

6 WORLD
 ● At least 35 people have been killed, 1,200 detained in Iran's economic protests
 ● Israel strikes multiple sites in Lebanon ahead of key disarmament meeting

7 NORTHEAST
 ● VB-G RAM G major reform, will strengthen rural livelihoods: Arunachal CM
 ● Protest held in Tripura against persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh

Vol .No. XXVI Issue No. 352 RNI-ASSENG/2000/12862 DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2026 PAGES 12 PRICE ₹ 8

PROMISE MADE
PROMISE FULFILLED



Promised 1 Lakh Govt jobs

Recruitment till date

1,45,664

Upcoming Recruitment

9 January 2026

ADRE-passed candidates
Grade IV
4,374

Jyoti-Bishnu Antarjatik Kala Mandir
 Khanapara, Guwahati

11 AM

10 January 2026

ADRE-passed candidates
Grade III
6,347

Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah Sports Complex, Sarusajai, Guwahati

11 AM

12 January 2026

ADRE- passed **Tea Tribe candidates**
Grade III & IV
292

Gauhati Medical College Auditorium, Bhangagarh, Guwahati

4 PM



DIPR/D/HLT/2707-Jan-26

Total Recruitment

1,56,677

Grok obscene AI content: Govt gives 'X' time till today to submit report

NEW DELHI, Jan 6: The government has given X additional time till January 7 to submit a detailed Action Taken Report after it issued a stern warning to the Elon Musk-led social media platform over indecent and sexually-explicit content being generated through misuse of AI-based services like 'Grok' and other tools.

The grant of extension came after X sought additional time from the IT Ministry, sources told PTI.

On Sunday, X's 'Safety' handle said it will take action against illegal content on its platform, including Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), by removing it, permanently suspending accounts, and working with local governments and law enforcement as necessary.

"Anyone using or prompting Grok to make illegal content will suffer the same consequences as if they upload illegal content," it had said, reiterating Musk's stance on illegal content.

Government sources said X had sought more time, and now it has been asked to submit its report by January 7.

The Centre on Friday pulled up X and directed it to immediately remove all vulgar, obscene and unlawful content, especially generated by Grok (X's built-in artificial intelligence interface) or face action under the law. The ministry had also asked the US-based social media firm to submit a detailed action taken report (ATR) within 72 hours of the directive (effectively by January 5).

The IT Ministry, in its January

2 missive, said that Grok AI, developed by X and integrated on the platform, is being misused by users to create fake accounts to host, generate, publish or share obscene images or videos of women in a derogatory or vulgar manner.

"Importantly, this is not limited to creation of fake accounts but also targets women who host or publish their images or videos, through prompts, image manipulation and synthetic outputs," the ministry said, asserting that such conduct reflects a serious failure of platform-level safeguards and enforcement mechanisms, and amounts to gross misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in violation of stipulated laws.

The ministry said the regulatory provisions under the IT Act and rules were being flouted by the platform, particularly in relation to obscene, indecent, vulgar, pornographic, paedophilic, or otherwise unlawful or harmful content.

"The aforesaid acts and omissions are viewed with grave concern, as they have the effect of violating the dignity, privacy and safety of women and children, normalising sexual harassment and exploitation in digital spaces, and undermining the statutory due diligence framework applicable to intermediaries operating in India," the IT Ministry said.

The government made it clear to X that compliance with the IT Act and rules is not optional, and that the statutory exemptions under section 79 of the IT Act (which deals with safe harbour

and immunity from liability for online intermediaries) are conditional upon strict observance of due diligence obligations.

"Accordingly, you are advised to strictly desist from the hosting, displaying, uploading, publication, transmission, storage, sharing of any content on your platform that is obscene, pornographic, vulgar, indecent, sexually explicit, paedophilic, or otherwise prohibited under any law..." the ministry said on January 2.

The government warned X in clear terms that any failure to observe due diligence obligations shall result in the loss of the exemption from liability under section 79 of the IT Act, and that the platform will also be liable for consequential action under other laws, including the IT Act and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

It asked X to enforce user terms of service and AI usage restrictions, including ensuring strong deterrent measures such as suspension, termination and other enforcement actions against violating users and accounts.

X has also been asked to remove or disable access "without delay" to all content already generated or disseminated in violation of applicable laws, in strict compliance with the timelines prescribed under the IT Rules, 2021, without, as such, vitiating the evidence.

The ministry has asked X to submit a detailed Action Taken Report (ATR) within 72 hours of the date of issuance of the said letter.

The ATR, it said, must cover specific technical and organisational measures adopted or proposed in relation to the Grok application; the role and oversight exercised by the Chief Compliance Officer; actions taken against offending content, users and accounts; as well as mechanisms to ensure compliance with the mandatory reporting requirement under Indian laws.

"...ensure ongoing, demonstrable and auditable compliance with all due diligence obligations under the IT Act and the IT Rules, 2021, failing which appropriate action may be initiated, including the loss of the exemption from liability under section 79 of the IT Act, and consequential action as provided under any law including the IT Act and the BNS," the ministry wrote.

Besides India, the platform has been facing criticism from authorities in the UK and Malaysia too. Ofcom, the UK's independent communications regulator, in a recent social media post said: "We are aware of serious concerns raised about a feature on Grok on X that produces undressed images of people and sexualised images of children".

"We have made urgent contact with X and xAI to understand what steps they have taken to comply with their legal duties to protect users in the UK. Based on their response, we will undertake a swift assessment to determine whether there are potential compliance issues that warrant investigation," Ofcom said. (PTI)

Sensex, Nifty log losses for 2nd day on geopolitical concerns, renewed US tariff hike threats

MUMBAI, Jan 6: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined for the second consecutive day on Tuesday, tracking intense selling pressure in market heavyweights Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank amid geopolitical tensions and renewed concerns about potential US tariff hikes.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 376.28 points, or 0.44 per cent, to settle at 85,063.34. During the day, it tanked 539.52 points, or 0.63 per cent, to 84,900.10. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 71.60 points, or 0.27 per cent, to end at 26,178.70.

"Domestic equities experienced a correction led by large-cap stocks, with selling in heavyweights like Reliance Industries and HDFC. The market reaction was influenced by uncertainties surrounding the Venezuela-US crisis and Russian oil imports, coupled with anticipations regarding the upcoming Q3 results," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Trent tumbled 8.62 per cent after the Tata group's retail firm's revenue growth in the December quarter failed to cheer investors.

Reliance Industries cracked 4.42 per cent, while ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, InterGlobe Aviation, and HDFC Bank were also among the laggards.

On the other hand, ICICI Bank, Sun Pharma, Hindustan Unilever, and State Bank of India were among the gainers.

"Indian equity markets declined for a second consecutive session, with the Nifty ending nearly 0.3 per cent lower amid profit-booking in heavyweight stocks and renewed geopolitical concerns. Sentiment was weighed down by resurfacing trade worries after comments from the US President on potential tariff hikes on India linked to Russian oil purchases.

"Stock-specific pressure added to the weakness, as Reliance Industries fell over 4 per cent, its steepest intra-day decline in more than eight months, while Trent declined 9 per cent, following its weak Q3 business update," Siddhartha Khemka - Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.39 per cent, and midcap dipped 0.24 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, energy tanked 1.71 per cent, oil & gas (1.22 per cent), services (1.07 per

cent), capital goods (0.63 per cent), realty (0.28 per cent) and power (0.23 per cent).

BSE Healthcare jumped 1.38 per cent, BSE PSU bank (0.52 per cent), consumer durables (0.43 per cent), IT (0.37 per cent) and BSE Focused IT (0.35 per cent).

Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth ₹ 36.25 crore on Monday after a day's breather, according to exchange data. Domestic institutional investors, however, bought stocks worth ₹ 1,764.07 crore.

Meanwhile, India's services sector growth moderated in December, as the rates of expansion in incoming new work and output eased to the slowest in 11 months, and companies refrained from recruiting additional staff, a monthly survey said on Tuesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index fell from 59.8 in November to 58.0 in December, indicating the slowest rate of expansion since January.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

Firms remained upbeat towards growth prospects, but overall sentiment fell to its lowest level in nearly three-and-a-half years, the survey said.

"Market sentiment remained cautious amid mixed global cues and lingering concerns around geopolitical developments and global trade dynamics. Profit booking in recent outperformers, particularly in select large-cap stocks, continued to weigh on overall momentum," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

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

Markets in Europe were trading on a mixed note. US markets ended higher on Monday.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 0.28 per cent to USD 61.93 per barrel.

On Monday, the Sensex dropped 322.39 points, or 0.38 per cent, to settle at 85,439.62. After hitting a record intra-day high of 26,373.20, the Nifty failed to carry forward the momentum and declined 78.25 points or 0.30 per cent to end at 26,250.30. (PTI)

Finmin unveils 852 PPP projects worth over ₹ 17 lakh cr



NEW DELHI, Jan 6: The Finance Ministry on Tuesday said it has created a three-year Public Private Partnerships (PPP) pipeline of 852 projects across central infrastructure ministries and states with a combined cost of over ₹ 17 lakh crore.

The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance, has created a three-year PPP project pipeline commencing FY26, in pursuance of the implementation of the announcement in the Union Budget

2025-26.

The pipeline provides early visibility of potential PPP projects to enable investors, developers and other stakeholders to undertake more informed planning and investment decisions, the finance ministry statement said.

Sharing the breakup, it said 232 PPP projects envisaging an expenditure of ₹ 13.15 lakh crore would be undertaken by central infrastructure ministries, while 620 projects worth ₹ 3.84 lakh crore to be implemented

by 20 states and Union Territories.

Of the central government's share, a maximum of 108 projects belong to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways with an outlay of Rs 8.76 lakh crore, followed by the Ministry of Power with 46 projects and ₹ 3.4 lakh crore of budget and the Ministry of Railways with 13 projects and a budget of ₹ 30,904 crore.

Others like the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation would undertake 29 PPP projects spending ₹ 12,254 crore, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas one project with an estimated expenditure of ₹ 8,743 crore, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade 2 projects with a budget of ₹ 6,646 crore, and the Ministry of Civil Aviation 11 projects having an allocation of Rs 2,262 crore, it said.

As far as states are concerned, the lion's share goes to Andhra Pradesh with 270 PPP projects with an outlay of ₹ 1.16 lakh crore, followed by Tamil Nadu with 70 projects and ₹ 87,640 crore allocation, Madhya Pradesh with 21 projects with ₹ 65,496 crore and Jammu and Kashmir with 57 projects with an outlay of ₹ 21,374 crore. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 3...

'Vote theft' slogan

allegations raised after the Bihar elections, claiming that a similar pattern was now being repeated in Assam following the publication of the draft rolls.

The BJP and the state government have rejected the allegations.

Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reiterated that the preparation of electoral rolls falls solely under the jurisdiction of the Election Commission of India.

"There is time till January 22 to raise objections. Political parties should use institutional mechanisms instead of protests," Sarma said.

'Voters exist in

5,23,680 shifted voters were identified. Another 53,619 multiple entries were detected. The Election Commission, however, said that these names have not yet been deleted. These will only be processed for removal or shifting after formal applications are received during the current claims and objections period.

Claims and objections can be filed from December 27 to January 22, with special campaign dates fixed for January 3-4 and January 10-11.

The final electoral roll will be published on February 10. (PTI)

Illegal religious structures

verification, a move aimed at preventing illegal migration. He also said the BEFR would be amended further to make it stronger.

On concerns over illegal immigration, Khandu said the government is committed to strengthening ILP enforcement and border controls, while ensuring that all actions are taken through proper legal procedures.

The Arunachal Pradesh Indigenous Youth Organisation, the Indigenous Youth Force of Arunachal and the All Naharlagun Youth Organisation, which are spearheading the agitation against illegal immigration and unauthorised religious structures, enforced a 12-hour bandh in the state capital in December.

Their demands include the removal of what they claim is an illegally constructed "Capital Jama Masjid" at Naharlagun, action against unauthorised settlements, and a ban on weekly markets allegedly run by undocumented settlers.

The organisations have also called for tighter checks at the state's entry gates and regular verification drives, saying stronger internal monitoring and gate security are essential to protect tribal land and maintain demographic balance.

Police, however, said ILP enforcement and verification drives are already being intensified to plug loopholes. (PTI)

New reed snake

recognised species globally, most of which are small, secretive and poorly studied. The newly identified Mizoram species is non-venomous and poses no threat to humans.

Described as nocturnal and semi-fossorial, the snake inhabits humid, forested hill environments and has been recorded at elevations ranging from 670 to 1,295 metres above sea level, including areas close to human settlements such as the Mizoram University campus, the study noted.

Based on available data, the researchers have tentatively assessed the species as 'Least Concern' under the IUCN Red List criteria, citing its presence across multiple localities and the absence of major identified anthropogenic threats.

In addition, the study presents an updated checklist of Mizoram's herpetofauna, documenting 169 species, including 52 amphibians and 117 reptiles.

The researchers said the discovery highlights the need for continued biological surveys in Northeast India, particularly in forested hill regions where many species remain poorly documented. (PTI)

Peerless Hospital Guwahati outlines growth roadmap, expands access to affordable healthcare

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Jan 6: Peerless Hospital Guwahati on Tuesday shared key milestones achieved over the past six months and outlined its strategic roadmap for 2026 and beyond, reaffirming its commitment to providing high-quality, accessible and patient-centric healthcare across Assam and the Northeast.

Addressing a press conference at the hospital premises, the management highlighted notable improvements in clinical outcomes, patient footfall and service delivery across departments since the hospital began operations in July 2025. Several patient success stories were presented, reflecting the hospital's growing capabilities in handling complex cases through multidisciplinary care and timely medical intervention.

Dr Gautam Kumar Das, CEO of Peerless Hospital Guwahati, said the institution's vision is to build a sustainable healthcare ecosystem that balances clinical excellence with affordability and accessibility.

He said the hospital is expanding services under Ayushman Bharat, investing in modern medical equipment and strengthening its workforce to ensure quality healthcare reaches a wider section of society across the region. He also invited skilled healthcare professionals to join the hospital's growth journey.

Highlighting recent clinical performance, Dr Pranab Barua, Medical Superintendent and Director of the Emergency Department, said consid-

ent improvement in patient outcomes over the last six months has been driven by strong teamwork, refined clinical protocols and timely decision-making. He credited the success to the dedication of doctors, nurses and support staff.

Senior doctors, including Dr Pranab Barua, Dr Shahanur Rahman (Neurosurgery), Dr Aditya Bhaskar and Dr JP Kalita (Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery), said the hospital is now effectively managing highly complex and life-threatening neurological conditions such as subarachnoid haemorrhage caused by ruptured blister aneurysms.

They noted that advanced endovascular procedures, including flow diverter placement, are being successfully performed, reflecting the hospital's growing expertise, precision and specialised infrastructure.

Outlining future plans, the hospital said 2026 will focus on consolidation and expansion, with emphasis on strengthening clinical capabilities, upgrading infrastructure and expanding outreach services. As part of this phase, additional specialists, nursing staff and allied healthcare professionals have been onboarded to further enhance patient care.

The hospital also announced the procurement of advanced medical equipment across key departments to improve diagnostic accuracy, treatment efficiency and patient safety, enabling better management of critical and complex cases within the region.

Axis Bank launches 'Safety Centre' to combat digital frauds

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, Jan 6: Axis Bank, one of India's largest private sector banks, on Tuesday announced the launch of its new 'Safety Centre' on the Axis mobile banking app 'open', aimed at strengthening customer protection against rising incidents of digital fraud.

The Safety Centre functions as a dedicated security hub that empowers customers with real-time, customer-controlled features to safeguard their bank accounts from unauthorised or suspicious activities, without requiring them to contact customer care or visit a branch.

The new feature offers granular control over key digital banking functions, allowing users to customise security settings based on individual usage patterns and comfort levels. Key features include SMS Shield, the option to turn off internet banking, stop fund transfers, prevent online shopping through net banking, stop UPI payments, block the addition of new payees, and set limits for fund transfers and UPI transactions.

According to the bank, the Safety Centre enables instant activation of security controls, ensuring changes take effect immediately.

By offering selective blocking and real-time controls, the feature significantly reduces exposure to digital fraud risks while enhancing operational efficiency by minimising dependence on branches and call centres.

NAME CHANGE

I Aneba Rahman (26) has changed my surname to Bey as I have been adopted by Stephan Bey (59), S/o-Lt. Pul Bey, R/o- Tika village, PO-Tika, PS- Baithalango, Dist. West Karbi Anglong, Assam and hence from now on for all intent and purposes I will be known by the name Aneba Bey.

Aneba Bey, Village.- Baithalango, PO/PS- Baithalango, Dist.- West Karbi Anglong, Assam PIN- 782450

NAME CHANGE

I Aneswar Rahman (29) has changed my surname to Bey as I have been adopted by Stephan Bey (59), S/o-Lt. Pul Bey, R/o- Tika village, PO-Tika, PS- Baithalango, Dist. West Karbi Anglong, Assam and hence from now on for all intent and purposes I will be known by the name Aneswar Bey.

Aneswar Bey, Village.- Baithalango, PO/PS- Baithalango, Dist.- West Karbi Anglong, Assam PIN- 782450

NAME CHANGE

I Suriya Begum has changed my surname to Beypi as I have been adopted by Stephan Bey (59), S/o-Lt. Pul Bey, R/o- Tika village, PO-Tika, PS- Baithalango, Dist. West Karbi Anglong, Assam and hence from now on for all intent and purposes I will be known by the name Suriya Beypi.

Suriya Beypi, Village.- Baithalango, PO/PS- Baithalango, Dist.- West Karbi Anglong, Assam PIN- 782450

NAME CHANGE

I Estakul Rahman (29) has changed my surname to Bey as I have been adopted by Stephan Bey (59), S/o-Lt. Pul Bey, R/o- Tika village, PO-Tika, PS- Baithalango, Dist. West Karbi Anglong, Assam and hence from now on for all intent and purposes I will be known by the name Estakul Bey.

Estakul Bey, Village.- Baithalango, PO/PS- Baithalango, Dist.- West Karbi Anglong, Assam PIN- 782450

NAME CHANGE

I Mun Mun Begum has changed my surname to Beypi as I have been adopted by Stephan Bey (59), S/o-Lt. Pul Bey, R/o- Tika village, PO-Tika, PS- Baithalango, Dist. West Karbi Anglong, Assam and hence from now on for all intent and purposes I will be known by the name Mun Mun Beypi.

Mun Mun Beypi, Village.- Baithalango, PO/PS- Baithalango, Dist.- West Karbi Anglong, Assam PIN- 782450

NAME CHANGE

I Nelima Begum, age 33yrs, changed my surname to Beypi as I have been adopted by Stephan Bey (59), S/o-Lt. Pul Bey, R/o- Tika village, PO-Tika, PS- Baithalango, Dist.- West Karbi Anglong, Assam and hence from now on for all intent and purposes I will be known by the name Nelima Beypi.

Nelima Beypi, Village.- Baithalango, PO/PS- Baithalango, Dist.- West Karbi Anglong, Assam PIN- 782450

NAME CORRECTION

I, Smt. Lilu Biswas, D/O: Late Jatindra Biswas, resident of Vill. Hayang Basti, P.O. Gujigan Bazar, P.S. Hojai, Circle Office-Hojai, Dist. Hojai, Assam, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare via notarial affidavit executed in front of Notary Public at Srimanta Sankardev Nagar Court on 26-12-2023 that my father's actual and correct name is Jatindra Biswas. That, in the land documents vide P.P. No.80 my father's name has been inadvertently recorded as Jyotish Chandra Biswas and Satish Biswas instead of his actual and correct name Jatindra Biswas, which is recorded in other documents. I declare that Jatindra Biswas, Jyotish Chandra Biswas and Satish Biswas are the names of one and same person i.e. of my father.

NAME CORRECTION

I, Gajal Khakholia, DOB-26/03/2006, D/O-Binod Khakholia, R/O- Flat-3D, Block C, Kamala Residency Road, Lawkhowa Road, P.S-Nagaon, Dist-Nagaon (Assam) do hereby solemnly affirm and declare via an affidavit executed in front of Additional District Commissioner, Nagaon, Assam on 06-01-2026 that my mother's actual and correct name is "Bobby Khakholia" which is recorded in my Passport vide No-S8196643 and in my mother's Aadhaar card vide No-8622-7168-6764, Pan card vide No-AURPK3192Q, but in my Educational documents my mother's name has been recorded as "Bobby Khakholia" instead of "Bobby Khakholia". I declare that "Bobby Khakholia" and "Boby Khakholia" are the name of same and one person i.e. my mother.

E-AUCTION FOR "ADVERTISING ASSETS"

E-Auction for "Advertising Assets" over Lumding Division for a period of 03 years. Details are as under. Auction Catalogue No.: ADVT-LMG-49-25; Auction Start Date & Time (All Lots): 10:45 hrs. on 19-01-2026; Auction Close Date & Time: 12:15 hrs. on 19-01-2026; Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee; Trips/Days: 1096.

Seq No.	Lot No./Category	Description
AA/1	ADVT-LMG-SCL-OH-428-26-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	A proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at Silchar (SCL) Circulating area for a period of 03 (Three) years.
AA/2	ADVT-LMG-BPB-OH-422-25-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Proposal for Calling of e-Auction for advertisement rights of circulating area of Badarpur (BPB) Railway Station for a period of 03(Three) years.
AA/3	ADVT-LMG-LMG-OH-426-25-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	A proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at Lumding (LMG) Railway circulating area for a period of 03 (Three) years.
AA/4	ADVT-LMG-KXJ-OH-421-25-1 (Advertising - Out of Home)	Proposal for Calling of e-Auction for advertisement rights of Karimganj (KXJ) Railway Station circulating area for a period of 03 (Three) years.
AB/1	ADVT-LMG-LMG-OSN-425-25-1 (Advertising - On Station Premise (Non-Digital))	A proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at Lumding (LMG) Railway Station for a period of 03 (Three) years.
AB/2	ADVT-LMG-NHLG-OSN-427-25-1 (Advertising - On Station Premise (Non-Digital))	A proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at New Haffong (NHLG) Railway station premise area for a period of 03 (Three) years.
AB/3	ADVT-LMG-CPK-OSN-383-25-1 (Advertising - On Station Premise (Non-Digital))	A proposal for calling e-Auction for advertisement rights at Chaparmukh (CPK) Railway Station for a period of 03 years.

Prospective bidders are requested to visit e-Auction leasing module of IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in.

Divisional Railway Manager (C), Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2026

THE HILLS TIMES 3

Govt to move HC for special court for Zubeen death case probe: Himanta SPP appointment after Jan 9 Cabinet meet



HT Correspondent
JORHAT, Jan 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said the State Government will appoint a Special Public Prosecutor in the death case of Assamese singer Zubeen Garg after the next Cabinet meeting scheduled for January 9.

Speaking to media persons during a brief stopover in Jorhat on his way to Delhi, Sarma said the offi-

cial announcement regarding the appointment of the Special PP would be made after the Cabinet discusses the matter on Friday.

He noted that with the next date of hearing fixed for January 18, there would be sufficient time for the appointed advocate to prepare and appear before the court.

The chief minister said that as per established norms, the Special

PP would advise the Government, which would then act accordingly. He added that the State would write to the Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court for the constitution of a special court for the case, once the Special PP of the Government in this regard.

Replying to a query on seat adjustment among the BJP and its NDA allies for the forthcoming Assembly elections, Sarma said the issue was not a major one and would be resolved by February 15 or 20. He said discussions with alliance partners were underway and the matter would be finalised cordially. During his visit, the chief minister also inspected the ongoing National Freedom Movement Museum-cum-park project at the Central Jail in Jorhat.

After reviewing the progress, he said the first phase of the project is likely to be completed by February this year.

'Vote theft' slogan echoes in Guwahati Irregularities in draft poll rolls alleged: Assam Cong launches protest ● CM, State BJP pin charges

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Jan 6: The Congress party on Tuesday staged a strong protest at the Manabendra Sharma Complex in Dispur, alleging large-scale irregularities in Assam's recently published draft electoral rolls and accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Election Commission of India (ECI) of attempting to influence the outcome of the forthcoming Assam Assembly elections through voter list manipulation.

The protest was organised by the Guwahati Metropolitan District Congress and saw the participation of several senior party leaders, including Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress president Mira Borthakur, APCC Media Department chairman Bedabrata Bora, Youth Congress leaders and other party functionaries.

Addressing the gathering, Congress leaders described the draft electoral rolls as "deeply flawed," alleging that the names of unknown voters were being added to



households of genuine residents, while eligible voters were being arbitrarily deleted.

They claimed that in multiple localities, unfamiliar names had appeared within a single family's voter list, raising serious concerns about the credibility and transparency of the revision process.

The protest witnessed intense sloganeering against the BJP and the Election Commission, with party workers alleging a systematic

attempt at "vote theft."

Police were deployed outside the complex to maintain law and order as tensions briefly flared during the demonstration.

Leading the Mahila Congress contingent, Mira Borthakur alleged that the voter list revision exercise was being misused to engineer electoral outcomes instead of ensuring free and fair elections.

"We strongly condemn attempts to conduct the Assam Assembly

elections through vote theft. The Election Commission is acting like a BJP morcha. We will not allow elections to be held on the basis of error-filled voter lists," she said, demanding a CBI probe into the alleged role of Assam BJP president Dilip Saikia.

Youth Congress leaders echoed similar concerns, warning that the alleged discrepancies posed a serious threat to democratic rights in the state.

Iftekhar Younis, General Secretary of the APCC Media Department, alleged that during the Special Intensive Revision process, voters from other states were being enrolled in Assam, while genuine Assamese voters were being excluded.

"What Rahul Gandhi had earlier flagged as vote theft is now visible on the ground. Elections should be fought on development and governance, not by manipulating voter lists," Younis said.

The Congress also drew parallels with (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Oil pipeline burst in Tingkhong, farmland affected

HT Correspondent
DIBRUGARH, Jan 6: A crude oil pipeline belonging to Oil India Limited burst at Shalmari Dighalia Gaon in Tingkhong area of Dibrugarh on Monday night, leading to continuous leakage of crude oil and causing damage to nearby agricultural land and fish-farming ponds.

The incident occurred at around 10 pm, following which crude oil reportedly spread rapidly across the area.

The spill entered adjoining farmlands and fish-rearing ponds, resulting in the death of several fish and causing losses to local farmers and pisciculturists.

Residents alleged that the pipeline was extremely old and vulnerable to repeated failures, accusing the Oil India management of neglecting long-term safety measures.

The sharp smell of crude oil quickly spread through the locality, triggering panic among villagers, who feared the possibility of a major fire.

Local resident Monimanik Gogoi said a loud sound was heard around 10 pm, after which villagers discovered crude oil spilling from the burst pipeline.

He added that fire tenders from Oil India rushed to the spot and took immediate steps to control the leakage and prevent a larger mishap.

"The pipelines are very old and should be replaced. There are around 50 oil wells in our village, including two OCS and one DCS. Oil India should take necessary steps to replace the ageing pipelines," he said, adding that a major incident was narrowly averted due to timely intervention.

Meanwhile, the spill has caused concern among residents, who have demanded urgent repair and replacement of old pipelines to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Himanta lampoons Akhil Gogoi's live videos

HT Correspondent
JORHAT, Jan 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited Jorhat on Tuesday and inspected the under-construction Freedom Memorial Park, one of the key heritage projects being developed in the town.

During the visit, the chief minister interacted with the media and shared his views on state politics, governance issues and upcoming infrastructure projects.

Commenting on Raijor Dal leader Akhil Gogoi, the chief minister said he regularly watches Gogoi's live videos and suggested that journalists should also follow them.

In a lighter remark, he said that when Gogoi skipped a live session one day, he became con-

cerned about his health and asked minister Pijush Hazarika to check on him.

Referring to the 2026 Assembly elections, Sarma said the BJP was fully prepared and that discussions would be held across all 126 Assembly constituencies.

He said the BJP-led alliance was likely to contest around 103 seats, adding that candidate selection within the party is largely done through internal consultations rather than complicated processes.

Addressing the issue of eviction, Sarma said that those who had been evicted would not have their names included in the voter list, but clarified that they could continue to stay at their present locations.

Criticising the Congress party's slogan "Save Caste, Save Land," the chief minister questioned which caste the party was referring to and said the Congress should be explicit about its intent.

He also took a dig at Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi, remarking that despite multiple visits to Assam, including visits to tea gardens, she had failed to bring tangible benefits to the state.

On the development front, Sarma announced that the Freedom Memorial Park in Jorhat and the flyover from Barua Chariali to Bhogdoi Bridge are likely to be opened to the public in February, adding that both projects would significantly enhance the town's infrastructure and public spaces.

B'desh situation may impact Assam: CM

BOKAKHAT, Jan 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said the ongoing situation in Bangladesh is a matter of concern and the state may witness some impact of it in the coming days.

Sarma also claimed that the "jihad elements" have always remained in the state and it may still be there as "sleepers cells".

"Whatever is happening in Bangladesh, is a cause of concern for us. Torture on Hindus are increasing day by day. The situation is worrying and we may see its effect in Assam too," he told reporters on the sidelines of an official function here.

There has been a spate of violence targeting Hindus in Bangladesh in the last few weeks, and mob violence or clandestine attacks have emerged as a major crisis in the changed political landscape.

"So, we have to remain cautious and monitor the situation. We will also have to give courage to Bangladesh's Hindu society," Sarma said.

As per the 2022 census, the Hindu population in Bangladesh is approximately 13.13 million, which accounts for about 7.95 per cent of the country's total population.

Talking about fundamentalist activities in Assam, the CM said, "Jihadis are there in Assam and we are



getting its proof repeatedly in the last 10 years. There may be some elements hiding somewhere even now, may be they are part of the sleep cells. These are all matters of concern."

Assam's security has always been an issue of concern and it will remain so until there is an improvement in the entire geopolitical issue, he added.

In December last year, 11 people were arrested in Assam and Tripura for their alleged links with Bangladesh-based fundamentalist groups that were aiming to destabilise the Northeast, according to the police. (PTI)

Three-month-old infant dies, two injured in fire in Kaliabor

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Jan 6: A devastating fire broke out at the residence of Rajab Ali and Matiur Rahman at Borghuli under Uluwani Police Station in Kaliabor area of Nagaon district on Tuesday, claiming the life of a three-month-old infant and leaving two others injured.

The fire reportedly originated in the kitchen and quickly spread, engulfing two residential houses.

The injured have been identified as Rakibul Husain (3) and Nazima Khatun (26), who are currently undergoing treatment at a nearby hospital.

Both houses were completely gutted in the blaze, with losses estimated to run into several lakh rupees, including cash and important documents.

Upon receiving information, police personnel from Uluwani Police Station and Sulong Police Outpost rushed to the spot and initiated an investigation.

Firefighters from Ambagan and Kaliabor fire stations managed to bring the fire under control after sustained efforts.

The tragic incident has cast a pall of gloom over the locality, with residents mourning the loss of the infant and expressing concern over the sudden blaze.

'Voters exist in non-existent Household No 00 in Nazira'

Poll rolls issue: Debabrata sends SOS to CEC Gyanesh Kumar

GUWAHATI, Jan 6: Assam's Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, alleging "serious irregularities" in the draft electoral rolls of the state, published after a Special Revision (SR).

The senior Congress leader demanded the halt of the finalisation of the electoral rolls until "all irregularities are thoroughly verified and resolved" to ensure the removal of any unauthorised or "unknown" voter entries.

Assam has registered a 1.35 per cent increase in the number of voters as per the integrated draft electoral roll for the state, published on December 30 after the SR was conducted, with months left for the assembly elections.

"I am writing to express my deep concern regarding serious irregularities observed during the ongoing SR of electoral rolls in Assam. Media reports and ground-level feedback indicate unauthorised inclusion of non-Assamese speaking voters and other procedural lapses that threaten the integrity of the electoral process," Saikia said



in his letter to Kumar on Monday.

He alleged that specific instances have come to light where "unknown" persons have been added as voters in households without the knowledge of residents.

Saikia cited examples of four non-Assamese individuals enrolled at House No 44 and 15 on Tayabulla Road in Guwahati unbeknownst to the family, while voter entries have been seen against non-existent Household No 00 in the Nazira constituency.

Saikia demanded that the CEC conduct a swift and transparent investigation into all reported discrepancies and make the

findings public.

"Halt the finalisation of electoral rolls until all irregularities are thoroughly verified and resolved, ensuring the removal of any unauthorised or 'unknown' voter entries," he said.

Saikia also asked the poll panel to implement a uniform addressing system and strengthen verification protocols to prevent such issues.

"Elections are the cornerstone of our democracy, and any compromise in the accuracy of electoral rolls erodes public confidence and democratic values. I trust the ECI will take decisive action to uphold the sanctity of the electoral process in Assam," he added.

The draft roll reflected a total of 2,52,01,624 electors, representing a 1.35 per cent increase from the previous final roll published in January 2025.

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

During the SR process, 4,78,992 deceased electors and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Five suspected peddlers arrested with drugs worth ₹ 2 cr



GUWAHATI, Jan 6: Five suspected drug peddlers were arrested with drugs worth ₹ 2 crore in Assam's Cachar district, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. The seizure was made from two different vehicles in the district, he said.

"@Cacharpolice intercepted two vehicles at Sunabarighat Bypass, seized 406 g of heroin worth ₹ 2 crore and arrested 5 peddlers," he said in a post on X on Monday night. "Fast rides, short run... Drug routes in Assam don't lead far, they end here! Kudos to @assampolice... #AssamAgainstDrugs," he added. (PTI)

Species currently confirmed only from Mizoram New reed snake species identified in Mizoram

AIZAWL, Jan 6: A team of scientists from Mizoram, in collaboration with researchers from Russia, Germany and Vietnam, has identified a new species of reed snake from the state, correcting a long-standing taxonomic misidentification and adding a previously unknown species to India's reptile fauna.

The new species has been named Calamaria Mizoramensis, after the state where it was discovered, said HT Lalremsanga, a professor at the Mizoram University's Zoology Department and the lead of the research team.

The findings were published in the international scientific journal Zootaxa on Monday, based on detailed morphological examinations and DNA analysis, he said.

According to Lalremsanga,



specimens of the snake were first collected in Mizoram in 2008, but were earlier considered part of a widely distributed Southeast Asian species.

The new study establishes that the Mizoram population represents

a distinct evolutionary lineage unique to the state, he said.

The research team analysed specimens collected over more than a decade from forested areas in and around Aizawl, Reiek, Siphir and Sawleng, as well as parts

of Mamit and Kolasib districts, he added.

Lalremsanga said genetic comparisons revealed that the Mizoram reed snake differs by over 15 per cent from its closest known relatives, a level of divergence considered sufficient to recognise a new species.

The species is currently confirmed only from Mizoram, though its presence in neighbouring regions cannot be ruled out, he said.

"Its occurrence in other parts of India remains unverified, but it is likely to be present in adjoining states such as Manipur, Nagaland and Assam. A possible extension into the Chittagong region of Bangladesh also requires further confirmation," noted the study.

The genus Calamaria comprises 69 (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Illegal religious structures to be demolished in Itanagar, ILP system to be tightened: CM Khandu

ITANAGAR, Jan 6: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Tuesday said he has directed officers to identify and demolish all illegal religious structures in the state capital.

The development came in the backdrop of agitation by youth organisations, alleging that illegal immigrants are erecting unauthorised religious structures in the Itanagar Capital Region (ICR).

Speaking to reporters, Khandu said, "I have instructed the deputy commissioners to identify and demolish all unauthorised religious structures in the state capital."

He said Arunachal Pradesh is protected by the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR), 1873, which regulates the entry of non-residents to safeguard



indigenous communities, land and culture.

Khandu said the state government would soon roll out a new digitised ILP system to more effectively check illegal immigration.

"Earlier, the ILP system could not be properly monitored. We have

now migrated to a digital platform. After cabinet approval, new rules will come into force," he said.

The CM said that under the new system, employers bringing labourers from outside the state would be required to inform the government for (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities - J.K. Rowling

Trump's onslaught on Venezuela

During the past one year, perhaps no other man has garnered so much news headlines and space as the American President Donald Trump. This is not due to any of his humane policies or pro-people announcements, but based solely on his quirky and unpredictable executive orders undermining the global political, diplomatic, and economic rules-based governance or a lack of comprehension on how to run a superpower. After a hiatus of four years, Trump came back as the 47th American president, promising to get the 14 years-old Russia-Ukraine war ended within 24 hours of assuming office, though nothing of that sort has happened in the last one year. Immediately after assuming office, he started a whimsical Tariff War against almost every nation and vowed to colonialise Greenland and run over Mexico. The latest folly, which this foaming at the mouth American president has committed is a completely flagrant violation of international norms and the respect for any sovereign country. Trump's second term is marked by aggressive foreign actions, including the military capture of Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro and threats toward Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, and renewed interest in Greenland, sparking global backlash and concerns over US power projection.

Trump's second term as United States president is increasingly being defined by an aggressive projection of power far beyond America's borders. Following the dramatic US military operation in Venezuela and the capture of President Maduro, Trump has signalled that his ambitions stretch across the Western Hemisphere and into the Arctic, triggering alarm from Latin America to Europe. He has also mused about the idea of kidnapping another president, Colombia's Gustavo Petro, and said Venezuela's vice president Delcy Rodríguez, will suffer "a fate worse than Maduro" if she fails to fall in line. Maduro's ouster has been justified in the name of combating "narco-terrorism." He has been called the "narco dictator" of a "narco regime." Maduro's government was indeed up to its neck in drug smuggling. But the stress placed on this issue reflects a persistent failing in the US approach to Latin America—what we could perhaps call narcolepsy.

Trump's wrath against Latin American countries started with his spat against Mexico and operations to take control of the Panama Canal. But why is Trump adopting an aggressive posture against the Latin American countries? The reason mostly is based on his temperament to treat every issue in economic terms and his promise of MAGA. It is not a hidden fact that in the past 25 years, China has made inroads into every Latin American country just like Asia and Africa. China runs its bases and companies from every Latin American country. So, Trump's game plan is not just to occupy or subjugate Venezuela just for its oil, but as evident from his statements he is basically trying to ramp-up the American presence in every Latin American country.

Baghdad to Caracas: The return of a troubling US pattern

By: Dipak Kurmi

The modern global order of oil, currency, and power can be traced back to a pivotal arrangement forged in 1974 between the United States and Saudi Arabia under the stewardship of then US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. This agreement ensured that oil traded across the world would be priced exclusively in US dollars, giving birth to what later came to be known as the petrodollar system. The consequences of this deal were far-reaching and transformative. By tying the world's most essential commodity to its currency, the United States created an artificial yet powerful global demand for dollars. Every country, regardless of its political alignment, had to earn or borrow dollars to secure energy supplies. This arrangement enabled the US to print money with relative impunity while forcing other nations to accumulate wealth through labor, trade, and austerity. Over time, this monetary privilege became a cornerstone of American global dominance, and any challenge to it was treated not as an economic disagreement but as a strategic threat. History shows that leaders who attempted to deviate from the dollar-dominated oil trade paid a heavy price. In 2000, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein announced that Iraq would sell its oil in euros instead of US dollars, a move that directly challenged the foundations of the petrodollar system. Three years later, the United States invaded Iraq under the pretext that Saddam possessed chemical weapons that posed a global threat. Those weapons were never found, yet the invasion dismantled the Iraqi state, placed its oil industry under effective Western control, and restored oil sales in dollars. Saddam Hussein was eventually captured and executed, becoming a stark symbol of what happens when a resource-rich country defies the monetary order imposed by Washington. The stated justifications of security and weapons of mass destruction failed to conceal the deeper economic motivations behind the war.

A similar pattern emerged in Libya less than a decade later. In 2009, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi proposed the creation of a gold-backed African currency, often referred to as the gold dinar, which he envisioned as a medium for selling oil and other resources. Such a currency would have undermined the dominance of the dollar and euro in African and Middle Eastern trade. In 2011, NATO forces bombed Libya under the banner of humanitarian intervention, and Gaddafi was brutally killed. With his death, the idea of the gold dinar was buried, and Libya was plunged into prolonged instability. Once again, a leader who sought monetary independence through control over natural resources was removed, and the global financial hierarchy remained intact.

Today, Venezuela stands at the centre of this unfolding historical continuum. Possessing oil reserves estimated to be five times larger than those of Iraq and Libya combined, Venezuela represents a far more

consequential challenge to the petrodollar system. Under President Nicolás Maduro, the country began selling oil in Chinese yuan and sought closer economic and strategic ties with China, Russia, and Iran, the three major powers most actively trading outside the dollar framework. Maduro also expressed Venezuela's desire to join the BRICS group, which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, a bloc actively developing payment systems that bypass the US dollar. Venezuela's estimated 303 billion barrels of oil would have significantly strengthened this alternative economic architecture. Compounding Washington's anger, Caracas expelled American oil corporations, asserting national control over resources that the US had long treated as its own.

The rhetoric from Washington has been revealing. Just weeks ago, US Homeland Security Advisor Stephen Miller declared that American sweat, intellect, and hard work had built Venezuela's oil industry, calling its nationalisation the largest robbery of American property in history. This argument implicitly claims that natural resources belong indefinitely to foreign corporations if they were first exploited by them, rendering every act of nationalisation across the Global South a form of theft. Such reasoning exposes the deeper anxiety behind US actions: the petrodollar system is showing signs of erosion. Russia, after its conflict with Ukraine, has shifted significant portions of its oil trade to rubles and yuan. Saudi Arabia has openly discussed settling oil trade in yuan. Iran has, for years, conducted energy transactions in currencies other than the dollar. The dollar's dominance is no longer unchallenged, and Venezuela's defiance threatens to accelerate this decline. Against this backdrop, the recent US military actions against Venezuela have drawn widespread condemnation. US President Donald Trump has claimed that the assault was intended to curb drug trafficking, eradicate terrorism, and restore democracy. Yet no credible evidence has been produced to show that Maduro leads a terrorist organisation, and the US continues to support Saudi Arabia, a country that has never held democratic elections. Trump, who once described himself as a messiah of peace and openly spoke about deserving the Nobel Peace Prize, has now overseen an attack that resulted in the detention of Venezuela's elected president. Images of Nicolás Maduro in custody circulating on social media have inevitably evoked memories of Saddam Hussein's capture, reinforcing fears that history is repeating itself with grim precision.

Reports indicate that US forces launched attacks in the early hours of Saturday, striking Caracas and key military installations such as the La Carlota airstrip and the Fuerte Tiuna base. Explosions were heard across residential areas, raising concerns about civilian casualties. The US Attorney General has announced legal proceedings against Maduro and his wife in the Southern

District of New York, while Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodríguez has publicly stated that the government lacks clear information about the president's condition. Venezuela's Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino López has confirmed troop deployments across the country and vowed resistance against foreign aggression, calling on citizens to unite against what he described as the greatest attack in the nation's history. Russia, China, and Colombia have all condemned the assault, with Moscow explicitly calling it an armed attack that must be denounced by the international community.

The personal history of Nicolás Maduro, as outlined by agencies such as Reuters, complicates the simplistic narratives often presented in Western media. Born into a working-class family on November 23, 1962, Maduro's father was a union activist, and Maduro himself drove a bus during Hugo Chávez's failed coup attempt in 1992. He later worked tirelessly to secure Chávez's release from prison and became a committed supporter of his Marxist vision. Maduro rose through the ranks of Venezuelan politics, serving as a parliamentarian, National Assembly president, and foreign minister before narrowly winning the presidency in 2013 after Chávez's death. His tenure has been marked by severe economic crisis, hyperinflation, shortages, and allegations of human rights abuses, including crackdowns on protests in 2014 and 2017. Yet these domestic failures do not negate the illegality of foreign military intervention or the right of a nation to control its own resources. The broader implications of the attack on Venezuela extend far beyond Latin America. BRICS nations are watching closely as a country that challenged the dollar faces military punishment. Trump's open suggestion that questioning the dollar could invite bombing may, paradoxically, hasten the currency's decline by convincing developing nations that collective resistance is their only defence against economic coercion. When a state must rely on bombs to sustain faith in its currency, that currency's moral and structural foundations are already eroding. If the confrontation escalates, it risks drawing in China, Russia, and Iran, potentially igniting a conflict with global consequences.

In the end, the assault on Venezuela represents more than a geopolitical dispute; it is a struggle over the future of the global financial system. By forcibly removing elected governments and installing compliant regimes, the United States seeks to preserve a monetary order that increasingly fails to compete on merit alone. Such actions undermine international law, weaken America's democratic credibility, and push the world closer to fragmentation and conflict. If history has taught anything, it is that empires that cling to dominance through force rather than consent hasten their own decline. Venezuela today stands where Iraq once stood, and the world must decide whether it will allow history to repeat itself yet again in silence. *(the writer can be reached at dipakkurmipltd@gmail.com)*

Social Media, Misinformation and Democratic Decline

Social media entered public life with the promise of democratisation of expression. It was celebrated as a platform that would flatten hierarchies, amplify marginal voices and make power more accountable by placing information directly in the hands of citizens. In its early years, it appeared to revive civic participation by connecting people across geography, class and ideology. Yet, over time, this promise has curdled into a paradox. The very platforms that claimed to strengthen democracy are now widely seen as contributing to its erosion. The unchecked spread of misinformation, the manipulation of public opinion and the weakening of democratic institutions have become defining features of the digital age, raising urgent questions about the future of democratic societies.

At the heart of this crisis lies the transformation of information itself. In traditional democracies, information moved through relatively slow, regulated and accountable channels such as newspapers, public broadcasters and academic institutions. These spaces were imperfect and often exclusionary, but they were bound by professional norms, editorial scrutiny and legal responsibility. Social media dismantled these gatekeeping mechanisms. Anyone can now publish anything instantly to a potentially global audience. While this has expanded freedom of expression, it has also collapsed the distinction between verified information, opinion, propaganda and outright falsehood. In this environment, truth competes on unequal terms with sensationalism, emotion and outrage.

Misinformation thrives on social media because of the economic logic that governs these platforms. Algorithms are designed not to promote accuracy or public interest but to maximise engagement. Content that provokes anger, fear or moral outrage travels faster and farther than nuanced analysis or verified reporting. False claims are often simpler, more dramatic and more emotionally charged than the truth,

giving them a structural advantage in digital spaces. Over time, users are nudged into echo chambers where their existing beliefs are reinforced and dissenting views are filtered out. This algorithmic curation fragments the public sphere, replacing shared realities with parallel versions of truth.

The consequences for democratic debate are profound. Democracy depends not only on free expression but also on a common factual ground on which disagreements can occur. When citizens no longer agree on basic facts, democratic deliberation becomes impossible. Political opponents are no longer seen as adversaries with different viewpoints but as enemies living in an entirely different reality. Social media accelerates this process by rewarding polarisation. Extreme voices gain prominence, while moderate and reasoned perspectives are drowned out. The result is a coarsening of public discourse that undermines mutual trust, a foundational element of democratic life.

Misinformation has also become a powerful political weapon. Organised campaigns, often backed by political parties, interest groups or even foreign actors, exploit social media to influence elections and public opinion. False narratives are carefully crafted and strategically disseminated to discredit opponents, delegitimise institutions and inflame social divisions. The speed and scale of social media make it difficult for fact-checkers or regulators to respond in time. By the time a false claim is debunked, it has already shaped perceptions and emotions. In many cases, the correction never reaches the same audience that consumed the falsehood.

This phenomenon has weakened faith in democratic institutions. When misinformation repeatedly portrays courts, election commissions, legislators or the media as corrupt or conspiratorial, public confidence erodes. Citizens begin to doubt not only specific decisions but the legitimacy of the system itself. This distrust creates fertile

ground for authoritarian narratives that promise strong leadership and simple solutions in place of democratic complexity. Ironically, platforms that were meant to empower citizens are increasingly being used to justify the concentration of power and the undermining of checks and balances.

The impact of social media misinformation is particularly severe in diverse and unequal societies. In countries with deep social, religious or ethnic divisions, false narratives can rapidly escalate into violence. Rumours spread through messaging platforms have triggered lynchings, communal clashes and mass panic. In such contexts, misinformation does not merely distort democratic debate but poses a direct threat to social cohesion and

DEGREE OF THOUGHT

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

public safety. The digital sphere amplifies existing prejudices, turning them into viral narratives that are difficult to contain.

Another troubling dimension is the erosion of journalism. Social media has disrupted the economic model of traditional news organisations, reducing advertising revenues and weakening professional reporting. At the same time, it positions itself as a substitute for journalism, even though it lacks editorial responsibility. News is consumed in fragmented snippets, often stripped of context. The authority of journalists is challenged by influencers, anonymous accounts and partisan pages that mimic the appearance of news without adhering to its standards. As trust in media declines, citizens become more susceptible to misinformation, creating a vicious cycle.

The psychological effects of constant exposure to misinformation further deepen democratic decline. Repeated encounters with conflicting claims can lead to information fatigue and cynicism. When people feel unable to distinguish truth from falsehood, they may dis-

engage altogether. This withdrawal from civic life weakens democratic participation and leaves decision-making to more organised and often more extreme groups. Democracy does not only collapse through coups or constitutional changes; it also withers when citizens lose faith in the value of informed engagement.

Attempts to regulate social media have so far produced mixed results. Governments face a genuine dilemma. On one hand, there is a need to curb harmful misinformation and hold platforms accountable. On the other hand, excessive regulation risks infringing on free expression and can be misused to silence dissent. In several cases, governments have invoked the fight against misinformation to justify censorship, surveillance and control over digital spaces. This selective approach undermines democratic norms and reinforces fears that regulation is less about protecting truth and more about protecting power.

Technology companies, for their part, have been reluctant to accept full responsibility. While they acknowledge the problem and invest in fact-checking initiatives or content moderation, these measures often remain reactive and insufficient. The fundamental incentive structure of these platforms remains unchanged. As long as profit depends on engagement, misinformation will continue to flourish. Self-regulation, driven by corporate interests, cannot substitute for a broader democratic conversation about the role of technology in public life.

Addressing the crisis requires a multi-layered response. Media literacy must become a central component of democratic education. Citizens need the skills to evaluate sources, question narratives and recognise manipulation. This is not merely a technical skill but a civic one, essential for participation in a digital democracy. At the same time, independent journalism must be strengthened through public support, legal protection and sustainable funding models. A healthy

democracy needs credible institutions that can counter misinformation with depth, context and accountability.

Equally important is the creation of transparent and accountable regulatory frameworks for social media platforms. These should be based on democratic principles rather than executive discretion. Clear standards for algorithmic transparency, data use and content moderation can help align digital platforms with the public interest. International cooperation is also crucial, as misinformation does not respect national boundaries. Democratic societies must recognise that the digital public sphere is now a shared global space requiring collective responsibility.

Ultimately, the challenge posed by social media and misinformation is not merely technological but moral and political. Democracy has always depended on a balance between freedom and responsibility. The digital age has expanded freedom of expression beyond anything previously imaginable, but responsibility has not kept pace. Reclaiming that balance is essential if democracy is to survive and adapt. Social media, like any powerful tool, can either strengthen or weaken democratic life. Its current trajectory suggests that without conscious intervention, it will continue to deepen divisions and corrode trust.

The decline of democracy in the age of social media is not inevitable. It is the result of choices made by governments, corporations and citizens. Recognising misinformation as a systemic threat rather than a series of isolated incidents is the first step towards addressing it. Democracy cannot function in an environment where truth is endlessly contested and manipulation is normalised. Preserving democratic values in the digital era demands vigilance, reform and a renewed commitment to the idea that informed citizens are the true foundation of self-governance. *(The author is the recipient of the 'Yuba Lekhak Samman - 2025' from the Government of Assam)*

Restore OPS: Secure retirement for government employees

By: Satyabrata Borah

The pension system for government employees in India has undergone significant transformations over the past two decades, reflecting a delicate balance between ensuring financial security for public servants and maintaining fiscal sustainability for the nation. At the heart of this evolution lies the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), a defined benefit plan that provided retirees with a guaranteed monthly pension equal to 50 percent of their last drawn basic pay, adjusted periodically for inflation through Dearness Relief. This scheme, inherited from the British era, offered unparalleled security: no contributions were required from employees, the government bore the entire cost, and families received continued support in the event of the employee's demise. For millions of government workers, OPS represented not just financial stability but dignity in retirement after years of dedicated service to the country.

However, the unfunded nature of OPS posed growing challenges. As India's workforce expanded, life expectancy increased, and salaries rose with periodic pay commissions, pension expenditures ballooned. By the early 2000s, pension outgo had become a substantial burden on the exchequer, diverting funds from critical areas like education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Studies highlighted that without reform, this liability could strain future generations, as current taxpayers funded pensions for past employees—a phenomenon known as intergenerational inequity. In response, the central government introduced the National Pension System (NPS) in 2004 for new recruits. NPS shifted to a defined contribution model, where employees contribute 10 percent of their basic pay plus Dearness Allowance, matched by a government contribution (initially 10 percent, later raised to 14 percent). The accumulated corpus is invested in market-linked instruments such as equities, bonds, and government securities, aiming for higher returns over the long term. At retirement, up to 60 percent can be withdrawn as a lump sum (tax-free), while the remainder purchases an annuity for monthly pension payments.

While NPS addressed fiscal concerns by creating a funded corpus and reducing unfunded liabilities, it introduced uncertainty. Pension amounts depend on market performance; poor returns could mean inadequate income in old age, especially amid inflation or economic downturns. Employees voiced strong dissatisfaction, arguing that public service jobs often involve lower salaries during active years, compensated by post-retirement secu-

rety. Protests erupted, and several states like Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh reverted to OPS for their employees, despite warnings from bodies like the Reserve Bank of India about escalating costs potentially crowding out developmental spending.

Recognizing these grievances, the central government launched the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) in 2024, effective from April 1, 2025. UPS serves as an optional alternative under the NPS framework, allowing existing NPS subscribers to switch irrevocably. It retains the contributory structure, employees contribute 10 percent, while the government ups its share to 18.5 percent, but guarantees benefits akin to OPS. Employees with at least 25 years of service receive 50 percent of the average basic pay over the last 12 months as pension, with a minimum of Rs 10,000 monthly after 10 years. Dearness Relief adjusts for inflation, family pension is assured at 60 percent, and a lump sum payment (1/10th of monthly emoluments for every six months of service) supplements gratuity without reducing the pension. As of early 2026, UPS has gained traction, with central employees exercising options and some states considering adoption, though uptake varies.

Comparing the three schemes reveals stark differences. OPS is fully government-funded with zero employee contribution, delivering fixed, inflation-indexed pensions but imposing heavy unfunded burdens—estimates suggest reverting nationally could multiply costs several times over NPS levels. NPS minimizes governmental liability through contributions and market investments, offering potential for higher corpora but exposing retirees to volatility. UPS strikes a middle path: contributory yet guaranteed, providing predictability without the full fiscal strain of OPS. For risk-averse employees valuing stability, UPS or OPS appeal more; those optimistic about markets might prefer NPS for larger lump sums.

Yet, even with UPS in place, demands for OPS restoration persist into 2026. Employee unions argue that while fiscal prudence matters, the government's primary duty is to safeguard those who serve the nation. Public servants often accept modest pay scales, remote postings, and demanding roles, relying on retirement security as deferred compensation. Market-linked schemes like NPS leave retirees vulnerable, especially lower-grade employees with smaller corpora. Moreover, a glaring disparity fuels resentment: Members of Parliament and state legislators continue to enjoy generous pensions under separate laws. Even a single term qualifies them for

lifelong benefits, often starting at substantial amounts with incremental increases for additional terms, plus Dearness Relief—all funded by taxpayers. Many politicians draw dual pensions if they served in both houses or held prior government posts. Critics highlight this as inequity: decades of service for ordinary employees yield uncertain or contributory pensions, while brief political tenures guarantee lavish security.

This perceived double standard amplifies calls for equity. If lawmakers retain OPS-like benefits, why deny them to bureaucrats, teachers, police, and other frontline workers who execute policies on the ground? Restoring OPS, proponents assert, would boost morale, attract talent to public service, and honor long-term contributions. In states that reverted, employee satisfaction reportedly rose, though at the cost of strained budgets.

On the fiscal side, the central government maintains that full OPS restoration is untenable. Pension expenditures already form a significant budget portion, and revival could derail deficit targets—projected at 4.4 percent of GDP for 2025-26 amid ongoing consolidation efforts. Resources must prioritize growth drivers like infrastructure and social welfare. UPS, officials contend, offers the best compromise: assured benefits funded sustainably through higher contributions and corpus investments.

Nevertheless, considering employees' future warrants serious reconsideration of OPS. In an era of rising living costs and longer lifespans, retirement anxiety undermines productivity and well-being. Government service demands sacrifice; denying secure pensions risks eroding public trust. While OPS marks progress, it falls short of OPS's complete assurance—no employee contributions, full government backing. With economic growth projected robustly and revenues improving, phased restoration could be feasible, perhaps limited to certain categories or offset by adjustments elsewhere.

Ultimately, the pension debate transcends numbers; it touches on fairness, gratitude, and societal values. Employees deserve peace of mind after lifelong service, free from market whims. Politicians' privileges underscore the need for uniform standards. As India aspires to developed status, investing in human capital includes securing retirees' dignity. Restoring OPS nationally may challenge budgets short-term but yield long-term gains in loyalty and efficiency. UPS provides a bridge, yet true security lies in reverting to the old scheme's promise: a guaranteed, worry-free retirement for those who build the nation.

'Tata Semiconductor Project at Jagiroad would generate employment for nearly 29,000 people'

Congress supports Bangladesh and Pakistan: Minister Pijush Hazarika



HT Correspondent
JAGIROAD, Jan 6: Jagiroad MLA and Water Resources Minister Pijush Hazarika on Tuesday launched his election campaign by participating in the BJP's wall-painting drive in Jagiroad, a

day after Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated the party's campaign by painting walls with party symbols.
 Speaking on the occasion, Hazarika said the BJP-led coalition government in Assam has

ushered in a new phase of development over the past 10 years, with visible progress at every level. He thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for their efforts in accelerating Assam's development.

Highlighting industrial growth, the minister said the Tata Semiconductor Project at Jagiroad would generate employment for nearly 29,000 people and is among five major projects being implemented in the country.

He said the project would create both direct and indirect employment opportunities for youths and described it as a matter of pride for the people of the Jagiroad constituency.

Hazarika further claimed that the Congress party supports Bangladesh and Pakistan and alleged that people of Assam no longer attach importance to the Congress's views because of what he termed the party's inclination towards the two neighbouring countries.

He asserted that the people of Jagiroad would remain grateful for what he described as the strong coordination between the Prime Minister and the chief minister, which, according to him, has played a key role in driving development across the State.

Preparatory meeting held in Diphu for Republic Day celebrations

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Jan 6: The District Administration, Karbi Anglong, on Tuesday convened a preparatory meeting in connection with the celebration of the 77th Republic Day, scheduled to be observed on January 26 at the Diphu Government Boys' Higher Secondary School playground. The meeting, held at 3 pm in the conference hall of the Circuit House, Diphu, was chaired by District Commissioner Aranyak Saikia and attended by officers from all line departments.

During the meeting, departmental duties and responsibilities were reviewed in detail to ensure the smooth and orderly conduct of the Republic Day programme.

Arrangements relating to the main ceremonial function, parade, security, logistics and inter-departmental coordination were discussed at length. The District Commissioner directed all concerned departments to ensure the timely completion of assigned responsibilities and maintain close coordination for the successful observance of the national event.

The meeting concluded with an emphasis on collective efforts to ensure that the Republic Day celebration is conducted in a dignified and orderly manner.

School timings rescheduled in Darrang due to cold wave

HT Correspondent
MANGALDAI, Jan 6: In view of the prevailing extreme cold wave, classroom timings of all government and private educational institutions in Darrang district have been rescheduled with effect from Tuesday.

According to an order issued by the Inspector of Schools, Darrang Circle, on Monday, the revised timing for Lower Primary schools will be from 10 am to 1 pm.

For Upper Primary to Higher Secondary levels, classes will be held from 10 am to 2 pm.

The order stated that the revised schedule will remain in force until further notice. However, the timing of examinations conducted by any examination-controlling authorities will remain unchanged.

Oath-taking ceremony of newly inducted CSB members held

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Jan 6: The oath-taking ceremony of the newly inducted members of the Central Selection Board (CSB) under the Government of the Bodoland Territorial Council was held on Monday at the conference hall of the BTC Secretariat in Kokrajhar.

A total of 11 members, including chairman Pradeep Kumar Brahma and vice-chairman Dipti Prasad Brahma, were administered the oath of secrecy by MC Sahu, Principal Secretary, BTC.

Other members who took the oath included Supriya Rani Brahma, Manoj Kumar Nath, Santosh Kumar Sah, Malati Rani Brahma, Nripen Sutradhar, Lata Lakra, Mohan Ch Basumatary and Tarani Kanta Madahi.

Ripen Daimari, who is also a member of the committee, could not attend the programme and will take the oath at a later date.

Following the ceremony, the newly inducted members proceeded to the Central Selection Board office near the Daily Market in Kokrajhar, where they formally assumed charge of their responsibilities.

Philanthropic initiatives by social worker Ranjit Borah across Barhampur region

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Jan 6: Prominent social worker Ranjit Borah has undertaken a series of philanthropic initiatives across the Barhampur region, extending support to religious, social, sports and cultural sectors with active public cooperation.

Recognising everyday challenges faced by rural communities, the need for social and religious reform and the shortage of sports facilities for youth, Borah has provided assistance in multiple fields with the aim of promoting equality, harmony and inclusive development.

His contributions include donating bricks for the Monikut of the main Namghar at Charchali Rangia village, corrugated tin sheets for the Namghar at Bamun Gaon and paving the floor of the Panchajanya Regional Namghar.

He also extended support to the



minority community by donating cement for the main masjids at Ramtila Ati and Halowagaon, providing financial assistance for the construction of a concrete boundary wall at the Potoni Masjid and supplying iron rods for the eidgah field gate at Bamuni Muslim Gaon.

In addition, Borah helped renovate the approach road to the church at Rangagara village.

Giving priority to youth development and sports, Borah provided a volleyball to the youth group of Halowagaon Potoni Jumumur and

arranged for the installation of a tube well on the pond bank for the youth group at Bamuni Gaon.

He also distributed tin sheets to economically weaker families in Jumumur to support housing needs.

As part of religious and cultural upliftment, Borah contributed tiles for the Mourachuk Namghar.

He also extended financial assistance to cultural and literary activities, including the annual convention of poets and litterateurs at Kamrup and the convention of the Tiwa Students' Union in Nagaon district.

The wide range of initiatives reflects Ranjit Borah's commitment to the holistic development of society, cutting across community lines, and has earned him recognition as a development-oriented figure working towards a more inclusive and harmonious future for the Barhampur region.

Traditional Jonbeel Mela with unique barter system to be held from Jan 22

HT Correspondent
JAGIROAD, Jan 6: The traditional Jonbeel Mela, known for its centuries-old barter system, will be held from January 22 to 24 at Jonbeel Pathar near Jagiroad. The mela will begin on January 22 with an auspicious puja at the Deosal Mandir. On the second day, the highlight of the festival—the traditional barter system between hill and plains communities—will take place in the morning. People from the plains will exchange items such as sandah (fried rice powder), pitha, laddu and raw fish with hill produce including ginger, spinach, garlic, la and dhuna, preserving an age-old practice of mutual exchange.

A mass fishing festival will also be organised at Jonbeel on the same day, open to all irrespective of caste, religion or community.

On January 24, the mela will be attended by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, along with several ministers and MLAs.

This year, around 60 villages from Karbi Anglong and 20 villages from Meghalaya are expected to participate in the mela, particularly in the barter exchange. During the Rajdarbar at the fairground, the chief minister will present Rajbhatts to 22 Tiwa kings of central Assam, continuing a traditional ceremonial practice. The festival will conclude with a mass fishing event at the Gobha Raja's Aram Beel and the symbolic collection of taxes by royal officials at the fairground. Organising committee secretary Jursingh Bordoloi said a mass tribute to Assam's heartbeat Zubeen Garg will also be organised during the mela.

Nagaon Lions Club distributes meals, sweets and drinking water

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, Jan 6: Marking the birth month of Melvin Jones, founder and guiding figure of the Lions Club International, the Nagaon Lions Club on Tuesday organised a meal distribution programme for the poor and destitute in the town.

As part of the initiative, club members dis-

tributed one meal, a packet of sweets and a bottle of drinking water to several needy people in front of Panchmukhi Hanuman Temple, Jagannath Temple and Gurusthan in Nagaon.

The programme was organised in remembrance of Melvin Jones, a social thinker dedicated to the upliftment of people irrespective of religion and caste.

Preparatory meeting held in Diphu ahead of CM's visit

HT Bureau
DIPHU, Jan 6: A preparatory meeting in connection with the proposed visit of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma from January 12 to 14, 2026, was held on Tuesday at the District Commissioner's Office conference hall in Diphu.

The meeting was chaired by District Commissioner, Karbi Anglong, Aranyak Saikia, IAS.

The meeting was attended by the Senior Superintendent of Police, the Additional District Commissioner, the Secretary of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), the Assistant Commissioner and officers from all concerned line departments.

Detailed discussions were held on arrangements for the distribution of cheques under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA).

Under the scheme, over 55,000 women beneficiaries from the Diphu and Howrahgaat Legislative Assembly Constituencies are ex-



pected to be covered.

The initiative is aimed at empowering women members of Self Help Groups to become rural micro-entrepreneurs, or 'Lakhpati Baideu', by enabling them to earn a minimum annual income of ₹1 lakh through grant-in-aid support provided as an Entrepreneurship Fund.

The District Commissioner as-

signed specific responsibilities to various line departments and laid special emphasis on the role of KAAC officials to ensure timely and coordinated completion of all arrangements.

He also said that any remaining issues or queries would be addressed in a subsequent preparatory meeting to be scheduled shortly.

BTAD Gaonburah Association conference concludes in Kokrajhar



HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, Jan 6: The 20th Foundation Day and fourth five-year triennial conference of the All

BTAD Gaonburah Association concluded on Tuesday after a two-day programme held at the Gaonburah Bhawan campus at Kargaon

in Kokrajhar district.

During the delegate session, members of the association held detailed discussions on issues related to the welfare and social well-being of citizens across the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts.

Several resolutions were adopted, focusing on long-pending issues and grievances faced by Gaonburahs in the region.

A new central committee of the association was constituted for a three-year term, with Robert Keretta elected as president and Birhang Mushahary as general secretary.

BTC executive member Lwmsrao Daimary attended the open session of the conference as the chief guest and addressed the gathering.

Earlier, outgoing association president Dhananjay Brahma hoisted the association flag, followed by floral tributes to Gopal Chandra Basumatary, the founder president of the association, marking the formal commencement of the conference proceedings.

NEP 2020 regional workshop on technology-enabled higher education begins at KKHSOU

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Jan 6: A three-day regional workshop on "NEP 2020 and Higher Education Leaders: Technology as an Enabler" began on Tuesday at the City Campus of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), Khana-

para. The programme is being organised by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi, in collaboration with KKHSOU.

The workshop aims to strengthen leadership capacities among higher education administrators and facilitate effective implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, with a special focus on the integration of technology and artificial intelligence in higher edu-

cation. A total of 54 participants from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya are taking part in the workshop, representing universities and colleges from across the North Eastern region.

The inaugural session is being graced by Prof Rajendra Prasad Das, Vice-Chancellor of KKHSOU; Prof Shashikala Wanjari, Vice-Chancellor of NIEPA; and Prof Ramesh Ch Deka, Vice-Chancellor of Cotton University, who is attending as the chief guest.

Vice-chancellors, deans, principals and senior academic administrators are participating in intensive interactive sessions focusing on outcome-based education, blended and experiential learning, curriculum redesign and the responsible

integration of generative AI in teaching, assessment and academic administration.

Renowned academicians from NIEPA, including Prof Kumar Suresh, Prof Pradeep Kumar Misra and Prof K Srinivas, are serving as resource persons.

The programme is being jointly coordinated by Dr Indrani Kalita and Dr Sanjib Borah of KKHSOU, with Dr Pranab Saikia, Professor and Dean, Study Centre (i/c), acting as the nodal officer.

The workshop will conclude on January 9 with a valedictory session, during which participants are expected to present institutional action plans for the technology-enabled implementation of NEP 2020.

Hojai District Day review meeting held ahead of January 25 celebrations

HT Correspondent
HOJAI, Jan 6: In preparation for the Hojai District Day celebrations scheduled on January 25, 2026, a review and planning meeting was held at the District Commissioner's Office conference hall on Tuesday under the chairmanship of District Commissioner Bidhyut Bikash Bhagwati.

During the meeting, the District Commissioner reviewed in detail the responsibilities assigned to members of various executive committees constituted on the basis of suggestions made in the earlier meeting held on December 24, 2025.

Stressing the importance of smooth coordination, he emphasised timely follow-up actions to ensure the successful conduct of the celebrations.

Describing Hojai as a "mini India", Bhagwati said the central attraction of the District Day programme—the cultural procession—will feature traditional folk dance troupes representing more than 20 ethnic and community groups from across the district.

The procession will also carry awareness campaigns and exhibitions on key social issues such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, prevention of child marriage, drug abuse prevention and road safety.

He added that exhibitions will display replicas of archaeological sites and highlight development initiatives and projects undertaken by various departments, with the objective of promoting Hojai as an emerging tourist destination.

The meeting also decided to felicitate individuals who have made notable contributions to the formation of Hojai district and its social life.

Members of the public have been invited to submit nominations along with relevant details via email at dchojai@gmail.com.

The review meeting was attended by Hojai MLA Ramkrishna Ghosh, Luming MLA Shibu Mishra, Senior Superintendent of Police VV Rakesh Reddy, Hojai Zilla Parishad president Junti Bora, representatives of various political parties and organisations, office-bearers of literary bodies, social workers, senior citizens, departmental heads and prominent members of Hojai civil society.

Participants offered several constructive suggestions and assured full cooperation to ensure the smooth and successful celebration of Hojai District Day.

IIE Guwahati hosts IAS officer trainees on Winter Study Tour

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, Jan 6: The Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India, hosted an exposure visit for IAS officer trainees of the 2025 batch as part of their Winter Study Tour.

Addressing the trainee officers, Pritam Dutta, IDAS, Director, MSDE and Director, IIE, spoke on the skill development and entrepreneurship landscape in India with special reference to the North Eastern Region.

He highlighted key policy priorities, institutional mechanisms and emerging opportunities aimed at inclusive and sustainable growth.

Kumar Padmapani Bora, IRS, Commissioner and Secretary, Tourism Department, Government of Assam, interacted with the



trainees and outlined the State's approach to skill development, entrepreneurship promotion and tourism-led initiatives.

He described tourism as a major driver of enterprise creation, stressing its role in strengthening local value chains, promoting indigenous products and services, and generating sustainable employment across the region.

PVSLN Murty, Chairman and

Managing Director of NEDFi, also addressed the officers, focusing on the role of the banking and financial sector in livelihood generation.

He emphasised the importance of institutional finance, credit linkages and development finance in nurturing entrepreneurship and supporting inclusive economic growth.

During the institutional pres-

entation and interactive discussions, various initiatives undertaken by IIE under different Government of India schemes were highlighted, showcasing the institute's contribution to entrepreneurship promotion, skill development and livelihood generation, particularly in the North Eastern Region.

The visiting delegation comprised 10 IAS officer trainees, including three officers from the Royal Bhutan Service, who actively participated in discussions on governance-led entrepreneurship and regional development perspectives.

ASS Devan, faculty member of IIE Guwahati, was also present during the programme.

The programme was coordinated by Dr Santanu Mohan Deka, associate faculty member and nodal officer for the event at IIE Guwahati.

Israel strikes multiple sites in Lebanon ahead of key disarmament meeting



SIDON, Jan 6: Israel's air force struck areas in southern and eastern Lebanon on Monday and early Tuesday, including in the country's third-largest city.

A strike around 1 a.m. Tuesday leveled a three-story commercial building in the southern coastal city of Sidon, a few days before Lebanon's army commander is scheduled to brief the government on its mission of disarming militant group Hezbollah in areas along the border with Israel.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun in a statement Tuesday condemned the attacks as counter to both international efforts to deescalate hostilities and Lebanon's efforts to extend the government's authority into areas long dominated by Hezbollah and to disarm militants.

An Associated Press photographer at the scene in Sidon said the area was in a commercial district containing workshops and mechanic shops and the building was uninhabited. At least one person was transported by ambulance and rescue teams were searching the site for others, but no deaths have been reported.

Israel's military said Tuesday they targeted weapons storage sites and infrastructure belonging to the militant groups Hezbollah and Hamas. They acknowledged the sites were located in civilian areas but blamed the groups for operating there.

The strikes were the latest in near-daily Israeli military action since a ceasefire signed more than a year ago that included a Lebanese pledge to disarm militant groups, which Israel says has not been fulfilled.

They took place nearly two hours after Israel's military Arabic language spokesman Avichay Adraee posted warnings on X that the military would strike targets in two villages in the eastern Bekaa Valley and two others in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said a home struck

in the village of Manara in the Bekaa Valley belonged to Sharhabil al-Sayed, a Hamas military commander who was killed in an Israeli drone strike in May 2024.

The areas were evacuated after Israel's warning. There were no reports of casualties in those strikes. Earlier Monday, Lebanon's Health Ministry said a drone strike on a car in the southern village of Braikheh earlier Monday wounded two people. The Israeli military said the strike targeted two Hezbollah members.

The Lebanese army last year began the disarmament process of Palestinian groups while the government has said that by the end of 2025 all the areas close to the border with Israel — known as the south Litani area — will be clear of Hezbollah's armed presence.

The Lebanese government is scheduled to discuss Hezbollah's disarmament during a meeting Thursday that will be attended by army commander Gen. Rudolph Haikal.

Monday's airstrikes were in villages north of the Litani river and far from the border with Israel.

The disarmament of Hezbollah and other Palestinian groups by the Lebanese government came after a 14-month war between Israel and Hezbollah in which much of the political and military leadership of the Iran-backed group was killed.

The latest Israel-Hezbollah war began Oct. 8, 2023, a day after Hamas attacked southern Israel, when Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel in solidarity with Hamas. Israel launched a widespread bombardment of Lebanon in September 2024 that severely weakened Hezbollah, followed by a ground invasion. The war ended in November 2024 with a ceasefire brokered by the U.S.

Israel has carried out almost daily airstrikes since then, mainly targeting Hezbollah members but also killing at least 127 civilians, according to the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. (AP)

At least 35 people have been killed, 1,200 detained in Iran's economic protests

DUBAI, Jan 6: The death toll in violence surrounding protests in Iran has risen to at least 35 people, activists said Tuesday, as the country's theocracy acknowledged the unrest in one western province where security forces reportedly raided a hospital.

The figure came from the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, which said more than 1,200 people have been detained in the protests, which have been ongoing for more than a week.

It said 29 protesters, four children and two members of Iran's security forces have been killed. Demonstrations have reached over 250 locations in 27 of Iran's 31 provinces.

The group, which relies on an activist network inside Iran for its reporting, has been accurate in the past.

The semiofficial Fars news agency, believed close to Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, reported late Monday that some 250 police officers and 45 members of the Guard's all-volunteer Basij force have been hurt in the demonstrations. However, Iran's government has offered no overall statistics or information about the unrest.

Iran promises Ilam investigation

Late Monday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian assigned the country's interior ministry to form a special team for a "full-fledged investigation" of what had been happening in Ilam province. Malekshahi County in Iran's Ilam province, some 515 kilometers (320 miles) southwest of Iran's capital, Tehran, has seen protesters killed as online videos purported to show security forces fir-



ing on civilians. The presidency also acknowledged an "incident in a hospital in the city of Ilam." Online video showed security forces wearing riot gear raiding a hospital, where activists said they were seeking demonstrators.

The hospital assault drew criticism from the US State Department, which, in Iran's Farsi language, called the incident "a crime."

"Storming the wards, beating medical staff and attacking the wounded with tear gas and ammunition is a clear crime against humanity," a post on the social platform X read. "Hospitals are not battlefields." A report by Fars earlier alleged, without offering evidence, that demonstrators carried firearms and grenades. Firearms are more prevalent in west-

ern Iran, along the border with Iraq, but there's been no clear evidence provided by the government to support allegations of demonstrators being armed. Ilam has hundreds of kilometers (miles) of border with Iraq.

Iran's rural Ilam province is mainly home to the country's Kurdish and Lur ethnic groups and faces severe economic hardship.

Protester deaths a focus of Trump

The growing death toll carries with it the chance of American intervention. US President Donald Trump warned Iran on Friday that if Tehran "violently kills peaceful protesters," the United States "will come to their rescue."

While it remains unclear how and if Trump will intervene, his comments sparked an immediate, angry response, with officials

within the theocracy threatening to target American troops in the Mideast. The comments took on new importance after the US military on Saturday captured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, a longtime ally of Tehran. The protests have become the biggest in Iran since 2022, when the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody triggered nationwide demonstrations. However, the protests have yet to be as widespread and intense as those surrounding the death of Amini, who was detained over not wearing her hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities.

Iran has faced rounds of nationwide protests in recent years. As sanctions tightened and Iran struggled after a 12-day war with Israel, its rial currency collapsed in December, reaching 1.4 million to USD 1. Protests began soon after, with demonstrators chanting against Iran's theocracy. On Tuesday, USD 1 traded at 1.46 million rials.

Understanding the scale of this latest round of protests has been difficult. Iranian state media has provided little information about the demonstrations. Online videos offer only brief, shaky glimpses of people in the streets or the sound of gunfire. Journalists in Iran also face limits on reporting in general, such as requiring permission to travel around the country, as well as the threat of harassment or arrest by authorities.

But the protests do not appear to be stopping, even after Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday said "rioters must be put in their place." (AP)

Activists march for justice in Hadi killing, demand work permit ban for Indians in Bangladesh

DHAKA/NEW DELHI, Jan 6:

Slain student leader Sharif Osman Hadi's party on Tuesday launched a day-long rally in Dhaka, pressing for justice in his killing, and demanding, among other measures, the cancellation of work permits of all Indians residing in Bangladesh.

As part of its four-point demand, Inqilab Moncho also sought the repatriation of the alleged killers who, it claims, have taken refuge in India, warning that Dhaka should move the International Court of Justice if New Delhi refuses to hand them over. The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

Indian authorities had dismissed claims that Hadi's killers crossed into India, saying there is no evidence of illegal border movement.

The "March for Justice" began around 11:30 am from Shahbagh, with activists travelling on 10 pickup vans and on foot through several major intersections, including Science Lab, Mohammadpur, Mirpur-10, Uttara, Bashundhara, Badda, Rampura and Jatrabari, before returning to Shahbagh in the evening, the newspaper quoted the

organisers as saying.

Participants said the protest was aimed at drawing attention to what they described as a "lack of progress" in the investigation into Hadi's killing, demanding that all those involved, including the killer, planners, accomplices and those who sheltered them, be brought to trial before the February 12 parliamentary elections.

During the march, demonstrators chanted slogans such as "We will not let Hadi's blood go in vain," "Why is the murderer free while my brother lies in the grave?" and "Red and green flag, the flag of Inqilab—you can see Hadi".

The protesters also demanded that alleged "fascist accomplices" within the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence must be identified, arrested and brought to justice, the report said. Hadi, 32, a prominent youth leader who rose to national prominence during the July-August 2024 mass protests that led to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government, was shot in the head on December 12 during an election campaign in Dhaka.

He was also a parliamentary candidate for the upcoming February 12 elections. Hadi was airlifted to Singapore for treatment but died on December 18. His killing has triggered fresh political unrest in Bangladesh and strained ties with India, after some groups alleged an Indian link to the crime.

New Delhi has strongly rejected the accusations, calling them a "false narrative".

"We have rejected the false narrative that has been projected in Bangladesh. The law and order situation and developments happening there is the responsibility of the government of Bangladesh. To portray a narrative where things go in another direction is completely false and we reject that," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said last month in New Delhi.

He said India stands for strengthening its ties with the people of Bangladesh and favours peace and stability in the country.

India has also sought a thorough probe into Hadi's killing amid a sharp downturn in ties between the two countries.

On Dec 28, Additional Police Commissioner (Crime and Operations) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police S N Md Nazrul Islam claimed in a press conference that the suspects, Faisal Karim Masud and Alamgir Sheikh, "crossed into the Indian state of Meghalaya via the Halaughat border with the help of local associates". Security agencies in Meghalaya dismissed the claims, describing them as "unfounded and misleading".

"There is no evidence to suggest that any individual crossed the international border from the Halaughat sector into Meghalaya. The BSF has neither detected nor received any report of such an incident." Border Security Force (BSF) chief in Meghalaya, Inspector General O P Opadhyay, had said. The Meghalaya Police also said there was "no input or intelligence to corroborate" the claim of the suspects' presence in the Garo Hills region.

The Garo Hills region falls under Meghalaya's western sector, which shares an international border with Bangladesh and is guarded by the BSF. (PTI)

Strong earthquake hits western Japan but no risk of tsunami



TOKYO, Jan 6: A strong earthquake hit western Japan on Tuesday, but there was no danger of a tsunami and no major damage or life-threatening injuries were reported.

The quake, with a preliminary magnitude of 6.2, occurred in Shimane prefecture in northwestern Japan, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. The agency later upgraded the quake to magnitude 6.4.

The prefectural capital of Matsue and nearby cities, including some in the neighbouring Tottori prefecture, were among the most strongly shaken.

The epicentre was located inland at a depth of about 10 kilometres (6.2 miles), the agency said, adding there was no risk of a tsunami.

JMA officials, however, cautioned residents in the region against the possibility of subsequent powerful quakes for about a week.

Local fire departments received several reports of minor injuries, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. Shinkansen bullet trains were temporarily suspended or delayed in the region.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority said no abnormalities were found at the Shimane nuclear power plant and a related facility in the region. Japan is on the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, which is one of the world's most earthquake-prone areas. (AP)

Another Hindu businessman killed in Bangladesh

DHAKA, Jan 6: A 40-year-old Hindu man, owner of a grocery shop, has been murdered after unidentified attackers struck him with a sharp weapon in Bangladesh's Narsingdi city, according to a local media report.

The incident took place on Monday night, hours after a Hindu businessman, who was also the acting editor of a newspaper, was fatally shot in the head by unidentified men in Jessore district of Bangladesh.

Moni Chakraborty was attacked and killed at Charsindhur Bazar in Palash Upazila around 11 pm on Monday, bdnews24 news portal reported.

Palash Police Station chief (OC) Shahed

Al Mamun said Moni was the son of Madan Thakur of Sadharchar Union in Shibpur Upazila.

Moni had been running a grocery shop at Charsindhur Bazar for a long time. He is the third Hindu businessman to be killed in recent weeks.

Police and local residents said Moni was returning home after closing his shop on Monday night when unidentified attackers struck him with a sharp, locally-made weapon.

He collapsed on the spot, the report added.

Locals rushed him to the Palash Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared



him dead. Police reached the scene immediately after receiving the information and have

launched an investigation to identify and arrest those responsible, Police OC Shahed said.

The body was sent to the Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The killing marks the latest in a spate of violent incidents against the Hindu community members.

On Monday only, 38-year-old Rana Pratap Bairagi, a resident of Arua village in Keshabpur upazila of Jessore in Khulna Division was fatally shot in the head by unidentified men.

The incident occurred around 5:45 pm at Kapalia Bazaar on Monday.

On January 3, Khokon Chandra Das

(50) died after he was brutally attacked, hacked and set on fire.

On December 24, another Hindu man, Amrit Mondal, was lynched over alleged extortion in Rajbari town's Pangsha upazila.

On December 18, Dipu Chandra Das (25) was lynched by a mob and his body set on fire over alleged blasphemy in Myensingh city.

Unidentified men set on fire Qatar expatriate workers Shukh Shil and Anil Shil's home in the Raojan area on the outskirts of Chattogram on December 23, but the residents managed to come out of the building unharmed. (PTI)

Rubio, Hegseth brief congressional leaders as questions mount over next steps in Venezuela

WASHINGTON, Jan 6: Secretary of State Marco Rubio and other top officials briefed leaders in Congress late Monday on the striking military operation in Venezuela amid mounting concerns that President Donald Trump is embarking on a new era of U.S. expansionism without consultation of lawmakers or a clear vision for running the South American country.

Republican leaders entered the closed-door session at the Capitol largely supportive of Trump's decision to forcibly remove Venezuela's president Nicolás Maduro from power, but many Democrats emerged with more questions as Trump maintains a fleet of naval vessels off the Venezuelan coast and urges U.S. companies to reinvest in the country's underperforming oil industry.

A war powers resolution that would prohibit U.S. military action in Venezuela without approval from Congress is heading for a vote this week in the Senate.

"We don't expect troops on the ground," said House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said afterward.

He said Venezuela's new leadership cannot be allowed to engage in narco-terrorism or the trafficking of drugs into the U.S., which sparked Trump's initial campaign of deadly boat strikes that have killed more than 115 people.



"This is not a regime change. This is demand for a change in behavior," Johnson said. "We don't expect direct involvement in any other way beyond just coercing the new, the interim government, to get that going."

Johnson added, "We have a way of persuasion — because their oil exports as you know have been seized, and I think that will bring the country to a new governance in very short order," he said.

But Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, emerged saying, "There are still many more questions that need to be answered."

"What is the cost? How much is this going to cost the United States of America?" Rep. Gregory Meeks

of New York, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said afterward.

<h2>Lawmakers were kept in the dark </h2>The briefing, which stretched for two hours, came days after the surprise military action that few, if any, of the congressional leaders, knew about until after it was underway — a remarkable delay in informing Congress, which has ultimate say over matters of war.

Administration officials fielded a range of questions — from further involvement of U.S. troops on the ground to the role of the Venezuelan opposition leadership that appeared to have been sidelined by the Trump administration as the country's vice president, Maduro ally Delcy Rodríguez, swiftly became the country's in-

terim president.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Air Force Gen. Dan Caine and Attorney General Pam Bondi, who brought drug trafficking charges against Maduro, all joined the classified session. It was intended for the called "gang of eight" leaders, which includes Intelligence committee leadership as well as the chairmen and ranking lawmakers on the national security committees. Asked afterward if he had any more clarity about who is actually running Venezuela, Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Intelligence Committee, said, "I wish I could tell you yes, but I can't."

Leaders of the Senate Judiciary Committee — Republican chairman Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa and ranking Democrat Sen. Richard Durbin of Illinois — said they should have been included in the classified briefing, arguing they have oversight of the Justice Department under Bondi.

Earlier in the day, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer warned that Trump's action in Venezuela is only the beginning of a dangerous approach to foreign policy as the president publicly signals his interests in Colombia, Cuba and Greenland.

"The American people did not sign up for another round of end-

less wars," Schumer said.

Afterward, Schumer said the briefing, "while extensive and long, posed far more questions than it answered."

Republicans hold mixed views reflective of the deepening schism within Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement as the president, who vowed to put America first, ventures toward overseas entanglements many lawmakers in both parties want to avoid — particularly after the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

<h2>No clarity on what comes next</h2>Next steps in the country, and calls for elections in Venezuela, are uncertain.

The Trump administration had been in talks with Rodríguez, who took the place of her ally Maduro and offered "to collaborate" with the Trump administration. Meanwhile, Trump has been dismissive of Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado, who last month won the Nobel Peace Prize for her struggle to achieve a democratic transition in her nation. Trump has said Machado lacks the "support" or "respect" to run the country.

But Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., a staunch Trump ally, said he plans to speak soon with Machado, and called her "very popular if you look at what happened in the last election." (AP)

Cuba faces uncertain future after US topples Venezuelan leader Maduro

HAVANA, Jan 6: Cuban officials on Monday lowered flags before dawn to mourn 32 security officers they say were killed in the US weekend strike in Venezuela, the island nation's closest ally, as residents here wonder what the capture of President Nicolás Maduro means for their future. The two governments are so close that Cuban soldiers and security agents were often the Venezuelan president's bodyguards, and Venezuela's petroleum has kept the economically ailing island limping along for years.

Cuban authorities over the weekend said the 32 had been killed in the surprise attack but have given no further details.

The Trump administration has warned outright that toppling Maduro will help advance another decades-long goal: Dealing a blow to the Cuban government.

Severing Cuba from Venezuela could have disastrous consequences for its leaders, who on Saturday called for the international community to stand up to "state terrorism." On Saturday, Trump said the ailing Cuban economy will be further battered by Maduro's ouster. "It's going down," Trump said of Cuba. "It's going down for the count."

Many observers say Cuba, an island of about 10 million people, exerted a remarkable degree of influence over Venezuela, an oil-rich nation with three times as many people. At the same time, Cubans have long been tormented by constant blackouts and shortages of basic foods. And after the attack, they woke to the once-unimaginable possibility of an even grimmer future. "I can't talk. I have no words," 75-year-old Berta Luz Sierra Molina said as she sobbed and placed a hand over her face.

Even though 63-year-old Regina Méndez is too old to join the Cuban military, she said that "we have to stand strong." "Give me a rifle, and I'll go fight," Méndez said. Maduro's government was shipping an average of 35,000 barrels of oil daily over the last three months, about a quarter of total demand, said Jorge Piñón, a Cuban energy expert at the University of Texas at Austin Energy Institute.

"The question to which we don't have an answer, which is critical: Is the US going to allow Venezuela to continue supplying Cuba with oil?" he said. Piñón noted that Mexico once supplied Cuba with 22,000 barrels of oil a day before it dropped to 7,000 barrels after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Mexico City in early September.

"I don't see Mexico jumping in right now," Piñón said. "The US government would go bonkers." (AP)

VB-G RAM G major reform, will strengthen rural livelihoods: Arunachal CM

'It will enable farmers to complete their farming activities without losing livelihood support'

ITANAGAR, Jan 6: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Tuesday asserted that the VB-G RAM G Act would strengthen rural livelihoods, improve accountability and align grassroots development.

The Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajevika Mission (Grameen) Act, or VB-G RAM G, replaced the MGNREGA enacted by the UPA government in 2005.

"It brings transformative reforms to MGNREGA by extending guaranteed employment to 125 days in comparison to the 100 days employment, prioritising durable rural infrastructure, and strengthening gram panchayat-led planning with clear accountability," Khandu told reporters here.

Khandu said the scheme "goes beyond welfare and reflects true nation building at the grassroots, empowering farmers, securing livelihoods, strengthening villages, and aligning rural India with the vision of 'Viksit



Bharat".

"There was no proper monitoring in the MGNREGA scheme, which had many loopholes. These will be cor-

rected through VB-G RAM G," the CM claimed.

Khandu said it focuses on four core areas - water security, strengthening

rural infrastructure, livelihood infrastructure and climate resilience.

For farmers, the scheme provides flexibility by allowing a 60-day break during the agricultural harvesting season, he said.

"This will enable farmers to complete their farming activities without losing livelihood support," Khandu said.

Responding to queries, the chief minister said the funding pattern would be 90:10 for the northeastern states, while it would be 60:40 in the rest of the country - 60 per cent by the Centre and 40 per cent by the states.

Slamming the opposition for criticising the scheme, Khandu asserted that programmes under the Congress regime were "riddled with loopholes and lacked strong verification mechanisms, leading to misuse of funds through fake and duplicate job cards, ghost beneficiaries and inflated or fabricated muster rolls". (PTI)

Protest held in Tripura against persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh

Demands to halt trade, boycott of Bangladeshi products

HT Correspondent

AGARTALA, Jan 6: The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), along with members of the Sanatani community from North Tripura, organized a protest and rally on Tuesday at the Raghna Border along the India-Bangladesh frontier in Tripura's North District.

The demonstration was held to protest alleged atrocities, persecution, and targeted violence against Hindu minorities in Bangladesh.

The protest began around noon at BBI Maidan in Dharmanagar, where a large number of participants gathered before proceeding in a bike and vehicle rally towards the Raghna Border.

Upon reaching the border area, the protesters staged a peaceful demonstration, demanding the immediate suspension of import and export activities

between India and Bangladesh through the Raghna Land Customs Station (LCS).

Leaders of the VHP submitted a memorandum to senior administrative officials, expressing "grave concern and deep resentment over the continuous atrocities, systemic persecution, and targeted killings of minority Hindus in neighboring Bangladesh."

The memorandum stated that the recurring violence had "reached an unbearable limit," prompting the people of North Tripura to oppose any form of trade, commerce, or communication with Bangladesh through the border.

"We strongly demand the immediate closure of the Raghna Border and the suspension of all bilateral trade activities. National dignity and the safety of our community must take precedence

over economic relations," the memorandum read, urging the administration to convey their concerns to higher authorities.

Addressing the media, rally coordinator Birendra Das said the protest was organized in response to the killing of Hindu youth Dipu Chandra Das in Bangladesh, along with continued reports of violence against Hindus and other minority communities.

He called for exemplary punishment for those responsible for the killing and demanded concrete measures to ensure the safety and security of minorities in Bangladesh.

The protesters also appealed to Indian citizens to boycott Bangladeshi products and called for a complete halt to bilateral trade until incidents of violence against Hindus cease.

4 killed, several injured as pick-up van falls into gorge

CHURACHANDPUR, Jan 6: Four people, including three women, were killed and several others injured after a pick-up van fell into a gorge in Manipur's Churachandpur district on Tuesday, police said.

Around 30-40 people were travelling in the truck, which was hired for a wedding, they said.

The accident happened around 12 pm near the remote Ngajiang village in the Singnat sub-division of the district, they added.

The vehicle could not negotiate a sharp turn and fell into the gorge, police said.

The deceased were identified as Thangmuanmung Khuotong, Hauchiin, Chingngaihsiam and Ni-angzaniang, they said. (PTI)

Arunachal CM promises strict action in Frontier Highway land compensation 'scam'

ITANAGAR, Jan 6: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Tuesday asserted that strict action will be taken against those found guilty in an alleged Rs 130-crore land compensation scam linked to the Lada-Sarli stretch of the state's Frontier Highway.

Khandu said the government's one-man inquiry committee has already submitted its report on the matter. The CM also said that the Arunachal Pradesh government has ordered fresh verification of land ownership records and compensation payments related to the Lada-Sarli stretch.

On demands from some quarters to hand over the case to central agencies, Khandu told reporters that the state government does not have the authority to take a call on it.

"The stretch of the highway is being funded by the Centre, and it can direct either the ED or the CBI to investigate the case," he said.

The "scam" pertains to alleged irregularities in land compensation disbursed for the 125.5-km Lada-Sarli segment of the strategic Arunachal Frontier Highway, aimed at improving connectivity along the India-China border. Earlier, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) had arrested the land revenue and settlement officer of East Kameng district in connection with the case. (PTI)

Parts of Mizoram experience sharp drop in temperatures, IMD warns of dense fog

AIZAWL, Jan 6: Parts of Mizoram witnessed a sharp drop in temperatures over the past few days, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting dense fog and very poor visibility across the state, officials said.

Sudheer Kumar Dwivedi, Director of the Aizawl Meteorological Centre, said minimum temperatures began dipping with the onset of January, and have been lower than last year's levels.

Between January 2 and January 6, minimum temperatures ranged from 6.1 to 9 degrees Celsius in Lengpui and 7.2 to 10.7 degrees Celsius in Aizawl, he told PTI.

During the same period, maximum temperatures ranged between 18.7 and 22.6 degrees Celsius in Lengpui and 19.2 to 23.2 degrees Celsius in Aizawl, he said.

IMD officials said minimum temperatures between 4 and 7 degrees Celsius were recorded over the past three days in south Mizoram's Lunglei and Champhai districts, which border Myanmar.

It also forecast dense fog across all districts for the next two days, with "very poor visibility" of less than 10 metres.

Advising farmers to take precautions, the department said excess irrigation should be avoided and proper field drainage ensured.

The IMD also warned that foggy conditions coupled with low night temperatures could increase the incidence of fungal diseases. (PTI)

NFR records 8.7 per cent growth in freight unloading

HT Bureau

MALIGAON, Jan 6: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) maintained strong operational performance in freight services during December 2025, registering an 8.7 per cent growth in unloading activity compared to the same period last year.

During the month, NFR unloaded 1,287 freight-carrying rakes across its jurisdiction, against 1,184 rakes handled in December 2024.

The zone ensured smooth and uninterrupted transportation of a wide range of essential and non-essential commodities, including FCI rice, sugar, salt, edible oil, foodgrains, fertilisers, cement, coal, vegetables, automobiles, tankers and other goods.

These consignments were handled efficiently at various goods sheds across the zone, ensuring timely supply and operational reliability. A substantial portion of freight movement was dedicated to meeting the requirements of the northeastern states.

Assam alone accounted for the unloading of 689 rakes, of which 351 carried essential commodities, highlighting the critical role of the Railways in supporting public dis-

tribution systems and daily consumer needs.

During the same period, 106 rakes were unloaded in Tripura, 23 in Nagaland, nine in Arunachal Pradesh, 23 in Manipur, three in Meghalaya and 22 in Mizoram.

In addition, areas under NFR jurisdiction in West Bengal recorded unloading of 225 rakes, while Bihar accounted for 187 rakes, comprising both essential and non-essential commodities, thereby strengthening inter-regional supply chains.

Officials said the uninterrupted movement of essential commodities is vital for meeting daily requirements of the population, while the transportation of industrial and other goods plays a key role in supporting economic activity across the region.

Close monitoring at all operational levels and coordinated efforts by field units have helped reduce turnaround time and improve overall unloading efficiency.

The performance, NFR said, reaffirms its commitment to operational excellence, reliability and its pivotal role in driving socio-economic development across the Northeast and adjoining regions through efficient freight operations.

Probe into Manipur twin blasts handed over to NIA

IMPHAL, Jan 6: The investigation into the twin blasts in Manipur's Bishnupur district was handed over to the NIA, officials said on Tuesday.

Two persons were injured in the consecutive explosions that rocked Ngaukon in the Phougakchao police station area on Monday morning, they said.

The first blast, suspected to have been caused by an improvised explosive device (IED), occurred around 5.45 am at an abandoned house. The second one occurred nearly 200 metres away around 8.45 am, when locals gathered after getting news of the earlier blast.

"The case has been forwarded to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for further investigation," a statement issued by the state police said.

"Combing and search operations are being carried out in the adjoining areas, and security has been strengthened to prevent any further escalation of violence. Investigation and operational efforts are underway to identify and apprehend those responsible for the blasts," it said.

The incident further escalated tensions in the restive state, where over 260 people have been killed and thousands left homeless in the ethnic clashes that broke out in May 2023.

The house, where the first explosion happened, has remained abandoned since ethnic violence broke out, with its owner and his family currently living at a relief camp.

Several organisations, including the Indigenous People Organisation and the All Manipur Students' Union, called for a 24-hour shutdown across the state, starting 12 am on Wednesday, to protest the blast.

Meitei civil organisation Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (CO-COM) demanded an immediate, transparent and time-bound investigation into the blasts.

Manipur has been under the President's Rule since February 2025, after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned amid criticisms of his administration's handling of the ethnic clashes between Kukis and Meiteis. (PTI)

INVITATION

eCF No.FISH/382513/93

It is hereby informed to all the candidates selected by the State Level Recruitment Commission (SLRC) under the Fishery Department, Government of Assam, that the distribution of appointment letters will be conducted as per the venue, date, and time mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Grade	Venue	Date	Time
1.	Grade IV	Jyoti Bishnu Antartatik Kala Mandir, Khanapara, Guwahati	09-01-2026	11:00 AM
2.	Grade III	Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah Sports Complex, Sarusajai, Guwahati	10-01-2026	11:00 AM
3.	Tea Tribes Candidates selected under Tea Tribe Quota	Venue will be notified shortly	-	-

Important Instructions:

- Each candidate is permitted to be accompanied by **only one family member**.
- Candidates are advised to **report at the venue by 9:30 AM positively**.
- Appointment letters shall be collected from the **designated stall of the Fishery Department** at the venue.
- Candidates must bring a copy of his/her Admit card generated for the purposes of appearing in the ADRE exam for verification.

Sd/-

Additional Secretary to the Govt. of Assam,
Fishery Department,
Dispur, Guwahati-6

DIPR /D/HLT/269/7-Jan-26

No.DMCH/MRU/2026/003

ADVERTISEMENT

The following vacancy shall be filled purely on temporary and contractual basis under the project entitled "Vector bionomics and vectorial capacity for Aedes and anopheles mosquitoes and knowledge and behavioral practices for transmission and prevention of dengue and malaria among the population of Karbi Anglong District of Assam and Dhalai district of Tripura", funded by Department of Health Research, Government of India, in the Multi-disciplinary Research Unit (MRU), Diphu Medical College and Hospital.

Date of Interview: 12/01/2026

Time: 11:00 AM

Venue: Academic Block, Diphu Medical College and Hospital, Baghmari, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam, 782460.

Sl. No.	Name of Post	Number of Post	Monthly Remuneration	Minimum Qualification	Age limit
1.	Laboratory Technician	1	(20000+ Applicable HRA)	Essential: B.Sc. (MLT) from recognized university (Registered) OR Diploma MLT from recognized university (Registered) Desirable: ■ The candidate having experience in ICMR/DHR/IDSP/CSIR/DBT/ any other project/Medical college. ■ Knowledge of computer application/Data management. Note: Preference will be given to candidate having BSc MLT over the DMLT	21-30 years

General Terms and Conditions:

- The Interview will be Walk-in-Interview along with a Skill Test.
- The candidates will have to bring the signed copy of **bio-data and photocopy** of all supporting documents along with the **original documents** for verification.
- No TA/DA will be paid for attending Interview.
- The appointment will be valid for the **period of 11 months** only and will be co-terminated with the Project.
- The posts are purely temporary and are based on the tenure of the project. However, the appointment can be terminated at any time even before the end of the contract period due to any reason. In case of such premature termination, one month's notice or one month's salary in lieu of the same will be provided. The same will not hold true in case of premature termination due to performance related issues. Candidate can leave the job prematurely giving one month's notice or one month's salary in lieu of the same.
- Candidates are advised to bring Two recent self signed passport sized colored photographs.
- Other instruction:**
 - These are purely contractual posts and as such they will not have any claim whatsoever for regularization neither in DMCH&H, Diphu, nor at DHR/ICMR. The mere fulfillment of requisite essential qualification/experience does not guarantee selection.
 - During the period of the project as well as on its termination, the DMCH, Diphu as well as DHR will have no legal liabilities relating to staff.
 - Performance will be assessed on a regular basis.
 - No TA/DA will be paid, neither for appearing in the interview nor for joining the assignment and for the period of work.
- The pay band for the above mentioned posts is subject to payment as per latest DHR guidelines and receipt of funds from the funding authority.

Sd/-

Principal-Cum-Chief Superintendent
Diphu Medical College & Hospital
Diphu:::Assam

DIPR /D/HLT/268/7-Jan-26

Silver Jubilee celebrations of Si-Donyi Hilo observed at Mechuka

HT Correspondent

MECHUKA, Jan 6: The Tagin community of Shi-Yomi district celebrated the Silver Jubilee of Si-Donyi Hilo at Mechuka with traditional fervour and gaiety.

The festival, which honours the Earth (Si) and the Sun (Donyi), marked 25 years of its observance in the district, having been first celebrated in 2001.

Deputy Commissioner of Shi-Yomi district Tungge Loya attended the celebrations as the chief guest, while Tanil Komi, President of the Boh Ramo Bokar Welfare Society, was the guest of honour.

Minister for Labour and Employment, Information and Public Relations Nyato Dukam graced the occasion as chief patron, along with Additional Deputy Commissioner of Mechuka Tana Yaho as patron.

Special guests at the programme included Superintendent of Police, Shi-Yomi district Sang Khandu Thongdok and Norbu Tsering Naksang, President of the Neh Nang Cultural Development Society.



The celebrations began with traditional prayers offered at the Yagging (altar), seeking prosperity and protection, followed by colourful traditional dance performances by community members.

Members of the first Si-Donyi Hilo Celebration Committee of Mechuka, 2001, were felicitated for their pio-

neering role in initiating the festival in the district.

Addressing the gathering, Tungge Loya emphasised the importance of preserving cultural identity through the celebration of indigenous festivals and called for strengthening brotherhood and unity among different communities by participating in one

another's cultural events.

Minister Nyato Dukam also highlighted the need to ensure continuity of traditional practices and encouraged the Tagin community of Shi-Yomi district to uphold their customs and celebrate Si-Donyi Hilo in an even grander manner in the years to come.

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL.

KAAC SECRETARIARY: DIPHU
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION
NOTICE INVITEING TENDER

No. KAAC/TAX/NIT for sale of E.T.Gs, Markets, etc. /2025-26/8649(III) 12/260 Dtd. 31/12/2025. Sealed tender affixing non-refundable Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council money receipt worth Rs. 1000/- (Rupees One thousand) only are hereby invited from intending Tenderers for sale of Entry Tax gates, markets (Daily and weekly), Ghats, Fisheries, cattle pounds under Diphu / Phuloni/ Silonijan/ Donka Revenue Circle for the year 2026-27. The same shall be received up to 2 pm on or before 21/01/2026 by the undersigned at the office of Superintendent of Taxes, KAAC, Diphu for Diphu Phuloni/Silonijan/Donka Revenue Circle and at the office of OSD, KAAC Branch Secretariat, Hamren for Donka Revenue Circle and shall be opened on the same day in presence of tenderers or their authorized agents. The tender application form and detailed particulars of the items may be collected from the office of Superintendent of Taxes, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu, and also in the office of the OSD, Hamren Branch Secretariat, Hamren during office hours. The intending Tenderers shall have to pay Rs.1000/- (Rupees one thousand) only against the cost of tender application form for sale of Markets, Entry Tax gates, Fisheries, Ghats, and Cattle Pounds. The terms & Conditions are as follows.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-

The following terms and Conditions must be fulfilled by the Tenderers.

- (a) Incomplete/ irregular application and documents are liable to be rejected.
 (b) The Tenderers must furnish Professional Tax Clearance Certificate Valid up to 31/03/2025.
 (c) Trading License duly renewed up to 31/12/2026 must be furnished by non-tribal Tenderers.
 (d) The Tenderers belonging to Scheduled Tribe (Hills) must furnish NOC/Caste Certificate (Tribe Certificate) in lieu of Trading License issued by competent authority.
- The Tenderers shall furnish Land Revenue Clearance Certificate Valid up to 31/12/2025 issued by the concerned Assistant Revenue Officer, KAAC. The Tenderers must have annual/ periodic Patta of his own/ either of his/her parent.
- Tenderers shall deposit % (one-fourth) as earnest money against Govt. Value quoted in the NIT by way of original demand draft/Bankers Cheque from any Nationalized Bank pledged in favour of the "Superintendent of Taxes", Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu, without which the tender will be rejected outright.
- Separate tender application form supported by required documents must be submitted against each item.
- Tender submitted by Tax defaulters / incomplete documents or any document found to be forged or submitted will be rejected out rightly.
- The Selected Tenderers shall deposit the settled amount in 1(one) installment within 7 (Seven) days from the date of issue of settlement order failing which the settlement order shall be Cancelled and the security amount liable to be forfeited.
- The Selected Tenderers shall enter into Deed of Agreement on a non-judicial stamp on appropriate value for execution of Lease for collection of tolls/Tax.
- The authority of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council shall have the discretion on settlement of any market/ Entry Tax gate/ Fishery/ Ghat/ Cattle pound with the highest bidder with regular tenderer.
- The name of Market/Entry Tax Gate/Fishery/Ghat/Cattle pound should be written in "BLOCK LETTERS on the application Format in every column with self-attested signature on the documents.
- The name of Tenderer and the name of market/ Entry tax gate etc should be written in 'BLOCK LETTER' and clear handwriting on the envelope of the tender application form.
- Tender in prescribed format shall be submitted by the Tenderers along with required and relevant documents and the same relevant and required documents shall be attested by the tenderers themselves. Any documents submitted with the tender application without self-attestation by the tenderers themselves shall be liable for rejection.
- Earnest money shall be released to the unsuccessful tenderers after completion of the settlement process.
- Earnest money shall not be released if settlement holder fails to deposit the entire settlement amount within the stipulated period as noted in condition No.-6 and also shall be liable to be black listed.
- Earnest money of successful Tenderers shall be released after completion of full Term of Lease period, except in the event of unavoidable circumstances with due approval from the KAAC authority.
- In a circumstances, when bids could not be invited before the expiry of the current term due to certain events like election year, etc. then the lessee shall be granted extension till further orders. Consequently, the earnest money shall be adjusted and supplemented by the lessee with the extension period, whichever be the case. The existing lessee shall continue with the lease period with payment above 2% (two percent) from the current settlement amount.
- In case the last date of receipt of the sealed tender falls on holiday/under NI Act. Tender will be received and opened on the next working day.
- All lessees shall collect entry tax/market tolls as per prescribed rate approved by KAAC.
- The tender papers and documents shall be properly scrutinized by the Tender committee before preparation of Comparative Statement (C/S) and the tenderer shall produce all documents in original.
- The decision of KAAC authority shall be final in any dispute relating to settlement/ cancellation of gates, markets etc.
- The terms of lease is from 1 April 2026 to 31 March' 2027.
- The tenderers offering more than 2% (Two percent) above the Govt. value or offering below the govt. value of the current year i.e 2026-27 shall be summarily rejected.
- The Existing Lessee shall continue with his/her leasehold of the E.T.G/ Market etc in question, if bids / Tender could not be invited due to any unforeseen, unavoidable circumstances, situations, until further orders.
- The list of items and its Govt valuation is at Annexure-A.

ANNEXURE-A

Govt. Valuation of Entry Check Posts under Diphu, Phuloni and Silonijan Revenue Circles for the Year 2026-27

Sl. No.	ENTRY CHECK POST NAME	Govt. Value for the year 2026-27	Earnest Money for the year 2026-27
1	BORLANGPHER ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 7,18,756	₹ 1,79,689
2	RONGAPAHAR CROSSING ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 1,08,784	₹ 27,196
3	LAHORIJAN NH-36 ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 40,99,770	₹ 10,24,943
4	HOWRAGHAT ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 13,43,720	₹ 3,35,930
5	PAROKHOWA ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 1,81,40,554	₹ 45,35,138
6	GARAMPANI ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 1,70,00,000	₹ 42,50,000
7	HOLLOWKHUWA ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 10,52,885	₹ 2,63,221
8	LAHORIJAN NH 39 ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 73,54,171	₹ 18,38,543
9	KHATKHATI ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 2,80,000	₹ 70,000
10	BOGIJAN ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 1,88,026	₹ 47,007
11	TARADONG ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 4,24,257	₹ 1,06,064
12	BHORBHETA ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 64,727	₹ 16,182
13	KOSANG ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 16,646	₹ 4,162
14	BELTOLA (ALLUBARI) ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 6,91,867	₹ 1,72,967
15	RONGMONGVE ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 1,10,397	₹ 27,599

16	BALIJAN ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 2,39,521	₹ 59,880
17	ANJOK PANI ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 39,732	₹ 9,933
18	PARKUPPAHAR ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 536	₹ 134
19	RONGAGORA ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 23,400	₹ 5,850
20	CHOTOLENGRI ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 1,97,240	₹ 49,310
21	RANGSALI ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 1,81,571	₹ 45,393
22	DEOPANI PER GHAT ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 10,40,400	₹ 2,60,100
23	NH-29 (KHATKHOTI) ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 1,12,21,122	₹ 28,05,281

Govt. Valuation of Markets under Diphu Revenue Circle For the Year 2026-27.

Sl. No.	Name of Market/Cattle pounds	Govt. Value for the year 2026-27	Earnest Money for the year 2026-27
1	Longnit weekly market/daily market	61,000/-	15,250/-
2	Daldoll weekly market	20,000	5,000/-
3	Theso Ajur weekly market	10,000/-	2,500/-
4	Rongklarbong weekly Market Hidisajir, Birla, Diphu	10,000/-	2,500/-

Govt. Valuation of Markets under Phuloni Revenue Circle for the Year 2026-27.

Sl. No.	Name of markets/Fisheries/Ghats/cattle pounds	Govt. Value for the year 2026-27	Earnest Money for the Year 2026-27
1	Rajapathar weekly market	92,259/-	23065/-
2	Rajapathar daily market(6 days in a weekly market)	5,100/-	1,275/-
3	Hatidandi Weekly market	9,704/-	2,426/-
4	Samuguri weekly market	37,5871-	9,397/-
5	Samuguri D/market (6 days in a week)	7,854/-	1,964/-
6	Uttarborbil w/market 2days in a week	89,770/-	22,443/-
7	Sangtimili W/market (PankumarBaligoan) 2days in a week	13,362/-	3,341/-
8	Panditghat W/market	10,645/-	2,661/-
9	Panditghat D/market	5,000/-	1,250/-
10	Jaipong w/market	7,850/-	1,963/-
11	Selawar Langteng W/market	5,000/-	1,250/-
12	Dentaghat W/market	1,03,969/-	25,992/-
13	Tekelangjun (Baghpani) weekly market	6,898/-	1,724/-
14	Paklongkam weekly market	6,763/-	1,691/-
15	Howraghat Tinali weekly market	10,000/-	2,500/-
16	Howraghat Tinali D/market 6days in a week	10,000/-	2,500/-
17	Kalibheti weekly market	10,000/-	2,500/-
18	Rongagora weekly market	10,000/-	2,500/-

Govt. Valuation of Fisheries and Ghats and Cattle Pound under Phuloni Revenue Circle For the Year 2026-27.

Sl. No.	Name of fisheries	Govt. Value for the year 2026-27	Earnest Money for the Year 2026-27
1	Patradisha to Serakani river fishery	510/-	128/-
2	Dighalpani fishery	510/-	128/-
3	Barganga Fishery	510/-	128/-
4	Jamuna Digharu fishery	714/-	179/-
5	Dighalpani-jamunamukh River fishery from Kasojan via Dighalpani to Serakani	624/-	156/-
6	KurjotRongmongve to Kaipanimukh over Dhansiri river	2,040/-	510/-

Ghats

1	Panditghatghat	1212/-	303/-
2	Chitalmarighat to Hidibonglong ghat	500/-	125/-

CATTLE POUNDS

1	Bokolla C/Pound	510/-	128/-
2	Balijan C/P	510/-	128/-
3	BaroiChonkar C/P	510/-	128/-
4	Era Engti C/P	510/-	128/-
5	Kam Engtigaon	510/-	128/-
6	Kalatora Engti	510/-	128/-
7	Langbungdingpi C/P	510/-	128/-
8	Narlongati C/P	510/-	128/-
9	Phonglokpet C/P	510/-	128/-
10	Phonglokpet (Phangchogaon C/P	510/-	128/-
11	RongkutSobaiKro C/P	510/-	128/-
12	Rajapothar C/P	510/-	128/-
13	Simoluguri C/Poud	510/-	128/-
14	Upper Phonglokpet C/P	510/-	128/-
15	Cherop-abiRongphargaon C/P	510/-	128/-
16	Tarabasa C/P	510/-	128/-
17	Tongprok Beygaon C/P	510/-	128/-
18	Kakijan C/Pound	510/-	128/-
19	Ramiokjan C/P	510/-	128/-
20	Sampothar C/P	510/-	128/-
21	Nihang Engligaon C/P	510/-	128/-
22	Phuloni C/P Near Circle office	510/-	128/-
23	Phongbirik CIP	510/-	128/-
24	Centre bazar C/Pound	510/-	128/-
25	OkerengRongkimi C/P	510/-	128/-
26	MetekaJonghar Teranggaon C/P	510/-	128/-
27	Hatipura C/P	510/-	128/-
28	Rongmongve C/P	510/-	128/-
29	Magumari C/P	510/-	128/-
30	Dokmoka C/P	510/-	128/-
31	Kiurdung C/P	510/-	128/-
32	Bokolla Udharjan C/P	510/-	128/-
33	Eradighalpani C/P	510/-	128/-
34	Bokolla Ram TerangGaon C/P	510/-	128/-
35	Rajpur No-1 Kosomary C/P	510/-	128/-
36	Joypur and Kurmi C/P	510/-	128/-
37	Okerengdighalpani C/P	510/-	128/-

(CONTD. FROM PAGE-8)

38	Jamuna Jangpong C/P	510/-	128/-
39	Bokolja Udali C/P	510/-	128/-
40	Langhinmahikpur C/P	510/-	128/-

Govt. Valuation of Markets under Silonijan Revenue Circle For the Year 2026-2027.

Sl. No	Name of Markets	Govt. Value for the year 2026-27	Earnest Money for the Year 2026-27
1	Dillal weekly Market	48,550/-	12,138/-
2	Dillal D/market 6 days in a week	2,550/-	638/-
3	Hidipi weekly market	91,800/-	2295
4	Saijang weekly market	30,100/-	7,525/-
5	Lahorijan NH-39 D/market 7 days in a week	4,94,904/-	1,23,726/-
6	Khatkhoti W/market 2days in a week	4,94,904/-	1,23,726/-
7	Khatkhoti Dimarket 5days in a week near Bongrungbosti	1,15,756/-	28,939/-
8	Khatkhoti D/m 7days in a week near forest gate	1,34,028/-	33,507/-
9	2 miles Bokajan seasonal market	1,250/-	313/-
10	Sarihajan W/market	1,69,200/-	42,300/-
11	Sarihajan Dim 7days in a week	7,85,804/-	1,96,451/-
12	Kathalguri seasonal market	2,330/-	583/-
13	Balipathar weekly market	1,65,057/-	41,264
14	Balipathar Dim 6days in a week	41501/-	10,375/-
15	Tenglijan w/m	-	-
16	Japrajan w/market	1,15,588/-	28,897/-
17	Upper Deopani W/market	19,000/-	4,750/-
18	Silonijan Weekly market	1,08,000/-	27,000/-
19	Silonijan D/market 6days in a week	57,074/-	14,269/-
20	Kailamati Weekly market	45,788/-	11,447/-
21	Bogijan Weekly market	1,00,106/-	25,027/-
22	Borpathar weekly market	1,86,660/-	46,665/-
23	Merabheti weekly market	3,195/-	799/-
24	Rongbonghat weekly market	20,011/-	5,004/-
25	Chokihola weekly market	38,494/-	9,624/-
26	Old Lahorijan Weekly market	3,35,784/-	83,946
27	Khatkhoti pacca field Daily market	4,500/-	1,125/-
28	Gandhipur weekly market	5,000/-	1250/-
29	Paklangso weekly market	5,000/-	1250/-
30	Khatkhoti Shirvomu D/m 7days in a week	5,048/-	1,262/-

Govt. Valuation Ghats and Fisheries under Silonijan Circle For the Year 2026-2027.

Sl. No	Name of Ghats	Govt. Value for the year 2026-27	Earnest Money for the Year 2026-27
1	Japrajan Dhansiri ghat	58,140/-	14,535/-
2	Thongnokbe ghat over Dhansiri River	5,000/-	1,250/-
3	Koch gaon Dhansiri ghat	5,000/-	1,250/-
4	Rongagora ghat	19,908/-	4,977/-
5	Akhaiputa ghat	14,097/-	3524/-
6	Neparputyghat(Ali Singa)	6,120/-	1,530
7	Khatkhati pacca field over Dhansiri ghat	424/-	106/-
8	Khatkhati Ram Nepali bosti	10,000/-	2,500/-
9	Rongbongghat Ghat	5,000/-	1,250/-
10	Deopani Parghat	46,168/-	11,542/-

Fisheries

Sl. No	Name of Fisheries	Govt. Value for the year 2026-27	Earnest Money for the Year 2026-27
1	Ghorialdubi pond	3,434/-	859/-
2	Matipul pond	467/-	117/-
3	Moh-khuti	5,000/-	1,250/-
4	Diphulu pond	5,000/-	1,250/-
5	Kaliani river fisher fishery	10,000/-	2,500/-
6	Banaspati pond	7,344/-	1,836/-
7	Deopani River	8,160/-	2,040/-
8	DhansiriErasuti pond near Japrajan	8,000/-	2,000/-
9	Dhansiri Erasuti Keseru pond	8,000/-	2,000/-
10	Dhansiri Erasuti pond near Borpathar	8,000/-	2,000/-
11	Dhansiri Erasuti pond near Khatkhoti Railway gate	15,000/-	3,750/-
12	Shiv mondir pond	2,001/-	500
13	Boguridubi pond	5,452/-	1,363/-
14	Horse shoe lake of Dhansiri river at Kathalguri	7140/-	1,785/-

ANNEXURE-B

Govt. Valuation of Entry Check Posts under Donka Revenue Circle for the year 2026-27

Sl. No.	ENTRY CHECK POST NAME	Govt. Value for the year 2026-27	Earnest Money for the year 2026-27
1	TUMPRENG ENTRY CHECK POST	₹6,64,108	₹1,66,027
2	OGURI ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 15,91,235	₹3,97,809
3	BAITHALANGSO ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 4,40,728	₹ 1,10,182
4	BORGAON ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 63,409	₹ 15,852
5	NAM TARADUBI ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 1,26,096	₹ 31,524
6	UPPER LOTUMARI ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 17,491	₹ 4,373
7	HABEPUR ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 16,750	₹ 4,188
8	SABUDA ENTRY CHECK POST	₹ 23,813	₹5,953
9	KHANDULI ENTRY CHECK POST	₹10,404	₹2,601

Govt. Valuation of Markets under Donka Revenue Circles for the year 206-2027.

Sl. No.	Name of Markets	Govt. value for the year 2026-27	Earnest Money for the Year 2026-27
1	Amtereng Weekly Market	97,270/-	24,317/-
2	Borthol Weekly Market	43,644/-	10,911/-
3	Borkok Weekly Market	40,233/-	10,058/-
4	Bhokshong Weekly Market	1,34,097/-	33,524/-
5	Doyangmukh Weekly Market	1,90,185/-	47,546/-
6	Doyangmukh Dally Market	2,040/-	

7	Hongkram Weekly Market	2,77,500/-	69,375/-
8	Habang Weekly Market		5,722/-
9	Jirimpanchali Weekly Market	1,46,268/-	36,567/-
10	Kolonga Proper Weekly Market	37,842/-	9,461/-
11	Kheroni Char ali Weekly Market	1,00,000/-	25,000/-
12	Kheroni Char ali Daily Market	11,089/-	2,772/-
13	Kheronighat Weekly Market	2,38,282/-	59,570/-
14	Malloo Weekly Market		2,00,100/-
15	Mailoo Daily Market		4,433/-
16	Satgaon Weekly Market		1,25,800/-
17	Satgaon Daily Market	1,22,500/-	30,625/-
18	Umtili Weekly Market	5,610/-	1,403/-
19	Umlafer Weekly Market	42,656/-	10,664/-
20	Umat Weekly Market	19,039/-	4,759/-
21	Tengkeralangso Weekly Market	8,670/-	2,168/-
22	Taradubi Weekly Market	31,008/-	7,752/-
23	Birsingki Weekly Market	1,24,760/-	31,190
24	Kheroni Beat Daili Market	33,734/-	8,434/-
25	Lamsakan Weekly Market	170/-	43/-
26	Umsowal Weekly Market	49,440/-	12,360/-
27	Slidubi Weekly Market	1,29,217/-	32,304/-
28	LangtukApam Weekly Market	10,612/-	2653
29	Tumpreng Weekly Market	2,22,200/-	55,550/-
30	Tumpreng Daily Market		15,453/-
31	Serdhuniangso Weekly Market	31,250/-	7,813/-
32	Donkamukh Weekly Market	2,213/-	3,863/-
33	Long eh Lobui Weekly Market	31,388/-	7,847/
34	Lumta weekly Market	6,575/-	1,644/-
35	Langhemphi Weekly Market	10,000/-	2,500
36	Mokolium Weekly Market	12,150/-	3,038/-
37	Khanduli Weekly Market	5,000/-	1,250/

Govt. valuation of Ghats and Fisheries under Donka Revenue Circles for the year 2026-2027.

Sl. No	Name of Ghats	Govt. value for the year 2026-27	Earnest Money for the Year 2026-27
1	Boguridubi Ghat	612/-	153/-
2	Deramukh Gaht	408/-	102/-
3	Cheng Cheng Ghat	408/-	102/-
4	Hongkram Ghat	5,000/-	1250/-
5	Hatimara Ghat	2,719/-	680/-
6	Lalmati Ghat	48,200/-	12,050/-
7	Mumiok Ghat	408/-	102/-
8	Naobhanga Ghat	408/-	102/-
9	Taradubi Ghat	408/-	102/-
10	Sapura Ghat	408/-	102/-
11	Majurhup Ghat	408/-	
12	Longre Ghat	408/-	102/-
13	Sildubi Ghat	2,29,800/-	57,450/-
14	Kolongamukh Raikata Ghat	1,062/-	265/-
15	Longjap Ghat	408/-	102/-
16	TimungkeloJorporator to Umrongkelok Ghat	408/-	102/-

Fisheries

Sl.No	Name of Fisheries	Govt. Value for the Year 2026-27	Earnest Monet for the Year 2026-27
1	Doyangmukh to kheroni R.C.C Bridge	1,020/-	255/-
2	Kheroni R.C.C. to Tumpreng Bridge R.C.C Bridge	1,500/-	375/-
3	Khanda Beel	1,000/-	250/-
4	Lalmati Beel	1,020/-	255/-
5	Lotumari Beel	1,020/-	255/-
6	Cheng Cheng Beel	1,020/-	255/-
7	Doyangmukh to Panimur Over Kopili River	1,020/-	255/-
8	Tumpreng RCC Bridge to Sissirijan	1,000/-	250/-

Govt. valuation of Cattle Pound under Donka Revenue Circles for the year 2026-2027.

Sl.No	Name of Cattle Pound	Govt. Value for the Year 2026-2027	Earnest Monet for the Year 2026-2027
1	Bagori Cattle Pound	500/-	125/-
2	North Hongkram Cattle Pound	500/-	125/-
3	Hongkram Tini Ali Cattle Pound	500/-	125/-
4	HongkramHabeGaon Cattle Pound	500/-	125/-
5	Hatimara Cattle Pound	500/-	125/-
6	Rongagora Cattle Pound	500/-	125/-
7	Karbi Rongsopi Cattle Pound	500/-	125/-
8	Tengaralangso Cattle Pound	500/-	125/-
9	Dalimbari Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
10	Kakolngso Cattle Pound	500/-	125/-
11	Namtaradubi Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
12	Taradubi Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
13	Memuru Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
14	Kharupintha Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
15	Moiso Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
16	TharveAbiCattle pound	500/-	125/-
17	Belbari Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
18	Panbari Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
19	Tumpreng Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
20	Hindura Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
21	SarsingHabe Cattle pound	500/-	125/-
22	Tumpreng Bali gaon Cattle Pound	500/-	125/-

Sd/-

Deputy Secretary, Taxation,
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,
DIPHU.

Memo. No. KAAC/TAX/NIT for sale of E.T.Gs, Markets, etc./2025-26/8649(III) 12/260(A) Dtd. 31/12/2025

Pongal spice: 2 Tamil films turn bigger than entertainers, assume political overtones ahead of polls

As the political temperature in poll-bound Tamil Nadu heats up, an 'ideology war' is brewing in the box office, with the political stakeholders playing a role in the clash of the movies as well.

During the mid-January Pongal harvest festival, two Tamil films, "Jana Nayagan" and "Parasakthi", each seen as speaking its respective ideology, are all set to assume centre stage.

Actor Vijay's 69th film Jana Nayagan is also said to be his last before he makes the full-fledged entry into politics through his Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) party. It is set for a January 9 release.

Clashing with him is "Parasakthi", the namesake of the 1952 blockbuster starring Thespian Sivaji Ganesan in his maiden role. It apparently speaks an issue close to the ruling DMK's heart-- the language struggle. On the political front TVK and DMK are going all guns against each other, with the state elections only a few months away from now.

Incidentally, Sivaji-starrer "Parasakthi" also catapulted the late DMK president M Karunanidhi to great heights for his fiery dialogues questioning the then societal norms and social evils.

The Sivakartheeyan-starrer Parasakthi's release this year has been advanced by four days from its original date of January 14. The film is distributed by Red Giant Movies owned by

Udhayanidhi, Deputy Chief Minister and son of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin.

On the political turf, the race for power in the 2026 Assembly election is between the ruling DMK dispensation and the AIADMK combine, though the TVK is actively present, making it a triangular contest.

Sivakartheeyan, who plays the lead role in Parasakthi, has been spotted on the DMK stages on many occasions.

The film's producer Aakash Baskaran told reporters here recently that Parasakthi has been moved to January 10 due to "some personal suggestions from theatre owners and distributors," speaking off speculations that it was a "Vijay vs DMK" face-off. "We took the call considering the equal screen split factor suggestions from senior distributors and theatre owners," Baskaran said.

The film is reportedly based on a real-life character named Chezhian who became a hero for fighting against the imposition of Hindi-- a subject close to DMK's heart - but the director Sudha Kongara has clarified that the movie is not a biopic.

"No one has addressed this post-Independence movement before. We are presenting it for the first time," producer Baskaran said.

Though the film makers are attempting to depict Parasakthi as a non-political movie based on the very political movement - the 1965 student agitation against Hindi imposition - its

political positioning is too clear to be ignored.

Jana Nayagan's plot, however, revolves seemingly around the struggles of an ordinary young man who takes on the powerful. He is reluctantly forced to enter into politics. This is also one of the reasons for Vijay's entry into politics, to allegedly cleanse it of corruption.

Jana Nayagan directed by H Vinoth and produced by KVN Productions stars Pooja Hegde, Bobby Deol, Mamitha Baiju, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Prakash Raj, Narain and Priyamani. Anirudh Ravichander has composed the music while the cinematography has been handled by Sathyan Sooryan.

Parasakthi is directed by Sudha Kongara, the filmmaker behind the critically acclaimed "Soorarai Pottru".

Sivakartheeyan in the lead role as a railway loco pilot is drawn into the student-led movement against Hindi imposition and he even confronts social inequality in his journey.

Ravi Mohan, Atharva Murari, Sreeleela, Rana Daggubati, Basil Joseph, and Guru Somasundaram are part of the cast in the film in which G V Prakash Kumar has composed the music.

A DMK leader said Parasakthi fictionalised the anti-Hindi agitation of 1960. "But considering the film as a political war between DMK and TVK is unacceptable. The DMK is strong on the ground and would continue its 2.O regime after the election this year," he said.



A BJP senior leader argued that the films would hardly impact the electoral prospects of the parties.

"These may seem as an emotional narrative but will not connect with the masses during the election," he said and claimed that it was a hype generated by the media.

"The films will hardly make political impact," he added. And as the slugfest continues from the reel to the real, much is yet to unfold in the 2026 Assembly election. (PTI)

'Xorotor Podulit' on YouTube



Welcoming the New Year with melody, a new Assamese song titled "Xorotor Podulit" was released on January 3 on the YouTube channel Srishti Sonic, offering a special musical treat to listeners.

The song has been sung by Srishti (Julika) Borphukan, a law graduate and an accomplished vocalist. She was once adjudged the best performer in the women's wing of JB College, Jorhat, and later received inter-college level recognition.

Over the years, Srishti has built a distinct identity among music lovers through popular audio cassettes such as Monmoyuri, Sapunor Marami, Sonaru 99, Jadu, Kiyu Anjali, and others.

A trained classical singer, she has also been deeply engaged in the practice of Borgeet. Several of her songs have been aired on Jorhat FM Radio, and her performances have featured on various satellite television channels.

She earlier received widespread appreciation for the song "Kun Tumi Duronir", sung alongside Zubeen Garg. "Xorotor Podulit" marks her latest release as a solo vocalist.

The lyrics, composition, and video concept of the song have been crafted by Anup Baruah, while the music has been done by Pallab Talukdar.

Instrumental support has been provided by Raja Baruah, Jibanta Apurba, and Subhankar Hazarika, with mixing by Karmel.

The music video features graceful performances by popular actress and Kathak dancer Megharanjani Medhi, alongside Dipankar Gayan.

The choreography has been jointly designed by Megharanjani Medhi and Barnali Kalita.

The video is directed by Samin Das and edited by Manas Kashyap. Rituparna Bora has designed the poster, Anup Dutta has contributed the calligraphy, and Hirak Das has handled the make-up.

The video has gained 1,400 views after one day of its release on Monday.

Released at the very beginning of the New Year, "Xorotor Podulit" is expected to resonate strongly with music lovers, say members of the creative team associated with the project.

Was offered Urmila Matondkar's role in 'Pinjar', but got replaced: Juhi Babbar

Actor Juhi Babbar says she was offered the lead role in the 2003 drama "Pinjar", based on Amrita Pritam's novel of the same name, but was replaced in the end as the makers were keen to cast a "bigger" actress.

The film, directed by Chandraprakash Dwivedi, is about the struggles faced by Hindus and Muslims during the Partition of India. The movie featured Urmila Matondkar in the lead role of Puro alongside Manoj Bajpayee and Sanjay Suri.

"There was a film called, 'Pinjar', I was going to play the role that Urmila Matondkar played. I would not blame Dr Chandraprakash Dwivedi for it, he appreciates the work I do. He was

"I told Dr. sahab 'I won't be able to do it because my heart was in Puro (lead role) and that I'll not be able to give my best. I was thinking about the character of Puro for a year, had read the novel and then it didn't happen. So, things that have to happen will happen. I was so young at that time. Thankfully, I made some correct decisions," Juhi said. The actor said both she and Dwivedi still share a warm equation and the director praised her work in "The Great Shamsuddin Family".

The actor said she was also slated to work opposite Abhishek Bachchan in the 2002 film, "Shararat" but again she was replaced by another popular actor, Hrithika Bhatt.

the light of the day because there are some issues with the makers. It's a beautiful series and I got the opportunity to work with one of the best actors of our industry, Subodh Bhave. It's his first major Hindi work."

Juhi has also acted in Karan Johar-produced, "Dostana 2", which reportedly has been put on the backburner.

"I was doing 'Dostana 2', Mukesh Chhabra (casting director) got me that film from Dharma Productions. But the film got shelved, I had shot for it, 60 per cent. I took up the role on Mukesh's advice. He had said, 'Didi, do it, because people need to know you're around, and it's a Dharma film, so you'll be watched, you'll be noticed,'" she

claim for her work in her latest film, "The Great Shamsuddin Family" and her play, "Ek Lamha Zindagi".

The actor said she will continue to straddle between films and theatre. Her mother, acclaimed actor Nadira Babbar, is a theatre veteran and has a company called Ekjute Theatre Group. Before foraying into movies, Juhi worked extensively in theatre with her mother. She made her debut in 2003 with "Kash Aap Hamare Hote" opposite Sonu Nigam. Juhi said initially her father, Raj Babbar, had some reservations about her acting in movies.

"I expressed this to my parents, my father was not very happy because (he was like a) typical protective father, and he said no. I too knew that my father would want me to finish my studies, and that's the reason I did that and then spoke about acting. But he wasn't happy," Juhi said, adding, she started working backstage.

Juhi then did a play when she was 21. Her mother offered her a role in the play called 'Yahudi Ki Ladki', a famous Urdu play by Agha Hashar Kashmiri (on the theme of persecution of Jews by the Romans), followed by another play called, 'Begum Jaan'. "My father was watching that play ('Begum Jaan'), and after that, he said, 'Juhi, you deserve a film'. This I think was my biggest achievement because my father didn't want me to act and now, he was ready to make a film for me.

"My father is the only actor, who's actually made a film for his daughter because all other actors have only launched their sons. In the Hindi film industry; it was a huge step. After that, so many actors got inspired. Today, you see this generation, where so many actors are out there promoting their daughters, which is fantastic. But the one to start it was my dad," she said.

In "The Great Shamsuddin Family", Juhi plays the role of Humaira, the older sister to Bani Ahmed and Iram. Bani is chasing an important writing deadline when her family, including her two sisters, mother and other relatives land at her home. She has to complete her assignment while trying to defuse a domestic emergency. Juhi said as the eldest child in her family, the role felt like a natural fit. (PTI)



starting off then and he had said, "Whenever I make 'Pinjar', you will act in it" but then a huge producer came on board and they wanted a bigger actor," Juhi told PTI in an interview.

The director then offered her the role of Laajo, but she said no to it. The role was finally played by Sandali Sinha of "Tum Bin" fame.

"I had a meeting with director Gurodev Bhalla and I didn't even come to know that I'm not doing it. Years later, Gurodev sir called me when he was making a web-series and I looked at him and said, 'You do remember history?' and he said, 'Yes, and I realise it'. "He came to me with an important role in the series. Let's see when the web-series will see

said, "I was never on social media, never ever, just before COVID, I came on social media, I started making little videos, posting photographs. I came on social media after shooting for 'Dostana 2' when the team of 'Dostana 2' told me that I'm not even on Instagram, and that people need to see you," she added. Juhi has been garnering ac-

Jaaved Jaaferi-starrer 'Mayasabha' to release on January 30



"Mayasabha", featuring Jaaved Jaaferi in the lead role, is set to release in theatres on January 30.

Directed by Rahi Anil Barve, the film also stars Mohammad Samad, Veena Jamkar, and Deepak Damle in pivotal roles.

"It offers a gripping and introspective exploration of human relationships and the illusions that shape human lives," according to a press release.

Before its theatrical release, the film is set to be screened at the Third Asian Film Festival.

Barve said the response to the film has been encouraging. "The audience response so far has been extremely encouraging. Festivals

like the Third Asian Film Festival and PIFF provide an ideal platform for a film like 'Mayasabha' to connect with discerning viewers. With the theatrical release on 30th January, we are excited to take the film to a much wider audience," he said in a statement.

The film is presented and distributed by Pickle Entertainment, led by Sameer Dixit and Rishikesh Bhiringi.

It is produced by Zirkon Films. (PTI)

He was a giant of Indian sports: Fraternity mourns Kalmadi's death

NEW DELHI, Jan 6: Country's sports fraternity on Tuesday expressed deep sorrow at the death of former IOA president Suresh Kalmadi, calling it a huge loss to the Olympic movement in India.

A towering figure in Indian sports administration for more than two decades, the 81-year-old Kalmadi died at a hospital in Pune in the early hours of Tuesday. "As IOA President, I am saddened by the demise of former IOA President Shri. Suresh Kalmadi ji. He was also President AFI for nearly two decades where he introduced numerous developmental programs for the growth of Athletics in India. My condolences to his family! Om Shanti!" wrote current IOA chief PT Usha in 'X'.

Calling it a personal loss, former Athletics Federation of India (AFI) Secretary and Kalmadi's long-time associate Lalit Bhanot said the former Congress MP's role in the growth of Indian sport was unparalleled.

"It is sad to hear the sudden demise of

our beloved friend and sport's leader. His contribution to uplift Indian sports will be remembered," said Bhanot, who is currently AFI's planning commission chief.

"He was President of AFI for almost two decades and introduced many developmental programs. He was dedicated sports promoter who brought many changes in Indian sports. As head Indian Olympics Association, he organised Afro Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and revived National Games.

Highlighting Kalmadi's role in bringing foreign athletes to India, Bhanot said: "He introduced prize money track-and-field permit meets in the early 1990s and invited elite foreign athletes, including Olympic champions like Carl Lewis and Mike Powell, which changed the concept of sports in the country.

"He was a great sports administrator and wonderful person. I convey my condolences to his family and all supporters. It is personal loss. We will miss him al-



ways RIP."

Former IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta, who worked closely with Kalmadi, also condoled his death.

"I am deeply saddened by the passing of Shri Suresh Kalmadi. His demise is a

profound loss to the Indian sporting fraternity and the Olympic movement in India," said Mehta, who served as secretary general of IOA for 8 years from 2014 to 2022.

"As former President of the Indian Olympic Association, he played a pivotal role in shaping sports administration in the country. The creation of Olympic Bhawan stands as a lasting symbol of his vision and commitment to building strong institutions for Indian sport.

"I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family, colleagues, and all those associated with the sporting community and pray for strength in these difficult times. May his soul rest in peace, and may his contributions to Indian sport always be remembered," added Mehta, the current Secretary General of the Fencing Association of India.

Kalmadi served as IOA president from 1996 to 2011, making him one of the longest-serving heads of the country's apex Olympic body.

He also served as president of the Asian Athletics Association and was a member of the IAAF (now World Athletics) Council, making him one of India's most powerful sports administrators internationally.

"Feeling profound sorrow and deep regret at the passing of the dynamic Shri Suresh Kalmadi, former President of Indian Olympic Association and Athletics Federation of India. He was a giant sports administrator," Adille Sumariwalla, vice president of World Athletics and spokesperson of the AFI, wrote on 'X'.

"My heartfelt condolences to the family. #InMemoriam."

Paying his tribute to Kalmadi, AFI president Bahadur Singh Sagoo said: "He will always be remembered as a dedicated and inspirational sports administrator whose unwavering commitment to the cause of the Indian athletics has left an indelible mark. He also made efforts to initiate Railway travel conces-

sions for sportspersons."

During his tenure as IOA chief, India achieved a historic breakthrough at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, when shooter Abhinav Bindra won the country's first ever individual Olympic gold medal.

"Saddened to hear about the passing of Mr. Suresh Kalmadi. My condolences to his family and loved ones. May they find strength in this difficult time," Bindra wrote on 'X'.

Kalmadi was also the Chairman of the Organising Committee when Delhi hosted the Commonwealth Games in 2010 even though the event itself was mired in controversies due to allegations of corruption and mismanagement.

Kalmadi was also closely associated with the growth of athletics and sports infrastructure in Pune, his Parliament constituency.

He played a key role in initiatives such as the Pune International Marathon, which is a regular fixture on the Indian athletics calendar. (PTI)

Netherlands leave out Griekspoor, Van de Zandschulp for Davis Cup tie vs India

NEW DELHI, Jan 6: The Netherlands have left out their top-ranked singles players Tallon Griekspoor and Botiek van de Zandschulp in their four-member squad for the Davis Cup Qualifiers tie against India in Bengaluru on February 7-8.

Griekspoor, currently the Dutch No.1 and ranked 25 in the world in singles, and former world No.22 Van de Zandschulp, who is now placed 75th, were notable omissions from the team named by the Royal Dutch Lawn Tennis Association.

The Dutch challenge will instead be led by Jesper de Jong, ranked 71 in singles, along with Guy den Ouden, who is placed 158th.

The doubles challenge will be spearheaded by David Pel, the world No.27 in doubles ATP ranking chart, and Sander Arends, ranked 35.

The Netherlands are hosting an ATP 500 event in Rotterdam around the same time and it might



have impacted their decision-making in announcing the team.

The Dutch were without Griekspoor even in their last tie against Argentina, losing 1-3 in the Qualifiers Round II.

Jong had made his debut in that tie and was the only player to win a match while Van de Zandschulp had lost his singles and later doubles with Arends.

The India-Netherlands tie will be played at the Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association Stadium, with India aiming to make home conditions count against a Dutch side missing their most experienced singles campaigners.

India will be led by Sumit Nagal (ranked 275) and Dhakshinewar Suresh (ranked 521).

Karan Singh (ranked 466) is the

third singles option for the hosts, while Yuki Bhambri (ranked 21) and Rithvik Bollipalli (ranked 91) will take care of the doubles rubber.

"The Netherlands' nominations do not include their two top singles players, and it adds a positive dimension to India's prospects in the contest," India's Davis Cup coach Ashutosh Singh told PTI.

"Indian players are shaping up strongly through their respective pre-season preparations, and their immediate transition into the Bengaluru Open ATP Challenger at the KSLTA provides an ideal build-up phase for the tie.

"Additionally, Sumit Nagal and Dhakshinewar benefited from valuable exposure at the World League at the same venue, sharing the court with top players such as Daniil Medvedev and Gael Monfils," he added.

KSLTA is currently hosting ATP 125 Challenger, India's biggest ATP event, with country's top players competing. (PTI)

Liam Rosenior leaves Strasbourg and confirms he has an agreement to manage Chelsea

STRASBOURG (FRANCE), Jan 6: Liam Rosenior confirmed his exit from French club Strasbourg on Tuesday and strongly hinted he will be the next Chelsea coach.

Rosenior has been praised for turning Strasbourg, which is part of the same ownership group as Chelsea, into a force in French soccer after a seventh-place finish last season. Rosenior told a press conference in Strasbourg he has an agreement with Chelsea but has not signed a contract.

"Everything is agreed, it will probably go through in the next few hours," he said.

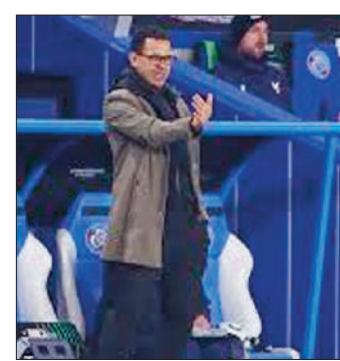
"It looks like I will be the next manager of that football club."

Rosenior's previous jobs include a stint as assistant coach at Derby to Wayne Rooney, who praised his "incredible" work ethic and attention to detail.

"He's more than capable of going into Chelsea and doing a great job," Rooney said on his podcast on Monday. "His detail, how he approaches day to day, he's as good as I've ever worked with."

The 41-year-old Rosenior has never coached in the Premier League.

Chelsea last week parted company with Enzo Maresca, who



spent 18 months in charge.

Moving to Chelsea will bring much more visibility and pressure for Rosenior.

The fifth permanent coach since BlueCo ownership took over in 2022, Rosenior will inherit a team which is capable of high-level success but has lacked consistency. Chelsea is fifth in the league with a 17-point gap to leader Arsenal.

Rosenior could head straight into his first competitive game on Wednesday against Fulham, one of his former clubs as a player.

Interim coach Calum McFarlane laid out one potential challenge when he revealed some players had been left stunned by the decision to move on from Maresca's 18-month tenure.

"Enzo was incredibly successful

with this group and some of them were shocked by the decision," McFarlane said on Sunday.

Maresca left after a reported breakdown in his relationships with club management and made cryptic public comments about a lack of support. McFarlane stepped in as interim coach to oversee Sunday's 1-1 draw with Manchester City. Getting the Chelsea job is a rare top-level opportunity for a Black British coach in the Premier League.

"This opportunity for me is something I can't turn down at this moment in my life," Rosenior said, adding that the perspective of being reunited with his family added an extra incentive.

"It means that I can go home and see my kids," he said. "I'm away from my children, I missed them. And I wanted to make the sacrifice of not seeing them worth it, with the success that we have here."

Son of former player and coach Leroy Rosenior, Liam played in the Premier League as a full back for Fulham, Reading, Hull and Brighton over the course of a 16-year professional career, as well as for England Under-21s.

He returned to Hull for his first head coach role in 2022 and joined Strasbourg two years later. (AP)

Gvardiol has broken leg and faces months out

MANCHESTER (ENGLAND), Jan 6: Manchester City and Croatia defender Josko Gvardiol needs surgery this week for a fracture to his right leg and faces months out ahead of the World Cup.

The 23-year-old Gvardiol "suffered a tibial fracture to his right leg" in the second half of a 1-1 draw against Chelsea at the weekend, City confirmed in a statement late Monday. He will have surgery this week and City gave no timetable for his return.

City trails Premier League leader Chelsea by six points and is well set to advance directly to the round of 16 in the Champions League which resumes in March. The club is fourth in the 36-team standings with two league-phase games left this month at Bodo/Glimt and hosting Galatasaray. Croatia starts its World Cup group on June 17 against England at the Dallas Cowboys stadium. Croatia then plays Panama in Toronto and Ghana in Philadelphia.

Gvardiol is likely to miss Croatia's visit to the United States in March for warmup games against Colombia and Brazil. (AP)

Anahat enters British Junior Open squash final

NEW DELHI, Jan 6: Top-seeded Indian Anahat Singh registered a fine win over Egypt's Malika El Karakasy in the semifinals to storm into her maiden women's under-19 final at the prestigious British Junior Open squash here.

The 17-year-old, winner of 12 PSA Tour titles, secured a 11-8, 11-7, 11-9 win over Malika in just 28 minutes at the University of Birmingham. Anahat will meet European junior champion and second seed Lauren Baltayan of France in the summit clash.

This is Anahat's ninth British Junior Open final across age-groups, as she aims to become only the second Indian to win the U-19 title after Joshna Chinappa in 2005.

Anahat, who beat Malika in the BJO U-17 final and the World Junior Championships quarterfinals last year, kept attacking the front corners and converted those opportunities into winners to close out the contest in straight games in what is the 100th anniversary edition of the tournament. (PTI)

DC told me not to change my game in WPL: West Indies all-rounder Chinelle Henry

NEW DELHI, Jan 6: West Indies all-rounder Chinelle Henry believes the upcoming Women's Premier League (WPL) season starting later this week is vital for her preparation for the international season ahead. In seven WPL matches in 2025, she scored 163 runs at a strike rate close to 196, including a blistering 62, and picked up six wickets with her medium-pace bowling after coming in as a replacement for UP Warriorz's Alyssa Healy.

Her blend of explosive batting and useful bowling led to Delhi Capitals spending ₹ 1.3 crore to secure her services in the players' auction.

"This competition is definitely good preparation. There are a few of us here -- myself, Deandra (Dottin) and Hayley (Mathews) -- and it's also a chance to cement our spots and give the selectors something to think about before the World Cup," Henry told PTI Videos.

"Being selected shows that the job I did last year was appreciated. This team has reached the final three times, so the goal is to go one step further."

On her role with the team, Henry said conversations with captain Jemimah Rodrigues and the coaching staff have been clear and encouraging.

"They've told me not to change my game. I was brought in because of the type of player I am -- whether it's finishing games with the bat or contributing with the ball," she said.

The 30-year-old Henry said the environment at the Delhi Capitals has helped her settle quickly.

"It's a big family. From the minute I got here, they made me feel comfortable," she said, adding that the



training camp has been focused on building combinations and refining roles ahead of the season.

She said missing out of the women's ODI World Cup by the narrowest of margins has been really painful.

"That (World Cup miss) was really painful for us," she said.

"Being at home and watching while everyone else was in India playing was extremely hard. That's a feeling we never want to have again," she added.

West Indies failed to secure a place in the quadrennial ODI tournament despite a six-wicket win over Thailand, finishing with a net run rate just 0.013 behind Bangladesh in the World Cup Qualifiers. The Women in Maroon and Gold missed the quadrennial showcase for the first time since 2000.

The disappointment, she said, has been a learning experience as West Indies prepare for the Women's T20 World Cup in England later this year. (PTI)

Malaysia Open: Lakshya enters second round, Malvika out

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 6: India ace Lakshya Sen made a fine start to the new season, advancing to the men's singles second round with a hard-fought win over Jia Heng Jason Teh of Singapore at the Malaysia Open Super 750 badminton tournament here on Tuesday.

The 24-year-old from Almorat, who won the Australian Open and also registered a final finish at Hong Kong last season, took 70 minutes to get past world No. 21 Teh 21-16 15-21 21-14 in a thrilling opener.

A 2021 world championships bronze medallist, Lakshya, currently ranked World No. 13, will next face either sixth seed Christop Popov of France or Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong.

In women's singles, Malvika Bansod, returning after a six-month layoff due to a left knee in-

jury, however, suffered a 11-21 11-21 loss to seventh seed Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand, a former world champion in the opening round.

Later in the day, Ayush Shetty,



who won the US Open Super 300, will take on Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia, the Paris Olympics bronze-medallist.

Indian men's doubles pair of experienced M R Arjun and 22-year-old Hariharan Amsakarunan will face Japan's Hiroki Midorikawa and Yoohei Yamashita. (PTI)

CIC advocates transparency in sports bodies, cites 2036 Olympics ambition

NEW DELHI, Jan 6: Information related to sports federations and associations recognised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports should be proactively disclosed on the ministry's website to ensure transparency and accountability, the CIC has directed.

Underlining the country's aspirations to host the 2036 Summer Olympics, Information Commissioner PR Ramesh said transparent functioning of sports bodies will strengthen India's sporting ecosystem manifold.

The Central Information Commission (CIC) made the observation while hearing a Right to Information (RTI) petition by Sacheen Gandhi seeking details of the recognition status of various sports federations like All India Carrom Federation, Kho-kho Federation of India, Amateur Kabbadi Federation of India, Squash Rackets Federation of India and Softball Association of India.



While holding that the ministry had provided an appropriate reply under the RTI Act, the CIC emphasised that proactive disclosure of such information would reduce citizens' dependence on RTI applications for accessing basic and vital details.

"As India aspires to host the 2036 Summer Olympics, marking a huge step in the country's rise as a sports superpower, the transparent func-

tioning of sports bodies will strengthen India's sporting ecosystem manifold," Ramesh said.

Referring to Section 4 of the RTI Act, the Commission said every public authority must make constant efforts to place maximum information in the public domain through various means, including the internet.

"Voluntary disclosure of all information that ought to be displayed

in the public domain should be the rule and members of the public seeking information through RTI application should be an exception," it observed.

The CIC noted that an open government, which is the core objective of the RTI Act, can be realised only when public authorities comply with proactive disclosure norms and update their websites at regular intervals.

Advising the sports ministry to ensure regular updates on recognised sports federations and associations, the Commission said such disclosures would enhance transparency, disseminate correct information and also obviate the need for filing RTI applications on matters of public importance.

The appeal was disposed of with no further action, though the Commission advised the ministry to proactively disclose information related to recognised sports bodies going forward. (PTI)

Head, Smith centuries put Australia in control after 3 days of the final Ashes Test

SYDNEY, Jan 6: Travis Head's third century of the series and Steve Smith's first guided Australia to a 134-run first-innings lead over England by stumps on the third day of the fifth and final Ashes test.

Head resumed Tuesday at 91 and was out for 163 from 166 balls, a masterful innings to follow his match-winning 123 in the second innings of the first test at Perth and his 170 in the second innings of the third test at Adelaide.

Smith was 129 not out at stumps, elevating a relatively disappointing series with the bat. His previous highest score in the series was 61 in the first test at Adelaide.

The century was Smith's 13th in Ashes tests, the 37th of his career and his fifth at the Sydney Cricket Ground. With it, he moved up to sixth on the all-time list of most test centuries.

At stumps, Australia was 518-7 in reply to England's first innings of 384.

Beau Webster was unbeaten on 42 and had put on 81 runs with Smith for the eighth wicket, expanding Australia's

lead.

"It was a really nice day today with a couple of nice partnerships," Smith said. "Hopefully, we can put a little partnership together, get up over a 200 lead and the wicket starts to play a few more tricks."

"I just love batting here, obviously it's my home deck. I know the ground really well and when I get in here I really like batting here."

Khawaja saluted While Head and Smith's centuries elicited huge cheers and Head's departure earned a standing ovation, the greatest cheers of the day were reserved for Usman Khawaja when he arrived at the crease in his 88th and final test for Australia. Khawaja will retire at the end of the series.

He made 17 from 49 balls at the ground where he made his test debut 15 years ago, and he departed also to a standing ovation. Khawaja is an Australian fan favorite for his dogged nature and, as a Pakistan-born Muslim, for his courage to discuss issues of race and belonging.

Head's hundredHead reached triple



figures from 105 balls, becoming the first Australian opener since Matthew Hayden in 2002-03 to post three centuries in an Ashes series. The 32-year-old left-hander reached the milestone with the 17th boundary of

his innings.

His two previous centuries contributed heavily to Australia retaining the Ashes in 11 days of action. In Sydney, he's helped the home team rebound after England's drought-breaking win last week in the fourth test in Melbourne.

Head had a big reprieve when he was dropped on 121 by Will Jacks from Brydon Carse's bowling. He hit a short ball out to mid-wicket where Jacks put down a regulation chance.

He slowed his run-rate for a while but then accelerated after nightwatchman Michael Neser (24) was caught behind off Brydon Carse, ending a 72-run third-wicket stand.

Head hit the first six of the innings and then surpassed 150 with another boundary to take him to 153 from 152 balls. His tally was up to 24 boundaries and a six by lunch on Day 3. When he was out for 163 in the second session, Australia was 288-4.

Smith takes commandSmith then shared partnerships of 51 with Khawaja, 27 with Alex Carey (16) and 61 with

Cameron Green, who threw away a good start and was out for 37 when he was caught trying to pull a short ball from Carse. Green's single off Ben Stokes in the 94th over brought Australia level with England's total, then Smith's boundary in the same over took the home side into the lead.

Smith reached his century from 166 balls with 11 fours and a six.

He has always been hyperactive at the crease and hypersensitive to movement in the crowd even well away from the bowler's arm. On Tuesday he was especially energetic, hopping, bouncing, gesturing, wandering away from the crease, turning somersaults as he evaded short-pitched balls and ending the day bedaubed in dirt from pitch.

At one point he asked Carse to turn his sunglasses around because the reflection was distracting.

"It just kind of happens when I'm out there and when I'm doing those things it means I'm in a good zone," Smith said. "Hopefully, we can see a few more of them." (AP)

ICC T20 Rankings: Harmanpreet moves up two places, Deepti loses top spot

DUBAI, Jan 6: India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur on Tuesday moved up two spots to reach 13th position in the latest ICC Women's T20I ranking for batters, following her match-winning knock in the fifth and final game against Sri Lanka in Thiruvananthapuram.

India won the game by 15 runs, making a clean sweep for the five-match series which concluded on December 30.

Harmanpreet smashed 68 off 43 deliveries to bag the Player of the Match award and moved towards the top 10.

Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma continued to hold on to their third and sixth spots respectively as Australia's Beth Mooney extended her stay at the top.

Jemimah Rodrigues, however, slipped out of the top 10, and is placed 12th.

Deepti Sharma lost the top spot in the bowling rankings, as her return of one for 28 in the fifth T20I was not enough to stop Australia's Annabel Sutherland's climb to the top.

Deepti has one rating point less than Sutherland's 736 as the Australian fast-bowling all-rounder regained the No 1 position, which she first attained in August 2025 when Pakistan spinner Sadia Iqbal had similarly conceded the top spot to her.

The bowling rankings also saw Indian left-arm spinner Shree Charani advance five places to 47th. (PTI)

Glenn Phillips explores left-arm batting to counter left-arm spin Mustafizur unlikely to get any compensation



NEW DELHI, Jan 6: Gearing up for the upcoming T20 World Cup in India, explosive New Zealand batter Glenn Phillips believes his increasingly refined left-handed batting offers a glimpse of the future, particularly as a weapon against left-arm spin.

Known for his out-of-the-box approach, Phillips turned heads during a New Zealand Super Smash clash against Central Districts last Tuesday, smashing an unbeaten 90 for Otago.

What stunned spectators and the opponents alike was not just the innings, but the manner in which he dismantled left-arm

spinner Jayden Lennox -- batting left-handed, including a six over extra cover that would have sailed over midwicket had he stood in his usual right-handed stance.

"I do enjoy my left-handed batting training," Phillips was quoted saying in ESPNcricinfo.

"Obviously, I do it for multiple reasons. One, just to keep both hands and both sides of the brain working, but also just for the opportunity to, I guess, take down left-arm spin at some stage."

In modern day cricket, the ball turning away from the batter is considered a favourable match-up, prompting teams to prioritise

left-arm orthodox spinners given the predominance of right-handed batters.

Explaining his innovation to New Zealand Cricket, Phillips said it has been "a couple of years" in the making.

"It's more of a future thing," he said.

"But for the opportunity to come in a game where there's going to be a lot of left-arm off-spin bowling, I guess it sort of made sense to give it a go and bring it back to the forefront of the training leading into that game. And the fact that the opportunity came during the game to use it

was quite good."

Phillips admitted that several factors need to align before he fully unleashes his inner left-hander in competitive cricket.

"It's just trusting the training and understanding that I've just got to watch the ball as much as possible and I guess know that I've done the work and I've done the preparation and so there's no reason it shouldn't work," he said.

"But also, I guess, I generally have used it in the situation where there's nothing left to lose. There's a couple overs left and it's now time for a bit of fun, I guess, really."

New Zealand's white-ball tour of India begins with an ODI in Vadodara on Sunday.

After the three-match ODI series, the teams will compete in a five-match T20I series, serving as the final build-up to the T20 World Cup, which begins on February 7 and will be held simultaneously in India and Sri Lanka.

"The preparation is going to be perfect," Phillips said. "Obviously, the conditions may be a little bit different to what we'll actually get in the World Cup."

"You never quite know what sort of pitches that people will produce, especially if we're playing subcontinent teams."

"They tend to try and produce something that's a little bit more spin-friendly. But when we're on this T20 and ODI tour, they tend to produce pitches that are really quite good," he concluded. (PTI)



KOLKATA, Jan 6: Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman is unlikely to receive any financial compensation after being released by Kolkata Knight Riders on the instructions of the BCCI, despite having no role in the circumstances that led to the termination of his contract.

Mustafizur was bought by KKR for ₹ 9.20 crore at the IPL auction following competitive bids from Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals. The Indian Board didn't specify the reasons for its decision and merely stated that it was necessitated by "the developments all around".

In a retaliatory move, the Bangladesh Cricket Board has demanded the shifting of their T20 World Cup games from India to Sri Lanka.

While the move has triggered debate over the player's rights, especially since he neither voluntarily pulled out of the competition nor was accused of any wrongdoing,

sources say the existing insurance framework leaves little room for compensation.

"The salaries of all IPL players are insured. For foreign international players, normally the franchise pays if he is injured after joining the camp or during the course of the tournament."

"Normally up to 50 percent is paid from insurance. It is better for India's injured centrally contracted cricketers who normally get paid by the BCCI," an IPL source in the know of things told PTI on condition of anonymity.

However, Mustafizur's case does not fall under the standard insurance clauses. Since the release was not due to injury or a cricketing reason linked to participation in the league, KKR are not contractually bound to pay him any amount.

"In case of an insurance claim, this current situation isn't covered so KKR are under no official obligation to pay a penny." (PTI)

India women would be hard to beat in near future: Australia's Gardner



MUMBAI, Jan 6: She considers Australia the best women's cricket team in the world right now but Ashleigh Gardner is also spooked by the fact that recently-crowned ODI world champion India is well on its way to become a "very hard to beat" side in the coming decade.

Gardner, who was a part of the Australian team which lost to India in the Women's World Cup semifinal last year, said Harmanpreet Kaur and Co. are improving by leaps and bounds.

"India's going to be one of those teams in the next five to ten years that are going to be very hard to beat," said Gardner, who would be turning up for Gujarat Giants in the Women's Premier League starting January 9.

"It's an exciting prospect, it's scary as an Australian, but I guess knowing that the game is growing so quickly and rapidly over here,

it's fantastic to see."

However, Gardner said she still believes Australia is the best team in the world when asked how they processed the defeat to India.

"I've said in the media since that World Cup (and) I'm not denying that I still think we're the best team in the world. World Cups showcase your win in those high-pressure moments," she said.

"If we played any team ten times in a row, I would say that we're probably going to win eight or nine times. That might sound really cocky, but I just believe that we are the best team in the world still. It was a pretty hard defeat playing against a very good side. We know how damaging India can be and we got challenged throughout," she added. Gardner does not read much into the absence of a front-line Indian batter in Gujarat Giants' camp for the Women's Premier

League and insists that it won't come in the way of her side's push to win the coveted event.

While the Giants only have seamer Renuka Singh Thakur from the Women's World Cup-winning Indian squad in their ranks, they have a star-studded bench of overseas batters in Beth Mooney, Danni Wyatt-Hodge and Sophie Devine to do the heavy-lifting.

"If you look at all the teams, the overseas (batters) do a lot of the heavy-lifting in all regards. I don't think it's going to be any different in our side," Gardner told the media here during a press conference organised by the franchise.

"Certainly we would have loved a more experienced Indian batter, but they're all aligned to other teams and there's plenty of youth within our side."

"Yes, we might not have the likes of Harman (Harmanpreet

Kaur) or Smriti (Mandhana) within our side, but we have to win with who we've got. We've got a fantastic squad this year, there's no reason that we can't win," she added.

Gardner said having Renuka by her side in the WPL gives her a lot of assurance.

"Renuka has played for India for quite a long time, so I've had the privilege of playing against her quite a lot and it'll be nice to have her on my team this year, knowing that her skill set, she's obviously a wicket-taker, bowling (option) in the power play and bowling those hard overs," she said.

"Knowing that I've got someone that I can throw the ball to at the start and someone that I've got faith in certainly helps," Gardner added.

With the women's T20 World Cup to be played later this year in England, Renuka said the Indian players will keep working towards the "next goal".

"We have seen a lot of changes since winning the World Cup. We enjoyed a lot for a month but then the message arrived to start training and we played in the Sri Lanka series," Renuka said.

"Everyone knows what the next goal is and now the standard has been set, we would want to keep it that way."

Renuka admitted she had to work on her mental strength after the first edition of WPL.

"Yes my performances have not been that great (in WPL) but all that is in the past and I cannot keep thinking about it," she said.

"I will try to remain mentally strong because I remember in the first season I was mentally weak, and I worked on it," Renuka added. (PTI)

The Suresh Kalmadi legacy: From IAF Pilot to India's foremost sports administrator

NEW DELHI, Jan 6: Resourceful but also hugely controversial and almost always in the line of fire. This was Suresh Kalmadi as one of India's most towering sports administrators in varied roles for over two decades.

The former Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President, who breathed his last early this morning in Pune, was a dynamic man, whose command on Indian sports yielded both success and scandal.

Born in Madras in 1944, Kalmadi studied at Ferguson College in Pune, the city he went on to represent in the Parliament.

But much before entering politics or taking up sports administration, Kalmadi served in the Indian Air Force from 1964 to 1974, first as a commissioned pilot and then an instructor before retiring as a Squadron Leader.

Then came the political journey after being spotted by Sharad Pawar. The Maharashtra-tran was appointed Pune Youth Congress chief and later developed close ties with Sanjay Gandhi and former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

After the Congress split in the late 1980s, Kalmadi stayed with the Indian National Congress and was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1982, 1988, 1994 and 1998.

During his tenure as a Rajya Sabha MP, he also served as Union Minister of State for Railways in the PV Narasimha Rao government in 1995.

Kalmadi was elected to the Lok Sabha from Pune in 1996, but lost the seat in the very next general election before making a comeback by winning the 2004 and 2009 polls.

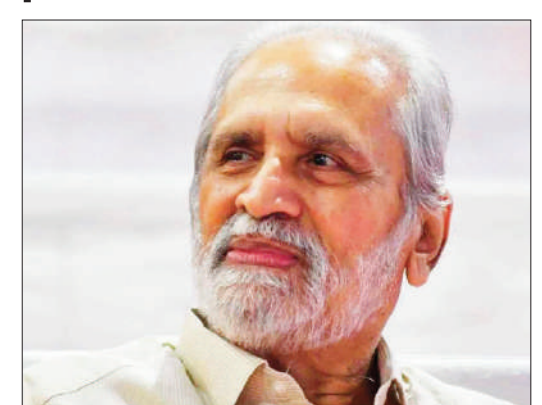
However, what brought him fame and a degree of infamy was his transition into the most powerful Indian sports administrator of his time.

He brought several top-class events to the country including the 2003 Afro Asian Games, the 2008 Commonwealth Youth Games, the 2010 Commonwealth Games, as well as two Asian Athletics Championships in 1989 and 2013. His tenure as IOA chief lasted from 1996 to 2011, the year allegations of corruption in the conduct of the Commonwealth Games (CWG) were levelled against him, culminating in his arrest.

However, in April this year, the Enforcement Directorate filed a closure report in the case, giving him a clean chit.

The mostly soft-spoken and reticent administrator was pushed into international limelight during the scandal and became the face of everything that went wrong in the organisation of the costliest CWG of all time while he headed its Organising Committee.

He vehemently denied any wrongdoing but those as-



sertions were lost in the public outrage and cacophony of news channel debates.

Despite the lasting damage the charges did to his reputation, it would be unfair to make Kalmadi's legacy all about the CWG wrongs.

As head of the IOA, one of his biggest successes was to revive the National Games.

He managed to organise the National Games at regular intervals and at different venues including Pune, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, and Manipur.

He was closely associated with Indian athletics, serving as the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) President for 19 years from 1987 to 2006.

During this time, he managed to pull in international track and field stars for eight meets in Delhi from 1989 to 1998. He also helped in organising the Pune International Marathon, which is now a regular fixture.

New Delhi also hosted the Asian Athletics Championships in 1989 for the first time in the country's history.

Elected as the Asian Athletics Association (AAA) president in 2001, he launched Asian Grand Prix Athletics meet in 1990.

He also brought Asian Athletics Championships to Pune in 2013 but lost the AAA president's elections to current chief Dahlan Al Hamad in the polls held just before the continental showpiece at his hometown.

He also organised the World Half Marathon in 2004 in New Delhi after becoming the first Indian to get membership of the World Athletics Council from 2001 to 2013.

Kalmadi was honoured with the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) award in Beijing in 2008 for his role in spreading awareness on Olympic Games. (PTI)