to Chinese workers, and comes amid a continuing rise in India's record trade deficit with China, he said.

The Congress leader claimed that it is part of a broader set of recommendations from NITI Aayog aimed at removing restrictions on Chinese trade and investment in India entirely.

"This is nothing short of a calibrated capitulation to Chinese aggression, born out of the Prime Minister's own weakness - as demonstrated most shamefully by his public clean chit to China on June 19, 2020," Ramesh said.

"This humiliating kowtowing is taking place even as Indian troops are denied access to traditional patrolling areas, China maintains its heavy military presence in eastern Ladakh, continues to provoke on Arunachal Pradesh, and builds the Medog dam on the Brahmaputra - less than a year after giving hyperactive support to Pakistan's attacks on India," the Congress leader said.

The prime minister's "evasions" have gone on far too long, Ramesh said and demanded that he must now explain his government's sudden "U-turns on China policy during the forthcoming Budget session of Parliament -- which has for very long been denied an opportunity to discuss and debate the challenges and threats from China". (PTI)

TMC MPs stage protest outside Union Home Ministry office**MPs allege govt using ED for electoral goals**

NEW DELHI, Jan 9: Several Trinamool Congress MPs were detained while staging a protest outside the Home Ministry's office here on Friday against alleged misuse of probe agencies by the Centre. The Delhi Police evicted the protesters from the spot, lifting them up and dragging the parliamentarians to clear the area.

The protest came a day after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) carried out raids at the office of political consultancy firm I-PAC and the residence of its chief in connection with a coal smuggling case.

Its officials faced obstructions during the raids on Thursday, with the ED claiming that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee entered the premises and took away "key" evidence related to the probe.

A Delhi Police officer said the MPs were detained and taken to Parliament Street Police Station, as protests are not permitted outside the Home Ministry's office. The MPs were released by the police around 3 pm.

Holding placards and raising slogans alleging misuse of the ED, MPs Derek O'Brien, Satabdi Roy, Mahua Moitra, Bapi Mandal, Saket Gokhale, Pratima Mondal, Kirti Azad and Sharmila Sarkar tried to

enter the Kartavya Bhavan, which houses the Home Ministry.

The MPs were stopped from entering the building, after which they staged a protest at the gate, disregarding requests made by the police to vacate the area. They were then forcefully evicted from the spot.

Visuals of O'Brien, Moitra, Haladar, Roy, and Gokhale being physically picked, pushed and shoved in a bus flooded social media, with several of the clips being shared by the TMC on its official X handle.

"What kind of arrogance is this, Amit Shah? Are you now using your Delhi Police to assault elected representatives just to crush democracy? Is this how dissent is silenced in your India?" the TMC charged in a post on X.

"Admit it, you are rattled! First, the shameless misuse of the ED. Now, an attack on the peaceful dhama of our eight MPs. This desperation exposes your fear. You may try to choke democracy, but Bengal will not be cowed. Shame on you and your police!" the ruling party in poll-bound West Bengal said.

The MPs also shared visuals from the bus, in which they were seen raising slogans against the



Union government.

Moitra also took a dig at Union Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya's faux pas moment when he recently mispronounced the names of two Kolkata-based football clubs.

Talking to the media at the Parliament Street Police station, Moitra accused the government of "using" the ED to "steal" their party's election strategy.

"Never before in a democracy has a government made ED its agent to steal information and election strategy from our political consultant. They are claiming there was a seven-to-10-year-old scam. You could not probe it all this time; now you are remembering it on the

attacks only the opposition," he said, while adding that Narayan Rane, Ajit Pawar and Himanta Biswa Sarma were branded as corrupt by ruling leaders, but no action was taken against them.

In a post on X, Rajya Sabha MP Gokhale said, "After the failure of SIR, the BJP has resorted to its old tactic of using pliant central agencies". "Today, we eight MPs of TMC were peacefully protesting outside Amit Shah's office in Delhi. We were dragged, assaulted, and forcibly arrested. This is how scared Amit Shah is -- pulling MPs by their hair and dragging them on the floor," he said, sharing a video of the MPs being evicted by police.

Reacting to the police action, TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee took to X to say, "Democracy is punished. Criminals are rewarded. Agencies are weaponised. Elections are manipulated. Jail the protesters. Bail the rapists. This is BJP's version of New India."

"Even if the rest of the country is forced to surrender, Bengal will resist. We will fight you tooth and nail and defeat you, no matter how much force you unleash," the Lok Sabha MP from Diamond Harbour said. (PTI)

Budget session likely from Jan 28; Budget on Feb 1

NEW DELHI, Jan 9: The Budget session of Parliament is likely to commence on January 28 and the Union Budget is set to be tabled on February 1, a Sunday. Officials, citing the tentative schedule finalised by the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, said on Friday that President Droupadi Murmu will address a joint sitting of the two Houses on January 28. The customary address of the President takes place on the first day of the first Parliament session of the year. The two Houses will not meet on January 29 due to the Beating Retreat ceremony. Parliament will sit on January 30 when the Economic Survey is likely to be tabled.

On January 31, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha will not meet. The Union Budget is set to be tabled on February 1, a Sunday. After discussions on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address and Union Budget, Parliament will adjourn for a near month-long recess on February 13.

Parliament will reconvene on March 9 and the session will conclude on April 2, a Thursday.

Usually Parliament is adjourned on a Friday but keeping in mind Good Friday on April 3 and the subsequent weekend, the session could conclude on April 2, officials said. The recess in the Budget session helps department-related standing committees to examine demands for grants of various Union ministries and departments. (PTI)

Over ₹ 34,000 crore investment made in UP defence corridor nodes: Rajnath

LUCKNOW, Jan 9: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a major hub of defence manufacturing, with investments of over ₹ 34,000 crore already made across six nodes of the state's defence corridor, marking a decisive shift towards India's self-reliance in weapons and ammunition production.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating Ashok Leyland's electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing plant here, Singh said India is no longer dependent on other countries for weapons, missiles or defence equipment.

These are now being manufactured domestically, with a significant portion originating from Uttar Pradesh.

The event was arrested by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Heavy Industries Minister HD

Kumaraswamy.

Singh said the defence corridor, spread across Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Agra, Aligarh and Chitrakoot, is producing arms, ammunition and components for fighter aircraft, with major firms setting up manufacturing units in the state.

"I have been told that investments worth around ₹ 34,000 crore have been made in these defence corridor nodes," he said.

Referring to the Uttar Pradesh Aerospace and Defence Unit and Employment Promotion Policy, Singh, the Member of Parliament from Lucknow, said the state is being developed as a major centre for large-scale defence production.

He said the policy aims to attract massive investment over the next five years and create employment opportunities for

lakhs of youth, ensuring that people find jobs locally without being forced to migrate outside the state.

Singh said a BrahMos Aerospace factory has already been set up in Lucknow, manufacturing BrahMos missiles, the effectiveness of which was demonstrated during Operation Sindoor.

He credited Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for facilitating land allotment and ensuring timely project clearances, saying the "double-engine" government has accelerated development through clear and industry-friendly policies.

He noted that Uttar Pradesh, once labelled a "BIMARU" state hindered by crime and poor governance, is now a growth engine, with new industries being set up regularly and the state now recognised for its contribution to national development. (PTI)

'Next gen shield against terrorism'**Amit Shah inaugurates NSG's national IED data platform**

GURUGRAM, Jan 9: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a national digital IED data management platform that will act as "next generation security shield against terrorism" and a comprehensive deterrence against all forms of bombings that take place in the country.

The national IED data management system (NIDMS) has been developed by the federal counter-terrorist commando force NSG with the help of Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) in Gandhinagar, IIT-Delhi, National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Indian cyber crime coordination centre (I4C).

It is armed with artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning tools for "accurately" studying all types of bombings.

Improvised explosive device (IED) blasts in the country have been categorised as one of the "most challenging" threats in the internal security domain, killing thousands of civilians and security personnel, and critically injuring many others over the years.

Shah inaugurated the facility through a video conferencing link that connected the platform, housed at the National Security Guard (NSG) garrison in Manesar here.

The minister said the NIDMS will act as a "shield" and "national asset"



against terrorist incidents, as it will provide a "comprehensive" data to the police, various investigative agencies, state Anti-Terrorist Squads, federal agencies like the NIA and central forces to analyse the patterns and modus operandi of various types of bombings.

In his address, Shah said, this platform will act as a "one nation one data repository" for IED blasts, help to speed up prosecution by adding quality to the forensic evidence gathered and enhance inter-agency coordination.

NSG Director General (DG) Brighu Srinivasan said the NIDMS is a "real-time" exchange of information platform, for government agencies in the anti-terrorism and counter-insurgency domain, that will collect, analyse and disseminate data on all bombing incidents of the country.

The platform is "unique" as during its

preparatory stage, 26 "friendly" countries were approached and they did not have such a facility, he said.

According to NSG, the database has 800 users (various agencies) and will also be able to capture 'signature linkages' among different bomb blast incidents, conduct post-blast investigation and can also perform "predictive" analysis to thwart certain bombing incidents.

The ambitious project has been in the works for some time and is part of the NSG's National Bomb Data Centre (NBDC), which analyses all types of bombings that occur in the country, apart from major explosions that take place globally.

Shah also said that once the newly commissioned NSG hub in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, is operational, its commandos will be able to reach any part of the country within 1 to 1.5 hours. The NSG has five active hubs in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata.

The NBDC, established in the year 2000, has a database of all bombings that took place in the country since 1999.

Raised in 1984, the NSG's 'black cat' commandos are tasked to undertake specific counter-terrorist and counter-hijack operations besides protecting select high-risk VIPs. (PTI)

**GOVT OF ASSAM
DIRECTORATE CUM ADDITIONAL
CHIEF ENGINEER PWD (R&B), ASSAM, DIPHU**

No. ACEH/CS/PMC/80/2025-26/01

Date: 08.01.2026.

PRESS NOTICE (E-PROCUREMENT)

The Director Cum Additional Chief Engineer, PWD (R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu on behalf of Governor of Assam invites online tender on EPC Mode-1 of contractors registered under APWD (Bldg). in appropriate category for the following work. Details of the bids may be seen at e-procurement portal website www.assamtenders.gov.in. and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 12.01.2026 to 27.01.2026

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approx. value of work (In Rs.)	Bid security	Cost of Bid Document	Period of Completion	Class of Bidder
1.	"Consulting Service for Project Management Consultancy Seevice for the" Constructin of Executive Member Residential Bungalow & MAC Hostel at Council Colony, Diphu in Karbi Anglong District (EPC Mode-1	1,98,49,742.00	2% for General and 1% for Reserved category	10,000.00	30 (Thirty) months	Class-1 (A,B & C)

The Bidders must be registered with the E-tendering system (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam (Website :<http://assamtenders.gov.in>).

The undersigned reserves the right to accept/reject any or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-

Director Cum Additional Chief Engineer,
PWD (R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu.

MemoNo. ACEH/CS/PMC/80/2025-26/01-(A)

Date:08.01.2026.

Sl. No.	Name of works	Estimate Amount	Tender Value	Time of completion
1	Const./Development of Burial Ground (Kabarsthan) at Panigaon under Nangal Bhangra VCDC.	Rs. 19,99,500/-	Rs. 19,99,500/-	6 month

Details NIT may be seen in all working days during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Tender papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized representatives from 26/12/2025 to 17/01/2026 in the office of the undersigned on payment of .03% cost of tender paper in the form of demand draft from any Nationalized Bank duly pledged in favour of the Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar, Payable at Kokrajhar.

Sd/-
Block Development Officer,
Sidli-Chirang Dev. Block, Sidli

IPR(BTC)/C/2025-26/3637

Public Investment Board nod to Kamala project major boost to clean energy: Arunachal Deputy CM

ITANAGAR, Jan 9: Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein has said the approval of the 1,720 MW Kamala hydroelectric project by the Public Investment Board (PIB) marks a significant milestone for the state as well as for India's clean energy transition.

Calling it a landmark development, Mein said the project, to be jointly implemented by NHPC and the state government will generate 6,869.92 million units of green energy annually, making a meaningful contribution to the country's renewable energy capacity and its net zero target of 2070.

"This landmark project will contribute meaningfully to India's energy transition and the Net Zero target of 2070," the deputy chief minister said in a social media post on Thursday.

Highlighting the broader benefits, Mein said the flood moderation component of the storage-based project would play a crucial role in providing relief to the Brahmaputra Valley, thereby strengthening climate resilience and disaster management efforts in the region.

"The Kamala hydroelectric project reflects our collective commitment to sustainable development, energy security and inclusive growth



in Arunachal Pradesh," he said.

Mein, who also holds the power and hydropower portfolios, thanked the Centre, NHPC and all stakeholders for their support and cooperation in taking the project forward.

The PIB on Thursday approved an expendi-

ture of ₹ 26,069.50 crore for the proposed project.

The Kamala hydroelectric project is a storage-based scheme with a flood moderation component, proposed on the Kamala River (a major tributary of the Subansiri River), located in Kamle, Kra Daadi and Kurung Kumey districts of the northeastern state, officials said here.

The project involves the construction of a 216-metre high concrete gravity dam and an underground powerhouse with a scheduled completion period of 8 years.

The project is proposed to be financed with a debt-equity ratio of 70:30, supported by government of India grants for enabling infrastructure (₹ 1,340 crore) and flood moderation component (₹ 4,743.98 crore), along with 100 per cent SGST reimbursement by the state government.

Key benefits from the project include flood moderation in the Brahmaputra basin, 12 per cent free power to Arunachal Pradesh, yielding about ₹ 486 crore annually, contribution of ₹ 40 crore per year to local area development fund (LADF). (PTI)

District NCORD calls for stronger community action against drug menace

Officials stress supervision of rehabilitation centres, awareness drives and inter-departmental coordination



HT Correspondent

YUPIA, Jan 9: A District Level NCORD meeting was held at the DC Conference Hall, Yupia on Friday under the chairmanship of Dani Rikang, Assistant Commissioner. During the meeting, the directives issued in the previous NCORD meeting held on 23rd December 2025 were discussed in detail. The focus of the deliberations was on regular visits and supervision of Rehabilitation Centres, conducting intensive awareness programmes and ensuring monthly inspections of shops and gumtis located near school premises.

Addressing the meeting, Assistant Commissioner Dani Rikang expressed hope that coordinated inter-sectoral and multi-sectoral efforts by all concerned departments would lead to better outcomes in

curbing the drug menace. She called upon all stakeholders to extend their support and cooperation in the collective fight against drug abuse.

Speaking on the occasion, Phasang Simi, DySP, emphasised the importance of community policing and public cooperation in curbing the drug menace. He highlighted the crucial role of parents in preventing substance abuse and urged them to remain proactive and continuously monitor their children's activities.

Inspector Michi Yania informed the house that 17 drug-related cases were registered in 2025 alone, which is the highest number of cases recorded since the formation of Papum Pare district in 1992. She further stated that 26 persons were arrested during the

year and expressed hope that the same momentum would be maintained in 2026.

A representative from the New Hope Rehabilitation Centre informed the members that nearly 90% of drug users admitted to the centre are either Hepatitis C or HIV positive. He pointed out that the lack of testing kits and adequate medical facilities at the rehabilitation centre poses serious challenges. Frequent movement of inmates outside the centre for medical check-ups and medicines also increases the risk of inmates escaping. He requested the district administration and the NCORD committee to take up the matter at higher levels for necessary intervention.

Other decisions taken during the meeting included regular monthly inspection of shops and gumtis, to be carried out jointly by the TDO, Yupia and the Superintendent of Excise. The district administration will issue necessary directives and orders in this regard for effective implementation. The meeting also decided to intensify awareness activities, particularly in schools and colleges to prevent substance abuse among youths.

Among others, Jaya Taba, DD, ICDS; CDOs of Doimukh, Balijan and Kimin; representatives from the education department and Tax and Excise officials attended the meeting.

District administration evicts illegal structures



HT Correspondent

DAPORJO, Jan 9: The District administration evicted the temporary illegal structures on the Right of Way (RoW) of the highway road, stretching between Gandhi and New Market, Daporjo.

The eviction procedure was carried out in the presence of Ama Nungnu Mara, C O Cum-Town Magistrate Daporjo, with the assistance of the Police Department.

Further, she directed the public to avoid illegal encroachment on the RoW, warning that illegal encroachers shall not be spared and will face strong action.

Two arrested in frontier highway land compensation scam in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, Jan 9: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) of Arunachal Pradesh has arrested two persons for allegedly acting as brokers in a multi-crore land compensation scam linked to the Lada-Sarli Frontier Highway, officials said on Friday.

The arrests were made on Thursday in connection with the alleged manipulation of land compensation awards in East Kameng district.

They were identified as Rajo Gyadi (46) of Tassomora village and Yayo Yangfo (36) of T-II Colony, Seppa.

The ACB claimed that Gyadi, in connivance with the then District Land Records and Settlement Officer (DLRSO) Takam Kechak, fraudulently enhanced compensation amounts in favour of certain beneficiaries.

Investigators claimed the syndicate collected bribes totalling ₹ 19.51 crore from beneficiaries, of which Gyadi alone received ₹ 1.96 crore through post-dated cheques routed into his personal and firm-linked bank accounts.

Yangfo allegedly played a key role in routing bribe money through post-dated cheques and is accused of collecting ₹ 1.77 crore, an amount included in the total bribe figure, by facilitating transactions from beneficiary accounts, the ACB said.

The probe has also led to the arrest of another accused, Khya Byagang, whose interrogation helped investigators trace critical financial trails, officials added.

ACB officials said further arrests are likely as the investigation progresses and financial evidence is examined.

The case relates to alleged irregularities in the ₹ 130-crore land compensation for the 125.5-km Lada-Sarli stretch of the strategic Arunachal Frontier Highway, aimed at improving connectivity along the India-China border. (PTI)

Arunachal gets NEC push for health, roads, livelihood projects

ITANAGAR, Jan 9: Arunachal Pradesh received developmental support from the Centre last year with the North Eastern Council (NEC) releasing funds for health-care infrastructure, road connectivity, tourism facilities, livelihood generation to strengthen growth and access in the border state, an official statement said.

The NEC during the month of December last released a total of ₹ 4.24 crore for several priority projects in Arunachal Pradesh, a statement from the apex statutory planning and development body for the Northeastern states said on Friday. The projects include the construction of a nursing hostel at the district hospital in Yingkiong in Upper Siang district, a maternity and child care centre at Miao in Changlang district and the development of the Tissa View Point near Tissa Camp in Tirap district.

The projects are aimed at improving healthcare services and promoting tourism-linked infrastructure in the state.

In a major boost to connectivity, the NEC also released ₹ 13.50 crore under the North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS-Roads) for key road projects in Arunachal Pradesh.

The funding covers construction and improvement of the Murung Gika to Panior Bridge Point Road via Sarehgai, Mate, Kusuk and Pan, spanning 21 km in Papum Pare district, as well as the Bana EAC to Richukrong headquarters road in East Kameng district, the statement said.

These projects are expected to significantly improve access to remote and administrative areas, benefiting around 19,500 people across 15 villages. The statement also highlighted the successful completion of a ₹ 2.60-crore livelihood generation project in the state for migrant workers who returned to the state during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implemented under the industries sector, the project focused on skill



development and promotion of self-employment opportunities, enabling beneficiaries to take up sustainable income-generating activities within the state. The initiative has helped reduce distress migration while strengthening local economic resilience in the post-pandemic period.

In the education and youth sector, students from the northeastern state also benefited from the North East Students Programme for Awareness, Reach and Knowledge on Space (NE-SPARKS), a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Devel-

opment of North Eastern Region (MDoNER).

Under the programme, selected students from the Northeast were taken on guided visits to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) centres in Bengaluru, giving them first-hand exposure to India's space science and technology ecosystem.

The initiative aims to inspire young minds, promote STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and

Mathematics) education and encourage careers in space science and allied fields.

Overall, the NEC released ₹ 76.78 crore across the Northeastern states and regional agencies during December 2025 for a wide range of projects covering infrastructure, livelihoods, education, research, culture and innovation.

The continued flow of funds underscores the Centre's commitment to inclusive development and balanced regional growth in Arunachal Pradesh and the wider Northeast, the statement added. (PTI)

NE-SPARKS programme takes 800 North Eastern students to ISRO

Initiative aims to inspire STEM careers and space science awareness in the region



HT Correspondent

NAHARLAGUN, Jan 9: The North East Students Programme for Awareness, Reach and Knowledge on Space (NE-SPARKS), an initiative of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), is designed to promote space science and technology awareness among students from India's North Eastern Region. The programme provides selected students with direct exposure to India's space research through guided visits to ISRO centres in Bengaluru, bridging long-standing geographical and informational gaps.

Union Home Minister and NESAC society president Amit Shah, in the 12th NESAC Society meeting on December 21, 2024, directed that 800 talented science students—100 from each of the eight North Eastern states be taken on visits to ISRO, underscoring the government's commitment to inclusive development and educational empowerment.

The programme is a collaborative effort involving MDoNER, the North Eastern

Council (NEC), ISRO, NESAC and the State Governments of the North East. It is jointly coordinated by NESAC and ISRO's Capacity Building Programme Office (CBPO) with active support from the state governments.

NE-SPARKS has a total sanctioned cost of ₹ 3.83 crore, funded on a 60:40 ratio—₹ 2.3 crore from NEC and ₹ 1.53 crore collectively from the state governments. The programme is executed in eight batches between April and December 2025, with each batch comprising 90-100 students and 10 coordinators.

Through interactions with ISRO scientists and engineers and exposure to advanced space technologies, NE-SPARKS inspires young minds, promotes STEM education and empowers participants to envision careers in space science and technology. By nurturing scientific talent in the North East, the initiative contributes to India's broader vision of global leadership in the space sector and acts as a catalyst for technological advancement in the region.

Arunachal chief secretary reviews security, outreach for SUMP's PFR

ITANAGAR, Jan 9: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Secretary Manish Kumar Gupta has stressed the need for close coordination among all stakeholders to ensure smooth progress of the strategic Siang Upper Multi-Purpose Project (SUMP) in the state.

The chief secretary chaired a high-level meeting here on Wednesday to review the security preparedness and administrative arrangements for the pre-feasibility report (PFR) activities of the project, officials said on Thursday.

Gupta said the project holds critical importance for both the state and the country and is being monitored at the highest level. He directed all concerned departments to adopt a focused and coordinated approach in carrying out PFR-related activities on the ground.

The meeting was attended by hydropower commissioner Sonam Chombay, state Director General of Police (DGP) Anand Mohan and the deputy commissioners and superintendents of police of Siang and Upper Siang districts.

Issues related to security, legis-



tics and inter-departmental coordination were discussed in detail, the officials said.

The chief secretary also emphasised the need for systematic outreach at the village level to disseminate accurate and factual information about the project, noting that addressing local concerns through transparent communication is essential.

An action plan with defined responsibilities and timelines was finalised to deal with key issues identified during the review.

The SUMP is envisioned as a

major hydropower and river management initiative on the Siang River, officials said.

Besides power generation, the project is designed to play a significant role in flood moderation by regulating river flow during peak monsoon periods, thereby helping reduce downstream flood intensity.

The project is also expected to contribute to water security, disaster management and long-term regional development, while strengthening strategic infrastructure in the eastern Himalayan region, they added. (PTI)

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Under the provision of Rules 32(1) & (2) of Assam Mines and Minerals sealed tender are hereby invited for grant of Mining Permit / Contract for collection of Sand / Stone as per Annexure 'A' the prescribed form is to be obtained from the undersigned and will be received up to 3:00 PM (IST) on or before 30/01/2026

ANNEXURE-'A'

STATEMENT SHOWING THE LIST OF MAHAL OUTSIDE RESERVE FOREST UNDER KARBI ANGLONG EAST DIVISION, DIPHU.

Sl. No.	Name of Mahal	Quantity	Period	GPS Coordinate	Earnest Money	Govt. Value
1	Deopani Parghat sand Mahal Dhanisiri River (Upstream)	6,000	2 Years	1. 26° 12'45.06" N	10%	8,40,000/-
				93°50' 20.25" E		
				2. 26°12'46.10" N		
				93°50'19.90" E		
2	Deopani Parghat sand Mahal Dhanisiri River (Downstream)	6,000	2 Years	1. 26°13'12.70" N	10%	8,40,000/-
				93°51'18.00" E		
				2. 26°13'12.50" N		
				93°51'19.23" E		
				3. 26°13'59.60" N		
				93°51'45.60" E		
				6. 26°13'59.03" N		
				93°51'47.03" E		

Sd/-
Divisional Forest Officer,
Karbi Anglong East Division, Diphu.

Memo No. B/KAE/Tender Notice/Sand Mahal/2025-26/8434 Dated 07/01/2026

BCB official calling Tamim 'an Indian agent' invites wrath of Bangladesh players

DHAKA, Jan 9: A senior Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official calling former captain Tamim Iqbal "an Indian agent" has not gone down well with the players in the country.

Tamim, one of the finest openers to have come out of Bangladesh, had advised the BCB to not be driven by emotion while deciding the way forward on the national team's participation in the T20 World Cup in India.

Nazmul, chairman of BCB finance committee, called the left-hander opener "an Indian agent" in a Facebook post.

"This time, the people of Bangladesh witnessed, with their own eyes, the emergence of yet another proven Indian agent," he wrote.

The post received immediate backlash from former and current cricketers, including Taskin Ahmed, Momimul Haque and Taijul Islam.

Even the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) expressed shock at Nazmul's comments.

"A comment made by BCB director M Nazmul Islam regarding former national captain Tamim Iqbal has come to the attention of the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh. We are stunned, shocked, and outraged by it.

"Such a remark by a board official about the most successful opener in Bangladesh's history,



who represented the country for 16 years, is utterly condemnable.

"Not only because it concerns a player like Tamim, but such comments about any cricketer of the country are unacceptable and insulting to the entire cricketing community," the players' body said in a statement.

The 36-year-old Tamim played 70 Tests, 243 ODIs and 78 T20 Internationals for his country in a fairly accomplished career.

"We strongly protest against this comment. When a responsible board director makes such remarks

on a public platform, it also raises serious questions about the code of conduct of board officials," it said.

"We have already submitted a protest letter to the BCB president, demanding a public apology from the concerned board director and that he be brought under accountability. We hope the BCB president will take appropriate action as soon as possible," CWAB added.

Bangladesh wrote to the International Cricket Council to move their T20 World Cup games out of India after the BCCI instructed IPL franchise KKR to release

Mustafizur Rahman ahead of the 2026 edition without giving a specific reason.

"Cricket is the life of Bangladesh. A recent comment surrounding a former national captain who has made a major contribution to the game has caused many to reflect," said pacer Taskin.

"I believe that such remarks directed at a former cricketer of the country are not helpful in the interest of Bangladesh cricket. I hope the concerned authorities will consider the matter seriously and adopt a more responsible stance in the future," he said.

Mominul added: "The comment made by BCB director M Nazmul Islam regarding former national captain Tamim Iqbal is completely unacceptable and insulting to the country's cricketing community. Such behaviour towards a cricketer is in direct conflict with the board's responsibility and ethics," said Mominul.

"A senior cricketer was not given even the minimum respect; instead, he was deliberately humiliated in public. Such remarks show a lack of even basic decorum regarding where and how to speak while holding such a high responsibility.

"I strongly condemn this comment and firmly demand a public apology from the concerned director and that he be brought under accountability. I call upon the BCB to take swift and strict action," said Mominul. (PTI)

It was meant to be: Young India spinner Vaishnavi on cricket career

NEW DELHI, Jan 9: It was written in the stars, or so believed her father.

Long before Vaishnavi Sharma picked up a cricket ball, she says her future as a sportsperson was known to her astrologer father, Narendra Sharma. The 20-year-old left-arm spinner from Gwalior made her India debut in the T20 International format just last year in a home series against Sri Lanka.

"When I was four years old, my journey in sports began. As you all know, my father is an astrologer. He looked at my horoscope and said that I should either go into sports or into the medical field," Vaishnavi told 'PTI Videos'.

"After that, it was a question of where my own interest was. After some time, he understood that my interest was in sports. When I was seven, I started playing more seriously, like going for evening practice sessions.

"And when I was 11-12 years old, I played my first Under-16 match for Madhya Pradesh. It wasn't under the BCCI then, but that's where my journey really started," she recalled.

In the five-match series against Sri Lanka, she finished as the joint-highest wicket-taker for India with five scalps. The youngster says she has been certain about cricket from the very first day.

"When I started cricket, this was always my goal. I never focused on any other goal. Whenever I go to the ground, I just forget everything else, because the feeling I get after playing cricket, I don't get it from anything else," she said.

"I can't sit idle at home. Even if I'm doing my favourite things, when I have that love for cricket, I don't think about anything else," she added.

Her journey, however, hasn't been without disappointment. Vaishnavi admitted she had hoped to be picked by a franchise during the Women's Premier League auction before the Sri Lanka call-up but when it did not happen, she felt disappointed.

However, she ensured that it didn't affect her performance at a domestic age-group event.

"Of course, it feels very bad when you have expectations. I had them too, and I felt really bad. But I was playing a tournament at that time, so my whole focus was on my team. Under-23 was a big stage for me, so I kept my focus only on that," she said.

"Then I thought that I can only do what is in my hands and leave the rest to God. And when I left it to God, He gave me something even better."

Instead of dwelling on the setback, Vaishnavi focussed herself on domestic cricket, determined to control what she could.

"I never showed that disappointment on the field. I was sad in my room, I spoke to my family. My friends, parents, brother and seniors all called me.

"Yes, I was a little sad, but I never let that come onto the ground. I focused on what I had in my hands, and at that time, it was Under-23 cricket for Madhya



Pradesh," she said.

A few weeks later, her perseverance paid off with a maiden India call-up and she said walking into a dressing room filled with World Cup winners was an emotional moment.

"I was very nervous. I was thinking, what will their reaction be, what will they say, how will I start the conversation? But when I reached there, everyone welcomed me warmly, spoke to me and made me feel very comfortable. I bonded really well with them," she said.

Despite now being teammates, Vaishnavi admits to being a fan of captain Harmanpreet Kaur.

"I will always have those butterflies that I am going to meet Harman di. They are big stars. I used to watch them on television and now I am playing with them. So the butterflies and excitement will always be there," she smiled.

Vaishnavi says she idolises Harmanpreet's fighting spirit, while Smriti Mandhana inspires her approach to the game.

"Smriti di and Harman di are my role models. I once saw an interview of Smriti di where she said that even if she contributes for the team, she celebrates that day and then starts again from zero the next morning. From Harman di, I've learnt the never-give-up attitude," she said.

"The best thing about her is that whenever she gives me the ball, she says, 'Go and bowl freely, bowl your best and make the batter dance.' The whole team is very sweet."

On the bowling front, Vaishnavi draws inspiration from Ravindra Jadeja and Radha Yadav for their accuracy and control. (PTI)

Guendouzi moves to title-chasing Fenerbahce from Lazio

ISTANBUL, Jan 9: France midfielder Mattéo Guendouzi moved to Fenerbahce from Lazio as he tries to reclaim a place in the national team squad ahead of the World Cup.

Fenerbahce is chasing its first Turkish league title for 12 years and said late Thursday the 26-year-old Guendouzi signed a 1 1/2-year contract.

The fee for the former Arsenal and Marseille player was not stated though was reportedly 28 million euros (\$32.6 million).

Fenerbahce, which started the season with José Mourinho as coach before firing him in August, is still unbeaten in the Turkish league but trails fierce rival and defending champion Galatasaray by three points.

The team now led by former Belgium coach Domenico Tedesco is 12th in the 36-team Europa League standings with two rounds left this month. Guendouzi will be eligible for the knockout phase starting in February if Fenerbahce advances.

Guendouzi was in the France squad that reached the final at the last World Cup in Qatar but was not selected for the 2024 European Championship. He also did not play in France's World Cup qualifying group during the first half of this season.

France was drawn into a World Cup group with Senegal, Norway and the winner of a playoff bracket featuring Iraq, Bolivia and Suriname. (AP)

Over 60,000 runners confirm participation in Tata Mumbai Marathon

MUMBAI, Jan 9: More than 60,000 runners have registered to participate in the 21st Tata Mumbai Marathon (TMM) to be held here on January 18.

The World Athletics Gold Label Race will bring together a record-breaking 69,100 participants -- over 65,400 on-ground and 3,700 in the virtual run --, according to the organisers of the event. A record 14,059 runners will compete in the full marathon for the first time. Participation has also surged across the Half Marathon and the Open 10K run.

"The Tata Mumbai Marathon has, over the last two decades, positively impacted both the physical health of

people and the economic health of the city. Beyond the runners, it benefits airlines, hotels, and local vendors, making it a strong economic driver," said Rajesh Aggarwal, Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra.

According to the organisers, ₹ 53.62 crore were raised by NGOs in the 2025 edition with education being the top cause that raised ₹ 27.66 crore.

"Over the past three years, the Tata Mumbai Marathon has delivered a cumulative impact of ₹ 1,182.67 crore, underscoring its influence as a catalyst for social and economic growth," stated a press release from Procram International, the promoter of the event. (PTI)

Anthony Edwards, the 3rd-youngest player in NBA history to reach 10,000 career points

MINNEAPOLIS, Jan 9: Anthony Edwards became the third-youngest player in NBA history to reach 10,000 career points, when the Minnesota Timberwolves star swished a 13-foot fadeaway jumper from the baseline midway through the fourth quarter against Cleveland.

Edwards, at 24 years and 156 days old, was beaten to the mark by just LeBron James (23 years, 59 days) and Kevin Durant (24 years, 33 days). Edwards is one of seven players who've hit 10,000 points before age 25, with Kobe Bryant, Luka Doncic, Tracy McGrady and Carmelo Anthony also in that group.

"To be honest, it's cool, but I know I've got a lot more to go, so it's really nothing, for real," Edwards said after the 131-122 victory over the Cavaliers. "I'm kind of sick that I got in front of Kobe. I wished I would've waited like 100 days or something, but yeah, it's all good."

Edwards had 25 points, nine assists and seven rebounds as the Timberwolves finished with season highs in field goal shooting (51 for 89, 57%) and 3-point shooting (20 for 38, 53%) percentages. Edwards shot 10 for 20 from the floor and 4 for 7 from 3-point range.

"The scoring comes natural to him in a lot of ways," coach Chris Finch said, reflecting on the first 40-point game of Edwards' career that came at Phoenix late in his rookie season. "At that point in time you knew there was something inside him where he could get to that."

Edwards, who was the first overall pick in the 2020 draft, made his debut at age 19. He reached the 10,000-point mark in 412 games, the 28th-fastest in NBA history and the seventh-fastest among active players behind Doncic (358), James (368), Joel Embiid (373), Durant (381), Trae Young (390) and Donovan Mitchell (410). Only two other players have scored 10,000 points for the Timberwolves: Kevin Garnett and Karl-Anthony Towns. (AP)

SG Pipers, Shrachi Bengal Tigers meet in WHIL summit clash



RANCHI, Jan 9: SG Pipers and Shrachi Bengal Tigers will lock horns in the Women's Hockey India League final here on Saturday after two weeks of high-octane action featuring 12 matches.

The winner of the league will receive Rs 1.5 crore in prize money, while the runner-up will take home Rs 1 crore.

Ranchi Royals, who finished

third, will be awarded Rs 50 lakh.

The finalists, with fairly similar playing styles, held their own in what was a highly competitive season.

While SG Pipers topped the table, Shrachi Bengal Tigers sealed the second spot.

The top two teams faced off twice in the league stage, with Shrachi Bengal Tigers clinching a penalty shootout win on both occasions.

After a 3-3 draw in their first match, the Tigers went on to secure a 4-3 win in the shootout. In the second game, they prevailed 7-6 in the shootout after a goalless draw.

However, the stats throughout the league stage would favour the SG Pipers.

They are the second-highest goal-scorers in the tournament having scored 11 goals - only bettered by Ranchi Royals (13 goals) - with their captain Navneet Kaur leading the way with four goals in the tournament thus far.

Lola Riera (3 goals) and Sunelita Toppo (2 goals) have also

contributed, while Jyoti Singh and Maria Teresa Vianaache have also found the back of the net.

The Pipers also have the second best defensive record in the league, having conceded nine goals in the group stage.

Reflecting on her team's journey, Navneet Kaur, Captain of SG Pipers, said, "It's been an incredible campaign for us, and reaching the Final is a reflection of the hard work every player has put in."

"From finishing at the bottom of the table last season to topping the table this year, the comeback has been special. We've played some fearless hockey along the way and the goal now is to finish on a high."

Meanwhile, Shrachi Bengal Tigers have scored only seven goals in the tournament so far, with five of those coming through penalty corner specialist Agustina Gorzelany.

With Vandana Katariya leading the side, they have plenty of experience in their ranks as they gear up for the big occasion. (PTI)

UP Warriorz, Gujarat Giants eye early momentum in WPL

NAVI MUMBAI, Jan 9: A fresh chapter beckons UP Warriorz and Gujarat Giants as the two sides open their Women's Premier League campaign here on Saturday, both sides chasing a maiden title after contrasting runs in the previous season.

UP Warriorz will lean heavily on new captain Meg Lanning, under whose leadership Delhi Capitals reached three consecutive finals, to arrest a steady slide that has seen the team finish third, fourth and then bottom of the table across the first three seasons.

The Australian great's arrival is expected to bring clarity and calm to a side that struggled for balance and consistency last year in the absence of skipper Alyssa Healy.

However, questions remain around the Warriorz's squad composition, particularly in the wicket-keeping department, where Shipra Giri is the lone specialist option.

At the top, Phoebe Litchfield provides flexibility, with the possibility of partnering Kiran Navgire. The middle order, featuring Lanning and Harleen Deol, will be central to setting up competitive totals.

With the likes of Sophie Ecclestone, Deepti Sharma and the experienced Shikha Pandey and Kranti Gaud in their ranks, the Warriorz boast of a potent bowling attack that combines world class spin, experienced new ball operators, and proven death specialists.

Gujarat Giants, on the other hand, arrive with renewed confidence after reaching the playoffs the last time following two underwhelming seasons.

Led by Ashleigh Gardner, the Giants boast of a formidable overseas core but lack a front-line Indian batter.

Behind the stumps and at the top will be Beth Mooney, while Sophie Devine returns to the WPL fold after missing the 2025 season.

The pace attack looks well-rounded with Renuka Singh Thakur leading it, supported by Kim Garth and Kashvee Gautam. (PTI)

Not a holiday: Govt tells administrators to be there for athletes at multi-sport events



AHMEDABAD, Jan 9: India's sports administrators were on Friday told that treating multi-sport events as an "outing with family" instead of being there for athletes will not be tolerated and were asked to give names for the Asian Games contingent by January 15 at a Sports Governance Conclave here.

The Conclave was attended by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and also featured top officials from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and National Sports Federations, Gujarat's Deputy Chief Minister and Sports Minister Harsh Sanghavi and Sports Secretary Hari Ranjan Rao.

"It would be shameful if a large contingent of officials goes and not one is available when the athlete needs them. They have to be there 100 per cent of times for the athletes. Please don't go if you think of this as an outing with relatives. We don't need you," Rao stated as he laid out the country's 10-year medal strategy that has Prime Minister Narendra Modi's approval.

"The selection criteria (both Commonwealth and Asian Games) is already out. The Organising Committee for the Asian Games in Japan has set January 30 as the deadline for submission of names.

"The IOA must have told you that you have to give names by January 15, including support staff. Are you all ready? If you don't give names, you might miss the Games. And once you give names, you have to stick to them. Japanese are ruthless, they won't adjust," he added in a curt message to the present NSF officials.

India's officialdom has often been criticised by athletes for not being available at big events even though administrators form a major chunk of contingents to big sporting events.

The Asian Games is scheduled to be held from September 19 to October 4 in Aichi-Nagoya. The Commonwealth Games is due before that in July-August.

Rao said the current medal estimate for the Asian Games stands at 111, an improvement from the best ever haul of 106 in the previous edition in Hangzhou.

However, the assessment for CWG is a modest 20-odd medals after the Glasgow Games was scaled down and major disciplines like hockey, badminton, shooting and wrestling were dropped to ensure a tight budget.

"It can go wrong or be better many times, which will require a lot of effort. CWG would be a bit of a showstopper. Three gold and 22 total medals are expected because it's a truncated Games," he said.

"But as we prepare, we need to train athletes on etiquette. We will be going to Japan and that is a very sensitive country on food habits, social etiquette. We can't make even one mistake," Rao added.

Medal Strategy
"Where exactly is the athlete that will play in 2036 when we plan to host the Olympics? He is in school right now. We have to tap that talent as soon as possible," said Mandaviya.

"Government is ready to help you but you also have to cooperate. We should meet monthly to discuss the pressing issues," he added.

And in line with that vision, the medal

strategy was detailed by Rao in a presentation.

"In 2036, we must get 12 to 14 gold medals and 30 to 35 total medals to be in the top 10 and in 2048 Olympics, 35-40 gold medals and around 100 total medals. Then only we can be in the top-10 club," Rao said.

"All the major countries improved their rank substantially when they hosted the Games. China started 'Project 119' before the 2008 Beijing Games. They focussed on five disciplines, athletics, swimming, rowing, kayaking-canoeing and sailing for 119 medals.

"These were disciplines in which China was not known to win too many medals...in Beijing Olympics, they got 48 gold medals and in these five games they managed eight gold medals. This is the kind of focus that is expected from all of us and we need to think where we are," he added.

He then talked about the 2028 Los Angeles Games which will have 353 events but India's participation would be significantly low compared to nations like the USA and China, which will field jumbo squads across disciplines.

"This is a painful scene. We think we will host the Olympics and not even participate in half the disciplines," he said.

"With these kind of statistics are we ready to host the 2036 Olympics?" he asked.

He then laid down the plan that can have a transformational impact if implemented properly, including setting up of Olympic Training Centres for every sport, AI-driven monitoring mechanism to identify talent and a National Institute of Sports Science and Research.

Rao revealed that a Pullela Gopichand-led committee has suggested some coaching reforms that would be implemented by the government soon.

"We are planning to set up a coaching certification board for tiered certification of different coaches -- grassroots, intermediate, elite level," he said.

He then addressed the NSF representatives and told them to think beyond day-to-day administration. The government strategy also urges every NSF get one state government on board as a financial backer, following the Odisha model which led to hockey's revival.

"You are the vision builders, you are not administrators. You require professional administrators in your organisation who handle the day-to-day business while you network with international bodies and plan the pyramid of growth," he pointed out. (PTI)