

**6 NATION**  
 ● Gandhi a way of thinking which ideology of hate unsuccessfully tried to erase: Rahul

**7 NATIONAL PRESS CLUB ANAGAR**  
 ● Cong takes out 'march' to protest MGNREGA repeal

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 ● APIYO defers Delhi Chalo Abhiyan after government assurance

● Seva Aapke Dwar 2.0 camp launched in Muktur village

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**Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) : VB - G RAM G (विकसित भारत - जी राम जी) Act, 2025**

**Under the VB - G RAM G, 125 days of employment will be provided for the construction of roads and bridges. This will open new avenues of development and strengthen connectivity between villages and cities.**

**125 DAYS Guaranteed Wage Employment**

**'People of Dibrugarh will now be known as residents of capital city'**  
**Shah unveils devp projects worth ₹ 1,715 cr**  
**State govt to rewrite history textbooks for high schools: Himanta**

**DIBRUGARH, Jan 30:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched projects worth ₹ 1,715 crore, including the second legislative assembly complex, in Assam's Dibrugarh.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had announced that the Upper Assam town of Dibrugarh will be established as the second capital of the state and the laying of the foundation stone of the assembly complex here is a step in this direction, Shah said after launching the projects virtually at the Khanikar Parade Ground here.

"We have seen several Congress governments and they made many announcements but these were not translated into reality; but it is the BJP government under Sarma who has taken the step to implement it," he said.

This is the result of the chief minister's efforts to ensure "equal development of all regions of the state, equal rights of people of all communities, and equal rights to build a Great Assam together," Shah said.

The people of Dibrugarh will also be now "known as residents of a capital city and

ond administrative hub.

The project will include a three-storey assembly building, a nine-storey hostel for MLAs, an 800-seat capacity auditorium and a barrack for security personnel.

Shah inaugurated the first phase of the modern multi-disciplinary sports complex worth Rs 238 crore and laid the foundation stone for its second phase, which will be constructed at an estimated cost of ₹ 209 crore.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inspired the youth across the country to take up sports (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**DHEMAJI, Jan 30:** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said he has instructed the Education Department to rewrite the history textbooks for high schools.

The CM did not elaborate on why the history books need to be rewritten. However, he questioned the existence of Ahom warrior Bagh Hazarika, who features in school textbooks.

Sarma claimed that Bagh Hazarika never fought any war with Ahom general Lachit Barphukan against the Mughals.

"There was no Bagh Hazarika with Lachit Barphukan in Saraighat's battle. It was Mising leader Miri Handique, who fought against the Mughals in Kamrup," Sarma said at the closing ceremony of the 10th Mising Youth Festival organised by Takam Mising Porin Kebang (All Mising Students' Union) at Kareng Chapori here.

Ismail Siddique, popularly known as Bagh Hazarika, was a 17th-century Ahom warrior who fought with Ahom general Lachit Barphukan against the Mughals in the Battle of Saraighat in 1671. Hazarika was known to be born in an Assamese Muslim family at Dhekerigaon village near Garhgaon in present-day Sivasagar district.

"We have decided to rewrite the history for high schools, and I have told (Assam Education Minister) Ranaj Pegu about it," the CM said in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Talking about infiltration, Sarma said the Mising community has played an important role in protecting the Upper Assam lands from encroachments.

"Had the Mising people lived from Dhubri to Sadiya (west to east of Assam), not a single Miya could have (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**Zubeen death case: Court rejects bail plea of 3 accused**

**GUWAHATI, Jan 30:** A court here on Friday rejected the bail petitions of three of the accused in Zubeen Garg's death case, with the singer's wife pleading that bail should not be granted to any of them till the case is closed.

The Kamrup Metropolitan District and Sessions Court fixed February 13 as the next date of hearing, special public prosecutor (SPP) Ziaul Kamar said.

Among the seven arrested in the case, three of them — Garg's band member Amritprava Mahanta and his two personal security officers (PSOs) Paresh Baishya and Nandeswar Bora — had earlier filed for bail.

Garg's wife Garima, who was present during the hearing, said she was glad that the bail petitions were rejected.

"We wish that none of them get bail until the case is closed and all the accused receive their due punishment," she said.

While Mahanta is accused of murder, the two PSOs have been charge-sheeted with criminal conspiracy and criminal breach of trust by misappropriating funds or property entrusted to them.

The 52-year-old singer-composer had died while swimming in the sea on September 19 in Singapore, where he had gone to attend the North East India Festival (NEIF).

Speaking to reporters after the hearing, Kamar said, "Mahanta was fully a part of the conspiracy (leading to Garg's death), and we objected to bail primarily on that ground. The two PSOs didn't come clean on the money deposited with them by Garg until they were brought under investigation. "The court upheld our arguments and rejected their bail (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**10TH MISING YOUTH FESTIVAL CONCLUDES**  
**PM trying to reverse Assam's changed demography: Shah**

**DHEMAJI, Jan 30:** Claiming that the demography of Assam changed during Congress rule, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the BJP-led government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working to reverse the trend.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the 10th Mising Youth Festival organised by Takam Mising Porin Kebang (All Mising Students' Union) at Kareng Chapori here as the chief guest, Shah appealed to people to vote for the BJP in the upcoming Assembly elections to free the state from infiltration.

"Assam's demography totally changed during the Congress rule. The population of infiltrators rose to 64 lakh from nil, and infiltrators became a majority in seven districts," he alleged.

Shah asserted that the Modi government was working through various means to reverse the demographic trend in the state.

"If you want to stop infiltration in Assam, then elect the BJP government for a third term and strengthen the hands of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in the fight against illegal immigrants. Two BJP state governments in Assam have freed 1.26 lakh acres of land from encroachment by infiltrators," he added.

The Union home minister also stressed the role played by the Mising community in stopping infiltrators from settling in Upper Assam through their lifestyle of hard work.

"It's the responsibility of the Mising community to stop infiltration. You do not need to take up guns. Through your culture of hard work, infiltrators have not been able to come to this side," he said.

Talking about the Bogibeel bridge over Brahmaputra river connecting Dibrugarh and Dhemaji, Shah said it stands as a symbol of India's progress before the entire world.

"However, very few people in India know that the Bogibeel Bridge was built through the hard work and sweat of my brothers and sisters from the Mising community. Today, this bridge has become a powerful representation of the vision of a New India, both across the nation and globally," he added.

The Union home minister further said that Rajya Sabha MP from Assam, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

management committee and the state core committee are participating in the meeting. The discussion will revolve around the Assembly elections," he said.

Besides Saikia, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Union ministers Sarbananda Sonowal and Pabitra Margherita, among others, are expected to be present at the meeting.

The spokesperson further said that since the seat-sharing arrangements with the alliance partners have not been finalised yet, party ticket allotment is unlikely to figure prominently in the discussion.

Assembly elections are due in the state within a few months.

The BJP currently leads a coalition government in Assam with the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**Shah meets top Assam BJP leaders in Guwahati with focus on polls**

**GUWAHATI, Jan 30:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah reached the state BJP headquarters on Friday evening for a meeting with top party functionaries with the focus on the upcoming Assam Assembly elections.

He was greeted by state party president Dilip Saikia and other leaders with traditional 'gamosas' (traditional Assamese scarf).

Shah, who arrived in Assam around midnight on Thursday on his second visit to this northeastern state within a month, attended two events at Dibrugarh and Dhemaji earlier during the day.

A party spokesperson said earlier on Friday that the meeting at the state headquarters will be a closed-door meeting with senior leaders, as the BJP seeks a third straight term in the state.

"Select members of the election

**Guv inaugurates two-day workshop on 'Manuscripts of Assam'**



**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Jan 30:** Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya on Friday inaugurated a two-day workshop on 'Manuscripts of Assam' at the Phandihar Datta Seminar Hall of Gauhati University, underscoring the role of manuscript preservation in safeguarding the state's cultural and literary legacy.

The workshop has been organised under the 'Governor Assam Bhasha Protsahan Yojana, 2025', an initiative of Lok Bhavan conceptualised by the Governor to promote and preserve Assam's rich linguistic and literary heritage.

Addressing the gathering, Acharya described manuscripts as immortal carriers of knowledge and cultural continuity.

Quoting the Sanskrit maxim "Nāsti vidyā samānī cakṣuḥ" (there is no vision equal to knowledge), he said manuscripts preserve the wisdom of sages, saints and society across generations and serve as living links between the past and the present.

Highlighting Assam's illustrated knowledge tradition from ancient Kamarupa through the Ahom period, the Governor said manuscripts written in Sanskrit, Old Assamese and Tai-Ahom reflect the state's multilingual and multicultural ethos. Referring to the literary works of Srimanta Sankardeva and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**Rahul disrespected NE by not wearing 'gamosa' at President's Republic Day event: Shah**

**DIBRUGARH, Jan 30:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of disrespecting the North East by refusing to wear a 'gamosa', presented by President Droupadi Murmu at the 'At Home' reception hosted by her on Republic Day.

All dignitaries, including those from abroad, had worn the scarf as a mark of respect, but Gandhi was the "only person to refuse" to do so, Shah claimed, while addressing a public rally at the Khanikar Parade Ground here.

He asked Gandhi "what enemy does he have towards the people of NE...why such injustice against the people of the region".

"Rahul Gandhi can do whatever

he wants, but as long as the BJP is in power and politics, it will not allow any disrespect of the North East's culture. We are firm on this, and nobody can shake us from this firm stand," the BJP leader said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has worn the Assamese 'gamosa' at the UN and talked about Vaishnav saints Sankardeva and Madhavdeva, thereby spreading the state's culture globally, he said.

Shah also accused the Congress of using infiltration as a "weapon of its vote bank politics".

"There has been no infiltration in Assam since the BJP came to power. Those who had come to India illegally will be identified and sent back," he added.

Asserting that before the last elections, the BJP had pledged that infiltration, which "changed Assam's demography and compromised the nation's security", would be stopped, Shah said, "We kept our promise".

The Assam government has stopped the process of changing demography, and has freed 1 lakh 26 thousand acres of land from infiltrators, he said. "If demographic change is not stopped, Assam may face difficulties in the coming days, and only our government can stop it."

Shah alleged that the opposition party, for the sake of vote banks, had even handed over the sacred land of Srimanta (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**Assam wins 'Most Proactive State under RCS-UDAN' award**

**GUWAHATI, Jan 30:** Assam has been conferred with the 'Most Proactive State under RCS-UDAN (Priority Areas)' award at Wings India 2026, being held in Hyderabad, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said on Friday.

The award was received on behalf of the state by Transport Commissioner Manvendra Pratap Singh.

"At @WingsIndia2026 in Hyderabad, Assam has been conferred the award for 'Most Proactive State under RCS-UDAN (Priority Areas)', recognising HCM Dr. @himantabiswa-led Govt of Assam's coordinated efforts in strengthening regional aviation", the CMO said. Reacting to the honour, Chief (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

**700 job vacancies across diverse sectors**  
**Over 50 corporate houses participate in job fair for ex-servicemen in Guwahati**



**GUWAHATI, Jan 30:** Over 50 leading corporate houses offered employment opportunities to ex-servicemen at a job fair at the Narangi Military Station here on Friday, a Defence spokesperson said.

He said over 700 former personnel participated in the event.

"The Directorate General Resettlement (DGR) organised the mega job fair, providing a strong platform for ex-servicemen to connect with leading corporate recruiters and explore meaningful second-career opportunities," the spokesperson said.

He said over 50 leading corporate organisations, collectively offering around 700 job vacancies across diverse sectors, participated in the fair.

"More than 700 ex-servicemen attended the fair, engaging directly with employers and showcasing their skills, experience and leadership qualities honed during military service," the spokesperson added.

The job fair was attended by the Corporate Guest of Honour, Maj. (ret'd) Rupam Talukadar, HR Head, ITC, and the Military Guest of Honour, Lt Gen. Mohit Wadhwa, Sena Medal.

In their speeches on the occasion, they highlighted the immense value of military discipline, adaptability and leadership in the corporate ecosystem.

Maj. Gen. SBK Singh, Director General, DGR, and Brig. (ret'd) Polish Choudhury, chairman, Rajya Sainik Board, were also present on the occasion. (PTI)

**EU-India trade pact to ensure Assam tea reaches European countries with zero tariff: Amit Shah**



**DIBRUGARH, Jan 30:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that the EU-India free trade agreement will ensure that Assam tea shipments will reach European countries with zero tariff.

Addressing a public rally at the Khanikar Parade Ground here, Shah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken Assam tea to Paris and Berlin along with other countries of the European bloc through the recently signed trade pact.

"The EU-India trade pact will further boost Assam tea exports to European countries," he asserted.

India and the European Union on Tuesday sealed a landmark free trade agreement - billed as the "mother of all deals" - to create a market of two billion people, with the PM and the top EU leadership unveiling a transformative agenda to leverage trade and defence in protecting the rules-based world order.

Dibrugarh, which has the highest concentration of tea gardens, will get the biggest advantage from this trade pact, Shah said.

"Tea from these gardens will now reach 27 countries and the people of these countries will enjoy the morning cup of tea from Dibrugarh", he added.

The 27 countries of the EU comprise one-third of international trade and the PM has "opened up a huge market for tea which will reach there with zero-tariff", the Union minister said.

"Our export earnings will go up and Modi ji has done wonders for Assam tea with this pact," Shah added.

In a bid to woo the tea tribe community ahead of the upcoming assembly elections, the union minister thanked the tea garden workers for giving a "distinct identity to Assam and India as one of the leading exporters of tea to the world".

"Dibrugarh is known as the tea capital, and garden workers have ensured that the aroma of Assam tea reaches the world. The state is (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Sebi gives clearance to NSE IPO after decade-long wait

NEW DELHI, Jan 30: Capital market regulator Sebi has granted a no-objection certificate to the National Stock Exchange (NSE) to move ahead with its long-awaited initial public offering (IPO), after a decade of delays caused by regulatory concerns and co-location controversy, a top exchange official said on Friday.

The listing plans of the country's largest bourse, NSE, were on hold since 2016, when the exchange first filed draft offer documents to raise around Rs 10,000 crore through an offer for sale by existing shareholders. Sebi withheld approval due to regulatory concerns arising from governance lapses and the co-location case. Since then, NSE has approached the regulator multiple times to seek clearance.

On Sebi's clearance, NSE Chairman Srinivas Injeti said the watchdog's approval for the exchange's IPO marked a significant milestone in its growth journey.

"With Sebi's approval, we embark on a new chapter of value creation for all our stakeholders. This approval also reinforces confidence



in NSE being an integral part of the Indian economy and a beacon of Indian capital markets," he added.

Earlier this month, Sebi chairman Tuhi Kanta Pandey said the regulator had granted "in-principle" approval to NSE's settlement application in the unfair market access case, an important development seen as paving the way for the exchange's IPO.

Pandey had also indicated that the no-objection certificate could be

The proposed IPO is expected to be among the largest in India's capital markets.

NSE, which has about 1.77 lakh shareholders, is valued at over Rs 5 lakh crore in the unlisted grey market, according to market analysts.

NSE managing director and chief executive Ashish Kumar Chauhan had earlier described the in-principle approval as a positive signal, though he said no formal communication had been received at the time.

"Once we receive the NOC, we will follow the conditions mentioned in the intimation and begin preparations for filing the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP)," Chauhan had told PTI Videos.

He had stated that it could take up to four months after receiving Sebi's NOC to file the DRHP, which would then require regulatory clearance.

The IPO itself could hit the markets around seven to eight months after the NOC, he had stated.

In March 2025, Sebi had constituted an internal committee to examine NSE's listing proposal. (PTI)

issued within about a month. NSE filed its settlement plea in June 2025.

The exchange's IPO plans were stalled due to the co-location case, in which certain brokers were accused of receiving preferential access to the exchange's trading systems.

After years of litigation, NSE in 2025 offered to pay ₹ 1,388 crore to settle the charges and move ahead with the listing process.

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## Stock markets snap 3-day rally on intense selling in metal, IT stocks ahead of Budget

### AFFIDAVIT

I, Kakro Keapapi, DOB-01/01/1986, C/O- Mansing Teron, village Bargaon, P.O.-Bargaon, Amtereng, P.S.-Baithalango, district -Karbi Anglong (Assam), do hereby solemnly affirm and declare on oath before the notary public at Morigaon Court on this day of 17th January, 2026, that my actual name is Kakro Keapapi, which is mentioned in my Adhar Card bearing No-8671-1887-8677, Pan Card No-NMNP0814E and Voter Id No-JRF4239707. But in my Assam Gramin Vikash Bank Passbook Vide A/C No-7469010055981 under Bargaon branch and, wherein in my name has been wrongly recorded as Kakrung Keappi instead of Kakro Keapapi. Both the names Kakro Keapapi and Kakrung Keappi are the same and one person, i.e. myself.

### AFFIDAVIT

I, Jonaki Senarpi, DOB-01/01/1985, C/O- Biren Rongpi, village -Bargaon, P.O.-Bargaon, Amtereng, P.S.-Baithalango, district Karbi Anglong (Assam), do hereby solemnly affirm and declare on oath before the notary public at Morigaon Court, on this day of 17th day of January, 2026, that, my actual name is Jonaki Senarpi, which is mentioned in my Adhar Card Pan Card No-OSKPS1371H and Voter Id No-bearing No-4430-7333-8462, JRF4238475. But in my Assam Gramin Vikash Bank Passbook Vide A/C No-7469010062046 under Bargaon branch and, wherein my name has been wrongly recorded as Junaki Singnarpi instead of Jonaki Senarpi. Both the names Jonaki Senarpi and Junaki Singnarpi are the same and one person, i.e. myself.

MUMBAI, Jan 30: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Friday, snapping a three-day rally, due to heavy selling pressure in metal, IT and commodity stocks as investors booked profits at higher levels ahead of the Budget 2026-27.

However, buying on select blue-chip counters restricted the sharp fall in domestic equities amid prolonged weakness in the rupee, traders said.

As a bearish trend gripped the street, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 296.59 points, or 0.36 per cent, to settle at 82,269.78. During the day, it tumbled 625.34 points or 0.75 per cent to 81,941.03. A total of 2,424 stocks advanced while 1,783 declined and 160 remained unchanged on the BSE. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 98.25 points or 0.39 per cent to end at 25,320.65 in a volatile session.

"Indian equity markets remained volatile ahead of the Union Budget, with benchmark indices dragged lower by weakness in IT and metal stocks. The IT sector lagged due to global growth concerns and higher US bond yields, while gold and silver declined amid a stronger dollar. "Persistent FII selling and continued rupee depreciation kept market sentiment cautious," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

With geopolitical risks and global tariff pressures rising, the Union Budget is keenly awaited for cues on growth support and fiscal discipline, he added.

Among the Sensex firms, Tata Steel suffered the most, tanking by 4.57 per cent. ICICI Bank, Power Grid, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, Infosys and Kotak

Mahindra Bank were also among the laggards.

Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, ITC and Bharat Electronics were among the gainers. "Indian equity markets traded with a weak and cautious bias, retreating from recent highs amid aggressive selling in metal and IT stocks. Mixed cues from overseas markets, along with persistent weakness in the rupee, capped intra-day recovery attempts."

"Overall, sentiment remained cautious, with market participants balancing pre-Budget positioning against external headwinds," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said. Among sectoral indices, metal tanked 5.12 per cent, commodities (2.56 per cent), oil & gas (0.88 per cent), energy (0.87 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.86 per cent) and BSE Private Banks Index (0.63 per cent).

Telecommunication jumped 2.17 per cent, FMCG (1.48 per cent), healthcare (1.05 per cent), capital goods (1 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.87 per cent) and consumer durables (0.85 per cent). Indian stock markets will hold a special session on Sunday for Budget 2026-27.

India's economy is projected to grow by 6.8-7.2 per cent in the fiscal year starting April, the government's pre-Budget Economic Survey said on Thursday, reaffirming the country's status as the world's fastest-growing major economy despite trade risks and global volatility clouding the outlook.

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

### ASSAM POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

BAMUNIMAIDAM, GUWAHATI - 781021

### PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

As per the provision of the EIA Notification dtd. 14-09-2006, the Public Hearing for the "Proposed Integrated Cement Plant with production capacity of Clinker: 8.0 Million TPA (2 x 4.0 Million TPA), Cement: 3.0 Million TPA, WHRS: 42 MW (2 x 21 MW), CPP: 50 MW (2 x 25 MW) in phased manner at Village: Choto Lokhindong, P.O: Umrongso, District: Dima Hasao, Assam, PIN: 788931 by M/s. Ambuja Concrete North Private Limited" to be held as per following schedule:

Date & Time	Venue
06-03-2026 at 11:00 A.M.	Veterinary Old Compound, Vill: Choto Lokhindong, P.O: Umrongso, District: Dima Hasao, Assam, PIN: 788931

Interested persons of the locality including bonafide residents, NGOs, etc., are hereby requested to attend the aforesaid Public Hearing for getting their statements recorded, if any. Stakeholders may also send their views before the date of Public Hearing to the Member Secretary, APCB.

To know details of the proposed Project, interested person may collect the Executive Summary of Draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Report for the project, available at the following offices:

- The District Commissioner, Dima Hasao District, Haflong, Assam - 788819, e-mail: [dcnchills@nic.in](mailto:dcnchills@nic.in).
- M/s Ambuja Cements Limited, Adani Corporate House, Shantigram, S. G. Highway, Khodiyar, Ahmedabad-382421, Gujarat, India
- The Principal Secretary, N C Hills Autonomous Council, P.O.: Haflong, Dist: Dima Hasao, Assam, PIN: 788819
- The Chairman, Umrongso Municipal Board, P.O.: Umrongso, Dist: Dima Hasao, Assam, PIN: 788931
- The G.M., District Industries & Commerce Centre, P.O.: Haflong, Dist: Dima Hasao, Assam, PIN: 788819
- Regional Office, MoEF & CC, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Housefed Building, G.S. Road, Rukminigaon, Guwahati - 781022, Assam
- The Gaonburah, a) Choto-Lokhindong Village, b) Borolokhindong Village and c) Tarvelango Village
- Head Office, APCB, Bamunimaidam, Guwahati - 21
- Regional Laboratory cum Office Silchar, APCB
- APCB's website at <http://www.pcbassam.org>

Date: 30-01-2026 Sd/- Member Secretary

## Montra Electric delivers India's first PM E-DRIVE

### HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Jan 30: Montra Electric, the electric medium and heavy commercial vehicle arm of the Murugappa Group, has marked a major milestone in India's clean mobility transition by becoming the country's first manufacturer to secure PM E-DRIVE certification for a heavy-duty electric truck.

To mark the achievement, Montra Electric delivered the first PM E-DRIVE-certified electric heavy truck—the Rhino 5538 EV 6x4 tractor trailer—to Ultra Tech Cement Limited, reinforcing the growing adoption of electric vehicles by large industrial and logistics players.

The milestone was commemorated in the presence of Arun Murugappan, Chairman of Montra Electric (TI Clean Mobility Private Limited), along with Lalaj Gupta, Managing Director, Montra Electric, and Sathia Raj, Chief Procurement Officer of UltraTech Cement Limited.

Murugappan flagged off and handed over the certified vehicle to UltraTech. Officials said the N3 category certification under the Government of India's PM E-DRIVE scheme significantly strengthens the commercial viability of electric heavy-duty trucks by unlocking customer incentives of up to ₹9.6 lakh per vehicle.

Of the ₹10,900-crore PM E-DRIVE scheme, ₹500 crore has been earmarked for e-trucks, improving fleet economics by lowering operating costs, reducing exposure to fuel price volatility and supporting compliance with evolving sustainability and emission norms.

Union Minister for Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy said the PM E-DRIVE scheme reflects India's growing capabilities in the heavy-duty electric vehicle segment.

"Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are committed to decarbonising our logistics

and making India a global hub for EV manufacturing. Electric trucks are pivotal to our Net Zero goals," he said, adding that the delivery of the first PM E-DRIVE-certified heavy-duty electric truck marks the realisation of that vision.

Arun Murugappan said decarbonising freight remains one of the most critical challenges in India's energy transition. "Forward-looking policy frameworks such as the PM E-DRIVE scheme represent a transformative step in accelerating this shift, particularly in heavy commercial vehicles where emissions intensity is high," he said.

He added that Montra Electric is proud to contribute to the national mission by delivering technologically advanced, reliable and scalable electric M&HCV solutions.

Designed for Indian operating conditions, the Rhino 5538 EV tractor trailer range is available in both 6x4 and 4x2 variants. The 4x2 version offers fixed battery as well as battery-swapping options, features a 282 kWh LFP battery delivering 380 hp and 2,000 Nm of torque, and provides a tested range of nearly 198 km.

With six-minute battery swap capability, the vehicle is suited for high-utilisation, fixed-route and hub-to-hub operations across ports, mining areas, cement logistics, steel plants and long-haul freight corridors.

With heavy-duty trucks accounting for a disproportionate share of freight-related emissions, the PM E-DRIVE-certified Rhino 5538 EV is seen as a critical lever in India's push towards net-zero and cleaner industrial growth.

Montra Electric said it plans to work closely with customers, policymakers and ecosystem partners to accelerate the deployment of electric heavy-duty trucks across the country's core economic sectors.

Contd. from Page 1...

## Shah unveils devp

and they are performing well at both national and international level, he said on the occasion. "The enthusiasm of the youth is not enough to make them world-class sportspersons. It is the state of the art infrastructure, modern training facilities and cooperation of the government that creates able sportspersons," he said. The first phase of the project includes an indoor stadium, swimming pool, football field, main gallery, tennis, volleyball and basketball courts and hostels. The second phase will have an additional seating space for 30,000 people, a central playground and an athletic track, officials said.

The home minister laid the foundation stone for the ₹ 292 crore Wildlife Health and Research Centre for the treatment of wild animals, and enhanced laboratory facilities along with training units.

Shah said that he has asked the CM to ensure that the centre caters to both animals and birds. "The centre will dedicate itself to scientific research and this will emerge as a very important place in the world by improving coordination among forest officials, veterinarians and researchers," he said.

The project will include an educational and administrative block, a central laboratory, a museum, a state-of-the-art auditorium, a clinical block and a laboratory with radiation facilities.

Shah also launched the ₹ 692 crore project for the restoration and rejuvenation of wetlands under the National Disaster Mitigation fund. "This project is like a dream is coming true. The rivers of Assam are a reservoir of cultural traditions and the backbone of the people's economy, particularly the farmers," Shah said.

Assam's rivers are "like our mothers but when there is flood it assumes a devastating form and leads to havoc in several places of the state", he said. The Union minister said that a survey was conducted by North East Space Applications Centre (NESAC) and on the basis of it, several wetlands were identified to direct the water of Brahmaputra as a flood control measure. "We had promised before the last elections that we will find a way to make Assam flood-free and just before the next elections this project is being launched," he said.

Water will flow into these wetlands and it will be used for irrigation which will help farmers to triple cropping during a year, increase livestock and dairy farming, he said.

These water bodies will also be used for water sports and become places of tourist attraction, he added. (PTI)

## State govt to rewrite

entered Assam. We can see that from Golaghat onwards, there is no Miya," he added. "Miya" is originally a pejorative term used for Bengali-speaking Muslims in Assam, and the non-Bengali-speaking people generally identify them as Bangladeshi immigrants. In recent years, activists from the community have started adopting this term as a gesture of defiance.

"Our Missing brothers and sisters are very hardworking. They earn their own livelihood. If there were Missing in all districts, not a single Miya could have taken our land," the CM said.

He lauded the community for its "big role" in protecting Assamese culture and identity. Sarma announced a ₹ 100 crore grant for the Missing Youth Festival and ₹ 10 crore for uplifting the 'Donyi-Polo' society. (PTI)

## Shah meets top

while the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) has also extended support. The saffron party has maintained that its alliance with the regional parties will continue, though the formalities are being worked out. "Amit Shah ji is expected to take an update on the progress in the electioneering process so far and also provide his guidance on the road ahead," the spokesperson added. Shah is scheduled to leave for West Bengal after the meeting with the party leaders here. (PTI)

## PM trying to reverse

Manmohan Singh had served as Prime Minister for 10 years, but this bridge remained incomplete. "The people of Assam placed their trust in Modi Ji, and it was under his leadership that this bridge was completed in just four years," he added. Shah further challenged the Congress to tell the people of Assam what it did during the 10 years of government at the Centre.

"As a PM for 10 years from Assam, what has Manmohan Singh given to Assam? Let me tell you. He gave ₹ 1.28 lakh crore to Assam in 10 years, while Modi gave ₹ 5.85 crore to the state," he added.

The Union home minister alleged that in 55 years of their government since Independence, the Congress never made an Adivasi the country's President. "But Modi made Droupadi Murmu India's President and gave respect to all Adivasi people of the country. From 2004 to 2014, the Congress government gave ₹ 28,000 crore to the ST component. Modi gave ₹ 1.35 lakh crore for tribal development," he claimed.

Shah also alleged that several tribal communities struggled to protect their identity during the Congress regime, while asserting that the BJP was committed to addressing the issues of the Missing society through an interlocutor appointed by the Centre. He lauded the unique 'chang ghar' or still house of the community, saying its architectural design in a way gives way to river during the flood, thereby silently fighting the global warming.

The Union minister also said that the government has plans to stop flooding in Assam and decided to create big ponds for this. He announced that a special requirement drive will be conducted for Missing youths for the central paramilitary forces.

"If I had not attended the Missing Youth Festival, my life would have felt incomplete without witnessing this truly magnificent spectacle. Today, I bow with deep respect to the sacred 'Donyi-Polo' tradition, which embodies nature worship and the faith of our Missing community," he added. (PTI)

## Zubeen death case

petitions. It was a result of teamwork and also due to feedback as sought from the police department," he added.

The SPP, who leads a five-member team of special public prosecutors appointed by the state government for the case, said three new petitions were filed by the accused, including one seeking details of the case being taken up by a coroner's court in Singapore. Kamar added that the court has fixed the next date for hearing in another case connected with accused Siddhartha Sharma, Garg's manager, related to his business investment and a residential flat in Guwahati, on February 16. Two of the accused - NEIF organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta and Garg's cousin and suspended state police officer Sandeepan - had initially filed for bail, but had withdrawn their petitions in the last hearing on January 22.

While Shyamkanu is accused of murder, Sandeepan is facing charges of culpable homicide not amounting to murder. The two other accused, Siddhartha and Garg's another band member Shekharjyoti Goswami, both facing murder charges, have not filed bail petitions yet. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the state police's CID is probing the case and had submitted its charge-sheet on December 12. A separate inquiry is also underway by local authorities in Singapore, with a coroner's court recently ruling out foul play and stating that Garg was severely intoxicated and had drowned off Lazarus Island after declining a life jacket. (PTI)

## Assam wins 'Most

Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said it is a proud moment for the state. "This has been made possible due to Adarniya (@narendramodi) ji's strong focus on regional connectivity and constant support. RCS-UDAN is expanding connectivity and boosting growth," the CM added. The four-day Wings India 2026, billed as Asia's largest civil aviation event, began on January 28 at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad and showcases the growth of the country's aviation sector and the future of global aviation, officials said. (PTI)

## Rahul disrespected NE

Sankardeva to infiltrators, which the Himanta government of Assam has now made infiltrator-free.

He also alleged that the Congress did nothing for Assam's development, and the BJP dispensation in Assam, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has taken a series of initiatives for the progress of all sectors. Both BJP Chief Ministers Himanta Biswa Sarma and his predecessor Sarbananda Sonowal initiated several development works, and this is happening because Prime Minister Narendra Modi has Assam in his heart, he said.

"The Congress ruled at the Centre for decades since Independence but did nothing for the development of the state. Now the BJP gives priority to Assam, whether it be in infrastructure, wildlife and environment, semiconductors, cancer facilities, airport, railways, waterways, industry and others," he said.

"I want to ask Rahul Gandhi what his party has given to Assam except guns, bullets, conflicts and deaths of youth," the union home minister said.

After the BJP government was formed at the Centre, more than 20 peace agreements were signed in the North East and more than 10,000 youth laid down their arms to make Assam and the region peaceful and secure, Shah said. There was a time when there were guns and explosions but now it is the music of Bhupen Hazarika that is reaching the world and it was the BJP government that gave Bharat Ratna to him, he said.

The Congress did not honour even its first chief minister Gopinath Bardoloi with Bharat Ratna, and it was the BJP that did it, he added. "We have started a new culture of peace, good governance, development and taking all together in the path of progress", he said. The chief minister has ensured equal rights for all communities by focusing on their all-round development, the union minister said. (PTI)

## Guv inaugurates two

Sri Madhavdeva, he said these manuscripts convey enduring values of social harmony, compassion and human dignity, while Ahom-era chronicles represent a distinctive and scientific tradition of historiography.

Emphasising the relevance of preservation in the digital age, Acharya said the language promotion initiative of Lok Bhavan seeks to foster linguistic harmony and cultural dialogue.

He cited recent efforts such as the publication of a translated compilation of Assamese and Tamil patriotic poems, noting that the initiative has now been expanded to include preservation and dissemination of India's ancient knowledge traditions in collaboration with Gauhati University.

Quoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi that "India's heritage is a bridge to the future", the Governor referred to the Gyan Bharatam Mission, under which more than 5.2 million manuscripts have already been documented across the country, with Assam making a notable contribution.

He lauded the efforts of institutions such as the Assam State Archives, Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti, Gauhati University, Cotton University, Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra and Vaishnavite satras in preserving manuscripts. He also highlighted that five rare Assamese Sanchipat manuscripts preserved at Rashtropati Bhavan's Granth Kutir symbolise national recognition of Assam's cultural heritage.

Calling upon scholars, academicians and society at large to actively engage in manuscript preservation, Acharya expressed hope that the workshop would serve as a meaningful platform for technical training, cultural revival and future collaboration, contributing to the revival of India's glorious past.

## EU-India trade

recognised in the world for its tea. It is the hard work of labourers that has ensured this," he said.

Asserting that tea garden workers have strengthened the state's economy, Shah said they also ensured that the beverage remains a leading export commodity. The BJP leader alleged that the Congress did "nothing for the welfare of garden workers who have positioned Assam, particularly Dibrugarh, as the tea capital of the country".

"The chief minister has amended the law to ensure that the tea garden workers get ownership rights of land," he said. Shah accused the Congress of giving a toolkit to defame Assam and its tea, without elaborating. Tea garden workers constitute a sizeable electorate in the upper Assam assembly constituencies, which was earlier considered a Congress stronghold, but they have slowly shifted their allegiance to the BJP since 2014. (PTI)

NCPCR and School Education Dept focus on education, health, mental health, POCSO and Juvenile Justice Act implementation

## State-level conference on child rights held in Guwahati



**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, Jan 30:** The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in collaboration with the Assam School Education Department, organised a state-level conference on "Key Child Rights Issues" at the Assam Administrative Staff College, Guwahati. The programme focused on education, health and mental health and effective implementation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

The conference brought together state- and district-level stakeholders, including officials from Edu-

cation, Police, Women & Child Development, State Child Protection Society (SCPS), District Child Protection Officers, Child Welfare Committees, Juvenile Justice Boards, Special Juvenile Police Units, school principals, staff of Child Care Institutions and civil society representatives. Discussions centred on district-level implementation challenges, school safety, accountability in NCPCR guidelines and children's health and mental well-being.

The programme was inaugurated by Surendra Kumar, IPS, Additional Director General of Police, Vigilance & Anti-Corruption, Assam, along with Dr Shyamal Saikia, Chairperson, SPCPR

Assam, Narayan Konwar, IAS, Commissioner & Secretary, School Education Department, Shaista K Shah, NCPCR, Madhumita Bhagawati, ACS, Secretary and Mamata Hojai, Director of Secondary Education. Kumar emphasised collaboration between government and civil society, while Shah highlighted safety, security and mental health concerns of schoolchildren, noting that NCPCR has resolved around 31,000 complaints, rescued 2,800 children and facilitated repatriation of 1,800 children in the last six-seven months. Shah also outlined NCPCR initiatives on children's mental health, protection of transgender children, support for children with

incarcerated mothers, combating child trafficking through the "A2i 3.0" campaign and AI-based mechanisms to curb child sexual abuse materials (CSAM). She urged district authorities to implement NCPCR's SugarBoard initiative in schools to address childhood obesity.

Technical sessions focused on:  
1. School safety & accountability: Roles of schools and management in safety and mental health support.

2. Health & mental health: Teacher training, awareness of childhood mental health issues, SugarBoards.

3. POCSO Act, 2012: Reporting, investigation, child-friendly procedures and counselling support.

4. Juvenile Justice Act, 2015: Strengthening infrastructure, manpower, monitoring of Child Care Institutions, aftercare and adoption services.

Key recommendations included institutional strengthening, regular training of district functionaries, improved inter-departmental coordination, enhanced cyber-safety and mental health support in schools. The programme concluded with an open house discussion, where participants shared district-level experiences and reaffirmed their commitment to safeguarding children's rights and entitlements.

## Karbi Community celebrates Hacha Kekan Festival in Jeng Kro

**HT Correspondent**

**KHERONI, Jan 30:** The quiet night in Jeng Kro village came alive as locals gathered to celebrate Hacha Kekan, the traditional post-harvest festival of the Karbi community.

The atmosphere turned electric with the arrival of a vibrant troupe of young performers from neighbouring villages of Phelangini and Rikangmihom. The group performed traditional songs and dances, marking the ritualistic welcoming of the harvest goddess, "Lakhimi."

Hacha Kekan is a significant cultural event celebrated after the reaping of golden grains from paddy fields or hilly Jhum (shifting) cultivation. Traditionally held at night, this year's festivities took place at the residence of Rajen Teron, where the courtyard became a stage for Karbi folk songs narrating the toil of farmers and the bounty of nature. Youth in traditional attire performed rhythmic dances, drawing villagers of all ages.

While historically an intimate affair observed by individual households or specific villages, Hacha Kekan is increasingly celebrated across various regions of Karbi Anglong, transcending barriers of caste and religion. This trend is largely credited to the Karbi Cultural Society (KCS), which works to preserve Karbi identity and bring indigenous art forms from private courtyards to public platforms for broader recognition. The celebration in Jeng Kro reflects the enduring spirit of the Karbi people, blending age-old gratitude for the land with a modern drive to preserve their unique cultural identity.

## Karbi Cultural Society marks 49th anniversary, reaffirms commitment to heritage

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Jan 30:** The Karbi Cultural Society (KCS) on Thursday commemorated its 49th anniversary at the KCS Office, KPH, Taralangs, with dignity and solemn pride, reaffirming its unwavering commitment to preserving, promoting and propagating Karbi culture and identity. The celebration began with the hoisting of the KCS flag by president Humsing Bey, in the presence of vice president Kamsing Ingti and general secretary Sunil Tokbi, who formally highlighted the objectives of the programme and recalled the Society's long journey in safeguarding Karbi traditions, language and cultural values.

As a mark of respect to departed cultural activists, the gathering observed two minutes of silence, creating a deeply moving moment of collective remembrance. Founded on January 30, 1977, under the visionary leadership of Lunse Timung, the first president and Roy Engli, the first general secretary, KCS has played a vital role in promoting Karbi cultural values through programmes, research activi-



ties, seminars and community engagement. Most notably, it has nurtured the Karbi Youth Festival (KYF), now recognised as one of Northeast India's largest and most vibrant ethnic festivals.

The Central Committee expressed deep gratitude to the Karbi community for its unwavering support over the years, noting that the Society's strength and success have been made possible through collective participation from elders, youth, artists, cultural workers and well-wishers across regions. The Society also paid homage to all Karbi cultural activists and pioneers whose dedication continues to guide its mission.

The occasion was graced by KCS founding president Lunse Timung as Chief Guest, adding historic significance to the celebration. Eminent personalities in attendance included Lawrence Teron, Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and Reception Committee president for the 52nd KYF; Ritesh Engli, KCS president; Adviser Chandrasing Kro; former general secretaries Saising Rongpi and Bidyasing Rongpi; composer of the KCS anthem Harsing Ingti; renowned singer Sashikala Hansapi; former MAC Seema Ronghangpi and prominent leaders Sonasing Terang, P Dili and Bibison Ingti.

Representatives from various organisations, including KNCA, KARSA, FHSAM, Karbi Adorbar, KSA, KUYA and the Women Justice Forum, along with members of KCS Zonal Committees from Diphu-Manja, Diphu Government College and Donsuri Chingri, participated in large numbers. All KCS Zonal Committees across different locations simultaneously observed the 49th anniversary, showcasing unity and collective pride across Karbi Anglong.

## Interaction programme with QUT professor held at Nagaon University

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, Jan 30:** The Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), in collaboration with the Department of Economics, organised a popular talkum-interaction programme at Nagaon University on Thursday.

Professor Jayanta Sarkar of Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Australia, attended the programme as the guest speaker. He delivered a talk on "Health Economics: A Behavioural Perspective and Research Opportunities Abroad," offering valuable insights into contemporary developments in the field. During his address, Professor Sarkar provided a broad overview of emerging global research trends and highlighted various opportunities for pursuing higher studies and research abroad, particularly for students and young researchers from Indian universities. The programme was coordinated by Dr Tiken Das, who guided the session and facilitated interaction with the participants. Dr Naba Prasad Nath also addressed the gathering, emphasising the importance of international exposure in higher education and the role of such programmes in strengthening academic globalisation.

Dr Bhuvan Ch Chutia briefed the meeting and outlined the objectives of organising the interaction under the broader framework of the international conference. Faculty members, research scholars and students actively participated in the discussion, with over 200 participants attending the programme and interacting with Professor Sarkar.

The session witnessed enthusiastic engagement, as participants sought insights on international research collaborations, funding opportunities and academic pathways abroad, according to a press note.

## National-level tourism conclave held at Bir Lachit Borphukan College

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Jan 30:** A national-level tourism conclave, "Sivasagar Tourism Conclave 2026", was held at Bir Lachit Borphukan College, organised by the Lachit Borphukan Research Centre.

The day-long event was moderated by Dr Nibedita Deka, Professor of Agricultural Economics, Assam Agricultural University and featured a panel including Dr Nitesh Kumar (Kaziranga University), environmentalist Dr Hemjit Deodhai Phukan, tourism entrepreneur Partha Pratim Sharma and Prabin Sharma (Sivasagar Girls' College).

Dr Nitesh Kumar highlighted lessons from Jaipur for boosting Sivasagar's tourism, while Dr Phukan stressed sustainable tourism and promoting local trade and indigenous products. Partha Pratim Sharma discussed challenges and practical measures for tourism growth and Prabin Sharma underscored coordinated

efforts with district authorities. Representatives from travel agencies, tour operators and civil society shared experiences during an interactive session.

The programme began with a ceremonial lamp lighting by Dipali Neog, Vice-Principal of the college and a dance performance by student Palki Khongia. Dr Birinchi Kumar Bora, Principal of Hemchandra Dev Goswami College, formally inaugurated the conclave. Dr Pankaj Jyoti Hazarika, Principal of Bir Lachit Borphukan College, presented the "Three H Model" as a roadmap for tourism development. The event was anchored by Nabajyoti Sharma and concluded with a vote of thanks by Dhruvajyoti Borthakur.

The conclave provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss strategies for sustainable tourism and regional economic growth, marking a successful event in promoting Sivasagar as a tourism destination.

## Hindu Sanmihan held at Sivasagar Boarding Field

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Jan 30:** Hundreds of people participated in the first-ever Hindu Sanmihan held at the Sivasagar Boarding Field on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The event witnessed a large gathering of people from different walks of life, reflecting wide public interest and participation.

Addressing the gathering, the Satradhikar of Bagharganya Satra near Jakkhalabandha and noted public speaker Hiru Prasad Mahanta said that as part of a fast-developing Bharat, Assam too is achieving significant gains on many fronts. He stated that this progress was possible because the Assamese nation was built on the strong foundations laid by Sankardev, Madhobdev and Sukapha and not on Sankardev-Ajan Fakir ideology.

Another invited speaker, Prantiya

Mantri of the Bharatiya Kishan Sangha, Krishna Kanta Bora, said that modern Indian society requires five-fold transformation, which includes family enlightenment, environmental protection, self-awakening, civic responsibility and social harmony.

Presiding over the meeting, Manoj Kumar Borthakur, executive president of the Ithash Sankalan Samity, Sivasagar chapter, said that all Hindus, along with non-Hindus living in the great country Bharat, need a stronger cohesive bond to build an enlightened society with a futuristic outlook.

On the occasion, a collection of articles published to mark the centenary year of the RSS was released by Hiru Prasad Mahanta. Satradhikar Hiru Prasad Mahanta and Kanuram Deka, Pranta Saha Byabostha Pramukh, lit the ceremonial lamp. The function was initiated by Chandutpal Bora, who also introduced the guests.

## All Assam Employees' Council stages sit-in protest in Kokrajhar



**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Jan 30:** The All Assam Employees' Council (AAEC) staged a two-hour sit-in demonstration in Kokrajhar on Friday, demanding the withdrawal of the New Pension Scheme (NPS) and the reintroduction of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) in Assam.

The protest, held from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM in front of Gandhi Park, was organised by the Kokrajhar District Employees' Council as part of a series of state-wide demonstrations. The AAEC has consistently opposed the NPS, which came into effect on February 1, 2005, maintaining that pension is a rightful entitlement of employees rather than a concession.

The organisation stated that the demand to restore the OPS is aimed at ensuring future financial security for workers, teachers, employees and officers across the state. A memorandum highlighting these demands was submitted to the Chief Minister of Assam through the District Commissioner of Kokrajhar.

## Karbi Anglong prepares for entrepreneurship fund cheque distribution

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Jan 30:** A review meeting chaired by District Commissioner Aranyak Saikia, IAS, assessed preparations for the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA) cheque distribution in Bokajan LAC, scheduled for February 6 at Hanjanglangso Ground. The event will benefit 16,395 participants.

Officials, including Additional District Commissioners, Superintendent of Police, DRDA Project Director and ASRLM representatives, discussed logistics, transportation, security, infrastructure, sanitation and technical coordination. The DC stressed efficient transport for beneficiaries from remote areas and directed DIPRO to ensure sound system, LED display, digital streaming and media management.

Drinking water, bio-toilets with women-friendly facilities, VIP toilets and green rooms were also reviewed. Police and Transport authorities were instructed to manage traffic and safety. Departments were urged to complete all arrangements within the timeframe to ensure smooth execution of the MMUA programme.

## Dumper injures school student

**HT Correspondent**

**JAGIROAD, Jan 30:** A school student was seriously injured after a dumper ran over her leg while she was on her way to school on Thursday morning at Bhakatgaon under Jagiroad police station. The incident has raised serious concern among local residents over the movement of heavy vehicles in the area.

The victim was identified as Jyotika Deka of Bongalbori village near Jagiroad. According to sources, the dumper bearing registration number AS 01 NC-0981 hit the student, causing severe injuries to her leg.

Police rushed to the spot immediately after receiving information, seized the dumper and arrested the driver. The injured student was shifted to a nearby medical facility for treatment.

Following the incident, local people appealed to the concerned authorities to take strict measures to curb the unruly movement of heavy vehicles in the area, especially during school hours to prevent such accidents in the future.

## Goalpara launches Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0 to accelerate district development

**HT Correspondent**

**GOALPARA, Jan 30:** The Goalpara district administration on Friday declared that the success of the mission 'Sampoornata Abhiyan' will be taken as a challenge, pledging to go to extreme lengths to implement schemes under the Aspirational District and Aspirational Block as per guidelines laid down by the NITI Aayog.

The declaration was made during the launching meeting of 'Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0', scheduled to run from January 28 to April 14, at the Natasurya Phani Sarma Bhawan in Goalpara town. The district administration showcased its determination through glimpses of several programs highlighting development schemes in the Aspirational District and Block.

Prodip Timung, Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara, Pranab Bora, Deputy Development Commissioner and other frontline officers were present at the inauguration. An all-women drama performed by local artists drew heartfelt appreciation from the audience. Scheme nodal officer Anupam Das, assistant commissioners Ashish Kalita and Merry Hazarika, Anup Kr Das, IS and health officer Dr Jonbir Das were also present and extended their cooperation. The program was anchored by Parimita Das of Lakhipur.

Goalpara district, along with the Lakhipur development block is included in the Aspirational District category and the mission aims to accelerate progress in health, education, infrastructure and livelihood schemes across the region.

## Howrah-Kamakhya Vande Bharat Sleeper Express sees surge in demand, occupancy crosses 128%

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Jan 30:** The Howrah-Kamakhya-Howrah Vande Bharat Sleeper Express has witnessed exceptionally high patronisation since the start of its regular commercial operations, highlighting strong passenger preference for premium overnight rail travel between eastern India and the Northeast.

Introduced by the Prime Minister on January 17, 2026, the Vande Bharat Sleeper Express began its regular services from Kamakhya on January 22 and from Howrah on January 23, ushering in a new era of long-distance, high-comfort rail connectivity between South Bengal and Assam.

Railway officials said booking trends show more than 100 per cent occupancy on all operating days, clearly indicating the growing popularity of the service. Over the last six days, from January 23



to January 29, the average occupancy stood at around 128 per cent. For the next five days, up to February 3, bookings have already crossed the 100 per cent mark and are expected to rise further. On January 30, the 27575 Howrah-Kamakhya Vande Bharat

per cent.

Officials said the consistently high occupancy reflects the immense tourism and travel potential of the premium sleeper service. The train has found particular favour among travellers from South Bengal, who prefer the comfort and reduced journey time while travelling to the Himalayan regions of North Bengal and on-ward to Assam.

With features such as high-speed capability, shorter travel duration, superior ride cushioning and well-designed sleeper berths, the Vande Bharat Sleeper Express offers a level of onboard comfort unmatched by conventional trains and other modes of transport. The strong response, railway authorities said, underlines passenger confidence in the new-generation sleeper service and points to sustained demand in the coming months.

Sleeper Express recorded an overall occupancy of over 117 per cent across all classes as of 3 pm. Class-wise data showed particularly strong demand, with AC First Class registering 133.33 per cent occupancy, AC 2-Tier at 115.95 per cent and AC 3-Tier at 116.85

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

Either you run the day or the day runs you.  
-Jim Rohn

## India-EU partnership

In today's fractured world, fissures caused mostly by the ongoing Trumpomania, every nation is working post haste to forge new alliances particularly focussed on trade. The best example of this is the India-EU partnership FTA, to be formalised on January 27. The enhanced partnership is going to eliminate tariffs on more than 90% of traded goods, besides imparting a thrust to services and facilitate investments between the two sides. On Tuesday January 27 India and the European Union elevated their long-standing strategic engagement with the signing of a Security and Defence Partnership (SDP) at the 16th India-EU Summit. The EU-India FTA conclusion marks the end of a two-decade-old process, initiated in 2007. With bilateral trade already crossing \$136 billion, this would be "one of the biggest" bilateral deals in the world. The underlying emergency and interests which both the sides showed to agree to an FTA were coherently expressed by EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, when she said that India and the European Union are giving a "fractured world" an alternative. While the FTA will be watched most closely, in terms of bilateral gains for both countries, it is the timing of the Summit, amidst unprecedented transatlantic tensions between the EU and the United States over territorial issues and trade, that is most significant.

European Council's President António Costa, has said that, "In our multipolar world, it's essential that the EU and India become closer and closer partners because we can together be strong providers of stability, protectability and reliability in international relations and to protect our international rules-based order. The EU is India's largest trading partner bloc, accounting for trade in goods worth €120 billion in 2024, or 11.5% of India's total trade. In 2023, trade in services was worth €59.7 billion in 2023. The EU's share of FDI in India touched €140.1 billion in 2023, up from €82.3 billion in 2019. Once the FTA is signed and ratified by the European Parliament, a process that could take at least a year, the agreement could expand bilateral trade and lift Indian exports such as textiles and jewellery, hit by 50% US tariffs since last August. For the EU, which has signed a new security and defence partnership and a free trade agreement with New Delhi, India will provide heft to the 27-nation European bloc on multiple fronts.

For instance, the security and defence pact will lead to strengthening cooperation in areas such as maritime security, counter-terrorism, cyber-defence, and maritime domain awareness, with a focus on stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Analysts say India-EU defence and security partnership would result in placing New Delhi within a framework that the 27-nation European bloc has so far extended to Japan and South Korea. It would provide an institutional platform for advancing security cooperation at a moment when both sides are reassessing their long-term security and defence priorities.

## Me-Dam-Me-Phi and the spirit of ancestral memory

Me Dam Me Phi is one of the most profound and emotionally resonant traditions of the Tai Ahom community of Assam. It is not merely a ritual or a religious observance but a living philosophy that binds memory, ancestry, identity, and moral responsibility into a single sacred practice. To understand Me Dam Me Phi is to understand how a civilization remembers its roots, honors its dead, and draws spiritual strength from the continuity between past and present. In an age of rapid change and cultural erosion, this tradition stands as a quiet but powerful reminder that a society survives not only through progress but through remembrance.

The phrase Me Dam Me Phi itself carries deep meaning. In the Tai language, Me refers to offerings or worship, Dam refers to deceased ancestors, and Phi refers to spirits. Together, the phrase signifies the worship and remembrance of ancestors and ancestral spirits. At its heart, Me Dam Me Phi is an act of gratitude. It acknowledges that the living exist because of the sacrifices, struggles, and wisdom of those who came before. This sense of continuity is central to the Ahom worldview, where life is not seen as a linear journey beginning and ending with the individual, but as a flowing river of generations connected by duty and respect.

Historically, the Ahoms migrated to the Brahmaputra valley in the thirteenth century and established a powerful kingdom that lasted nearly six hundred years. Throughout this long history, Me Dam Me Phi evolved as a unifying spiritual practice. It helped preserve collective memory, social discipline, and ethical values. Even when political power declined and external influences reshaped religious practices, Me Dam Me Phi remained rooted in the social fabric of the community. It functioned as a cultural anchor, reminding people of who they were and where they came from.

The philosophy behind Me Dam Me Phi is deeply human. It is based on the belief that ancestors do not vanish after death but continue to exist in the spiritual realm, maintaining an interest in the welfare of their descendants. These ancestral spirits are not feared as malevolent forces but respected as guardians and guides. When properly honored, they bless families with harmony, health, and prosperity. When neglected or forgotten, it is believed that imbalance and misfortune may arise. This belief does not promote fear as much as responsibility. It teaches that remembrance is a duty, not an option.

Me Dam Me Phi also reflects a sophisticated understanding of morality. By honoring ancestors, individuals are constantly reminded that their actions will one day be judged by future generations. One's life becomes part of a longer moral narrative. This



Me-Dam-Me-Phi

awareness encourages ethical behavior, social responsibility, and respect for tradition. The ritual therefore serves not only spiritual purposes but also social regulation. It reinforces values such as honesty, loyalty, courage, and community service, which were essential to the survival of the Ahom state and remain relevant today.

The observance of Me Dam Me Phi is both collective and intimate. Traditionally, it is performed at the household level as well as at the community level. Families remember their departed members with offerings, prayers, and symbolic gestures. At the same time, the community comes together to honor great ancestors, kings, and heroes who shaped collective destiny. This dual nature strengthens both family bonds and social unity. It reminds individuals that they belong to something larger than themselves while also affirming the importance of personal lineage.

Rituals associated with Me Dam Me Phi are marked by simplicity and solemnity. Offerings often include rice, meat, rice beer, and other items considered pure and respectful. These are not displays of wealth but expressions of sincerity. The act of offering is more important than the material value of what is offered. This simplicity reflects the core philosophy of the tradition, which emphasizes inner devotion over external show. The atmosphere during the ritual is one of calm reverence rather than spectacle.

An important aspect of Me Dam Me Phi is its relationship with nature. The Ahom worldview does not separate the spiritual from the natural world. Ancestors, spirits, humans, and nature are seen as interconnected. This holistic perspective fosters respect for the environment. By honoring ancestors who lived in harmony with nature, the living are reminded of their responsibility toward land, water, and forests. In this sense, Me Dam Me Phi carries an ecological consciousness that feels remark-

ably relevant in the modern context of environmental crisis.

Over time, Me Dam Me Phi has faced challenges. The spread of other religions, colonial influences, and modern lifestyles have altered traditional practices. In some cases, the ritual was misunderstood or labeled as primitive by outsiders. In others, younger generations drifted away due to lack of knowledge or exposure. Yet, rather than disappearing, Me Dam Me Phi has shown resilience. Cultural organizations, scholars, and community elders have worked to revive and reinterpret the tradition in ways that speak to contemporary realities.

In modern Assam, Me Dam Me Phi is increasingly seen as a symbol of cultural identity and pride. Public observances and discussions have brought the tradition into broader awareness. For many young people, reconnecting with Me

Dam Me Phi is a way of reclaiming history that was marginalized or forgotten. It becomes an act of cultural self-affirmation. This revival is not about rejecting modernity but about balancing it with rootedness. It shows that tradition and progress do not have to be enemies.

Me Dam Me Phi also offers a valuable perspective on death, a subject often avoided or sanitized in modern society. Instead of treating death as an end, the tradition frames it as a transformation. The dead remain part of the family and the community, though in a different form. This understanding can provide emotional comfort and psychological strength. It helps people cope with loss by maintaining a sense of connection rather than final separation. In a world where loneliness and alienation are growing, such a perspective holds deep emotional relevance.

From a broader cultural standpoint, Me Dam Me Phi challenges the homogenization of spiritual practices. It reminds us that indigenous belief systems possess depth,

philosophy, and ethical coherence. These traditions are not relics of the past but living knowledge systems. Recognizing their value is essential for cultural diversity and intellectual honesty. When societies dismiss such practices, they lose unique ways of understanding life, death, and community.

The role of elders is particularly significant in the transmission of Me Dam Me Phi. Knowledge is passed down orally through stories, rituals, and lived examples. Elders act as custodians of memory. In listening to them, younger generations learn not just procedures but meanings. This intergenerational dialogue strengthens mutual respect and continuity. It also counters the modern tendency to devalue age and experience.

Me Dam Me Phi is also closely linked to historical consciousness. By remembering ancestors, people remember history not as abstract dates and events but as lived experience. Kings, warriors, farmers, and mothers all become part of a shared narrative. This form of historical memory is emotional and ethical rather than merely factual. It fosters a sense of belonging and responsibility toward the past.

In contemporary discourse, Me Dam Me Phi can be seen as a form of cultural resistance. It resists the erasure of indigenous identities and asserts the legitimacy of local knowledge. It insists that progress does not require forgetting one's roots. This quiet resistance is not aggressive but deeply confident. It draws strength from continuity rather than confrontation.

Ultimately, Me Dam Me Phi is about relationships. It is about the relationship between the living and the dead, the past and the present, the individual and the community. It teaches that life gains meaning when it is connected to something beyond immediate self interest. By honoring ancestors, people learn to honor values, sacrifices, and responsibilities.

In reflecting on Me Dam Me Phi, one realizes that its relevance extends far beyond the Ahom community. In a world struggling with identity crises, moral uncertainty, and cultural fragmentation, the core message of this tradition feels universal. Remember where you come from. Respect those who made your existence possible. Live in a way that future generations will remember with gratitude. These are lessons that transcend geography and time.

Me Dam Me Phi therefore is not just a ritual preserved by a community. It is a philosophy of remembrance, humility, and continuity. It stands as a testament to the power of memory in shaping identity and ethics. As long as people continue to gather, remember, and offer gratitude to their ancestors, Me Dam Me Phi will remain alive, guiding the present through the wisdom of the past.

## Ajit Pawar's death deepens political uncertainty in Maharashtra

By: Dipak Kurmi

Tragic accidental death should not, in principle, decide the direction of political history. Yet politics rarely unfolds according to principle alone. Over the past three decades, and with greater intensity in recent years, Ajit Pawar came to occupy a position in Maharashtra's political ecosystem so central that his untimely death forces even his mourning supporters to confront an unavoidable question: what comes next. In a state where power equations have become fluid and personalised leadership has overtaken institutional depth, the sudden disappearance of such a figure creates not just emotional shock but strategic disarray. Ajit Pawar's death is therefore not merely a personal or familial tragedy; it is an event that reorders political possibilities in Maharashtra.

That he was travelling early in the morning to Baramati to campaign for Zilla Parishad elections underlines the relentless demands of modern competitive politics. There was no compulsion, in a conventional sense, for a leader of his stature to personally oversee a local election campaign. Yet contemporary politics increasingly demands constant visibility, perpetual mobilisation, and personal supervision, even at the cost of safety, privacy, and well-being. Ajit Pawar's death stands as a grim commentary on a political culture that depends excessively on top leaders for even the smallest electoral contests. It exposes how hollow organisational structures have become, forcing parties to rely on individual authority rather than collective leadership or grassroots strength.

The immediate political consequence of his absence is turmoil within both factions of the Nationalist Congress Party. After the Assembly elections last year, Ajit Pawar's faction had emerged as the more electorally successful and politically relevant wing, pushing the Sharad Pawar-led faction into an existential crisis. The balance of legitimacy had tilted in favour of the younger Pawar, not merely because of numbers but because he appeared to command a sharper sense of political timing and transactional acumen. This reality had begun to reshape Maharashtra's opposition politics, unsettling established hierarchies and forcing recalibrations across parties.

In recent municipal corporation elections, the two NCP factions had cautiously initiated a process of rapprochement. This tentative convergence hinted at the possibility of reunification, or at least coordination, which would have posed a significant challenge to the ruling BJP and complicated the state's political arithmetic. For an opposition landscape already weakened by fragmentation and defections, such a reunion threatened to resurrect a competing power centre. Ajit Pawar's sudden exit freezes this process midstream, leaving behind an atmosphere thick with uncertainty, emotion, and ruthless calculation.

Within Ajit Pawar's own faction, disarray is inevitable. While many of his followers and senior leaders share deep emotional ties with Sharad Pawar, a smooth and unconditional reunion was never guaranteed. Loyalty and personal attachment, once cen-

tral to Maharashtra's political ethos, have been steadily eroded by the compulsions of power-sharing and access to state resources. Politics today is driven less by ideology or lineage and more by calculations of survival and advantage. Ajit Pawar himself operated firmly within this pragmatic calculus, navigating alliances and confrontations with equal ease. His followers now face stark choices that will define their political futures.

They effectively have three options. One is to attempt to run the party independently, evolving a distinct political space in an already crowded and competitive environment. Another is to return to Sharad Pawar's leadership, accepting a subordinate role in exchange for ideological continuity and emotional reconciliation. The third option is to seek shelter under the BJP's umbrella, aligning with the dominant force in the state to ensure relevance and access to power. Each path carries risks, and without Ajit Pawar's personal authority to arbitrate disputes, fragmentation appears more likely than consolidation.

Historically, when a dominant party ascends, resistance often emerges through the formation of strong regional players. Maharashtra has witnessed this repeatedly, from the rise of the Shiv Sena to the emergence of the NCP itself. In recent years, the splintering of both the NCP and the Shiv Sena gave rise to multiple claimants for this regional space. Ajit Pawar and Eknath Shinde both attempted to assert distinct identities while aligning themselves with the broader narrative of Modi-led development. Yet neither was able to articulate a full-throated regionalist stance, constrained as they were by their dependence on the BJP and the need to appeal to overlapping voter bases, particularly the politically influential Maratha community.

Ajit Pawar also sought to carve out a measure of ideological autonomy by signalling discomfort with overt minority-bashing, a stance that distinguished him subtly from his senior coalition partner. This balancing act, often described as running with the hare and hunting with the hound, reflected both political skill and structural weakness. After joining the Mahayuti, he struggled to expand his party machinery independently, and his overtures towards the other NCP faction suggested deeper unease within the alliance. Like Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, Ajit Pawar's NCP gradually realised that the BJP was unlikely to cede regional space or allow allied parties to consolidate traditional social bases.

The potential coming together of the two NCP factions might have altered this equation, creating a counterweight within the ruling coalition and preserving some element of internal opposition. Ajit Pawar's death casts a shadow over this possibility. What now hangs in the balance is not just party unity but the existence of any meaningful countervailing force within the Mahayuti. In a state where the opposition has been systematically weakened, Ajit Pawar's separate political existence paradoxically helped sustain a limited plurality of power centres. His departure raises the possibility that this internal tension will dissipate, leaving the BJP even more

dominant.

Sharad Pawar himself is not immune to the fallout. The veteran leader now confronts a party torn between the temptation of power-sharing and the challenge of preserving an independent political identity. Ajit Pawar's decision to join the Mahayuti was widely seen as strengthening the BJP, yet his faction's respectable performance in the Assembly elections and its subsequent clashes with the BJP during urban local elections ensured that some resistance remained within the ruling dispensation. This internal friction occasionally disrupted the narrative of unchallenged dominance. With Ajit Pawar gone, it is uncertain whether this fragile resistance will survive or quietly dissolve.

Ajit Pawar leaves behind more than organisational questions. He bequeaths pockets of electoral strength, particularly in parts of western Maharashtra, where his influence was built over decades of local engagement and patronage networks. Numerous locally powerful leaders, once anchored by his leadership, now find themselves free to reassess their loyalties. He also leaves behind a generation of ambitious, largely non-ideological young politicians eager to make their mark. These cadres, motivated less by doctrine than by opportunity, constitute a valuable political resource that will be aggressively courted.

His close association with cooperative institutions, local bodies, and Maratha voters was another asset that set him apart from rivals. This extensive repository of influence and organisational capital will not remain unclaimed for long. In all likelihood, much of it will gravitate towards the BJP, which possesses both the resources and the strategic patience to absorb defectors incrementally. Such a shift would further accelerate the consolidation of power that has characterised Maharashtra's politics over the past decade.

For nearly ten years, the state has been poised on a cusp. In its pursuit of becoming the sole dominant pole, the BJP not only marginalised its national rival, the Congress, but also systematically eroded regional political space. Repeated defections, splits, and alliances have punctuated this transformation, reshaping Maharashtra into a laboratory of post-ideological politics. Ajit Pawar's tragic death adds a new layer of contingency to this already volatile landscape.

In the immediate term, uncertainty will prevail. Emotional loyalties will clash with hard calculations, and strategic silence will mask intense negotiation. Over the longer term, the absence of a leader who combined administrative experience, electoral clout, and transactional skill will be deeply felt. Ajit Pawar's life and death underscore a sobering truth about contemporary politics: when institutions weaken, individuals become indispensable, and their sudden absence creates vacuums that no process can easily fill. Maharashtra's politics, already unpredictable, now enters a phase where outcomes will hinge less on ideology or mandate and more on the raw dynamics of power, survival, and ambition. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmi@gmail.com)

## Me-Dam-Me-Phi : A tribute to Ahom ancestors

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

Me-Dam-Me-Phi is one of the most significant religious and cultural traditions of the Tai-Ahom community, observed as a tribute to ancestors. Deeply rooted in the spiritual beliefs of the Ahoms, this ritual reflects their worldview, where ancestral spirits are revered as protectors and divine beings. The festival is celebrated annually on January 31st and stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of the Ahom dynasty, which ruled Assam for six centuries. Even today, amidst rapid modernization, the observance of Me-Dam-Me-Phi continues to be an integral part of Tai-Ahom identity.

The Tai-Ahoms, who trace their origins to the ancient kingdom of Mong Mao in present-day China, carried their ancestral worship practices with them when they migrated to Assam under the leadership of Chao-Lung Sukapha in the 13th century. Their belief system does not adhere to conventional organized religions but instead revolves around the veneration of natural elements and the spirits of forefathers. According to Ahom traditions, after death, an individual's soul does not take rebirth but transforms into a divine entity known as 'Dam-Phi.' These ancestral spirits are believed to reside in different celestial realms and continue to guide and protect their descendants. Therefore, Me-Dam-Me-Phi is not merely a ritual but an expression of gratitude and devotion toward one's forebears, ensuring their blessings for the well-being of future generations.

The ceremony involves elaborate rituals conducted by designated priests known as Deodhai, Mohan, and Bailung. Central to the worship is the offering of food and symbolic items to the spirits. A sacred bamboo altar called "Mehenga" is erected, upon which various offerings such as rice, fish, meat, payas (sweet rice pudding), bottle gourd, and eggs are placed. These offerings symbolize prosperity and sustenance, seeking divine blessings for a harmonious and abundant life. The rituals also include prayers, recitations from ancient Ahom texts, and the invocation of deities associated with nature, including Langdon (the supreme sky god), Ai Lengdin (earth goddess), Khao-Kham (water deity), and Ja-Ching-Pha (goddess of wisdom). The reverence for these elements reflects the deep connection between the Tai-Ahoms and their environment, highlighting their dependence on natural forces for survival and prosperity.

An essential aspect of Me-Dam-Me-Phi is the practice of "Ban-Phi," a ritual that involves making special offerings to the spirits to seek their protection and guidance. This ritual signifies the strong belief that ancestors continue to be a part of their descendants' lives, safeguarding them from misfortune and calamities. The Tai-Ahoms believe that their household deities act as guardians, ensuring the family's well-being. A popular saying in Ahom tradition emphasizes this belief: "If the

ancestors protect, neither walls nor roofs are needed for shelter. If they watch over, even snakes do not bite, and tigers do not attack." This underscores the unwavering faith in the protective powers of ancestral spirits.

Me-Dam-Me-Phi also holds historical significance as it was observed by Ahom kings and nobles during important events such as coronations, military victories, and agricultural harvests. The Ahom rulers maintained a deep connection with their forefathers and sought their guidance in governance and warfare. Charaideo, the first capital of the Ahom kingdom, remains an important site of this ritual, as it is the burial ground of Ahom kings. For over 400 years, Charaideo has been the focal point of the festival, with grand ceremonies being conducted to honor the royal ancestors. Even today, people gather at Charaideo to participate in collective rituals, reinforcing their cultural roots and historical continuity.

Symbolism plays a crucial role in the observance of Me-Dam-Me-Phi. A distinctive flag, known as "Byaw Seng Bong Fra" or "Vi-Vao-Kham," is hoisted during the festival. This emblem represents the Tai-Ahom identity and features a mythical flying lion that embodies the qualities of five animals: the lion (symbolizing strength), the horse (speed), the bird (protection), the fish (adaptability), and the serpent (ability to move between land and water). The colors of the flag also hold deep significance—yellow represents sacrifice, red symbolizes vital energy, green stands for harmony, black signifies determination, and white denotes purity. These elements collectively reflect the Ahom worldview, which integrates courage, resilience, and spiritual balance.

In modern Assam, Me-Dam-Me-Phi has transcended its religious significance to become a cultural event that fosters unity among the Tai-Ahom community. Government recognition of the festival has further strengthened its importance, with state-level celebrations being organized in different districts, particularly in Upper Assam regions like Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Golaghat, Charaideo, Sivasagar, Dhemajai, and Lakhimpur. Schools, colleges, and cultural organizations actively participate in the observance, ensuring that younger generations remain connected to their heritage. This growing recognition has also led to the preservation and promotion of Tai-Ahom traditions, preventing them from fading into obscurity.

Despite modernization and the influence of mainstream religions, the observance of Me-Dam-Me-Phi continues to thrive, reflecting the resilience of the Tai-Ahom identity. The festival serves as a bridge between the past and present, reinforcing the values of respect, gratitude, and spiritual connection. As Assam evolves with time, Me-Dam-Me-Phi remains a cherished tradition that not only honors the ancestors but also strengthens the cultural fabric of the Tai-Ahom community. (The writer is Editor in Chief of the Assamese E-Magazine SAMPROTIK)

# 10 human-forward work skills you must master in 2026

By: Shruti Swaroop

By 2026, work will look far less like a straight ladder and far more like open ground -- uneven, shifting and full of intersections. Technology will be sharper but expectations from people will be deeper. Teams will stretch across time zones, cultures and work styles. In this environment, growth will not be driven only by what you know but also by how you think, decide and relate.

Here are 10 human-forward skills that will quietly but decisively shape professional growth in 2026. These are not buzzwords. They are daily practices -- often invisible -- that will compound over time.

**1. Narrative IQ**  
Organisations rarely act on data alone. They act when data is framed into something more meaningful. Narrative IQ is the ability to explain why something matters in a way that people remember.

To give you an example -- a project manager was presenting quarterly numbers at a team meeting. She quickly noticed that her leadership and presentation were disengaging.

Instead of adding more slides, she reframed the update around one customer story -- she tried to explain how a delay in decision impacted trust and how fixing it unlocked repeat business.

The numbers finally landed for the team and made it more engaging because they were anchored in a story. How to learn this skill: Take your next presentation/report/analysis and explain it as a 30-second 'why this matters' story.

**2. Interface fluency**  
Today, work increasingly happens through tools like AI platforms, dashboards and internal systems.

Interface fluency is being able to understand how these tools shape human behaviour.

Let me explain with an example. An HR team rolled out a new performance tool that was technically strong but emotionally cold. Naturally, managers stopped using it.

However, with a small redesign that included simpler language, fewer clicks and clearer intent, the same tool led to wider adoption without changing the technology itself.

How to learn this skill: Identify one tool that your team uses frequently/daily and identify where people hesitate or disengage. Suggest or implement ways how you can improve it for better engagement and results.

**3. Ethical velocity**  
Everything at work feels urgent these days. Decisions are made quickly, often with incomplete information, because waiting is seen as a weakness.

At the same time, moving fast without thinking things through

usually costs more time later.

Ethical velocity is about slowing down just enough to think even as the pressure mounts.

It is that moment where you ask yourself if a shortcut might create trouble down the line.

Consider this: A young company took a hasty decision to automate its hiring to save time. After some time, they realised that good candidates were being filtered out unfairly.

The solution? A short pause and a second look before launching the automation would have saved them a lot of fixing later.

How to learn this skill: At its core, ethical velocity is not so complicated. Before acting fast and taking a quick decision, it is worth asking: Is this fair and necessary? Who might this affect in ways we're not seeing yet?

**4. Return-on-culture (ROC) literacy**  
Work culture is often dismissed as 'soft' until attrition spikes or innovation stalls. ROC literacy means understanding how a company's culture and decisions affect its business and growth.

Here's an example: A manufacturing unit noticed high attrition among its supervisors. Instead of blaming poor and unfair pay, they chose to address psychological safety on the shop floor.

Within six months, absenteeism dropped and productivity improved. This is a simple example



of how work culture affects productivity and employee engagement.

How to learn this skill: Observe and connect a specific cultural intervention at your workplace (such as introducing flexible work hours, mentorship programmes or regular feedback sessions) to one clearly measurable outcome (like improved employee retention, higher engagement scores or increased productivity).

**5. Cognitive flexing**  
High performers do not just think well; they shift how they think. Cognitive flexing is choosing the right mental lens for the situation.

Here's an example: A finance leader known for his analytical rigour struggled during a sensitive team conflict.

When she switched from logic to empathy (listening without fixing), the issue was resolved faster

than any spreadsheet could have done it.

How to learn this skill: Solve one problem using a thinking style you normally avoid.

**6. Cross-boundary craft**  
Organisations lose momentum at handovers -- between functions, regions or hierarchies. Cross-boundary craft is the ability to translate without diluting.

Example: A product team simplified technical language for sales. This simple fix helped them close deals faster without over-selling.

The skill was not technical brilliance; it was translation (crossing the boundary, in this case).

How to learn this skill: Spend at least half a day understanding how another function within your department/organisation measures success. This will help you communicate better, make smarter decisions and create impact.

**7. Data storytelling with trust**

In an era of dashboards, trust in data matters as much as insight. Honest data storytelling includes more than confidence; it includes uncertainty.

Example: While reviewing market projections, a leadership team openly acknowledged data gaps during decision-making.

This transparency not only helped build credibility but also led to smarter contingency planning.

How to learn this skill: Don't simplify or over-interpret data. Be honest and list what your data cannot tell you -- the missing context, external influences etc -- not just what it can.

**8. Resilience literacy**  
Resilience is no longer about pushing harder. It is about designing work that does not drain people.

Example: A consulting team added short, protected recovery breaks after every tough client deadline.

The result? Burnout dropped. Not because of motivation talks but because the system was designed better.

How to learn this skill: Create one small recovery ritual your team can sustain weekly. It could be something simple like a team energy check, a Monday or Friday sign-off ritual.

**9. Adaptive network-building**  
Networks are no longer static

ladders. They are learning ecosystems.

Example: A mid-career professional intentionally built her relationships across industries. She did this not for the job but to gain better insights and perspective.

When her role changed and she moved to a new organisation, she wasn't anxious. Her network became a source of insight.

How to learn this skill: Identify three people outside your organisation who can teach you one small skill this quarter.

**10. Inclusive decision craft**  
Inclusive decisions are not slower; they are smarter. They reduce blind spots.

Example: A leadership team deliberately invited opposing views during a pre-mortem.

That early dissent surfaced risks in time, helping them avoid a costly market entry and make a decision that worked out successfully for the firm.

How to learn this skill: Before finalising a decision, ask whose voice is missing and try to include them.

Technical skills may open new doors and opportunities but it is these layered, human capabilities that help you stay relevant and credible inside the room.

Growth in 2026 will belong to those who balance speed with ethics, intelligence with empathy and ambition with collective care. (Courtesy: Refiff.com)

## BSNL Recruitment 2026 – 120 Senior Executive Trainee Posts, Online Apply

Last Date: 07/03/2026.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 120 Senior Executive Trainee Posts in Telecom and Finance stream. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online.

Name of post: Senior Executive Trainee  
No of posts: 120 posts  
Stream-wise vacancy:  
Telecom stream: 95 posts  
Finance stream: 25 posts  
Pay scale: Rs 24900/- to Rs 50500/- [Pre-revised]  
Eligibility Criteria of BSNL Recruitment  
Nationality: Only Indian nationals are eligible to apply.  
Age Limit: Age of the candidates should be minimum 21 years and maximum 30 years as on closing date of receipt of application.  
Age Relaxation: The relaxation of upper age limit for reserved categories are as follows:

Category	Age Relaxation
OBC-NCL	3 years
SC/ST	5 years
PwBD [UR/EWS]	10 years
PwBD [OBC]	13 years
PwBD [SC/ST]	15 years

Educational Qualification:  
Telecom stream: Bachelor of Engineering / Bachelor of Technology degree or equivalent engineering degree with minimum 60% marks on a regular full-time basis in any of the following discipline:  
1. Electronics and Telecommunications  
2. Electronics  
3. Computer Science  
4. Information Technology  
5. Electrical  
6. Instrumentation  
or combination of these disciplines as core with other associated emerging branches.  
Finance stream:  
# Chartered Accountant (CA)/  
# Cost & Management Accountancy (CMA)  
Application Fee: Candidates have to pay an application fee as mentioned below through online mode:

Category	Fee
UR/OBC/EWS	Rs. 2500/-
SC/ST/PwBD	Rs. 1250/-

Important Dates of BSNL Recruitment 2026  
# Starting date of submission of online application: 5th February 2026  
# Last date of submission of online application: 7th March 2026  
# Application edit option: 8th to 15th March 2026  
# Date of examination (CBT): 29th March 2026

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

Last date: 7/02/2026

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

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

Name of exam: Special Assam Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) – 2026  
Name of authority: State Level Empowered Committee, TET, Govt. of Assam  
Name of department: Department of Education, Government of Assam  
Type of exam: Written Exam (OMR)  
Date of exam: Not announced  
Duration of exam: 2 Hours 30 Minutes for each Paper. An additional 20 minutes time (per hour) will be there for visually impaired candidates.

No of papers: 2 Papers

# Paper-I: Lower Primary (LP)

# Paper-II: Upper Primary (UP)

Type of questions: Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

No of questions: 150 MCQs for each Paper.

Negative marking: There is no negative marking.

Medium of exam: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo and English

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

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

Mode of application: Online

Helpline: 8042303631 (10 A.M. to 5 P.M.) (Monday to Saturday)

Eligibility Criteria of Assam TET

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

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

Lower Primary TET (Classes I to V)

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

OR

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

OR

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

OR

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

Upper Primary TET (Classes VI to VIII)

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

OR

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

OR

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

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

OR

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

OR

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

OR

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

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

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

Examination Fee of Assam Special TET

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

Category	Paper 1	Paper 2
General	Rs.550/-	Rs.550/-
SC/ST	Rs.450/-	Rs.450/-
OBC/ MOBC	Rs.450/-	Rs.450/-
PWD (PH)	Rs.300/-	Rs.300/-

How to Apply for Assam TET Exam ?

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

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

# Click on Online Application Form link .

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

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

# Enter all your personal and educational details as required .

# Upload your passport sized photograph and signature .

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

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

Important Dates of Assam Special TET 2026

# Starting date of online application: 7th January 2026

# Last date of online application: 7th February 2026

# Change of exam centre districts: 12th February, 2026 to 5 p.m. of 19th February, 2026

# Issue of E-Admit Card: To be updated

# Date of Assam Special TET Exam: To be updated

Structure and Content of Assam TET

Following is the paper-wise Structure and Content of Assam TET.

# Paper I will be for a person who intends to be a teacher for Lower Primary level (classes I to V).

# Paper II will be for a person who intends to be a teacher for Upper Primary level (classes VI to VIII).

Paper I (for classes I to V)		
Subject	No. of Qs	Marks
Child Development & Pedagogy (compulsory)	30 MCQs	30
Language I – Bodo, Garo, Manipuri and Hmar (compulsory-any one)	30 MCQs	30
Language II – English(compulsory)	30 MCQs	30
Mathematics	30 MCQs	30
Environmental Studies	30 MCQs	30
Total	150 MCQs	150

Paper II (for class VI to VIII)		
Subject	No. of Questions	Marks
Child Development & Pedagogy (compulsory)	30 MCQs	30
Language I – Bodo, Garo, Manipuri and Hmar (compulsory-any one)	30 MCQs	30
Language II –English (compulsory)	30 MCQs	30
Anyone Paper of the below		
Mathematics and Science (For Mathematics and Science teacher): Or	60 MCQs	60
Social Studies (For Social Studies teacher):	60 MCQs	60
Total	150 MCQs	150

List of TET Exam Centres and Centre Codes

Candidates have to select Centre District at the time of submission of online application for appearing in Special Assam TET. Candidate will have to select one Centre

District only.

Sl No.	Centre District	Sl No.	Centre District
1	Cachar	2	Dibrugarh
3	Kokrajhar	4	Kamrup
5	Kamrup Metro	6	Hojai
7	Sonitpur	8	Dhemaji
9	Goalpara	10	Karbi Anglong
11	Tamulpur	12	Dima Hasao

## RBI Office Attendant Recruitment 2026 – 572 Vacancy

Last date: 4/2/2026

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released an employment notification for the recruitment of 572 posts of "Office Attendant" in Reserve Bank of India. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online here.

Name of post: Office Attendant

No of posts: 572 posts

Location wise vacancy:

Ahmedabad: 29	Bengaluru: 16	Bhopal: 4
Bhubaneswar: 36	Chandigarh: 02	Chennai: 09
Guwahati: 52	Hyderabad: 36	Jaipur: 42
Kanpur & Lucknow: 125	Kolkata: 90	Mumbai: 33
New Delhi: 61	Patna: 37	

Pay: Selected Candidates will draw a starting basic pay of ₹24,250/- per month in the scale of ₹24250 – 840 (4) – 27610 – 980 (3) – 30550 – 1200 (3) – 34150 – 1620 (2) - 37390 – 1990 (4) - 45350 – 2700(2) - 50750 – 2800 (1) – 53550 and other allowances, as admissible from time to time.

Eligibility Criteria of RBI Office Attendant Recruitment

Age Limit: Age of the candidates must be between 18 and 25 years as on 01/01/2026. Candidates born not earlier than 02/01/2001 and not later than 01/01/2008 (both days inclusive) are only eligible to apply.

Age Relaxation: Category-wise age relaxation is as mentioned below.

# SC/ ST: 5 years

# OBC: 3 years

# PwBD (Unreserved): 10 years

# PwBD (OBC): 13 years

# PwBD (SC/ ST): 15 years

Educational Qualification: A candidate should have passed 10th Standard (S.S.C./Matriculation) from the concerned State/UT coming under the Regional Jurisdiction of the Recruiting Office to which he/she is applying.

Higher Qualification: The candidate should be an undergraduate as on 01/01/2026. Graduates and candidates possessing higher qualification are not eligible to apply.

Language Proficiency: Candidates applying to a recruiting office should be proficient in the language (i.e., know to read, write, speak, and understand the language) of the State/UT falling under that office.

Application Fee:

Category	Fee (in Rs.)
GEN/OBC/MOBC	₹450/- + 18% GST
SC/ST/PwBD/EXS	₹50/- + 18% GST
Staff	NIL

How to Apply for RBI Recruitment ?

Interested and eligible candidates may apply online for these vacancy by visiting official Recruitment Portal. Candidates may follow below mentioned steps to apply for RBI Office Attendant Recruitment.

# Scroll down, go to Important Web-Links section .

# Click on the "Online Application Form" and complete the registration process by clicking "Click here for New Registration".

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

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

# Pay the necessary application fee as per your category .

# At the end, submit the application form and take a print out of the application form .

Important Dates of RBI Office Attendant Vacancy 2026

# Starting Date to Apply Online & Payment of Fee: January 15th, 2026

# Last Date to Apply Online & Payment of Fee: February 04th, 2026

# Tentative Date of Online Test: February 28th & March 01st, 2026

Selection Process of RBI Office Attendant Posts

The selection process of RBI Office Attendant Posts consists of Online Test and Language Proficiency Test (LPT).

Online Test		
Subject	No. of Questions	Marks
Reasoning	30 MCQs	30
General English	30 MCQs	30
General Awareness	30 MCQs	30
Numerical ability	30 MCQs	30
Total		

**Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse on this day in 1948**

## Gandhi a way of thinking which ideology of hate unsuccessfully tried to erase: Rahul

**NEW DELHI, Jan 30:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said Mahatma Gandhi is not just a person, but a way of thinking that an empire, an ideology of hatred and arrogance of power unsuccessfully tried to erase at different points in time.

Terming Mahatma Gandhi the "immortal soul of India", the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha paid tributes to the Father of the Nation on his death anniversary, saying that along with Independence, he gave the nation a fundamental principle that the power of truth is greater than the power of authority.

"Mahatma Gandhi is not just a person, but a way of thinking that an empire, an ideology of hatred, and an arrogance of power have all unsuccessfully tried to erase at different points in time," he said in a post in Hindi on X.

"The Father of the Nation gave us, along with Independence, the fundamental principle that the power of truth is greater than the power of authority and that non-violence and courage are greater than violence and fear," Rahul Gandhi said.

This way of thinking cannot be extinguished, because Gandhi is immortal in the soul of India, he added.

Rahul Gandhi also paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Gandhi Smriti at Tees January Marg here on Martyrs' Day, remembering the life and sacrifice of the Father of the Nation.

"His legacy of truth, courage, and compassion continues to guide our path and remind us of an India we must keep striving for -- just, harmonious, and united," the former Congress chief said in a Facebook post.

Sharing lines of a Bhajan that Mahatma Gandhi used to sing, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "The hatred that



separated us from Bapu, its solution also lies in Bapu's path. The light of truth, the power of non-violence, and the compassion of love. Homage to the Father of the Nation on Martyr's Day."

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary.

Party general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, recalled two separate letters written by Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in 1948 to Syama Prasad Mookerjee, in which they strongly criticised and raised questions on the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS.

"Both are damning indictments of the self-declared custodians of nationalism. And to

think that there is a Lok Sabha MP wedded to that ideology and who was blessed by the PM himself, who said that he could not choose between Gandhi and Godse. His mindset is revealing," Ramesh said on X, in an apparent reference to BJP MP Abhijit Gangopadhyay's controversial remarks in 2024.

Ramesh also shared a link to Nehru's address on All India Radio on the night of January 30, 1948, after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination.

In his letter to Mookerjee, Nehru had said the Hindu Mahasabha had held meetings in Pune, Ahmednagar and Delhi in defiance of the ban order.

"Speeches were delivered that Mahatma Gandhi was an impediment, and the sooner

he died, the better it would be for the country. The RSS has behaved in an even worse way, and we have collected a mass of information about its very objectionable activities," Nehru had said in his letter.

Ramesh also shared a screenshot of Patel's letter to Mookerjee in which the former criticised the activities of the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha.

Paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi, Congress general secretary in charge of the organisation, K C Venugopal, said that on this day in 1948, the greatest soul to ever guide India and the world was "snatched away from us".

"Today, on Martyrs Day, let's remember Bapu's eternal teachings of Satya and Ahimsa, and warn ourselves of the culture of hate and violence that gave rise to his assassins," he said on X.

"In 2026, the threat remains of their ideological descendants eager to wipe out Gandhi from our national consciousness. Repeatedly, we see those in the ruling regime evangelise his killers, encourage hate, and are now erasing entire schemes named after Mahatma Gandhi," Venugopal said.

The powers that be may have a delusion that they will succeed in diminishing Bapu through such acts, he said. "But Mahatma Gandhi and his values are deeply embedded in India's psyche, and no amount of effort from those who oppose him can ever succeed in erasing his towering legacy."

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse on this day in 1948. India observes the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi as Martyrs' Day to honour the life and legacy of the nation's foremost leader and his ultimate sacrifice for peace, justice, and freedom. (PTI)

## Cong takes out 'march' to protest MGNREGA repeal

**NEW DELHI, Jan 30:** The Congress on Friday launched a scathing attack on the government over the repeal of MGNREGA, alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not want the law connected with Mahatma Gandhi to run for long and people to have a legal right to work.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh made the remarks at an event to protest MGNREGA repeal at the AICC headquarters here.

Senior Congress leaders and workers took out a march from the Congress office at 24, Akbar Road, to the Gandhi Smriti against the "constitutional right to work being snatched away by the Modi government". However, they were stopped by the police and did not reach Gandhi Smriti. Addressing the "MGNREGA Bachao Sangram Yatra" event, Ramesh said, "The Modi government has scrapped the MGNREGA Act by running a bulldozer over it."

"MGNREGA was a historic and revolutionary Act that was passed unanimously in September 2005. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Ji, Sonia Gandhi Ji, and Rahul Gandhi Ji made significant contributions to the creation of this Act," Ramesh said, addressing the gathering.

"The MGNREGA law was a constitutional right, providing a legal guarantee of employment to the people. This law strengthened panchayats. For the first time, money was delivered to every family through DBT," he said. "But this law has been scrapped because Narendra Modi does not want this law, connected with Mahatma Gandhi Ji, to continue for long. He does not want people to get their rights," Ramesh alleged.

Congress media and publicity department head Pawan Khara said the Congress is firmly standing up

against this step taken by the Modi government. "A government that insults the country's farmers, labourers, and youth cannot remain in power for long. Narendra Modi should understand that his government will have to pay the price for this," he said.

Ramesh said the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) gave legal right to employment benefiting lakhs of families but the Centre was "eroding" these provisions. The VB-G RAM G scheme dilutes the the UPA-era MGNREGA's original spirit, he said.

Addressing the protest, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) president Dharmendra Yadav said the government's actions signalled a "continuous attack on the poor." The Congress has launched a 45-day nationwide "MGNREGA Bachao Sangram Yatra" campaign, demanding the repeal of the VB-G RAM G Act and restoration of the MGNREGA. "This government is continuously attacking the poor. People who were once assured employment are now seeing that guarantees being taken away. The systems that were meant to support them are being gradually dismantled," Yadav said.

"We must carry this movement forward because this is not a small fight. It is a long battle. For this long struggle, we will have to remain disciplined, but we will also have to work towards forcing this government to bow," he said. Protesters raised slogans of "MGNREGA chor gaddi chhod" at the protest.

The Union government's Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 (VB-G RAM G), was passed by both houses amid opposition uproar and received presidential assent in December 2025, effectively replacing MGNREGA after two decades. (PTI)

## My stand not pro-BJP, but pro-govt or pro-India on certain issues: Tharoor

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Jan 30:** Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Friday said that his stand on certain issues may have been seen as pro-BJP by the media, but he has only seen it as pro-government or pro-India.

Tharoor said that he has made it clear in the past as well that on some international matters, he does not like to talk about politics and instead prefers to speak about the country.

"It is not something new, I have always said so," the Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram told reporters here. A row had erupted last year over his comments on the India-Pakistan conflict and the diplomatic outreach after the Pahalgam attack. His comments were at variance with the Congress' stand and many party leaders took a swipe at him, questioning his intentions.

Tharoor, while speaking to reporters, also admitted that a party member should not go against the party line. "I have always stood with the party in Parliament and therefore, there is no need to be concerned," he said.

On being asked by reporters whether he can categorically state he will not leave the Congress party, Tharoor said, "I can say that I am going to be in the Congress and that I am not going anywhere. I will be part of the poll campaign (in Kerala) and will work for the victory of the UDF." (PTI)

## Focus on Sunetra Pawar as Ajit successor buzz gathers steam

**MUMBAI, Jan 30:** Nationalist Congress Party working president Praful Patel on Friday said there is no opposition to late Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra becoming the new leader of the NCP legislature wing, but the family consent will be taken before filling the key post.

Patel's remarks came amid statements by some party leaders who said Sunetra, a Rajya Sabha member, is likely to be the new NCP legislature party leader and also the deputy CM.

Patel, a former Union minister, said right now the priority is to fill the vacant posts of Deputy CM and NCP legislature party leader, both held by Ajit Pawar at the time of his death in an air crash on January 28, and added that making appointment at the top organisational position (the late leader was also party president) was not an issue currently.

Talking to reporters here, Patel said party leaders met Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis to apprise him that the NCP, a key constituent of the ruling Mahayuti alliance, is in the process of finalising its leadership transition.

"Ajit Pawar was the leader of the NCP legislature party and an important functionary of the ruling Mahayuti alliance. We are in the process of finalising the leadership transition," he said. Patel insisted there was no question of opposing Sunetra Pawar's name to replace Ajit Pawar as the NCP legislature party leader.

Sunetra Pawar is currently a Rajya Sabha MP and not a member of the ei-

ther house of the state legislature. However, the Baramati assembly seat in Pune district has fallen vacant after Ajit Pawar's death.

"Sentiments of the people and that of the party are the same. We have to speak to the (Ajit Pawar) family (over key appointments), request them first (for approval)," Patel said.

Senior NCP leaders on Friday met Fadnis at his official residence Varsha in south Mumbai. The meeting lasted nearly one and a half hours, and was attended by senior party leaders, including Patel, Chhagan Bhujbal, state president Sunil Tatkare and former minister Dhananjay Munde.

NCP minister Narhari Zirwal on Thursday had publicly expressed his wish that Sunetra Pawar be appointed as the deputy chief minister.

According to a close associate of Pawar, he was keen on the merger of the two factions of the NCP and that it was about to happen soon.

BJP's Maharashtra unit media in-charge Navnath Ban on Friday said there was no doubt that Ajit Pawar would be cleared of the allegations levelled against him in the alleged irrigation scam case.

Speaking to reporters, Ban responded to remarks by Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut, who had said that the true tribute to Pawar, who died in a plane crash on Wednesday, would be for the BJP to withdraw the allegations.

Ban said the matter was in court, and it was inappropriate to raise po-

litical questions at a time when the entire state was mourning Pawar's untimely death.

"The case relating to the irrigation scam allegations is already in court. There is no doubt that Ajit Pawar will get justice and will be cleared of the charges against him," Ban said.

A day after Ajit Pawar was cremated in his hometown Baramati in Pune district, his two sons on Friday collected his ashes from the funeral site.

Pawar (66), fondly called 'Dada' (elder brother), was cremated with full state honours on Thursday at Baramati, located around 100 km from Pune.

On Friday, Parth and Jay collected the ashes from the cremation ground. The late leader's uncle and NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and other members of the family were present during the ritual.

In Hinduism, ashes are traditionally collected on the next day of the cremation and later immersed in a river.

Party sources said the proposed merger of NCP and NCP (SP) headed by Sharad Pawar, is "very much on course", with talks reaching an "advanced stage" even before the deputy chief minister's death.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Crime Investigation Department (CID) has started its probe into the plane crash that killed Ajit Pawar and four others, an official said on Friday.

The state police have issued orders about the CID probe into the accidental death case registered at Baramati, the official told PTI. (PTI)

## Menstrual health is fundamental right: SC orders free sanitary pads, separate toilets in school

**NEW DELHI, Jan 30:** Declaring the right to menstrual health as part of the right to life under the Constitution, the Supreme Court on Friday directed all states and Union Territories to provide free oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins to girl students and functional, gender-segregated toilets for all the students.

In a landmark judgment to ensure gender justice and educational equity, a bench comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan issued a slew of directions to all states and UTs to ensure that these facilities are provided in schools irrespective of whether they are government-run, aided or private.

The verdict, authored by Justice Pardiwala, warns of stringent consequences for non-compliance, including the de-recognition of private schools and holding state governments directly accountable for failures in public institutions.

"The right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to menstrual health; access to safe, effective and affordable menstrual hygiene management measures helps a girl child attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. The right to healthy reproductive life embraces the right to access education and information about sexual health," the bench held.

"As regards the availability of menstrual absorbent, we direct that all



states and Union Territories shall ensure that every school where the government-run or privately managed in both urban and rural areas provides oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins manufactured in compliance... free of cost," it ordered.

Sanitary napkins shall be made accessible to girl students, preferably within toilet premises, through vending machines, or, where such installation is not immediately visible, at a designated place or with a designated authority within schools, it said.

On the issue of toilets, it directed all states and UTs to ensure that "every school... is provided with the functional gender segregated toilets with usable water connectivity".

It said all the existing and newly

constructed toilets in schools shall be designed, constructed and maintained so as to ensure privacy and accessibility, including by catering to the needs of children with disabilities.

"All school toilets shall be equipped with functional hand washing facilities with soap and water available at all times," it ordered.

Justice Pardiwala said the right to education has been termed as a multiplier right as it enables the exercise of other human rights.

"The Right to Education (RTE) forms part of the broader framework of the right to life and human dignity, which cannot be realised without access to education," the verdict said.

The substantive approach to equality under Article 14 demands that

treatment be accorded with due regard to the individual, institutional, systemic and contextual barriers that impede the translation of rights in reality, it said, adding, "At the same time, the state, as a benefactor, is under an obligation to remedy such structural disadvantages".

"Inaccessibility of menstrual hygiene management measures undermines the dignity of a girl child as dignity finds expression in conditions that enable individuals to leave without humiliation, exclusion or avoidable suffering," it said.

"Privacy is inextricably linked with dignity. As a corollary, the right to privacy entails a duty on the state to not only refrain from violating privacy but also an accompanying obligation on the state to take necessary measures to protect the privacy of an individual," it added.

It said the right to equality is expressed through the right to participate on equal terms; at the same time, equality of opportunity necessitates that everyone has a fair chance to acquire the skills necessary to access benefits.

"Inaccessibility of menstrual hygiene management measures strips away the right to participate on equal terms in school. The domino effect of the absence of education is the inability to participate in all walks of life later," it said. (PTI)

### GOVT OF ASSAM DIRECTORATE-CUM-ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PWD(R&B), HILLS, ASSAM, DIPHU.

No.ACEH/CS/AAP/82/2025-26/3,

Date.30.01.2026

#### PRESS NOTICE

Director-Cum-Additional Chief Engineer, P.W.D.(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu, on behalf of Governor of Assam invites Item Rates bids from registered contractors of Class-I (A&B) category for the work "Construction of Kaliyoni Buddhist Monastery road including retaining wall and Protection Work under AAP (KAAC) under Barpathar Road Division, Silonijan for the year 2025-26", L=350.00 M..

Details may be seen at e-procurement portal website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) and also in the office of the under the undersigned during office hours from 31/01/2026 to 21/02/2026. The Bidders must be registered with the E-Tendering system (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam.

Sd/-

Director-Cum-Additional Chief Engineer,  
P.W.D.(R&B), Hills, Assam, Diphu.

Memo NOACEH/CS/AAP/82/2025-26/3-(A),

Date 30/01/2026.

### Farmer Producer Company recruitment for the post of CEO under Morigaon District.

Applications invited from suitable candidates for recruitment to the following positions of CEO under Farmer Producer Company on purely contractual basis under Morigaon District for the scheme of "Formation & Promotion of 10k FPO scheme" implemented by Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare (MoA & FW).

Interested eligible candidates who are citizens of India and fulfill the eligible norms of education qualification, experience, age etc. as per respective Terms of Reference (ToR), may submit the scanned copies of the prescribed application form (Annexure I) along with certificates/documents relating to qualification, experience, age, identity proof, two passport size colored photographs etc. to the respective FPC mail id on or before 05:00 PM of 18th February, 2026. The date, time and venue for the interview and skill test will be communicated to the shortlisted candidates through email.

Eligible candidates are allowed to submit applications for only one position within the below given vacancy list.

Vacancy details are as follows:

Sl No.	Name of the FPC	Position	No. of Post	FPC Email Id
1	Bramhaputra Asomi Mahila Farmers Producer Company Limited	CEO	1	bramhaputraasomi@gmail.com Mikirbitha, Bhubandha, Morigaon, Pin -782106
2	Swabalambi Asomi Mahila Farmers Producer Company Limited	CEO	1	seujiasomi@gmail.com Kushtoli, Laharighat, Morigaon, PIN-782127

For ToR and application form please scan the QR code or use the link provided below.



Sd/- Chief Executive Officer  
Zila Parishad, Morigaon

# APIYO defers Delhi Chalo Abhiyan after government assurance

Chief Minister assures action on three-point charter of demands

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Jan 30: The Arunachal Pradesh Indigenous Youth Organisation (APIYO) has decided to defer its proposed Delhi Chalo Abhiyan after receiving written assurance from the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh on its three-point charter of demands, which has been in the public domain for quite some time.

Addressing newsmen at the Arunachal Press Club (APC) here in Itanagar, APIYO General Secretary Tapor Maying informed that the organisation had announced the Delhi Chalo Abhiyan on January 26 after the state government failed to respond to their three-point charter of demands. These demands include demolition of illegal Jama Masjid structures, removal of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and a ban on weekly markets in the Itanagar Capital Region. He said the movement



had been launched on October 6, 2025 and was carried out through various forms of democratic protests such as bandh calls, dharnas, rallies and protest marches. However, on January 27, a meeting was held with Chief Minister Pema Khandu and Home Minister Mama Natung in Itanagar to discuss the demands. During the meeting, the state government assured necessary action on the

its assurances, stating that the demands are aimed at the welfare of the state and its citizens. He observed that nearly 80 percent of illegal entry into the state takes place through weekly markets. He added that the government has decided to monitor such illegal entry digitally by strengthening Inner Line Permit (ILP) checks through digital mechanisms. The state government has also assured that necessary action will be taken against illegal Jama Masjid constructions strictly as per law.

He further informed that, as per APIYO's survey, there are six illegal Jama Masjid structures in the Itanagar Capital Region, including three in Itanagar, two in Naharlagun and one in the Nirjuli area.

The APIYO leader also expressed gratitude to the state government for responding to their demands and thanked the people of Arunachal Pradesh for extending support to the movement.

## Itanagar hosts 25<sup>th</sup> Bharat Rang Mahotsav, showcasing Global Theatre



HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Jan 30: The spirit of global theatre found a home in the heart of Arunachal Pradesh on Friday as the 25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM) 2026 officially raised its curtains at the Dorjee Khandu Hall. This landmark Silver Jubilee edition, organised by the National School of Drama (NSD) in partnership with the Department of Art and Culture, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, transforms Itanagar into a vibrant cultural hub for a four-day extravaganza running through January 30 to February 2.

The festival opened not with a formal gavel but with the rhythmic energy of traditional "Buya" folk artists, reminding the audience that while the festival is international, its soul remains deeply rooted in local heritage.

The ceremony was graced by Speaker Tesam Pongte as Chief Guest and Yachuli MLA Toko Tatung as Guest of Honor.

Addressing the gathering, Speaker Tesam Pongte expressed his pride in the state's selection as a host city, noting that hosting the 25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav in Itanagar provides a rare and precious window for youth and local artists while also highlighting theatre as a unifying force for global cultural dialogue. MLA Toko

Tatung reflected on how theatre mirrors society, concluding his address with a mesmerising shaayri. Following him, Riken Ngomle, Assistant Professor at NSD, emphasised the festival's role as a creative bridge, acknowledging that theatre regulation in the region originated at the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly (APLA) and lauding the support of Speaker Tesam Pongte and MLA Toko Tatung for local artists.

The atmosphere was electric as the audience settled in for the debut play, "MONEY MONEY MONEY BRIGHTER THAN SUNSHINE SWEETER THAN HONEY," a creation of MLA Toko Tatung addressing themes of income inequality, setting a high bar for the days to follow.

The celebration continues at the Dorjee Khandu State Convention Centre for the remainder of the festival. Upcoming performances include the soul-stirring "SAKALJAANI HE NAATH" on January 31, the timeless classic "TASHER DESH" on February 1 and the grand finale production "KAMRUPA" on February 2. By bringing this Silver Jubilee edition to Itanagar, the National School of Drama reinforces that theatre is a universal language, bridging the gap between regional heritage and the global stage.

## Mishmi Takin statue unveiled at Anini to promote eco-tourism



HT Correspondent

ANINI, Jan 30: Anini took a significant step towards becoming a premium and eco-conscious tourist destination with the unveiling of a statue of the endangered Mishmi Takin at the heart of the town on January 29. The statue was unveiled by MLA-cum-Advisor to the Minister for Tourism, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Mopi Mihu, in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Bekir Nyorak, Superintendent of Police Ringu Ngupok, SDO Lijum Ete, former ZPC Theko Tayu and DTO Lamwang Aran.

Anini is the natural habitat of the rare Mishmi Takin and the newly unveiled statue stands as a strong symbol of the district's commitment to development that goes hand in hand with the preservation of its rich ecology and biodiversity. The initiative reflects the administration's vision of promoting responsible tourism while safeguarding the unique wildlife and natural heritage of the region.

Adding further significance to the occasion, the programme included plantation of flowers along the Mishmi Takin Point (MTP), enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the area and reinforcing the message of environmental stewardship. This was followed by an oath-taking ceremony, during which officials and participants collectively pledged not to kill or consume wild meat and reaffirmed their commitment to protecting wildlife and nature.

The event witnessed active participation from heads of various departments and administrative officers, highlighting a unified and collective approach towards sustainable development and conservation in the district.

Initiative brings govt services, welfare schemes and citizen grievance redressal directly to villagers' doorstep

## Seva Aapke Dwar 2.0 camp launched in Muktur village



HT Correspondent

MUKTUR, Jan 30: The Second Seva Aapke Dwar (SAD) 2.0 camp was successfully inaugurated on Friday at Muktur Village Primary School under Duitongkhar Circle, marking a significant step towards inclusive governance and last-mile service delivery.

The camp was inaugurated by Namgyal Angmo, IAS, Deputy Commissioner, Tawang in the presence of Dr DW Thongon, Superintendent of Police, Tawang; Tashi Dhondup, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Lungla; Sangey Wangmu Mosobi, AC-cum-DPO; Tsetan Droma, Circle Officer, Duitongkhar, along with other Heads of Offices. On the same occasion, the Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0 of NITI Aayog for the Jiemihtang-Duitongkhar Aspirational Block was officially launched.

Almost all government departments participated in the camp, delivering essential services directly at the villagers' doorstep. Residents availed benefits including Aadhaar enrolment, Ayushman Bharat (AB-PMJAY) services, Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadi Yojana, free medical and eye check-ups and awareness sessions on ANBY, ANKY and other social welfare schemes.

During the Jan Sunwai, villagers placed their grievances before the Deputy Commissioner, many of which were addressed and resolved on the spot, reflecting the effectiveness of the initiative. The Deputy Commissioner also distributed science kits and sports items to Muktur Primary School, along with hybrid vegetable seeds and horticultural tools to promote education, sports and livelihood activities. AB-PMJAY cards were also distributed to beneficiaries.

DIGP Tumme Amo urges youths to take up sports for healthy and disciplined life

## 26<sup>th</sup> State Level Arm Wrestling Championship begins in Itanagar

HT Correspondent

ITANAGAR, Jan 30: The 26th State Level Arm Wrestling Championship-2026 was successfully conducted by the All Arunachal Pradesh Arm Wrestling Association (AAPAWA) at the DNGC Auditorium, Itanagar from January 28 to 29. The championship witnessed participation from around 170 players and officials representing 15 registered district associations affiliated with AAPAWA.

Unlike previous years, the association allowed participation only from players selected through affiliated district associations, doing away with the earlier open-to-all system. This step was taken to strengthen organised representation and improve competitive standards at the state level.

The programme was graced by DIGP Itanagar Range Tumme Amo, IPS, as Chief Guest, while BJP spokesperson Tanya Agu attended as Guest of Honour. Several eminent personalities were present as special guests on the occasion. Nada Apa from the Directorate of Sports, Dari Lokam from the Sports Authority of Arunachal (SAA) and



Sumeet Kshiar from the People's Arm Wrestling Federation of India (PAFI) attended the championship as observers. Referees and judges from the federation also officiated the event. The gold and silver medalists of the championship will be selected to represent Arunachal Pradesh at the National Arm Wrestling Championship, scheduled to be held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, during May or June 2026.

Speaking to the media, DIGP Tumme Amo emphasised that youths are the future of nation-building and encouraged them to

take advantage of the employment opportunities provided by the state government by excelling in games and sports. He said that sports not only build discipline and merit but also help individuals achieve national recognition, bringing respect to themselves, their families, communities and society at large. Expressing concern over rising drug cases, the senior police officer appealed to youths to stay away from drugs, actively participate in sports and adopt a healthy lifestyle to lead a long and meaningful life while contributing positively to society.

## Modular OT inaugurated at District Hospital, Namsai

HT Bureau

NAMSAL, Jan 30: A Modular Operation Theatre (OT) was formally inaugurated at the MCH Wing of the District Hospital, Namsai by CR Khampa, Deputy Commissioner, Namsai, in the presence of Diganta Kumar Borah, CGM (PA), Oil India Limited, Duliajan. The newly established facility aims to strengthen healthcare infrastructure in the district and significantly enhance surgical as well as maternal healthcare services for the local population.

The project has been implemented as part of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Oil India Limited, Duliajan, with the Rural Works Department (RWD), Namsai, acting as the executing agency. The inauguration of the Modular OT marks an important milestone in the ongoing efforts to upgrade healthcare facilities in Namsai district and highlights the collaborative role of government departments and public sector enterprises in improving public service delivery and healthcare outcomes.

## Indian Army and Air Force successfully douse forest fires in Sino-India border

ITANAGAR, Jan 30: A wildfire that broke out about a week ago near Kaho village in Arunachal Pradesh's Anjaw district has been doused by the Indian Army, an official said on Friday.

According to a post by the Spear Corps of the Indian Army, the fire broke out along the western ridge of the Lohit River close to the Sino-India border.

In a joint and coordinated effort, the troops of Spear Corps, along with the Indian Air Force, mobilised swiftly and successfully contained the forest fire, ensuring no damage to civilian life or property, it said.

The Indian Air Force (IAF), in a post, said that Mi-17V5 helicopters dropped 12,000 litres of water in the rarefied Himalayan air, showcasing exceptional courage, precision and a commitment towards protecting lives and fragile ecosystems.

Sharing the post by IAF, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said, "My heartfelt gratitude to the @IAF\_MCC Indian Air Force for their swift response in battling forest fire in Lohit Valley."

Meanwhile, a senior police official claimed that the fire had started on the other side of the LAC on January 21.

He said the wildfire spread into the Indian side on January 27 and engulfed Kaho, Sheru area and Madan Ridge near the LAC.

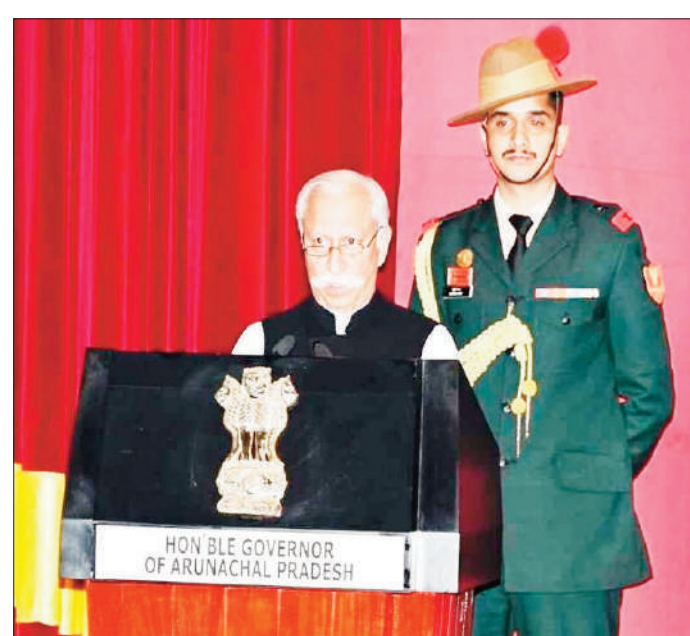
The cause of the wildfire is unknown, but an area of 4,50,00 sq metre (approx) has been destroyed, the official said.

Meanwhile, the Indian Army has also contained another wildfire at Tongkorla in Mechukha in the state's Shi-Yomi district, a Defence official said.

Responding to a request for assistance from a landowner, the quick reaction team undertook coordinated firefighting operations under difficult terrain and weather conditions, Defence PRO Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said. The official said the team contained the fire, preventing potential loss of human life, property and surrounding forest cover. (PTI)

Parnaik stresses coordinated political, economic and societal efforts to address challenges in the region

## Governor calls for unified approach to Northeast security



the Northeast is a region of immense strategic importance that must be developed in a sensitive and inclusive manner. He observed that the region's

unique geography and diverse ethnic communities with deep cultural and social linkages across borders, create both opportunities and challenges for national security.

Parnaik added that the region's security concerns are rooted in historical grievances, transnational tribal linkages and porous international borders, adding layers of complexity and sensitivity.

Addressing these challenges, he said, requires a nuanced, people-centric approach that balances security imperatives with dialogue, development and respect for the region's distinct social fabric.

Drawing from his extensive service experience in the Northeast, Parnaik stressed that peace cannot be secured through isolated measures.

He emphasised the importance of a unified national effort, anchored in a clear strategic vision, seamless political and governance integration, strengthened economic and industrial capacities and growing attention to emerging domains such as technology and cyber security.

"Fostering societal resilience and robust internal security are equally critical," he said. Highlighting Arunachal

Pradesh's transformation over the past decade, the governor said the state has emerged as a key pillar of India's Act East vision and the broader goal of Viksit Bharat.

He pointed to unprecedented investments in connectivity, noting that over 4,000 kilometres of roads have been built in the last five years, extending access to remote and border areas and bringing governance and essential services closer to the people.

"The expansion of rail and air connectivity has further integrated the state with the rest of the country, opening new avenues for trade, tourism, mobility and rapid emergency response," he said. Parnaik also flagged concerns over instability in neighbouring Myanmar and Bangladesh, warning that developments there do not bode well for the Northeast and are impacting India in an adversarial manner.

He said such challenges must be addressed through sustained diplomatic, political and economic engagement. (PTI)

## De Kock hundred in his 100th T20 leads South Africa to series win over West Indies (A)



**CENTURION (SOUTH AFRICA), Jan 30:** Quinton de Kock celebrated his 100th Twenty20 international with a century as he powered South Africa to a seven-wicket victory over the West Indies on Thursday.

De Kock hit a career-best 115 off 49 balls with a borrowed bat from Dewald Brevis. Ryan Rickelton finished the rout with a career-best 77 not out off 36.

The left-handers battered the West Indies for 162 runs in 11.5 overs. Together, they had South Africa flying at 12 runs per over. "Special to watch," South Africa captain Aiden Markram said. "Quinny put on a great show for the crowd. Ricks flies under the radar but to get us home back to back is a good effort from him."

The West Indies made a hefty 221-4 but South Africa cruised to 225-3 with 15 balls to spare.

The target didn't faze the Proteas. They chased down 258 against the West Indies on the same ground in 2023, led by de Kock's 100, his only previous T20 century.

After losing five straight bilateral T20 series, South Africa gave coach Shukri Conrad his first T20 series win as they clinched it 2-0 with a match to spare. That third match is on Saturday, then both teams head to the T20 World Cup starting next week in India and Sri

Lanka. De Kock was rested from the first T20, where Markram hit 86 not out in a nine-wicket win chasing 174. The captain made only 15 this time but de Kock, who was on 6, took up the mantle and launched sixes against five of the six West Indies bowlers.

He brought 50 up in 21 balls and got to 100 off 43. He was going for a third consecutive six off Akeal Hosein when he mis-cued to mid-off and was out after smashing 10 sixes and six boundaries. Rickelton was dropped on 17 and happy to play second fiddle to de Kock. He had just got to his fifty off 25 balls when de Kock left then finished the match in a rush. Rickelton hit nine boundaries and three sixes.

The West Indies made only one change after the first T20, bringing in captain, wicketkeeper and opening batter Shai Hope. But he was out for 4 from a nick behind.

That brought in Shimron Hetmyer, who overtook opener Brandon King en route to a 30-ball fifty, two days after hitting 48 in Paarl. Their partnership of 126 ended when King was caught on the boundary on a 30-ball 49.

Hetmyer was fourth out after a 42-ball 75, 50 of them from boundaries.

Sherfane Rutherford then blasted 57 in an unbroken stand of 76 with Romario Shepherd, who made 17. (AP)

## 5<sup>th</sup> T20I: Samson's form, Axar's fitness concerns for India in series finale against NZ

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Jan 30:** Sanju Samson would expect passionate home support to lift his game even as India fret over Axar Patel's fitness when they wind up their T20 World Cup preparations in the fifth and final T20 International against New Zealand here on Saturday.

India were in experimental mode in the fourth T20I at Visakhapatnam, sticking to five front-line bowlers without resorting to all-rounders Hardik Pandya and Shivam Dube. The plan didn't yield the desired result as the hosts lost even though the result does not alter the series outcome, which India has already sealed.

As has been the case through this series, the bowling department might see some shake-up again and the management could give a chance to mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy after resting him from the previous two matches.

The batting department might not see too many changes, but the management will keep an eye on Samson. A free-flowing batsman, Samson now appears to be holding the weight of the world on his shoulders.

More than the drying up of runs, the think-tank will be worried about technical discrepancies that have crept into his batting of late, and the subsequent draining of confidence.

A laden back-foot, and improper bat swing might require some deep correction ahead of the ICC showpiece starting February 7. Since Samson is a contender for the pivotal opening slot at the marquee event, the lean patch cannot be allowed to enter a terminal phase.

But in his home town, backed by adoring fans, Samson might just find the lost rhythm.

That he is a superstar in this part of the



country was evident from a video that the BCCI shared after the team's arrival.

Skipper Suryakumar Yadav was seen playfully clearing the way for 'Chetta' (elder brother) at the airport exit where hundreds of fans had lined up to catch the glimpse of the local favourite and his teammates.

**Focus on Kishan and Axar**

Ishan Kishan is a crucial backup option for Samson and has been in fine fettle in this rubber, but the wicketkeeper batter had to sit out of the previous match with an unspecified injury.

All-rounder Axar too has not played since suffering a finger injury in the first T20I at Nagpur. The left-arm spinner, though, had bowled a few deliveries at nets ahead of the fourth match in Visakhapatnam.

**Winning ways**

Beyond the individual scenarios, there are team goals to be achieved. In modern cricket, turnaround time between matches or series is quite tight, and India will play their first game of the T20 World Cup on February 7 in Mumbai.

So, by any stretch of imagination, India will not be treating this as a dead rubber. A dominant 4-1 margin will further enhance the confidence of a team brimming with style, strength and depth.

That is precisely what the Kiwis would not want happening.

They looked clueless against India's onslaught in the first three matches, but found a way to silence the hosts' big guns at Visakhapatnam.

Once they took out Abhishek Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav, the visiting bowlers were able to contain the rest of the batting unit despite Shivam Dube's blitz.

They now know that this Indian side is not exactly invincible and a 3-2 margin will keep them in a happy mental space ahead of imminent bigger assignments.

**Pitch matters**

The Greenfield Stadium is a high-scoring venue with a smooth pitch, and India have won three out of their four T20 matches played here, including one against New Zealand in 2017.

But as skipper Mitchell Santner put it, the Kiwis now know what it takes to beat India, and it should lead to a fascinating contest.

The addition of opener Tim Seifert has added considerable fire power to New Zealand's top-order.

They would also be hoping for an improved bowling performance, bringing in express pacer Lockie Ferguson but it depends on his fitness.

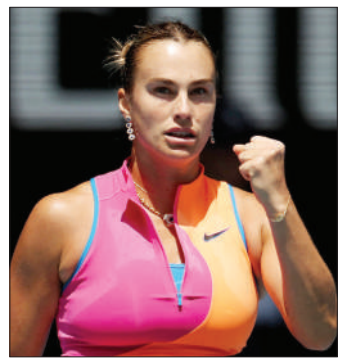
**Teams (from):**

**India:** Suryakumar Yadav (Capt.), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Shreyas Iyer, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel (Vice-Capt.), Rinku Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakravarthy, Ishan Kishan (wk), Ravi Bishnoi.

**New Zealand:** Mitchell Santner (Capt.), Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway (wk), Jacob Duffy, Zak Foulkes, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Bevon Jacobs, Daryl Mitchell, James Neesham, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Ish Sodhi, Lockie Ferguson.

Match starts at 7 pm. (PTI)

## Sabalenka's new mentality faces Rybakina's resolve in Australian Open final, a 2023 rematch



**MELBOURNE, Jan 30:** When Aryna Sabalenka is really deeply contemplating her Australian Open final rematch with Elena Rybakina, it won't be that breakthrough success in 2023 that she'll be dialing in on. It won't be the other three Grand Slam finals she's won, either, including the most recent at the U.S. Open. Top-ranked Sabalenka will be trying to derive more motivation from the five finals she lost in 2025.

"I actually know what was wrong in all of those finals that I played and I lost," Sabalenka said. "I would say that last year was lots of lessons, lots of things to learn about myself, and definitely not going to happen again this season."

The list of finals losses included the WTA Finals decider in November when she lost in three sets to Rybakina, who took a record \$5.2 million in prize money. Sabalenka was upset in the Australian Open final 12 months ago by Madison Keys, ending her 20-match winning streak at Melbourne Park. She lost the French Open final in three sets to Coco Gauff — after beating Iga Swiatek, winner of the three previous championships at Roland Garros — in the semis. At Wimbledon, she lost in the semifinals to Amanda Anisimova. She also lost finals in Stuttgart and Indian Wells in a year when she won four titles.

**A new approach**

"It's just a different mentality that I will try to have in each final that I play," the top-ranked Sabalenka said. "I feel like those frustrations were coming from not agreeing of what's going on in the moment." Sabalenka has had to learn to let go of those frustrations, or distractions or things that make her mad, and return her focus solely to winning the next point. She achieved that in her semifinal win over Elena Svitolina, when the chair umpire called her for hindrance in the fourth game — a decision that she said was unprecedented, and which she disputes. Sabalenka broke serve in that game and pretty much dominated the match. (AP)



सत्यमेव जयते  
অসম চৰকাৰ



সাংস্কৃতিক পৰিক্ৰমা বিভাগৰ উদ্যোগত  
লক্ষীমপুৰ জিলা প্ৰশাসন আৰু  
লক্ষীমপুৰ টাই সাংস্কৃতিক বিকাশ ও গৱেষণা কেন্দ্ৰৰ সহযোগত

# শ্ৰী-জন্ম-শ্ৰী-ক্ষী

২০২৬

উদ্বোধন

তাৰিখ : ৩১ জানুৱাৰী ২০২৬ (৭৯৭ জুকাফাদ)

সময় : দিনৰ ১১:০০ বজা

স্থান : ত্যাগ ক্ষেত্ৰ, উত্তৰ লক্ষীমপুৰ

|| মুখ্য অতিথি ||

শ্ৰীবিমল বড়া, মন্ত্রী, সাংস্কৃতিক পৰিক্ৰমা ইত্যাদি বিভাগ, অসম

|| সন্মানীয় অতিথি ||

শ্ৰীপৱিত্ৰ মাৰ্ঘেৰিটা, কেন্দ্ৰীয় মন্ত্রী (ৰাজ্যিক), বৈদেশিক পৰিক্ৰমা আৰু বহুশিল্প মন্ত্ৰালয়

ডাঃ ৰণোজ পেগু, মন্ত্রী, শিক্ষা ইত্যাদি বিভাগ, অসম

|| বিশিষ্ট অতিথি ||

শ্ৰীপ্ৰদান বৰুৱা, সাংসদ, লক্ষীমপুৰ লোকসভা সমষ্টি

শ্ৰীনৰ কুমাৰ দলে, বিধায়ক, ঢকুৱাখনা বিধান সভা সমষ্টি

শ্ৰীমানৰ ডেকা, বিধায়ক, লক্ষীমপুৰ বিধান সভা সমষ্টি

ড° অমিয় কুমাৰ ভূঞা, বিধায়ক, বিহপুৰীয়া বিধান সভা সমষ্টি

অনুষ্ঠানত সকলোৰে উপস্থিতি সাদৰেৰে কামনা কৰা হ'ল

জিলা আয়ুক্ত  
লক্ষীমপুৰ, অসম

সঞ্চালক  
সাংস্কৃতিক পৰিক্ৰমা বিভাগ, অসম

তথ্য আৰু জনসংযোগ সঞ্চালকালয়, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত

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অসম বাৰ্তা ছাবস্ক্ৰাইব কৰিবলৈ ৭৬৩৬৮৩৪৯৪৩ ত Assam লিখি বাটছপ কৰক

DIPR/D/HLT/289/31-Jan-26